

DANCING

By Mike Harris

Walking to music should be easy. Well, maybe for some people, but Roy just could not put it together. Holding a partner was in itself distracting. Then the music, which was coming from a phonograph demanded attention, it just seemed that too many things were going on at the same time. When he moved with no partner he managed, but when he moved with a partner he stepped on her feet, lost his balance, stumbled into other couples. Invariably someone fell to the floor, utter chaos. It got so bad the rest of the class began to refer to Roy as Mr. Stumblebum.

Roy's home was a bit unusual, his parents were perceptive and realized something was wrong. After dinner his father took him aside and started a conversation during the course of which Roy's difficulties came to light.

Upon being told that his son got a nickname "Mr. Stumblebum" he told Roy that he would take care of his problem, not to make any plans for the coming week end.

Friday after dinner his father gave him two pieces of paper, each had an address. One was marked ten a.m. to twelve, the other 1:30 to four. He was told to go both places. When Roy asked about this his father said, "Just go and you will learn about rhythm. I think that is your problem. Once you learn to handle rhythm all your problems will disappear."

The address on Saturday morning turned out to be a dance studio. He stood outside the door. Couples looked at him and went in. Soon a woman who could have been his mother came out and asked, "Are you Al's boy?" "Yes," he replied. And she said, "Come on in. I was told you might show up."

And so Roy was introduced to Square Dancing. He was introduced to another motherly lady and in the time that the rest of the club came in this woman explained the rudiments of Square Dancing and assured Roy that she would be his partner and he really had nothing to worry about. She was sure he was going to have a good time.

It was not long before the fiddlers were tuning their instruments and a man on the platform clapped his hands for attention and said, "Form your squares."

Roy's partner took his hand and joined three other couples. After introductions they squared up the set and the man on the stage said, "We will walk through what we learned last week and then we will do it to music."

He was walked through "bow to your partner and then to your corner, do-si-do with your partner and with your corner, grand right and left, and so on. The older folks were patient and Roy paid attention. It was not long before he was swinging his partner, his corner, passing through and having a good time. The two and a half hours passed quickly and as the people began to leave he offered to take his partner of the morning to lunch. She declined, thanking

him, but she had plans for the rest of the day. Left to his own devices Roy had lunch and went to the afternoon address.

Another dance studio. Now he was no longer a novice, he knew what to expect. Again another motherly lady and another afternoon of square figures and no stumbling and a good time was had by the whole group...

Monday at the high school Roy was the surprise of the class. No longer Mr. Stumblebum, the instructor came over and asked, "What happened between Friday and Monday?" Nonchalantly Roy replied, "I practiced."