

Sept. 1945

JARVIS - Jarvis is a town with "a fantastic community spirit," according to Bill Snowden, past president of the Jarvis Lions Club. That spirit, coupled with a love of dancing and baseball, is a bright side of the Jarvis lifestyle that is bound to surface when you look at past and present activities in Jarvis Community Centre and Park.

Since Mr. Snowden has been a participant in both the history and today's functions of the Community Centre, he filled us in on some pertinent facts.

"What would Jarvis have done without this hall?" Mr. Snowden muses. Not only has it served Jarvis and immediate environs but also has been utilized as the major hall of the whole former county of

Haldimand. Lions Club meetings are held there bi-monthly, catered to alternately by church ladies' groups. The Lions operate two dances monthly during the winter on the 48 by 78-foot dance floor.

Whether it's wedding receptions, firemen's balls, political or senior citizen's rallies, the 500-person capacity hall is booked most Friday and Saturday evenings year 'round.

A popular annual event at the hall is the spring Lions Minstrel Show which has been held for the past 22 years.

And there's more of that whole-hearted community participation at the annual Victoria Day celebrations here. The Lions-promoted festivities feature a dance at the hall Saturday night, a Sunday barbecue at the Park (they fed 1,200 this year) and a parade Monday. Kiddies games, a horse show and amateur show are also on the agenda.

"What other centre in Ontario could carry an amateur show for 20 years!" is Mr. Snowden's reaction.

The Jarvis Lions Club spearheaded the drive to build the hall in 1954 and members of the community enthusiastically joined in the venture.

Believe it or not, original cost of the building was \$5,000! That's how the old material costs and volunteer labour could keep down the price of a building. At that time the Lions Club membership was 30 compared with a 74 membership today.

The original material in the building came from an old airport hanger used at No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School at Nanticoke (located at the site of the present Texaco operation). When the School was abandoned, the hanger became available for sale.

While the original floor was cement, that "was unsatisfactory" for a dancing Jarvis. So the very first project two years after the completion of the Centre was an excellent hardwood floor that has withstood the rigors of time.

Since the original investment, an estimated

\$50,000 has been spent on the hall. Six years ago \$25,000 was spent on a major addition that provided a modern equipped kitchen, a bar and a concession booth. Each night that baseball games are played at the park, two Lions members volunteer to man the booth (assisted by wives and girl friends).

Last year's project consisted of paving the parking area at a cost of \$3,400. The auditorium was made much "cozier" with this year's renovations which included \$10,000 of panelling, papering and covering the original windows with lights and decorated panels. Immediately after the Centre was built it was turned over to the town of Jarvis. Now the Lions operate it for the City of Nanticoke. For this a five-man board is appointed by the Lions executive plus one man appointed by City of Nanticoke Council. Serving on this year's board are chairman Murray Fleming, Drew Williamson, Bob Nixon, Bert Pyfrom, Dave Doughty and council appointee Cliff McBride.

Grants were utilized as they became available through the years. The Centre has been self supporting for maintenance and operating costs, says Mr. Snowden. Last year and this, grants of \$5,000 each year were received from the City for capital expenditures.

The park is a beehive of activity for young baseball enthusiasts of the area. The two baseball diamonds (one with lights) are in continuous use nightly all summer. In July a Jarvis Lions Minor Ball tournament for 300 boys ages nine to 14 years took place at the park. Headed initially by Lion Ken Graham, this event has been chaired for the last three years by Lions Tom Saunders, George Miller and Dave Doughty. Kiddies swings, teeter totters, slides and climbers are another feature of the park area.

While the Jarvis Park is a 12-acre holding, the Lions Club would like to include more acres so that more recreations, like tennis, can be provided in the future.

As the area grows and population expands, so grows the Jarvis Community Centre and Park.