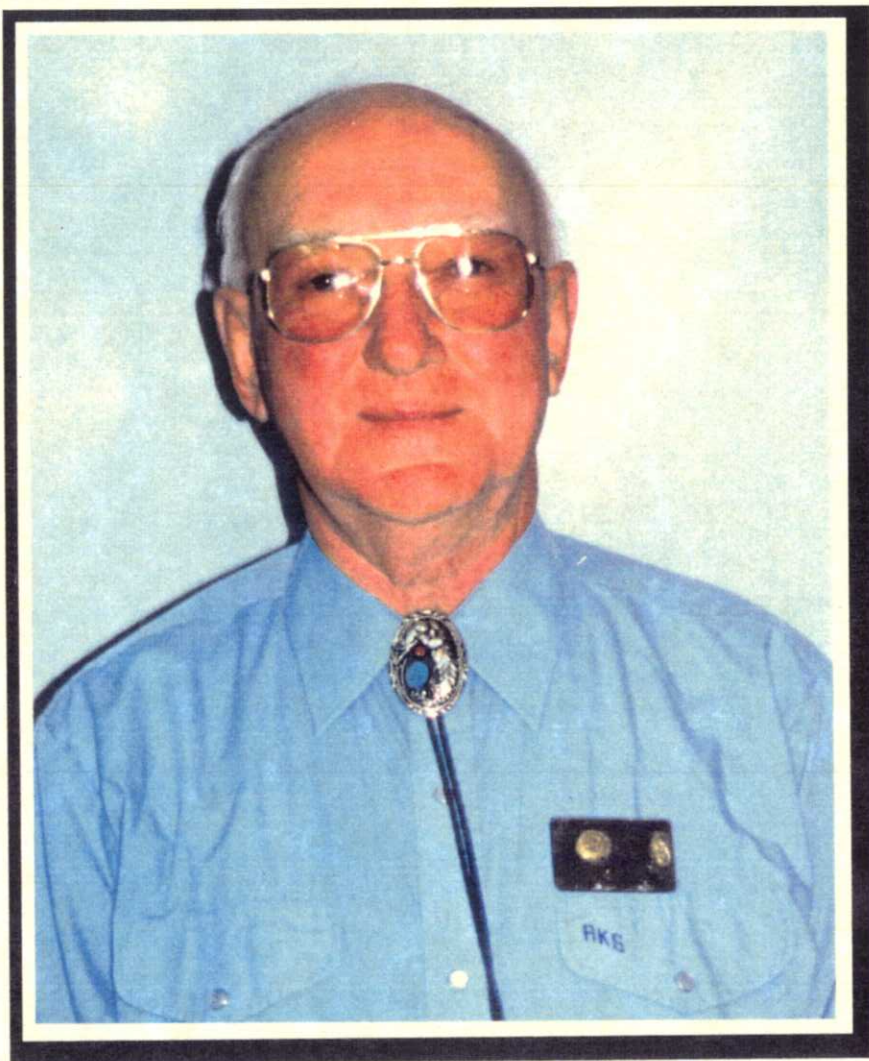




**Art Shepherd
Milestone, 1982**

At a time when square dancing has seen so many changes, where there seems to be a constant flow of terminology, differences in styling, and controversies over goals and philosophies, how many have said to themselves, "Knowing what we know now, looking back over forty years of contemporary square dance history and analyzing the mistakes, and successes - - wouldn't it be great if we could face a brand new audience of people who have never square danced before and provide them with a program that benefitted from the experiences we have had over the years?" This opportunity was offered to Art and Blanche Shepherd.

The Shepherds began square dancing in Canada in 1960. By 1965 Art was calling and teaching, and as fate would have, that same year they packed up their family and moved to Art's homeland, New Zealand. When they arrived they found that square dancing had only been dabbled with in the past. It was virgin territory. Setting out gently at first, they introduced square dancing to some of their neighbors. Here was an opportunity to avoid dumping tons of material or to

hurry the newcomers through class. Here was the chance to introduce a sensible program involving square and round dancing together. There was no race to get the dancers through class in order to fill existing clubs. Here was an opportunity to develop attitudes, to express the true friendly, philosophy of square dancing and, as the activity grew, to work with the most enthusiastic dancers in developing new teachers and callers without any fear of, or concern about, changing the directions that had been established.

Recipients of the New Zealand Callers and Tutors Ariki Award and the Georgia State Golden Peanut, Art was also secretary, president, and life member of the New Zealand Callers Association.

Today, after almost three decades of hard work, the Shepherds can look back with pride at this corner of the square dance world and point to it as an example of what can be done. Flourishing in the two islands that make up New Zealand is a square dance activity with leaders working closely together, with an open door to visitors, with cooperation between leaders and with a friendliness that can be envied and admired. It would be unfair to say that all of this is due to just one person or one couple, for it took many enthusiasts and much time to develop, but we can certainly acknowledge the key role played by the Shepherds.