

Kinmundy's Teen Center  
By Helen (Robb) Garrett

The year of 1968 was when a group of concerned parents met to discuss the need in our town for a teen center. One mother said, "The only place her kids could buy a Coke was the R & M Laundromat!" (This was operated by Ray and Mabel Olden and was a thriving, well-run business on Madison Street across the street from where the Kinmundy food pantry used to be.)

Meetings were held at the home of Floyd and Helen Garrett on N. Madison Street. After much discussion, a decision was made to form an organization to sponsor a place for the teens to gather. One board formed was one of adults and another with teen officers to make their ideas and plans a reality. Jesse George, who owned and operated the grocery and dry goods store on Madison Street (our Main Street) who heard of our plan, graciously offered the empty building just north of his store. (Rent free, of course!) Anyone who knew Jesse's generosity would not be surprised!

Paint was purchased, curtains made across all the big front windows, with a big plywood sign made with a huge Hornet painted on it. The center's name picked was "The Hornet's Nest" (which of course was the name for our baseball, basketball, and track teams.) Dale Hulsey made a big iron bracket to hold the sign and also a wrought iron railing inside separating the entry from the several steps down to the huge dance floor. This railing also had "The Hornet's Nest" welded into it. There was no overhead lighting so brass wall lights were added all around the walls. They added just the right touch. A jukebox was bought for after school get-togethers. Dances with live bands were the favorite events, though, with the building being packed! Since it was a teen center, we decided the ages of those eligible would be from 13-19. Each event was to be well chaperoned by parents and all rules followed. Our motto was:

The Hornet's Nest  
Our aim is not a lofty one  
We don't deserve a crown.  
We've only tied to keep our teens,  
Having fun right here in town.  
A good thing to remember  
And a better thing to do  
To work with the construction gang  
And not the wrecking crew.

Several area bands were contacted and played for dances. Our local band, "The Second Scene" was a favorite with John Harvey, Danny Arnold, Reed Garrett, and Steve Hanna. The teen center operated for several years with new boards appointed as time went by. The big problem towards the end was getting chaperones. Also as time passed and young people acquired driver's licenses, their interest declined. They had many choices. We hope the memories they have the "The Hornet's Nest" are good ones.