

Remembering Fairmont's Youth Center

When those of us that are adults think back to our youth, what did we do to enjoy and occupy our free time before the advent of soccer fields, Aquatic Parks, skateboard parks, video games, computers, cell phones, texting, CER programs, camps for aspiring athletes, and the myriad of other activities available in today's world? Maybe, if we go back far enough, some of us might recall Fairmont's "Youth Center."

Back in 1961, well before the whole host of activities available today, the city of Fairmont created a "Youth Center" aimed at providing area teens a place to congregate with their friends that provided activities they would enjoy. The establishment of the youth center was a result of a \$48,000 bequest from Harold Ward Pfiffner to the City of Fairmont for that purpose. It was named after his mother, May Ward Pfiffner.

Its location at 124 East First Street, on the corner east of the Fairmont Photo Press, had been the site of the American Legion Hall. The Legion had previously rented the hall from the city for many years.

Mayor John P. Brandenhoff described the youth center as the best equipped and most beautifully decorated center reserved exclusively for young people that can be found anywhere in the Midwest. He went on to state that the center has everything up to and including an intercom system which will permit communication throughout the building, even extending to the restrooms.

The center consisted of a main auditorium for dancing with built in benches along the walls for spectators. Remodeling made the stage larger and new, improved lighting was installed. The stairs leading up to the game room were enlarged and handrails were added. Some of the game room activities included pool tables, ping pong, and pinball games. The size of the rest rooms was increased with the girls' restroom described as having a battery of mirrors, even including a full length mirror. The kitchen was said to be equipped with all modern equipment, stairways were covered with slip resistant material, and the color scheme was lavender, grey, light green and pale blue.

The youth center, of course, had its "Rules of Conduct" conspicuously posted for all to see. Those posted "Rules of Conduct" seem to exemplify the era from which they evolved.

In reflecting on that time, today's society might consider the venue and its rules more than a bit antiquated. Although change and perceived progress is inevitable, the youth center of that period of time in our local history undoubtedly served its purpose in

providing many young people a place to call their own while bringing back fond memories for many of whom experienced it firsthand.

For more information on this topic, or to become a member of the Martin County Historical Society, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.





Rules of Conduct

The following rules are official, mandatory ones, presented to, and adopted by, the Council:

• **NO SMOKING** is permitted in the building.

• **THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** is strictly **PROHIBITED**. Anyone who has been drinking (WILL NOT BE ADMITTED).

• **STUDENTS SHOULD COOPERATE** with the chaperone in charge of the selection of records.

• **REFRAIN FROM SITTING** on any of the tables.

• **POP BOTTLE** may not be taken from the building.

• **STUDENTS UNDER SEVENTH GRADE** are not to be admitted.

• **ALL PURSES and SMALL ARTICLES** SHOULD BE placed on top of coat racks.

• **ALL WEARING APPAREL** must be placed in hangers.

• **POOL CUES** are to be checked in out with the

Chaperone at the door (10¢ per cue) MONEY REFUNDED WHEN RETURNED

• **PING PONG SETS** ARE TO BE checked out at door (20¢ PER SET REFUNDED)

• **COMMON SENSE** is required in clothing at all times.

• **NO SHORTS** may be worn.

• **BERMUDAS** will be **ALLOWED** IF NOT SHORTER THAN 5 INCHES THAN KNEE

• **GIRLS MUST WEAR** dress clothes on dance nites.

• **BOYS MUST NOT WEAR** blue jeans

HOURS:

DOORS OPEN 7:00 to 11:30 Friday nites.

7:00 to 11:00 Saturday nites.

ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THESE RULES WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE CENTER