

# Meet The DeBuses



## TWO HAPPY EXPONENTS OF FOLK DANCING

Are you under the impression that there is no fun in anything anymore? Are you bored with life in general and discouraged with trends in particular? Then come to the Westwood Co-operative Folk Dancers any Thursday evening and watch Louis and Bemí DeBus while they dance. ANY dance is their favorite dance, and while their sometimes unorthodox and/or flamboyant style curdles the liver bile of some of the self-styled purists there is no mistaking or denying their very obvious joy in their dancing, or the love of life they thereby express so poignantly.

Louis is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the educational product of Dartmouth and UCLA. He says that after nearly flunking out of Dartmouth and surviving World War II, he entered UCLA. "That institution, in a shameless burst of patriotism, awarded me both a BA and a MA degree in Psychology" he explains with a twinkle in his eyes. Louis is a "man of many parts", but brings home the bacon by toiling under the impressive title of Director, Santa Monica Area Office of the Los Angeles County Department of Probation. Of Dutch-French ancestry, he says he is too shiftless to hold either club or Federation offices, but is often lending a helping hand when needed and/or asked to do so (or when his ever-loving, ever-enthusiastic spouse volunteers his services.)

"Bemí" began life as Elizabeth Bemis in Littleton, Colorado, explaining that her misspent youth included studies in Paris and at the University of Colorado, which she left after obtaining her BA degree. Her background is English, and while her forebears did not come over on the Mayflower, they came to this continent soon enough after the Pilgrims, no doubt to bring items the Mayflower passengers forgot to bring from "Merrie Old England".

About 1961, Bemí finagled to get Louis to a 4th of July picnic, in Santa Monica's Lincoln Park. By a strange coincidence the Santa Monica Folk Dancers were there also, holding their annual 4th of July dance and picnic on the Lincoln Park slab. When the DeBuses went home that evening they had been thoroughly bitten by the folk dance bug. The following week Louis and Bemí started to learn to folk dance under the guidance of Avis Tarvin, Dave Slater and several others. Six years later, if you can believe Louis, ( and there is doubt that you should! ) they learned to Hambo in Dave Slater's kitchen. In spite of such top-notch private instruction, Louis claims he still hasn't mastered the "mysteries" (?) of *Sonderhøping*.

Besides claiming to be too shiftless to hold office, Louis also maintains he has no hobbies other than folk dancing and

the three De Bus offspring (one can no longer call them "children") and his wife. He says that is enough for any one man. (Well, he should know, shouldn't he?)

Bemi is not quite so loath to hold office. Although not formally an officer, she does participate in many ways in the various facets of folk dancing. She is on the Federation's Research and Standardization Committee; is a sometime teacher in the Westwood group; has helped Girl Scouts to attain their folk dance badges; has taught other Scout leaders how to teach folk dancing; has taught teen age, church, temple and senior citizens groups; and currently is hard at work on the publicity for the Southern Federation's participation in the summer-long folk dance events at Universal Studios. She is an inventor with several patents to her credit. Folk dancing is her number one hobby, but Whale Watching runs a close second. She is a founding member and past president of the American Cetacean Society (that is a whale - the cetacean, that is) and currently is the editor of the Society's monthly bulletin "The Whalewatcher". Flower arranging and crafts are also among Bemi's many interests. Although the three DeBus children, sons, David and Edwin, and daughter, Maya, have folk danced, they do not seem at present to pursue this activity.

When I asked the ebullient Louis and Bemi DeBus if they would like to add anything else of interest to other folk dancers for the compilation of this biography, Louis answered rather typically: "Isn't that enough?"

It is truly a pleasure to count Louis and Bemi among my friends and to "Meet Bemi and Louis" - - over and over again!

Liesl Barnett

