

Time stands still for senior ballroom dancers

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Freezing conditions exist each week at the Edgerton Community Center, but there is no problem with the thermostat.

Rather, it's time that's frozen.

The Stardust Ballroom, housed inside the community center at 41 Backus St., is a place for reliving memories in a musical fashion. Throughout the year, hundreds of seniors flock to the ballroom to hear and shuffle to some of their favorite types of music.

A recent Monday-afternoon gathering saw approximately 65 youngsters at heart gliding around the huge ballroom floor, dancing to such tunes as "Roll Out the Barrel" and "New York, New York" being played on the accordion by local band leader Joe Cady. Virtually every woman was primped up in her finest dance outfit, while the men looked dapper in colorful suit coats and ties.

"You can't go too many places and find this," remarked Penfield resident Doris Cosman, who serves as president of the Stardust Senior Citizens Dance Club.

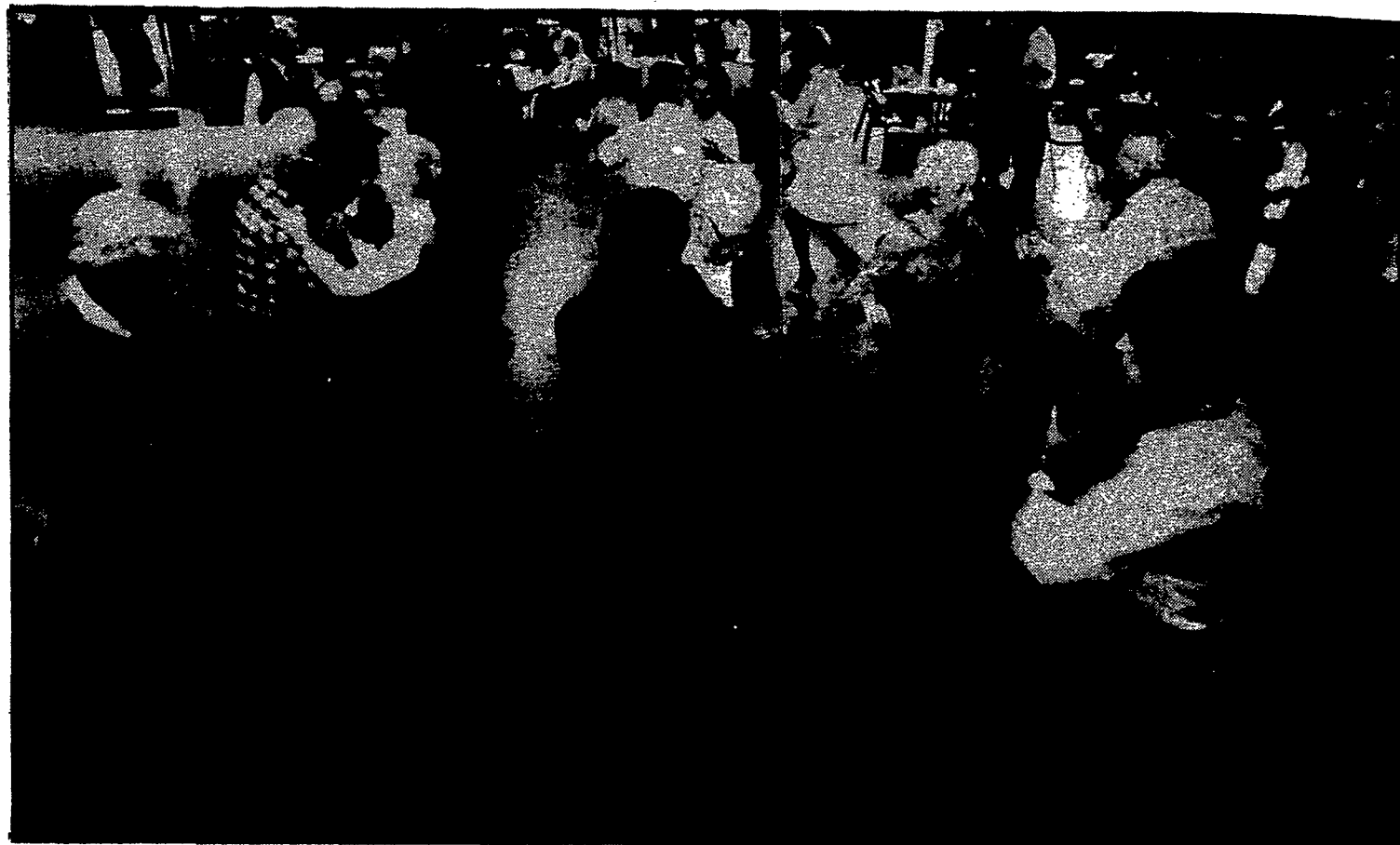
Cosman's group meets every Monday afternoon at Edgerton and every Friday afternoon at the Danforth Community Center on the city's southwest side.

In addition, a larger get-together takes place at Edgerton on the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month with a featured group playing big-band music. The Tuesday gatherings are sponsored by the City of Rochester and attract 250 to 300 people for an admission price of only \$1.50.

Several special events are planned for the dancers as well, noted Edgerton Community Center staff member Joe Kerr.

"We try to do something special at least once a month," said Kerr, who serves as the ballroom dancing adviser. "On April 25 we'll have a Sunday Spring Tea Dance, and in May we'll have our 'Senior Prom' for shut-ins."

Health-conscious seniors can also benefit from free services offered through these programs.



S. John Willdn/Photo intern

The Stardust Ballroom at the Edgerton Community Center was packed with senior dancers on Monday, March 8. The group meets every Monday afternoon at Edgerton and every Friday afternoon at the Danforth Community Center.

"We have people come in to give tests and provide information for blood pressure, hearing and vision," said Kerr.

Kerr observed that the dances offer seniors "a form of exercise, plus it's very much a social outing. This is very important to them."

He added that the events are attended by singles as well as couples. "We have several widows and widowers," he added.

Sophie Pilleteri of Greece has now been a member of the Stardust Dance Club for more than 20 years.

"I like the music, and the people are

all very friendly. I feel very comfortable," commented Pilleteri, a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Church, 2400 Ridge Road W.

"We have what the people understand in dance music, and we also have the friendship," added Cosman.

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