

People Worth Knowing

By Millie von Konsky

Jim and Alice Crank are truly "people worth knowing". They are a Mr. and Mrs. team who have for ten years claimed folk dancing as their number one hobby. They are an example of the kind of dancer who has helped keep the movement at an even keel. Yes, this has meant serving on numerous committees, holding official club positions and last, but certainly not least, really dancing.

Jim is President of the Greater East Bay Folk Dance Council, while Alice is Vice President of the East Bay Women's Dance Circle. As a team, they belong to the San Leandro Folk Dancers and are members of the San Leandro Exhibition Group.

Alice demonstrated her love of the folk dance, when as an accredited teacher, she turned her professional efforts toward offering a course of study in rhythm and folk dance in four parochial schools. In fact, the 1956 Woodminster program gave a good example of her work with children.

What about Jim? Was he forced into dance recreation? Certainly not — in fact, Jim was born in the midst of one might say, a united nations community of folk people. Jim was reared and educated in the small mining town of Hanna, Wyoming. He recalls the population as being a cross-section of Poles, Finns, Greeks, Irish, Japanese, and what he affectionately calls the Cousin Jacks (Englishmen).

Native dancing in this community was the most popular form of recreation and this almost always included the American Paul Jones, reel, square dance and waltz. The fiddle, guitar and occasionally the accordion, were the desired and usual accompaniment.

If you should ask Jim and Alice their preference as to some of their favorite dances of the moment, they would request, among others, the Mexican Corrido, Czechoslovakian Cardas z Kosických Hamrov, Bavarian Hofbrau Haus Landler, Serbian Zabarka Kolo, Polish Mazurka Violetta, Portuguese-Brazilian Fado for Four, South American Tango Meloso and finally the American Waltz la Golondrina. Quite naturally, it came as no surprise when several hundred dancers danced the waltz at the San Mateo Fair and watched Jim and Alice walk off with a trophy.

What have Jim and Alice Crank given to the folk dance movement besides their devoted interest, effort and active participation? I would say the gift of consistency in all directions, and if you don't know them, you will want to, for they are truly "people worth knowing".



Alice and Jim Crank

N. Giannini, Photographer