

BALKAN DANCE LEADER



John Skow got his first introduction to square, round and folk dancing during his school days in Santa Paula, California. Discharged from the Navy in 1948, he began folk dancing in Salinas, California. There he danced with the Recreation Department under the very able leadership of Howard and Marge Darington.

A short while after, he moved to central Oregon to attend school and soon became a part of the folk dance picture there. Pirkko Roeker, a Stockton Folk Dance Camp member for several years and a well known folk dance leader in the Northwest area, helped John on his way. It was in Eugene that John first started calling squares and shortly was voted into the Cascade Callers Association. It was also from Eugene that John made his first trip to Stockton Folk Dance Camp. There, he acquired his real interest in the Balkan Dance.

The summer of 1953 brought a move for John to San Francisco to be nearer the folk dance scene. Affiliation with the Festival Workshop, the Dance Guild and Chang's International Folk Dancers came soon after this move. More recently, in early 1957, John formed his own exhibition group, Ansambl Norodnih Igraca Sokoli. This group of over twenty young people has danced all over the state of California. Last year they received an invitation to dance at the National Folk Dance Festival in Oklahoma City. In addition to performing for the "regular" folk dance activities, "Sokoli" performs regularly for the Yugoslavian peoples at their programs. "Sokoli" is particularly interested in keeping alive the folklore of Yugoslavia. The members of this group are all active in the research necessary for these performances.

As a dance teacher, John began in the Recreation Department in Eugene, Oregon, in 1951. About four years ago he again took up teaching in San Francisco in the Balkan Dance field. Since that time he has taught classes in such places as Cupertino, Oakland and San Francisco. In 1957 he was driver for Vyts Belijus on Vyts' annual teaching tour of the East. During this tour John had the opportunity to teach in many places including the Oglebay Folk Dance Camp and most of the major cities of the East. This year John went on a teaching tour of his own and took his wife, Joan. Another similar trip is planned for this coming year as John has already several teaching dates scheduled, including two Folk Dance Camps. In keeping with his teaching interests, John is a very active member of the Folk Dance Federation of California and is currently serving on the Teachers' Institute Committee.

During the day John is a regular student at San Francisco State College. He is working for an A.B. degree and an Elementary School Credential.

Carlos Ruling