

## THE HOOSIER CORNERS SQUARE DANCE CLUB

The Hoosier Corners Square Dance Club was formed in the autumn of 1987 as a result of the consolidation of two Wayne County, Indiana clubs - The Nettle Creek Steppers of Hagerstown and the Boots & Slippers of Richmond. Both of these clubs had declining membership roles and were hard pressed to find officers. Many members belong to both clubs and it got to the point that members literally had to be an officer in one club or the other (some in both). At a joint meeting of the two clubs a decision was made to combine the memberships of the two clubs into one new club retaining the corporate status of one and the by-laws of the other. While the negotiations were in process, the caller decided to retire. Thus, the state was set for a complete new beginning - a new club and a new caller(our cuer stayed on but she, too, late retired for health reasons.)

Since everything was new, it was determined that we should come up with a new name for our fledgling club as well. Members felt they wanted a name which incorporated or made reference to the name of Indiana or Wayne County in part - but nothing sounded quite right. We must have considered at least 100 or more names and we nearly settled on the name "Starlight Promenaders" at one point in the discussions. However, at a lesson class, one of the students mentioned that the teacher frequently asked, "Who's your corner?" so why not call the club the Hoosier Corners. Needless to say, the name had the prerequisite tie to Indiana's nickname (Hoosier) and to square dancing (Corners) and the members liked it - so we became known as *The Hoosier Corners!* Our very first dance using our new name was held in February of 1988.

When we were deciding how to structure our new club the decision was made to have as great a variety of guest callers as possible while still allowing the local caller a chance to call club dances. Accordingly, we decided to have all guest callers except for one dance per quarter. We also made the decision to have a well-known regional or national caller for our 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday dances. This has remained our practice to this day.

We knew that variety was a key to growth and commitment on the part of our members. Therefore, we made the decision to be as active as we possibly could be, but with a variety of offerings for our members. We wanted to be able to have something to offer to every one of our members. This decision led us to continue with a parade float we owned, to contract

with the local Wayne County Tourism Bureau to entertain visitors to Wayne County with a "Hoosier Hoedown" show, to do demos at nursing homes, churches, private parties and even in shopping malls. In addition, our club is a banner club with multiple banners. We host two very large dances each year - Larry Letson comes to Richmond each August and we are privileged to have Johnny Preston in Richmond each November.

The Hoosier Corners has a rather unique office called "student coordinators" and we have been blessed with very dedicated people in that office. They are tireless sales people for our activity and we know they are responsible for a very large portion of our current level of membership. Through their efforts, and those of the membership in general, we have grown to become one of the largest square dance clubs in Indiana. Our by-laws require us to hold both square and round dance lessons at least once a year and we have held to that requirement since day one of our existence. We currently have arrangements with Earlham College in Richmond to hold dance lessons on campus. Earlham students have an option to take square dance lessons and to receive a two-hour credit on their Physical Education requirements for satisfactory completion of the 15 Square Dance Basics class. The lesson classes blend college students and community participants into one class session held each Thursday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. In the fall of 1999 there were twenty-four college students and seven community participants in our class. Active club members joined in the class as angels and we averaged seven squares at each week's class session. We are currently offering a second semester of lessons featuring Mainstream and Plus level calls and, although the enrollment is smaller, we still have a very solid mix of college and community students in our classes.

Our club is affiliated with the Indiana Dancers Association (IDA) as well as the Miami Valley Dance Council (MVDC) in Ohio and we have active representatives who attend the meetings of both organizations on a regular basis. If you are looking for a fun evening with energetic friendly people who are the epitome of Hoosier Hospitality, give the Hoosier Corners a try. You won't be disappointed!