

Hazel Nut Crackers

The Hazel Nut Crackers Square Dance Club was organized in 1959 after a Sadie Hawkins Dance that was the brainchild of Bill & Faith Debonis and Charles & Matilda Smith, two of the clubs founding members.

Emery & Dee Rentsdhlr were the club's first President Couple. Dee drew the clubs badge design and made the first banner. Gene & Opal Roop were the second couple to hold the office of President. They also served the club for many years by holding others offices. Dick & Jane Holstrickter were the third President and First lady and Dick made the Wooden Chipmunks for the welcome table.

After dancing at the Meadow Oaks Country Club (now YMCA at 75th and State Avenue, K.C. KS) and having lessons in each other's basements, the club started dancing at the Hazel Grove School (2401 North 67th Street, K.C. KS.), where the club name was acquired. The Hazel Nut Crackers were forced to move from the Hazel Grove School in 1962 when the school became unified and no longer allowed its use by private groups. The club then moved around using many different locations.

In 1963, during one of the low periods of square dancing, the Hazel Nut Crackers found their club in serious financial trouble with a net worth of \$8.41. A vote was held on April 30, 1963 by the 18 club members attending whether or not to continue the club. They voted to continue the club. The dance nights were changed from second and fourth Friday's to Saturday. Dances were held at the city park and halls were found that charged no rent.

On April 23, 1977, with increasing membership from the Leavenworth area, the Hazel Nut Crackers voted to move to Leavenworth. Club Officers for the 1977-1978 season representing the 18 couples were: Bill & Irene Shelton Presidents, Ralph & Mart Vincent Vice Presidents, Jim & Genny Evans Treasurers, and Don & Betty Foster Secretary.

Callers for the club include: Ervin Franz, Elmer Fowler, Norm Madison, Joe Banzet, Eddie Wiseman, Don Echols, Gene Ward and Perry Lindsey.

Historians Note: The club folded in the early 2000's, but many members found other clubs, and are still dancing!