

## **J-Bar-N**

In September, 1960, Jay Holmgren (who had been learning to call) was approached by a few of his close friends to teach a square dance class. Jay needed the practice and his friends wanted to learn to dance.

Blanche and Frank Freeman (both deceased) offered the use of their basement and the first set of lessons began. Each couple brought a couple and that first class in 1960 was made up of eight (8) couples. After a second class was held the winter of 1960/61, the club was formed.

The name chosen for the new club - J-Bar-N - was selected using the initials of Jay and his lovely wife Nellie.

Having outgrown the Freeman's basement, the search was on for a larger hall. Halls were not readily available during this time so again a club member, Gerald and Billie Mansell came to the rescue by offering their retired chicken house. A crew of club members renovated the chicken house into a square dance hall. (The only problem was that moisture would form on the concrete floor. This made the floor a little slick, but that didn't seem to stop the dancers!)

The first Presidents of the J-Bar-N Club were George and Evelyn Grafton. Membership fees were set at \$2.50 per couple which included name badges and graduation diplomas. Admission per dance was set at \$1.50. Caller fees were set at \$2.50 per square (or \$.62 1/2 per couple if not a complete square). With these rates, nobody made much for the effort put forth!

Over the next several years as the Club grew, larger halls were needed. We moved to the Odd Fellows Hall at 25th and New Jersey where many a trip was made to lug equipment and food up and down the long flight of stairs. Club Halloween parties, chili suppers and many other activities created more interest and Club growth.

We learned that a new hall was open at 17th & Quindaro and though we were pleased with a new and larger hall, the higher rent required us to move again. The Club danced for four (4) years at the UAW Hall at 11th & Waterway Drive. During this time club visitations were catching on and the J-Bar-N's were growing both physically and financially.

Jay had been calling and teaching lessons for another club, the Square Stoppers, for three (3) years and decided that every Saturday and Sunday from September to May was too much. His request that one of the two clubs find a new caller resulted in the two clubs merging retaining the J-Bar-N name.

Through the efforts of Tom Baker, we acquired the Bricklayers Hall at 7th & Osage, however with the merger and increased club size, we moved to the First Presbyterian Church at 40th and Victory Drive. Dances were held on the first and third Saturday of the month. Lessons were held at the Kensington Park Recreation Center at 29th & Minnesota on Tuesday evening.

The Club traveled together to dance in places such as Manhattan, Topeka, Perry, St. Joseph and made a yearly trip in March to Wagner, Oklahoma. A family picnic was also a yearly event for the entire family, sometimes combined with a campout at Perry Lake, Tonganoxie, or Melvern Lake or combined with another club like the Big O's.

In 1969 we were on the move again. Our new location was the Grandview United Methodist Church at 67th and Leavenworth Road, however the pillars made it difficult to dance with large crowds. With the help of Bob & Patsy Hammond, our lessons were changed to the Wyandotte County Township Hall, 81<sup>st</sup> & Riverview where they continued for several years without charge to the club.

Spring and Fall Flings were held at the Millstone Lodge at the Lake of the Ozarks and several canoe trips were made to Noel, Missouri.

On February 11, 1982, Jay and the J-Bar-N's lost our beloved "N" Nellie to cancer. It was certainly a sad time, however with the help of many supportive callers and fellow square dancers, the J-Bar-N's encouraged Jay to continue calling. It was Nellie's final wish that Jay continue

calling which he did. The Club began donating one-half of the door prize money to Cancer Action and continues to do so today.

We finished that season optimistic for the coming year. In June, thirty (30) couples along with kids, campers and pets trekked to Bennet Springs, Missouri for the annual canoe trip and outdoor fish fly by our leader and head chef - Jay Holmgren. The annual canoe trip to Bennet Springs continues today.

With about three weeks to go before our dance season was to start in September, 1982, we were notified by Grandview United Methodist Church that their facilities were no longer available for our Club dances. Judy and Paul Anderson checked into renting the gym at Grace Lutheran School, 3333 Wood Ave, Kansas City, Kansas. The rent was \$100 a night compared to the \$75 we were paying but time was short, there was ample parking, kitchen facilities and no poles to dodge, so we decided to try it for at least one season.

Jay began looking for a new location for the weekend Spring Fling. Branson, Missouri was selected and after several years moved to Kimberling City.

In 1985 the J-Bar-N's celebrated with Jay as he and Eula Mitchell were married on November 24th.

During the 1985 season we were on the move again - this time to the Bell Recreation Center at 36th and Rainbow. We celebrated our 25th Anniversary Dance on March 15, 1986. The hall had bad acoustics, other activities going on in the building and "strange" people walking in while were dancing. At the end of the season the decision was made to make yet another move! The new location - effective September, 1986 - was the Roeland Park Community Center, 4850 Rosewood in Roeland Park, Kansas where the J-Bar-N's still dance from September through April on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month.

In the spring of 1993, Jay Holmgren announced his decision to retire as our caller. The J-Bar-N's have been so fortunate for 33 years to have Jay, not only as our caller, but to provide the leadership needed to form a new club and grow from eight (8) couples to forty-eight (48) couples! He will certainly be missed by everyone. Thank you, Jay!

The search for a new caller led the J-Bar-N's to Peery Lindsey. Peery and his lovely wife, Mary, became the second caller for the J-Bar-N's and continues to call today.

The J-Bar-N's continue to be a very active Square Dance Club and have continued traditions established over the years - Visitations Annual float trips, Visitations, Treks to State in Salina, Annual picnics, More visitations, Fall Festival, Lake of the Ozarks

#### Past Presidents

1961-62: George & Evelyn Grafton  
1962-63: Tom & Charlotte Overman  
1963-64: Floyd & Jane Nowak  
1964-65; Tom & Nadine Baker  
1965-66: Bob & Edna Henderson  
1966-67: Gaylen & Arlene Jones  
1967-68: Bob & Florence Pierce  
1968-69: Ed Koerner & Edith Dowell  
1969-70: Don & Barbra McCully  
1970-71: Bob & Joyce Blackmore  
1971-72: Vernon & Faye Sturm  
1972-73: Wes & Lois Johnson  
1973-74: Gary & Karen Ohler  
1974-75: Gary & Karen Ohler  
1975-76: Larry & Shirley Simpson  
1976-77: Rich & Bea Wright  
1977-78: Roger & Carol Beauchamp  
1978-79: Doc (Dewey) & Marketa McAfee

1979-80: Bill & Darlene Moore  
1980-81: Bill & Darlene Moore  
1981-82: Herschel & Eula Stafford  
1982-83: Don & Pat Adkinson  
1983-84: Don & Pat Adkinson  
1985-85: Don & Pat Adkinson  
1985-86: Bill & Joan Breckenridge  
1986-87: Tom & Charlotte Overman  
1987-88: Larry & Shirley Simpson  
1988-89: Ray & Ruth lull  
1989-90: Charlie & Shirley Gross  
1990-91: Charlie & Shirley Gross  
1991-92: Darrin & Bridgette Tarwater  
1992-93: Darrin & Bridgette Tarwater  
1993-94: Larry & Shirley Simpson  
1994-95: Don & Pat Adkinson  
1995-96: Don & Pat Adkinson  
1996-97: Ray & Ruth Tull

September 1960 - January 1997

Club No Longer Dancing