

HISTORY OF THE MOOSE JAW

FIFTH WHEEL INCORPORATED

The minutes were not officially recorded until September 19, 1972, at which time, the first election of officers took place. Therefore, some of the history preceding this time is rather scant and has been gathered from the few remaining members of the original group.

In the winter of 1972, two ladies of this community approached Rev. Alex Lawson at Minto United Church, ^{ALSO DR} ^{REAL} expressing their concern that there was a great need for an organization in Moose Jaw for adults who were without a partner... whether they were single, separated, divorced or widowed. A couple of meetings were held at the church. The first one took place with about fifteen ladies and one very courageous man. Topics such as babysitters, finances, legal rights and social life (or, rather, the lack of it) were discussed. We also tried to think of a suitable name for our group. Were we parents without partners? No, not all were parents. Were we singles? Or were we just plain misfits in the community? After breaking up into smaller groups, the name 5th Wheel Club was decided upon. This came about because, although we were often asked to join with married couples at different functions, we very much felt like an "extra" or, in other words, "the fifth wheel" of the group.

The group moved to the White Cross Centre, which was located above the Co-op Store on High Street, in the summer of 1972. Attempts were made to alternate social functions with information meetings. We had one guest speaker, a social worker from the Union Hospital. However, the attendance was poor. As usual, interest in meetings was poor. But the social evenings were rather well attended, and so we came to the conclusion that this was what the majority wanted. And because of this, the information or discussion meetings were "scratched" and dances were held once a month. The first dance was held at the White Cross Centre on October 20, 1972. Our music consisted of records and the event was attended by twenty-five ladies and five gentlemen. The men were good scouts and, of course, very much in demand. We had a lot of laughs, a good lunch,

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(i) - Moose Jaw, Sask.

and a certain kind of kinship developed amongst the tired, but happy members. We felt our first dance had been a success. However, we knew that records did not provide the best dance music and so we decided to go all the way and hire an orchestra for our next dance. This was attended by approximately fifty-five people.

The White Cross Centre, now known as The Community Service Centre, moved to its present location in the Bowling Centre on Caribou Street, W. We moved there in the summer of 1973. They did not charge us a rental fee, but did appreciate the small donations that we were able to give to them. Had it not been for the generosity of the Community Service Centre, we may not have been able to carry on. On one or two occasions, some of the executive took a few dollars out of their own pockets in order to pay the expenses and were paid back as soon as our finances permitted.

Our crowds continued to increase, and we came to realize that a larger hall was needed. We applied to the New Horizons for a grant in December of 1973, but were informed that we did not qualify, because the club was not operated by senior citizens. So, once again we took a chance and rented the Oddfellows Hall. Fortunately, most of our dances were successful, and because a few more people were willing to help with the preparations, we began holding dances twice a month. We then moved to the Legion Hall in January of 1980. Here, there is more space and some facilities that have lightened our work.

The attendance now averages 150 to 160 people. Twice we have had a capacity crowd of 200, and on the last of these occasions, we were sorry to have to refuse admittance to some.

In 1984, we again moved to a larger hall and have since had our dances at the Sportsman Centre.

It is not always easy to belong to or to maintain a singles club, for we are human beings who come from many different walks of life and are single for various reasons. We have been criticized for calling our club The 5th Wheel Club. And sometimes we are unkindly referred to as a "lonely hearts" club or just simply a place to go to find a mate.

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However, this is not our purpose. Our purpose is to provide an opportunity for persons without partners to make new friends with mutual interests and understandings in an environment where we may feel comfortable and included.

Therefore, if you know of someone out there who is lonely and single, please encourage them to come to our functions or at least call us. One needs to walk through our open doorway but once to realize that you are not the only one who is alone and, hopefully, a brief glance at the many happy faces will tell you that here is where you, too, may find happiness and a new outlook on life.

This is what the 5th Wheel Club is all about.

We would like to dedicate this book to those hard working people of the past and present who are so dedicated and work so hard to make sure our club is always a nice place to go.

Pioneer Members: Thank you for having the courage to keep struggling to make the club what it is today.

New Members: Thank you for finding the courage to investigate our club, finding it to your liking, and becoming a member. Without regular new members, any club will not grow.

Guests: Thank you for your regular attendance. We really need you. Please continue to attend.