

## JOE LEWIS

During the past five years or so there has been a steady move toward a more dignified and smooth type of singing call.

Perhaps one of those most responsible for this encouraging trend is Dallas's contribution to the square dancing picture, Joe Lewis.

Joe's "Alabama Jubilee," the dance that brought the Joe Lewis name before the square dancing public many years ago, is just as popular today as it was the first time it was called. The same smooth, foot-tapping style has been captured in all Joe Lewis originals.

His latest, "Say Good Lookin" and "Square Dance Polka," are proving to be real hits in the list of the brand new dances. (Os)

## TAKE TIME TO ENJOY SQUARE DANCING

When you attend your regular square dance club, just how would you like to have the evening conducted? During the two and a half hour club dance about forty-five percent of the time is spent actually doing square dance figures. About twenty percent is spent doing rounds. Thirty-five percent is spent off of the floor - "free-time." During which of these periods to you have the most fun or do you enjoy them all?

It is possible for several clubs in the same city to use a schedule similar to the one above and yet have the atmosphere which prevails at their dance be quite different. This is true in my home town.

Any club with hard working officers, telephone and mail committees is going to flourish, but I am convinced that, everything else being equal, there is one kind which is consistantly more successful. By successful is meant over a period of years - five and more.

This club seems to be the one in which the members come to a square dance not just to square dance. The forty-five percent of the time actually on the floor for squares seems to have its proper importance, about forty-five percent. The other parts of the evening appear to have a relative importance.

The members in this kind of club know each other and apparently this is important as I have seen them give awards to those who could name the greatest number of members when name tags were removed. The widespread use of name tags confirms the fact that "getting to know you" is necessary in the clubs.

This sort of club likes the occasional new dance, easy or hard, if it is taught and called so that they can dance through it without feeling that they are back at work or at school. I believe that fast dancing and complication fails to please this club because it robs them of the chance to enjoy dancing with their friends as personages.

In high speed dancing you literally chain to the opposite lady, or was it a man, you didn't have time to notice; in a right and left grand during a complicated "hash" you literally travel to the fourth lady and promenade. Who was the first, the second, the third? Numbers or blurs?

In the club of long life (with the same members) they have convinced me that they want to, at least subconsciously, chain across to Sue and they want time to smile at her. When they promenade their corner, as a new partner, it's more fun to know that she is Jane - married to Bill - two children - mighty pleasant company.

This club always insists on a lot of mixers not necessarily man and wife, but moving couples around the floor. This seems to fit in with the atmosphere they want to create. For this club, I feel it is more appropriate to say "Mr. Johnson has his hand up over here for one more couple." (Of course with my memory I'll be in a mess if Mr. Johnson fails to show up some night. I mention this before Chuck or some other equally observant character does so.)

I have noticed that the "free time" is chuck-full of pleasant conversation. It must be pleasant because sometimes it takes dynamite to get them to quiet down and square up. A few minutes later they want to do one more instead of sit down.

**BUDDY WEAVER MUSIC**

The answer must lie in the fact that they enjoy the evening as a whole. Each member comes to be with the others and perhaps feels that the others at least to some degree come to be with him. As a group of people they enjoy the various parts of the program. I believe that such an approach creates the best atmosphere for a square dance.

For several years around Dallas we had admission dances which were operated by the caller or a hall owner. They were successful only for a few years. As we look back we know that the evening was lacking in personal touch. It was based on the singular appeal of the actual dancing time. The free time was for recuperation. It was in fact "lay your money down - see the show - good night."

We once tried to organize a group with the purpose of trying out all new dances and retaining only the most interesting. Dancing was in fixed squares and we had no host couples to see that all squares were filled. Though we had the most experienced dancers in town this operation lasted about three months. A few months later we re-organized in a more conventional manner - host couples - telephone committee - social time with refreshments - and though the dances chosen are still on the "hash" side, the club has gone along very well for the past two years.

As a professional it might appear that I am talking down my chosen activity. I think not. I believe that the successful clubs of long standing point the way to a lasting activity. For me it adds up this way - the most important part of square dancing is people and not vice versa - the best way known for people to get together for entertainment is square dancing.

Joe Lewis