

# Vic Perry's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Calling for Ottawa Promenaders

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The *Ottawa Promenaders* and friends celebrated Vic Perry's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of calling for the club at a "regular" dance at Celebration Hall (an appropriate setting) in Ottawa on March 4, 2006. It was a well-concealed surprise party for Vic. He knew "something" was up when he walked into the hall to see balloons and decorations, but would not find out until later. He was not aware of upcoming pranks and presentations.

Premise for the dance was "Donna's Favorites", an annual event of all singing calls, where Donna selects the calls for Vic, and he normally works from her list, arranging calls into program format. But, for tonight, Donna also requested songs at a specific time. She said he was puzzled, not only of the why for the certain order, but he knew one song that was scheduled for later in the program, was not very high on her favorites list. He would discover both answers as the dance progressed.

The first song, *White Sports Coat and Pink Carnation* was interrupted, before beginning, by Connie Jacobs and Bruce Groninger as they presented both Vic and Donna with pink carnations. Donna had requested Vic wear a white sports coat this evening. Immediately following the first song of the first tip, Vic was asked to relinquish the microphone and take his place as Donna's partner in a front square. Following a brief walk-thru of "Curlique", a soon-to-be-used call, Bob Rainbolt played a tape recording by the late Karl Edwards, from one of Karl's Caller Clinics in Lawrence. It was a somber moment as Karl's voice introduced a new caller (*surprise!*), Vic Perry, who called *She Believes In Me*, from July 17, 1983. One does not often witness a caller dancing, with 150 of his closest friends, to his own calling. We all enjoyed this "young" caller. He was pretty good, even back then.

During break for announcements, Club Presidents Shelly Gibson and Terry Larsen presented plaques of appreciation to both Vic and Donna. The Caller and Taw each thanked the *Promenaders* and visiting dancers for the special evening.

Vic related how, as Guest Caller for a club in Lawrence some 20 years ago, a group *Ottawa Promenaders* attended. He was calling 'pretty good' until one of them told him that he was being interviewed for their new club caller, then was a nervous wreck the rest of the evening. They must have liked what they heard for he was hired.

Vic then recognized Jerry Abbott, acknowledging to her and dancers that her late husband, Bill Abbott, gave Vic much support as he was starting out with calling, and he probably would not have made it without Bill.

Nancy Sloop, Northeast KSDA Chair with husband George, offered congratulations and thanks to Vic for his many years of support of the NEKSDA and Kansas square dancing.

Roberta Rebiskie, KSDA 1<sup>st</sup> VP with husband Louis, added congratulations and thanks on behalf of the KSDA.

Bill Roles congratulated Vic and the *Promenaders*, thanked Vic for his support of the Northeast Kansas Square Dance Callers Association. Bill commented that he has known Vic for more than 20 years, and of the respect and admiration of Kansas as well as Missouri callers of Vic's conduct and ethics with square dance calling.

There was a great refreshment table with anniversary cake, and the evening continued much as a regular dance, save for the one incident of a Sheik and belly dancers (Bruce Groninger, Sandra Cain, and Tonya Ketchum) invading the floor and harassing the caller during *If I Were A Rich Man*, the one song which had Vic puzzled of it's selection by Donna. (Vic had reminisced one evening a few months previous, of a similar incident with a bellydancer in his younger calling days. The *Promenaders* Anniversary Committee did not let the comments go unnoticed and arranged for another "incident".)

Some family members were present for the festivities: Donna's sister and brother-in-law Shawnon and Ray Armes, of Portland, Oregon, and Donna's daughter and son-in-law Tanya and Julio Castillo, all of whom were sworn to secrecy about the surprise party.

Vic announced at one point between tips that he was totally surprised and overwhelmed with the evening's party. One comment from a visitor brought laughs "Well Vic, everyone else in Northeast Kansas knew about it, I have seen flyers at most dances I have been to." It was a very well advertised event. Bruce Groninger and Connie Jacobs announced the "secret" surprise party at countless dances around the area.

The *Ottawa Promenaders* Officers, Anniversary Committee, and Donna, are to be commended for planning and pulling off such a fun and well-attended event. There were 75 *Promenaders* and 78 visitors attending, from 14 clubs. Two clubs, *Strato-Jets* and *Shawnee Swingers*, marched to retrieve banners and *Swinging Squares* stole a banner. Many dancers who had attended Vic's first dance for the *Promenaders* were present, as well as students from his first *Promenaders*' lesson class. Obviously, Vic is still a pretty good caller.

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