

# Lead That Hockey Stick

Harold and Meredith Sears

Have some of the common round dance figures become so familiar that we walk through them in a mechanical and almost thoughtless way? The cue is exactly where to go. It's more like walking to the kitchen for that morning cup of coffee than it is like dancing. We can reclaim some of the fun in well-known figures if we think beyond the steps and focus on connecting with our partner.

that we walk through familiar. We know that morning cup of coffee well-known figures if we partner.

For instance, we might begin a Rumba Hockey Stick in joined. The man steps forward on his left foot and, lead arms, leads the woman to close on her right. He forward left, he closes his left, and she steps she facing reverse and he shaping toward

fan position with the lead hands with a little pressure through toned Right away, you feel a connection with recovers on his right foot, she steps forward right to a position in front of him; the woman and so facing toward diagonal wall.

Here, at the end of the first measure, past your partner's shirt buttons. your lead hands as she thoughtlessly make that

we have a fun point of connection. Ladies, don't go And men, don't let her get past you. Begin to raise approaches. This will draw her attention to you. Don't third step a back step—stay close. You might even gently touch the front of her right hip with your trail fingertips as you turn slightly toward her. In a "mechanical" Hockey Stick, you might be facing the wall and looking at the back of her right ear, and she might have walked past you and been looking toward reverse line of dance. Is she maybe looking for someone else to dance with? But if you are connected through lead and follow, then you are close, touching, and looking into her eyes. Careful—don't be distracted from the dance.

Now, continuing to raise lead hands, on the first "quick" of the second measure, the man takes a small step back on his right foot, and she steps forward left, finally passing his shirt buttons. He recovers on his left foot, and she steps forward right with a sharp left-face turn under lead arms to face the man. She steps side and back toward diagonal reverse and wall, and he steps forward to follow her. Her progression toward reverse and then backing toward diagonal reverse and wall traces out the shape of an ice hockey stick, and the man can provide two different leads to make this a partnership effort. He can move the lead hands between partners and in the direction of diagonal reverse, and he can use his body shaping to guide her. The line of his upper body along the diagonal directs her progression along that diagonal.

If you communicate through tone in the lead arms and if you shape toward your partner and act as though you are aware of (and glad to be with) your partner, then you can take a familiar, ho-hum figure and make it dance.

