

## ARTS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CEREMONEY

On Sunday, November 2, President Laila Messer attended an Arts Achievement Awards ceremony at the Shadelands Arts Center in Walnut Creek. Honored were two women who work in theater, a community activist from Richmond, a teacher from Lafayette, and Max Horn, who was honored as a folk art preservationist. Max was presented with an Arts Achievement Award by the Contra Costa County Arts and Cultural Commission. In the Sunday Contra Costa Times were pictures and write-ups of the five recipients. Permission was granted to reprint the part on Max.

*MAX HORN*

*By Robert Taylor, Times Staff Writer*

*From the Contra Costa Times*

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Max Horn isn't being honored for his collection of 50,000 recordings of folk dance music, but that's a great place to start. Considering how long Horn has been teaching and promoting folk and square dancing, that's 1,000 records acquired per year. Many have come from other collectors, and from the families of collectors who have died.

That leaves the 78-year-old on his farm in Martinez, where he hosts informal outdoor folk dance "fandangos" every Friday night in the summer. Out come all the records and tapes, and in come dancers of varying ages and skills to perform steps drawn from centuries of village life around the world.

Horn admits he's concerned about the future of his record collection and the participation in folk dancing, which has diminished since its heyday of the 1940s and '50s. "It's very difficult to find younger people, although in the last year or two there have been a few. Well, is 40 younger?"

"Max Horn is a one-man United Nations for International Dance," said arts activist Pat Rezak, (wife of commissioner Bob Rezak), who nominated him for the award. He has reached out to thousands of people who share his enjoyment of dance, most as active participants.

It all began for Horn when he was a high school student in Loyalton, Sierra County, and helped a fiddler call steps for square dancing. Living in the East Bay in the 1940s, he was leading folk-dance events most every night of the week. He settled on the Martinez farm after a career as a building contractor.

Horn believes folk dancing was one of the earliest performing arts, along with singing and drumming. Folk dancers today, he said, can enjoy steps that date back centuries. "I like people to say, "See my people did that years before me." Horn's award is a reminder that the commission honors people outside the arts mainstream. "I often wondered if I was doing anything worthwhile," he said. "Now I think of it, I guess I was."