

February 2006

Spinnin' Wheels

Eight couples and a caller and his partner who lived in the Higginsville area met at a home and decided to form a square dance club in late summer of 1971. All had danced previously with an out of town club. Their first dance was on October 16, 1971 at the Grandview Elementary School in Higginsville, Missouri and that is where they are still dancing. At this dance the name "Spinnin' Wheels" was selected and it was decided to change our dance night to the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. We had a large crowd for our first dance. We had lessons that winter and we then had 17 couples and could be federated with the Heart of America Square Dance Clubs. We became federated on May 7, 1972. That fall the dance night was changed to the 1st and 3rd Saturdays. Our first outfit, a purple dress with white trim with the men in their lavender shirts looked real sharp.

Throughout the years the club has done many things to promote square dancing. They have danced for many years at the nursing home in Higginsville, Lexington, Concordia, Sweet Springs, Odessa and Waverly. Also at the Wal-Mart store and parking lots in Higginsville. They have danced on the street before the parade at the Corder Picnic and the Concordia Fall Festival every summer since the club was formed. Other street dances done for entertainment have been in Waverly, Carrollton, Norborne and Lexington.

In 1973 a youth club was formed and was known as the "Yackin Teens". They joined our group and danced with us. They had four squares and danced with us for 4 or 5 years.

One of our outstanding dances was a live music dance in 1974 with 120 visiting couples and in 1975 we even had a bigger live music dance with 130 visiting couples.

In 1974 we had our first Luau and it was held in a members pasture and the hog was cooked in a pit. We liked it so well that it became an annual club event and was moved to the school gym the next year. We have had our annual Luau in March every year. Our Luau events grew and finally we cooked three hogs and attendance would be up to nearly 400.

The club members attended the National Square Dance Convention in Kansas City in 1975. Another big event was dancing for the Air Stream campers from a 4 state area in 1977 and we took a bus trip to Columbia to visit a club that was having a Luau and we once took a bus to Jefferson City and danced in the Rotunda for a big celebration. We entertained the area AFS students for a number of year at a regular club dance. We entertained Lions International while they were meeting in Higginsville. This is only a few of the many things that the Spinnin' Wheels have done throughout the years. The club had an outing at a cabin at the Lake of the Ozarks every summer for a number of years. We had lessons every year and by 1976 we had 50 couples in the club.

For many years the club had a fish fry or hamburger cookout at the park every summer and also a watermelon splash. Then danced the rest of the evening away on the concrete dance floor.

In February 2001 the Spinnin' Wheels along with the other clubs that Gary called for helped him celebrate his 35th year of square dance calling at the Sermon Center in Independence. There were over 400 in attendance, many from other areas in the State.

The Spinnin' Wheels have received the Vigorous Visitors award every year since it was started. They received the Federation banner in 1996 and the next two years for having the highest percentage of members at the Heart of America Federation Dance. They have always attended the Federation dances and some of our members have taken part in the Fashion Show over the years. In 1998 the Spinnin' Wheels helped with the State Festival and will be doing the decorating for the 2006 State Festival in Sedalia

Some of the Spinnin' Wheels dancers helped some of the 3rd grade students with square dancing and line dancing for an afternoon toward the end of the school year for a few years recently. For many years the first dance in December we bring mittens and stocking caps for the elementary students in the school where we use their gym. We hope to continue dancing and having fun.