

Harpers Hoppers

Harpers Hoppers Square Dance Club was founded in 1960 by Johnny and Barbara Harper. Johnny and Barbara trained twenty couples in the art of square dancing in the basement of their home. The club was federated into the Heart of America Federation of Square Dance Clubs in 1961. In 1962 the club membership had grown to 45 couples and 6 teenagers. Harpers Hoppers' first home was in Bowling's barn. In 1963 the club moved to Smith Brothers Building, then on to Twirling Acres, then to Bel Air Country Club, Pitcher School, Blue Ridge Elementary School, Hickman Mills Community Christian Church, and finally to One Spirit United Methodist Church. Johnny and Barbara were the only regular caller and taw of the Harpers Hoppers until 1991 when Johnny resigned, due to Barbara's failing health. They had continued to train dancers and callers since the club was formed. They always taught, advocated and lived the philosophy that "Square Dancing is for fun, fellowship, and having a good time". Because of this philosophy, many lasting friendships and associations have been made.

In 1991 Jim Jefferies, one of the Square Dance callers that Johnny had helped train, accepted the club's invitation to become the second regular caller of the Harpers Hoppers. Ardis is not only Jim's taw, but she has also taught "Line Dancing" at club dances and lessons.

The club members have always followed their caller to help promote square dancing and, in turn, the caller has tried to attend visits with the club in their quest of The Vigorous Visitor Award. The club has received "The Vigorous Visitor Award" almost every year since the program's inception by the Heart of America Federation in the 1972-73 dance season.

Harpers Hoppers have sponsored and participated in many camp-outs, New Years Eve dances, carnival dances, minstrels, float trips, horse race trips, and National, State, and Regional Square Dance Conventions. The club has sponsored and participated in many Benefit Square Dances for the less fortunate.

In 1991 the club started attending the Ozark Fall Square Dance Ball sponsored by Jim Jefferies and other local callers. The Harpers Hoppers usually had the largest representation at these Balls.

In the spring of 1995 the Grandview Squares Club decided to disband and a majority of their members joined Harpers Hoppers. These new members were a welcome addition and their active visitations helped the club usually double the number of dancers at the visitations.

During the next 15 years the Harpers Hoppers continued to dance with Jim Jefferies calling and Ardis Jefferies teaching line dances. Although the number of club members began to decline the members' devotion to Harpers Hoppers and square dancing remained strong. For the last several years Patty Rogers who passed away January 12, 2010 was especially enthusiastic about keeping the club going to its 50th Anniversary. To celebrate Harpers Hoppers' 50 years of square dancing and to honor their retiring caller and line dance cuer, Jim and Ardis Jefferies, the Harpers Hoppers Club hosted a free last club dance on October 1, 2010 There were 219 dancers in attendance while twelve guest callers called the tips. It was an "Over the Top" evening enjoyed by all!!