

Eating, Meeting, Recreation

Country Club Provides 'Restful Retreat'

By JOYCE LATCHAM
It all began 45 years ago in a decidedly small way, when a group of local golfers decided they wanted to establish a golf course on the State Park tract three miles north of Beeville.

In July 1932 about 60 members of what was to become the Beeville Golf Association met to elect officers and directors and to appoint committees to take care of certain jobs.

By Sept. 11 the nine-hole course was opened when a foursome teed off in an exhibition match. Two Kerrville golfers who had been in charge of construction of the local links, George Hoffman and Sam Schneider, were matched with John Rossi, first president of the Beeville association, and Jesse Walker, a former baseball player and local undertaker.

Rossi and Schneider went one up over Walker and Hoffman to win the match that day. And Rossi has continued his winning ways through the intervening years, having been club champion several times and club president more than once.

Only Rossi and two other men elected to positions in the Beeville Golf Association still live in Beeville.

Attorney Alex Cox was a member of the bylaws committee and insurance agent Clarence Miller was one of those overseeing the links construction.

Perhaps it is a tribute to the fledgling club they helped organize, and to the three men, too, to know that they are still members of the vastly expanded operation which grew out of the golf association — the Beeville Country Club.

Although Rossi is the only one who is regularly seen on the golf course now, both Cox and Miller are still patrons of the club's dining facilities — whose food is generally acknowledged to be very good and often outstanding.

Probably none of them realized then that the club would evolve into the all-around eating, meeting and recreation center that it is today. Besides golf, the club now offers swimming and tennis facilities and lessons in all three.

The clubhouse itself, which, like Topsy, just sort of "grew" in a seemingly haphazard but eminently pleasing fashion, has been the scene of innumerable dances, dinners, birthday parties, teas, coffees, wedding receptions, club meetings, bridge and

gin rummy games, bird watching and even TV viewing.

The attractive decor of the club's interior has been provided to a large degree over the years by the efforts of the Ladies' House Committee. These women, appointed to two-year terms, have stage-managed all kinds of entertainment, ranging from style shows to dramatic productions, to produce revenue for their "interior decorating."

The beginning membership (or initiation) fee of \$25 has, of course, increased, to \$300. And the monthly dues of \$1.50 have gone up to \$17. But considering inflation and the expanded facilities, everyone agrees that membership in the Beeville Country Club remains an outstanding bargain.

The more than a quarter million dollar gross revenue generated by the various activities available for the club's 577 members provides employment for at least 22 full-time employees and others who are employed to oversee seasonal recreation such as swimming and tennis.

Newest addition to the staff is Jesus Lozano, who arrived here this fall to assist longtime manager Gertie

Cummings in overseeing the club's restaurant and bar facilities.

Mrs. Cummings and her late husband, Joe, both Indiana natives, arrived in Beeville from San Antonio in 1951, to take over the club's management. He was the club's golf pro until his death in 1969, and in her 26 years here, Gertie has become almost an institution — one it would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

Lozano has no intention of trying to do that. "Before I accepted this job I asked Mrs. Cummings for her approval and cooperation so we could work together in absolute harmony," he said.

A retired Air Force staff sergeant, Lozano was born in Lampasos, N.L., Mexico, the son of a druggist and grandson of a doctor. His mother was a Texan and after his parents married they lived in Laredo until after three sons were born, then moved to Lampasos.

In 1940 Lozano's oldest brother returned to the states to enlist in the armed forces and he served during all of World War II. So in 1948 the family returned to Laredo and Lozano enrolled in St. Joseph's Academy.

"I had a hard time switching from Spanish to English," he recalls now. "I was supposed to be a high school junior but I went back to the first grade for a few days, then was promoted to the second for a few more, and so on until I finally got back to my own grade level."

"When I graduated from high school in 1950 I enlisted in the Air Force and served 22 years before retiring in 1972. All those years I held just two jobs — as a cook, then as manager of service clubs for enlisted men, COs and officers. I was manager of the Officer Training School Club at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio when I retired."

Besides Texas, Lozano was also stationed in California, Scotland, Germany, Turkey, Okinawa, the Philippines and Vietnam during his Air Force career. He became a U.S. citizen in 1956 in London, England, and was the only Mexican in a large group taking the oath of citizenship at the American Embassy there.

Since his wife was a native of Refugio the couple moved there in 1972 and Lozano acquired two jobs — manager of the Pozo Seco (a private club) and municipal judge. When he took the Beeville Country Club job he resigned from the Pozo Seco but is still trying, unsuccessfully thus far, to shed the judge's post, since he still commutes to and from his job.

His wife, Connie, and their two children, Jesus Jr., a high school senior, and daughter, Juanita Linda, a sixth grader, still maintain the family home in Refugio. After Jesus Jr. graduates he intends to enter

either the University of Texas or Rice, and major in medicine or law. And his parents and sister will then move to Beeville.

Lozano, who has been named general manager of the local club (while Gertie remains resident manager), serves as vice president of the Gulf Coast Club Manager Association.

Eddie Wicker, current Country Club president, said everyone is really pleased to have Lozano working with Mrs. Cummings. "We're planning an extensive remodeling and addition program soon, and it's going to take a lot of cooperation from them and the rest of our employees, the board and members to see it successfully completed," he noted.

Serving with Wicker are Bill Green, vice president; Dan Conoly Jr., secretary-treasurer; Duane Baker, Charlene Ramirez, Sid Hall Jr., Alden Greling, and Capt. John Wasson.

Besides the Ladies' House Committee, currently co-chaired by Billie Sue Fuller and Carolyn Kraker, the club has a tournament committee (Loren Council, chairman), greens committee (Wanda Hendrix, chairman), tennis committee (Tubby McCarty, chairman) and finance, swimming and clubhouse grounds committees (no chairman designated).

Stanley Wright has been the club's golf pro since 1969, and he is assisted by Victor Pardo, who manages the

pro shop, and Eloy Almdarez, Domingo Esparza, Jose Gonzales, Alonzo Hernandez and Alfredo Castenado in keeping the grounds and yard spic and span. Burgess Hickman supervises the swimming pool and related activities each summer.

Ann Ford and Johnnie Hubbard are office manager and bookkeeper, respectively, and Ray Martinez is head waiter, assisted by Elia Martinez, Estefana Salinas and Beverly Ousley Faustina Chapa and Gilbert Mendoza are charged with cleaning duties inside the club house.

And Clara Mae Blackwell, Anna Martin, Rafaela Medina, Bertha Ann Robinson and Aurora Longoria are the kitchen employees who prepare those mouth-watering delicacies for club diners.

Back in 1932 the Bee-Picayune affirmed, "Beeville can now boast a good golf course, which has long been the need of the city, and in its beautiful and natural setting, it will furnish a restful retreat for many, as well as a demonstration of skill if one would negotiate the nine holes at par."

It is no longer necessary to be a golf addict to enjoy everything the Beeville Country Club provides. But it is safe to say that the club has provided the country "retreat" — albeit surrounded by residential buildup — for many hours of rest, relaxation and fun for area members and their guests.



Beeville Country Club Clubhouse

The spacious, modern clubhouse used by the 577 members of the Beeville Country Club today is a far cry from the little shack dispensing soft drinks and golf balls for the charter members of the Beeville Golf Association back in 1932. The 45 years in between have seen the club's activities expand to include swimming and tennis in addition to golf, and its clubhouse to

include a large ballroom, game room, private club room, kitchen, dining room and bar, in addition to golf locker rooms for men and women, pro shop and office. Plans are currently being considered for a large addition and remodeling program at the rear of the building, according to club president Eddie Wicker.

(Harrison Photography)



Duo Dispenses Delicacies

Longtime Beeville Country Club manager par excellence Gertie Cummings and the new assistant manager, Jesus Lozano, look as though they're ready to serve a dish fit for a king at one of the recent club

functions. Lozano, a United States Air Force retiree, came to the local club this fall from Refugio, where he had been manager of the Pozo Seco Club since 1972.

(Harrison Photography)

Gunfight

from 1A

and destruction Saturday night. A pickup truck belonging to Wayne Jewell of 1503 N. Washington St. and a car owned by Roberto Perez of 1801 Lucy Lane had their windshields

smashed in the incident. Police say a tire tool or hammer was likely used in the case. Jewell and Perez were both inside the Pizza Hut while the damage took place.

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