

WHO'S WHO

DR. ALBERT J. GARDI, D.D.S.

For a little more than a year, I have written a series of articles featuring prominent leaders in the folkdance movement. For the most part, they have been instructors and officers, people whose names and faces are known by many.

This month I would like to turn your attention toward one whose face is probably familiar to many, and whose dancing ability is observed and admired, but - - "I wonder what his name is?" I thought that myself until recently.



Dr. Albert J. Gardi (Continued from page 10)

Meet Dr. Albert J. Gardi, D.D.S. -- the dancing dentist from Redwood City, who participated in the 1969 Polka Dance Convention, held in Ocean Beach Park, New London, Connecticut, during this past July. "Al" Gardi competed with dancers from all parts of the nation, and says, "Boy, they're sharp!" From among 160 couples, eight were named as finalists, with Dr. Gardi placing among the top five. His prize was an English pewter tankard.

According to the rules stated by the United States Polka Association, patterns, turns and hand movements may be improvised as much as one wishes, but the basic polka step must be adhered to. Imagination in choreography, and a "sharp" appearance on the floor, count heavily in determining the winners. All dancing was done to live orchestras -- 30 of them - representing 10 States and Canada.

Dr. Gardi has attended summer folk dance camps for many years (he has danced for 15) and this year decided to try something different. He credits dancing as the main reason he has no leg or back trouble. Ballroom, square dance, and Latin dances are among other dance accomplishments by the energetic medic, who feels that those who are drawn to this type of activity are "friendly and sociable", and he likes to see families participating together.

He says this form of dancing is even more popular in the East and mid-West; and, to help further its popularity in California, Dr. Gardi uses word-of-mouth advertising whenever and wherever he can, and will help anyone interested in learning polka steps. He is a regular devotee of places such as Little Switzerland Park, in El Verano, near Sonoma; Harmonie Hall, in San Francisco; and the Oakland Tourist Club. Although a bachelor, Dr. Gardi never lacks for partners!

In his way, "Al" Gardi is doing much to further folk dancing in general, and the polka-free style forms in particular. If you should happen to need a dentist, and visit him for business purposes, you'll never guess what kind of "piped-in" music can be heard in his office. It won't be "Hair"!

Suzy Vails