

(Continued from front page)

Also in 1980, Arden decided that it was time for the club to stand on its own financially. He reached a financial agreement with the officers and like a child come of age should, JRDC went forward, bound to make it without the promise of parental bailout. Arden continued to play a lead role in the club and he continued to teach his popular group classes until 1983 when he left Purdue to return to his native Minnesota. He died in November 1988 in St Paul, Minnesota.

JRDC Meets Financial Challenges

JRDC struggled financially the first three years without Arden's financial subsidy. At \$25 per couple, the club relied heavily on admission fees "at the door" in addition to membership dues to cover the expenses for the five dances. This proved to be considerably harder to do without Arden there to write a check for any dance that lost money. Ellen Snellenbarger often recalled "sitting at the top of the stairs at the Grotto praying that one more couple would come in the door so we would break even!"

In 1983 President Doris Graefnitz, Vice President Irene Seders, Secretary/Treasurer Ellen Snellenbarger, and Member-at-Large Larry Swartz developed and implemented our current membership and financial structures. These officers did their homework. They knew the Grotto would comfortably handle approximately 60 dancing couples (120 members). They knew they needed \$3,000 to cover the expenses of five dances. The membership fee for 1983-84 was set at \$50 per couple, double the 1980 rate! They wrote and distributed a letter making the "dire need" known and challenging anyone interested or involved to step forward and commit to fully fund the budget with membership dues. They made it clear that if they fell short, the club could not continue. These reforms put the club on sound financial footing and have kept us solid ever since!

The twenty-three successful years that have passed since this group of officers took on the risks of reorganization are proof of their vision and wisdom! While we owe credit for our club's beginning to Arden Johnson, we owe its survival through its tough formative years to this group of leaders and to the members who answered their challenge...many of us in JRDC today can trace our membership back to that critical 1983-84 reorganization.

JRDC Matures and Grows

Finally on a solid financial and organizational foundation, JRDC continued to grow and change. Starting in 1980-81, all club dances were held at the Merou Grotto. The 5-dance season grew to seven. In 1998, we added a May dance at the PMU Ballrooms on a trial basis.

In 2000, after 20 years meeting at the Grotto, we relocated the club dances to the Greater Lafayette YWCA, where we continue to meet today. At the YW we enjoy "dance-floor-level" parking, entrance and restrooms. We gained dance floor space allowing us to grow club membership from the 120 maximum at the Grotto to our 2006-07 roster of 158 members.

Our last season at the Grotto, we had a schedule of 7 regular dances October – April plus the trial May dance, then renamed the "Miss Ellen Ball". In 2001, we moved the "MEB" from the PMU Ballrooms to the YWCA and made the May dance a permanent part of the schedule. A September dance was added 2003. In 2005 we expanded the schedule to include a June dance. In our 30 years, we have doubled the schedule of regular monthly dances.

But that is not all! One of the brightest spots in our recent history was the addition of the New Year's Eve dance starting December 31, 2005. That dance was made possible by **Marilyn & Jim Anderson**. The 2006 New Year's Eve Dance was sponsored by **Ruby & George Tsao**. JRDC is grateful for the Anderson's and Tsao's generosity and their vision and challenge to add New Year's Eve to the JRDC tradition!

In 2000, we lost our Secretary/Treasurer, teacher and friend, Ellen Snellenbarger. Ellen served as the club's first Secretary/Treasurer from 1976-79. Rita Manis served as Secretary/Treasurer for 3 years from 1980-1982. Then Ellen agreed to return to Secretary/Treasurer role as part of the reorganization of 1983. Ellen remained in that capacity until her death in March 2000, serving a total of 21 years as JRDC Secretary/Treasurer! If Arden was our founding father, Ellen was surely our sustaining mother...a rock-solid, constant leader through most of our club's history.

JRDC Looks Forward

Like many of you, Connie and I joined JRDC in that pivotal 1983-84 reorganization season. JRDC's charter priorities of "fun, fellowship and ballroom dance opportunities" have enriched our lives in many ways. Sometimes, I wonder if the good folks I have named in this account had any idea that their actions would lead to something so successful and long-lived. Hind-sight is 20/20 and words like "wisdom" and "vision" are mine, not Arden's or Ellen's. I guess they would say that they simply did the best they could with what they had at the time. I *know* they would say "This is a dance club, not a history lesson. A dance club is only as good as *tonight, next dance and next season!*"

Thirty years later, here we are still dancing the Black Hawk Waltz to Arden's record (which was probably 30 years old when we started)! This milestone year makes us stop and think about how we got here, how far we have come together and where we are headed. But mostly, this is a milestone to be celebrated. -- **Harry**

Fun! Fellowship! Let's dance!