

People Worth Knowing

LILLIAN and GEORGE KIESLICH

By Roi Partridge

GEORGE KIESLICH. German descent. Born and raised in "Shepherd of the Hills" country in the heart of the Ozarks. Worked as a chef, a truant officer, a farmer, a painter, a carpenter; managed a night club in Arizona; ran a rug-cleaning business; guided on an Arizona dude-ranch; taught folk dancing in Oklahoma; knocked about Mexico enough to learn something of its ways and language and to gain an admiration for its dancing. At present in construction, as he prefers to work out of doors. Instructor (with the invaluable co-operation of wife LILLIAN), mainspring and "SWINGERAJAH" of the SEMINARY SWINGERS, which they created. VICE-PRESIDENT of GREATER EAST BAY FOLK DANCE COUNCIL; BUSINESS MANAGER of "LET'S DANCE".

LILLIAN KIESLICH. Swedish and German descent. Born and raised in Illinois. Is a Notary Public. Has worked for but one firm - Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation - for 19 years, 16 of them as Executive Secretary. Met G. K. in folk dancing; got engaged quick and married soon. Hobby: 8mm movie photography. SECRETARY, GREATER EAST BAY FOLK DANCE COUNCIL; CALENDAR CHAIRMAN, "LET'S DANCE"; Co-Instructor and power behind the SWINGERAJAH in the SEMINARY SWINGERS.

As this page is written, if anyone were to take a stroll along Morse Drive in Oakland, near Mills College, he would see a proper one-story house in a quiet and dignified neighborhood, much like the other one-story houses up and down the street, but with the one startling difference, that it is standing high in the air like a boy on stilts. This surprising stilt-house, so out of character with its surroundings, may be explained as merely another expression - one of many - of its owners' interest in folk dancing. If one does not have space in one's living room for dancing, but two courses are open - get out of that house, or push it up and build a good-sized room underneath. Such is the proper philosophy of folk dance enthusiasts, and such was the course followed by Lillian and George Kieslich. Meanwhile their friends, knowing that this means more fun, more dancing, are prepared to swoop down on the place as soon as it is finished.

Folk dancing is the one Big Thing in the Kieslich life. It is their path to happiness, to a wide range of friendships, to unflagging interests and to stimulating activities; in a word, to the success in life which we all desire. Some of us seek this success in our work or professions or creative

outlets, in gaining wealth or in directing it to charitable purposes. To the considerable benefit of the rest of us, the Kieslichs find it in folk dancing, folk dances and folk dancers; on the organization and direction of their baby, the "Seminary Swingers". In this province, throughout a period that begins to run into some years, we have found them doing exactly what they wanted to do — building up their Club from the three original couples, with which it started in 1954, to its present abundant membership; teaching, urging, inspiring, making friends for folk dancing; one or the other — or both — ever busy with the endless seen or unseen tasks coming from club management; the typing, programming, book-keeping, party-organizing, MC-ing, disc-jockeying, teaching and even cooking — for this is a well-fed club and George has been known to work all the previous night preparing food for a party.

To the Kieslichs have now come wider fields for the expression of their concern with folk dancing, following the election of Lillian, as Secretary, and the accession of George, as Vice-President of the Greater East Bay Folk Dance Council. Furthermore, to George was given the task of managing the Federation magazine, "Let's Dance". Did he, as a result, feel overburdened, as any man, working for a living, might have been justified in feeling? No, not George Kieslich. He jumped in with both feet; with joyous and endless enthusiasm; with "Wim, Wigor and Witality", and already, in a brief period, he has pushed subscriptions and advertising (the lifeblood of a magazine) to new heights. One cannot refrain from remarking how greatly the Federation needed him, and how well he appears to be filling that need. This is an instance, involving not one individual alone, but two, both husband and wife, where appointment to office, with ensuing unpaid work and responsibility, has not only resulted in advantage to the office, but also has delighted the individuals so appointed. Lillian is an experienced secretary who can turn her skill directly from the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation to the secretarial problems of the Oakland Council. And while running a magazine is one thing George never did before, his adaptability as a Jack-of-all trades seems to have equipped him to take on that task, also with outstanding credit. Have we not shown that these two folk dance personalities are "People Worth Knowing"?

(Editor's Note: As an example of the admiration and appreciation the Seminary Swingers have for Lillian and George Kieslich, the costumes worn by them, as illustrated on the opposite page, were given to George and Lillian when they returned from their vacation in June, 1959. The costume for George was made by Mae Ellen Partridge (including an overcoat), and Lillian's costume was made by Miss Adelaide Hack, both being members of the Seminary Swingers. George and Lillian are very proud of these costumes and the sentiment behind them.)



LILLIAN and GEORGE KIESLICH
in Swedish Costumes from
District of Dalarna, Village of Leksand

Photo by N. Giannini of San Leandro