

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
FACULTY DANCING CLUB
1914 - 1979

by

Floyd and Lois Hoover

March, 1979

Lincoln, Nebraska

*Another 1 in 89
&
maybe another
later*

Sahs Archives

Easter Bonnets



March
Hare
Mad
Hatter



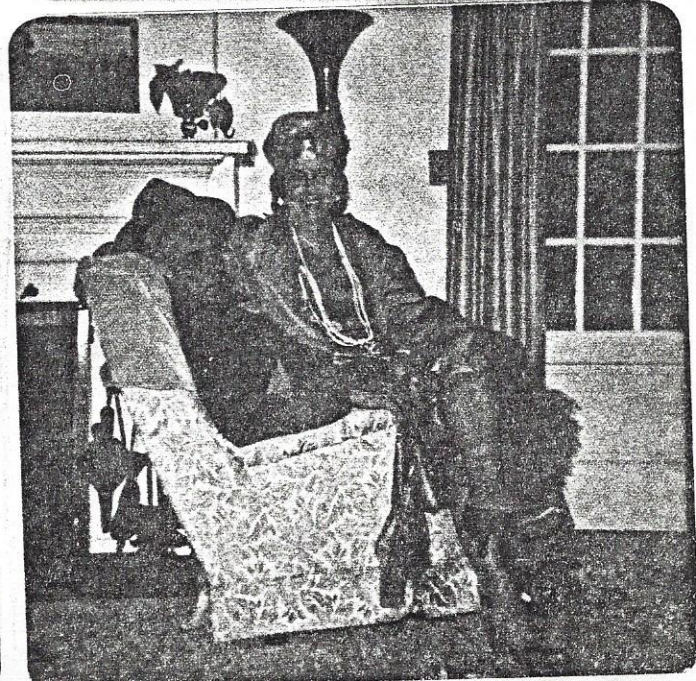
Ades
of
March
Cleopatra
Mark A.

1972

Cultermm Nocturne



1977-78



'75'
March Party
Wileen as
"Forward
March"
H. & M. Dixie
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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FACULTY DANCING CLUB

by

Floyd and Lois Hoover

Let's go dancing back through the years of the Faculty Dancing Club. How did the club start and when, who was dancing, what was being danced? Where were the dances held? What did the dances cost? What were the eating arrangements and at what price? Perhaps most important of all, how did former members feel about the club?

According to Pauline Bancroft Weldon the Faculty Dancing Club began in a highly informal way, and it began because of an interest in dancing by Dr. Winett Orr.

Dr. Orr, an orthopedic surgeon, and his wife were living in the Orthopedic Hospital some time before World War I. Perhaps some of you may remember that the hospital was located on about 9th and South Streets. A new laundry building had been erected in 1914 adjacent to the hospital with a second floor. The second floor was made into a recreation room for the nurses, so here was space for dancing.

For the benefit of the nurses who wanted to learn to dance, Dr. and Mrs. Orr took dancing lessons from Charlotte Wheedon who had evening classes in social dancing at the Lincoln Hotel. Dr. and Mrs. Orr learned at least the Tango and the Hesitation Waltz. So the ice was broken, and Dr. and Mrs. Orr began to talk about inviting others to make use initially of the recreation room. Among those invited were several university faculty members, Dr. and Mrs. Barbour; Mr. Lawrence Seaton, Business Manager; Dr. Herbert Waite, Dean of the College of Law; a Mr. Ivy of the College of Business Administration. Somewhat parenthetically, Miss Wheedon became the wife of Professor R. D. Scott, and both of them became members. Perhaps others than those mentioned became charter members, and in 1916 the club became known as the Faculty Dancing Club or the Faculty Dance Club. The two names have been used interchangeably.

Perhaps it would not be amiss to jump ahead to March 22, 1961, to try to pin down which of the two names is the official one. At a meeting held on this date the club members could not come up with anything more official than this: a consensus of the group recommended the name Faculty Dancing Club. A matter of heaven-storming importance.

Now flash back to the early twenties. At this time some physicians, lawyers, dentists, and judges who had private practices in Lincoln taught at the University on a part-time basis. An official policy was established which permitted and encouraged anyone who taught one hour or more on the campus to become eligible to join.

During the early years most of the members of the club were "down-towners" as they were called. There was a time then when the College of Agriculture did not enjoy the prestige it subsequently received. For years references were made to the "farm" in a pejorative sense. Professor Westerman invited Dr. and Mrs. Frank Mussehl to join the club. These two new members were among the youngest and set about encouraging their Ag campus colleagues to join. Before long "down-towners" discovered that the College of Agriculture was not only well represented but for a time actually was in the majority. Perhaps it was during this time that the Ag Activities Building was used as a place for dancing.

In 1923-1924 the club seems to have felt a need for some kind of organization which appears to have been lacking. Professor A. R. Congdon was elected the first president of the Faculty Dancing Club. At least this is the first formal recognition of an officer. Curiously enough no assistants were named as vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. In 1924-1925 Professor Westerman (initials unknown), clearly a "down-towner", became the second president, but like Professor Congdon he too functioned alone. In 1925-1926 a president was elected and also a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. From then on the Faculty Dancing Club appears to have become a going concern.

The names of most of the officers reads like a Who's Who in the University of Nebraska. Among them were deans, department chairmen, top administrative officers. Any number of members distinguished themselves in their individual disciplines, and the distinction continues to be impressive.

During the very early years the club dances were held in a variety of places. The Mussehls who joined in the early 1920s have said that the old Library on 11th and R Streets, now called Architecture Hall, was the site of some of the earliest dances. Ted Aakhus too remembers dances held there. Another former member, Mrs. Pauline Weldon, remembers dances held at the Roseland Ballroom which was located over a building on 11th and N Streets. The building has long since been torn down, of course.

At one time the Roseland Ballroom was considered to be off limits for the daughters of respectable parents. This was the place where stags and does met. Clearly other places had to be sought which could not besmirch the probity of the University family.

The old Shrine Club, now called Hillcrest, became somewhat popular as were the old Lincoln Hotel, now the Hilton Hotel. Also used was the Cornhusker Hotel which became known later as the Cornhusker Raddison. Now that building is no longer functioning as a hotel. The Activities Building, located on the Ag campus, became widely used where it was necessary to decorate the place. It had been used primarily as a gymnasium which had nothing to recommend it in the way of decor. So there were harvest themes using corn shucks, bales of straw and hay, and ears of corn strung overhead. Men sometimes wore overalls, and the women wore clothes which purported to be typical of farm wives. When the Student Union was built in 1938, no decorations were permitted nor were they needed.

From time to time hard times parties were held in the 1930s. Interestingly enough, at other times members of the club really dressed up. Men wore their tuxedos and women

their long formal dresses. Some of the men appear to have rented their tuxedos, which must have been something of a nuisance because a suit had to be fitted, picked up, and subsequently returned. Anyway, the custom of wearing formal attire at the dances fell into disuse about the time of World War II except for the women, many of whom continue to wear long dresses.

Occasionally costume parties were held. One spring the theme was Easter, and Professor Gunderson came dressed as an Easter Rabbit. The theme of Easter was carried out at each table. At another dance the Heart Fund became the theme, and everyone was expected to dress in red. Beyond any doubt the zaniest of all was the Ides of March theme in March, 1970.

John and Arletta Aronson and Lois and I cooked up the scheme of presenting a wild burlesque of Mark Antony's funeral oration. John and I were dressed as Romans wearing miniskirts. Lois was dressed as a soothsayer, and she intoned, "Beware the Ides of March." John asked his countrymen to lend him his ears, and Arletta obliged by handing him a pair of gigantic ears. Since I played the role of Julius Caesar, I was dead throughout the scene, and I performed that role with remarkable aplomb. With considerable forethought I had managed to toss my cape across my weirdly skinny legs, but I was forced to stand up and take a bow with John, Arletta, and Lois. That did it! I could see beyond the footlights that Hink Sahs was doubled over in what appeared to be agony. I had a vague impression at the time that Warren Sahs was not upset in the least, but I have experienced coronary thrombosis, so I rushed over to see what could be done for her, maybe administer a big jolt of whiskey. I was stunned when I saw her point weakly at my legs while the tears rolled down her cheeks. I forgot temporarily that others have experienced Hink's reaction to my hilariously funny legs, but I had been carried away by our histrionics. Anyway, no one has attempted to repeat that performance.

After the Student Union was built in 1938, for a period of time the dances were held there exclusively. However, some members of the club expressed dissatisfaction with the use of only the Student Union. They felt that more latitude should be allowed with respect to places for the dances and also the option of serving alcoholic beverages. No record has been found to indicate when the shift was made, but dances began to be held at several of the hotels. Drinks became available, and members of the dance committee manned the bars and received the profit. A liquor law was passed and then the hotels employed staff members to serve beverages.

Several former members of the club mentioned that the ballroom of the Student Union was always filled. A marked fall off in membership became apparent first during the war years, 1941-1945, and again a short time after the move from the Student Union to the hotels. A cause-effect relationship may not have been responsible for the move to the hotels. Other factors may have been operative. However, former members have suggested that the shift to hotels was the primary reason. The increased cost of meals may have had an adverse effect upon the membership. There is also the possibility that a generation gap began to exist in the 1950s and 1960s when hard rock dancing became wide spread among young people. As these rock devotees might have become eligible in terms of their ages for membership in the Faculty Dancing Club, they were unacquainted with what young people now call "touch" dancing. Now some are beginning to learn from instructors in the Department of Women's Physical Education, from community colleges, and from dance studios. Maybe we shall see a change as the generation gap closes.

In the opening paragraphs of this little "history," a question was raised about what was being danced. We found a reference to an early dance with music furnished by a string trio consisting of a violin, a piano, and a string

bass. How the dances responded to that combination is anybody's guess. Early members, however, danced the one-step, the two-step, the fox trot, and the waltz, and there was nothing sedate about most of those dances. They required a lot of energy. The epitome of terpsichorean energy was reached during the late 1930s by those who danced the jitterbug. I doubt very much if members of the Faculty Dancing Club engaged in anything like the abandon I observed among adolescents at that time. The jitterbug has been modified to less strenuous "swing." However, Mrs. Weldon remembers when she danced the Big Apple. She said she danced so vigorously that she almost collapsed from exhaustion. Perhaps some of you remember dancing the Charleston. That required flexibility in both knees. Increasing numbers of you are currently dancing the polka, and anyone who can dance one complete set needs the endurance of a trained athlete as well as youth.

Former members of the club remember that the music performed by the dance orchestras was of the type one hears now on the Lawrence Welk TV shows. Obviously the orchestras were not as big as those used by Welk, but in terms of the times the orchestras were quite large, frequently with seven or more pieces. On October 21, 1939, the earliest date I could find, the orchestra consisted of seven pieces, and the cost was \$40. But the cost began to go up slowly but steadily, and the orchestra size was usually reduced to five or fewer pieces. On March 17, 1945, the cost was \$56, and the next year it jumped to \$63. In 1965 Duane Schultz charged \$95 for a five-piece combo as these organizations have since become known. Inflation was really becoming a problem. On January 17, 1976, the Bill Albers orchestra charged \$225, a special discount rate for the Faculty Dancing Club for a 10 piece orchestra. Our present band, Duane Schultz, on March 17, 1979, cost \$200.00.

During the days when the old Library was in use, food was occasionally catered. It is easy to guess that obstacles to that practice were raised by the custodial staff and maybe the professional staff in the building. In the 1930s, Margaret Lindgren related, food was brought into the Activities Building several times. The men in the club donned chef's hats and baked and served turkeys in the building. The wives seem to have brought their respective recipes which each felt represented her own best efforts. Once during the war years the Cornhusker Hotel furnished punch to the group for \$5, the total amount to be spent for food. The women brought cookies from home to prevent imminent starvation. Mention was made previously, don't forget, that dancing was vigorous.

Dance programs have been used for as far back as is known. In the past especially, dances were exchanged, and by the beginning of the dance the programs would become filled. Margaret Lindgren said she usually danced with her husband only for the first and last dances. The rest of the time she danced with other members of the club. If any of you are old enough to remember the formal dances held by fraternities and sororities before World War II, you will know that boys always bustled around days before the big dance to nail down the names of girls who might be partners. The measure of a girl's popularity was the frequency with which she was asked, but woe to her if she danced clumsily. A pretty face could not excuse her.

The custom of exchanging dances was carried on about the same time by members of the Faculty Dancing Club. This seems to have brought about, in the view of Clifford Hicks, a cross section of the entire university. It may have contributed too to a greater degree of friendliness among the members. In 1977 the club began to encourage membership from Wesleyan, and other members of the community.

According to all those with whom we talked in gathering information about the Faculty Dancing Club, the women loved the dances. "Beautiful, beautiful," is the way one former member put it. "It was a fun time." Several remarked that they dropped out only because of reasons of health. The men enjoyed the club too, but perhaps to them the club had a special function. It enabled them to become acquainted with colleagues in other disciplines and to know them on a professional as well as a social basis.

So now let's continue to go dancing into and through the years of the future.

PAST OFFICERS OF THE FACULTY DANCING CLUB

Year	President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer
1923-24	A. R. Congdon			J. E. Kirshman
1924-25	Westerman		Mrs. R. E. Holland	A. R. Congdon
1925-26	Paul Gruman	Mrs. G. A. Grubb	Mrs. Minter	F. D. Keim
1926-27	H. M. Martin	Mrs. A. P. Cowgill	Mrs. C. W. Jones	Geo. W. Rosenlof
1927-28	J. D. Hicks	Mrs. J. M. Mayhew	Mrs. Don B. Whelan	L. V. Skidmore
1928-29	S. W. Dunlap	Mrs. H. G. Gould	Mrs. J. W. Haney	Clifford Hicks
1929-30	G. A. Grubb	Mrs. R. E. Holland	Mrs. Bill Day	Paul Stewart
1930-31	F. D. Keim	Mrs. A. R. Congdon	Mrs. John Polk	D. A. Worcester
1931-32	Earl W. Lantz	Mrs. H. K. Douthitt	Mrs. Ray Ramsey	Mr. Mussehl
1932-33	Don B. Whelan	Mr. Luebs	Mrs. Hathaway	Mr. Harkness
1933-34	G. W. Rosenlof	Mr. Watkins	Mrs. Lindgren	Mr. Ackerson
1934-35	P. A. Downs	Mr. Polk	Mrs. Penton	Mr. Askhus
1935-36	Lierdinand Griess	Mr. Walton	Mrs. Alexander	Mr. Hoppert
1936-37	Mr. Holland	Mr. Wood	Mrs. Pike	Mr. Mossholder
1937-38	L. F. Lindgren	Mr. Bingham	Mrs. Weldon	Mr. Mossholder
1938-39	Mr. Tysdal	Mr. Zink	Mrs. Prescott	Mr. Trively
1939-40	J. M. Reinhardt	Mr. Scott	Mrs. Yount	Mr. Georgi
1940-41	I. L. Hathaway	Mr. Quisenberry	Mrs. Anderson	Mr. Maunder
1941-42	T. T. Aakhus	Mr. Hicks	Mrs. Werner	
1942-43	M. A. Alexander	Mr. G. T. Webster	Mrs. Eric Kneen	
1943-44	L. A. Bingham	completed the term		
	Mr. G. T. Webster			Capt. E. C. Richardson

PAST OFFICERS OF THE FACULTY DANCING CLUB (cont.)

Year	President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer
1944-45	L. C. Newell	Mr. C. B. Schultz		Mr. Orrin Webster
1945-46	C. M. Hicks	Mr. C. B. Schultz	Mrs. E. C. Conard	Mr. W. Frankforter
1946-47	E. C. Conard	W. C. Harper	Mrs. H. F. Rhoades	H. E. Wise
1947-48	C. B. Schultz	C. E. Rosenquist	Mrs. E. C. Fisher	T. M. McCalla
1948-49	M. D. Weldon	E. J. Marmo	Mrs. John Mercer	E. F. Frolik
1949-50	H. E. Wise	Mr. M. E. Yount	Mrs. W.C. Meierhenry	Mr. Rufus Moore
1950-51	G. T. Webster	Mr. W. W. Ray	Mrs. Hugo Grauman	Charles F. Fowler
1951-52	E. C. Fisher	Mr. E. W. Janike	Mrs. Bernard Fuhr	Mr. W. C. Whitney
			Mrs. M.D. Weldon substituted	
1952-53	C. W. Nibler	Mr. Chas. Riley	Mrs. Victor Miller	Mr. Calvin Reed
1953-54	W. C. Meierhenry	Mr. C. R. Porter	Mrs. Roy Matelski	Mr. H. P. Doole
1954-55	E. F. Frolik	Mr. R. E. Stepp	Mrs. Woodrow Reed	Mr. V. H. Petersen
1955-56	C. R. Porter	R. G. Fossland	Mrs. W. R. Kehr	Mr. Floyd Meyer
1956-57	Mr. V. J. Miller	C. J. Webster	Mrs. V. Johnson	Ray Steinacher
1957-58	C. O. Gardner	Mr. U. W. Wendorff	Mrs. G. A. Young	Newell Joyner
1958-59	E. O. Ingram	Art Ward	Hink Sahs	Paul Mattern
1959-60	L. J. Sumption	Adrean LeGault	Mrs. D. Lancaster	Glen Sloan
1960-61				
1st Sem	Jack Gooding	Ralph M. Ibata	LaVerne Bish	John Winkelman
2nd Sem	Ralph M. Ibata		LaVerne Bish	John Winkelman
1961-62	Ted Roesler	Gordon Van Riper	Eunice Peterson	Wayne Collings
1962-63	Gordon Van Riper	Al Haunold	Lynn Asprooth	Alan Pickering

PAST OFFICERS OF THE FACULTY DANCING CLUB (cont.)

Year	President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer
1963-64	Alfred Haunold	Howard Eckel	Ethel Colville	Leonart Paulson
1964-65	Howard Eckel	Dermot Coyne	Marion Shively	Donald Clanton
1965-66	Dermot Coyne	Bob Johnston	Barbara Eastin	Thomas Thompson
1966-67	Robert Johnston	Herman Knoche	Janette Lucas	Jack Knodle
1967-68	Herman Knoche	Jess Shively	Barbara Kinbacher	John Aronson
1968-69	Alan Pickering	Jack Knodle	Anne Baker	Jim Williams
1969-70	Jack Knodle	Maurice Baker	Judy Lewis	Terry Lavy
1970-71	Maurice Baker	Joe Wampler	Susan Londoner	Miles Tommeraasen
1971-72	Joe Wampler	Warren Sahs	George Coleman	Larry Bitney
1972-73	Warren Sahs	Bill Wayne		Kem Shahani
1973-74	Bill Wayne	Dave Lewis	Jean Whistler	Bob Johnston
1974-75	Dave Lewis			
1975-76	Hal DeGraw			
1976-77	Jim Looker			
1977-78	Maurice Baker	Warren Sahs		Larry Brown
1978-79	Warren Sahs	Larry Brown	Cathy Sellmyer	Dewaine Alcorn

Written some time
ago-

Recollections of the University of Nebraska Faculty Dance Club - Henk Lake

List officers if you wish and update.
Possibly list dues and approx. meal cost examples.

My memories:

1. We used our dance programs for exchanging dances. All dance sets were unidentified with a few token dances listed as such and were shorter sets (Latin, etc).
2. There were very few chairs, as no one sat down.
3. We always had two "fun" mixers (devised by the committee).
4. Once we had a prize and that was a black cat for the best costume at a Halloween party.
5. Mrs Mark Weldon once spoke of going to "The Farm" (East Campus) and taking pot luck.
6. When we were unmarried guests in 1946, the dance was at the City Union. We joined the club in 1947 or 1948. There were no dinner dances at that time.
7. All dances were at the City Union, well sprinkled with dance wax. The ballroom charge was \$25.⁰⁰
8. There were a few dances in the first Legionnaire Club which was in the northwest corner of the former Lincoln Hotel. We had combas

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and almost always had Pop and Mom Schuly and their children. We believe we helped the children through school. Mom, and Ginny, played the piano. In time we hired other combos. We had a "record" dance in the "Our Place" restaurant, second floor, at University Place. Fun but not the greatest event. Floyd Hoover brought his collection of records.

9. The first time we tried a buffet was at the City Union, cost \$1³⁰. It consisted of a huge display of Christmas food. Evidently the dietetician had ~~been~~ done and took me aside asking me for \$1³⁵ a meal. The committee held a heated "business meeting" standing on the dance floor in their long gowns to discuss this crisis. I can't remember the outcome.

10. In 1961 the Lahs were elected presidents. After a large meeting a group decided to be a membership committee — they wanted to make the club more exclusive. At the time we were desperate for members and we felt we were too exclusive. The real answer came later when we opened the club to other colleges (Wesleyan, Doane etc) We reaped some fine couples from Wesleyan. The Wampers are ~~the~~ result of this idea.

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It turned out the Saks went to India for that year (1961-1962) and Roessler took over. Before we left it was suggested we should have dances at other city ballrooms. When we returned there was an entirely different social aspect. Before we had never had any liquor and now many tables had "bring your own bottles". This open policy surprised us because the bottles were to be under the tables! With that change, the club lost a few members but then were quite a few couples who joined the club.

11. At this time there were no bartenders. Different men in the committee would take turns tending bar.

12. Before above

Gene Ingram was president. We had 13^{06} at the beginning of the year. Gene printed engraved invitations and sent these to every faculty member. Believe he used Campus Mail.

13. The Club limped along financially. One year we assessed each couple for 5^{00} at the end of the season.

14. We sent invitations to faculty at Doane, Wesleyan, Milford and ^{later to} the public school faculty (Lincoln).

15. I was the one who suggested opening it up to the Public Schools which turned out to be an excellent idea.

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16. Costume parties were fun. Some said ^{many} their husbands would not come in costumes but almost 100 percent threw themselves into the fun of it. They saved dollars by not having to buy so many fancy clothes. Games and skits were carried out (Shakespearean). Floyd Hoover concocted a fabulous skit for the "Ides of March" costume party. He brought a real cow's head ^{mask} to be tused on the skit.

17. Hoover insisted and wrote the sole history of the Club. Stewart Jesse wanted it updated. We must send copies to their wives.

18. Hal De Braw conducted a pancake or skillet race at one dance.

19. Sumptions demonstrated the Twist at intermission. We needed a video at that time! Jack Knodle played the piano at intermission and I was "the bird" sitting on top of the piano leading the singing. It was an upright piano and a real climb!

20.

We often used brooms or hats or whatever (according to the theme) for mixer dances.

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20.

At one Hawaiian dance - partial costumes, committee only, the committee kissed all guests as they arrived, and placed a lei around their necks.

21. We used fresh flowers as much as possible. At a September dance at the Cornhusker Hotel we filled the room with buckets of lonely roses from the Horticultural gardens. Likewise Doreen and I used many "mums" for one dance. One time we borrowed Chick and Betty Bartlett's white garden furniture from Ben Simons building decoration department and hung pots of ^{fresh} true roses. We also borrowed the moon from the Walspurghat Committee, used a polaroid camera, Marrie Baker took every couple's picture, and sold them for 75 cents each.

22. The Committee meetings were the real means of becoming acquainted.

23.

We rented the Wachichi Indian Dancers old bus to go to the Flying V at Utica. A huge organizing problem but a fun trip on a cold night (The heater did not work too well).

Henk-6

24. The club experienced difficulty in the 1970's for dancing locations. Some dance floors were small, we danced in a counter clock wise circle, don't ask me why. Dancing became less popular with youth, dance styles became more with partners apart, and standing in one place and wiggling. I like the shugging kind.

25. We have had a few unmarrieds attend with dates and even one stag.

26. At one time the club was predominantly the Agronomy department folks and later Ag College people. A real effort was made to gain more downtown faculty. There was a traveling trophy to determine which department had the most members in attendance. Where is the trophy now?

27. First dances of the season were open to all guests, with guests only once a year. Formerly there was no charge for guests as it was intended to be an attempt to introduce people to our fun club, but we finally decided a few dollars could be reaped by charging for guests, and still serve the same purpose.

(Personal note - I am very much opposed to the \$10 guest fee

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as it defeats the purpose of introducing people to the club. Not many of our members could ask guests to bear the expense of such an expensive evening. We would never ask guests to pay their own and yet it would be nice to return social favors).

29. Former rules were that members would join for the whole year making it possible to budget for the orchestra and the dance locations. There has been limited funds carried over from year to year. I believe the whole year payment is a good idea.