

TEACHER OF THE MONTH

TEACHER PAR EXCELLENCE . . . ELSIE DUNIN

By . . . Liesl Barnett

Do you like "Red Boots", Kolos, Cardas Z Kozichkich Hamrov"? If you do, you are indebted to Elsie Dunin for introducing these dances to the Federation and to you.

Diminutive Elsie Ivancic first started to dance when her parents taught her the kolos of their native Yugoslavia, but her introduction to organized folk dancing came when she was a freshman at UCLA. She happened into a student dance while they were dancing the familiar Seljancica, a dance she had known since childhood. This amazed and excited Elsie and aroused her interest. The thought that others should like Yugoslav dances and the friendliness she experienced among folk dancers that day (Elsie calls it a fateful day) produced another folk dancer.

At UCLA, Elsie Majored in Theater Arts with Dance as a minor subject. In 1957 Elsie went to Yugoslavia to collect dances and folk lore material for her Master's thesis. However, when she returned from her eight-months trip, instead of a "Master's degree she took a Mrs. degree" instead.

It seems that things of interest happen to Elsie when she folk dances. It is how she met her husband, Stanley Dunin, who in his own right is a well-known and popular figure in Southern California Folk Dance circles. Stan was looking for an indoor basketball court when he happened into the women's gym at UCLA while a folk dance was in full session. He was enthused by what he saw (including our Elsie) and has been dancing ever since. As Elsie says, he did not play basketball that day and hasn't played much since, being much too busy dancing. Stan is a mathematician, just got his Ph. D. in June.

Elsie and Stan are the parents of 2½ year old daughter, Elonka, who is quite a scenestealer. Everyone who attended the 1960 Statewide festival in Long Beach will remember the little pixie who took part in the various costume parades wearing miniature versions of her mother's costumes.

While at UCLA, Elsie was president of the student group and this has been, as she puts it, the extent of her politicking. She prefers to keep it that way.

As a teacher, Elsie free-lances, going wherever she is invited to teach, such as Gandies, UCLA Folk Dance Club, Westwood Co-Op, Sokoli, etc. She has directed exhibitions of the Village Dancers of UCLA and Gandies. For two years Elsie was a popular addition to the faculty of the Santa Barbara and we regret to announce that she had to take a leave from this year's session. (Elsie does not regret it: it is a maternity leave.) She

has also taught at many institutes, one of them at the 1960 Statewide, thus giving people from Northern California the benefit of her teaching.

Another of Elsie's activities for the past two years is her weekly half-hour program of folk dance music on radio station KPFK-FM, 90.7. Due to the expected family addition, this activity, too, has to be curtailed and Elsie is now limiting herself to conducting the program once a month, on the first Saturday.

Elsie and Stanley Dunin are members of the Gandy Dancers, a Ukrainian group called Sianka Dancers and a specially composed group, known as Veyesiom.

Their hobby, next to folk dancing is skiing, which both love and for which they feel California's snow season is woefully short, and they take off for the ski trails. (Guess the coming addition will put a damper on this activity for a while, also!)

All in all, we, in Southern California are fond and proud of this gracious and graceful woman, and we want everyone in the folk dance world to know her as well as we do.



ELSIE DUNIN
in
Sestina Costume
(Yugoslav)



PHOTO BY:

WILLIAM DUKE
(Santa Barbara)