

# WHO'S WHO

## MEET THE DANCING SLATERS



If you began your folk dance hobby in Southern California, the chances are that you made your first *bokazo* or pivot turn under the expert teaching of Dave Slater, assisted by his charming wife, Frances. If you are one of the many dancers who attend the weekly Thursday night dances of the Westwood Co-op Folk Dancers, you probably have on occasion stood back and just enjoyed watching Dave and Fran dance. They dance together so beautifully that it is almost as enjoyable to just stand there and watch them as it is to dance.

If you were at last September's Federation Festival in Compton, your host group was the teen-age Opanki Dancers. Begun as a Federation-sponsored beginners' class for teen-agers, the Slaters were the teacher-chaperones of the group. The youngsters voted to become a Federation club and their first president was the Slaters' younger daughter, Linda. Older daughter, Julie, also is active in the group.

The Slaters both hail originally from New York. Fran comes from New York City, where she attended secondary schools and college, following this with careers as legal secretary and office manager for medical and insurance offices. Her introduc-

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tion to folk dancing came in 1957 when the Fordhams and Claire Bernstein, avid members of the Santa Monica Folk Dancers, persuaded Fran to come to Miles Playhouse with them. Knowing Fran Slater's interest in folk arts and culture, they felt she would enjoy folk dancing. "How very right they were" Fran says now fervently.

David is a Brooklynite, who came West to live and attend UCLA. He began folk dancing in New York's Greenwich Village at the Recreation Co-op in 1943, as a completely green beginner -- his words. Dave was wondering if anyone from that gang is still folk dancing, and, if so, where. He would enjoy hearing from them. Dave and Fran not only dance well together, they work well together, too. David has a considerable reputation in Southern California as a folk dance teacher of the highest caliber, and it is most assuredly well-deserved. He has for some years now been the only teacher of the immensely successful beginners class at West Los Angeles' Stoner Playground, a joint venture of the L. A. Recreation Dept., and the Westwood Co-op Folk Dancers. In this venture he is most ably assisted by two people, Claire Bernstein, who serves as class registrar and sales-woman-de-luxe, and, of course, Frances, who works with Dave as his partner, and demonstrates the dances with him. Fran serves as the catalyst to Dave's ebullience with her quiet, gentle calm.

Fran has not been active in Federation activities, per se. But she has been an enthusiastic, tireless worker for Westwood, serving the club as Program co-chairman, Refreshment Chairman, treasurer, secretary, and currently, president. She is running unopposed, for re-election, and it is therefore safe to assume that she will be at Westwood's helm for another year.

Fran keeps busy with her home, her family (sons, Daniel, 8, and Steve, 6, and the already mentioned Linda, 15, and Julie, 17) and in addition to dancing, enjoys sewing costumes and collecting stamps, concentrating on those which show folk costumes.

Dave has done some work in the Federation, but has not held office. He has been on the beginners class and institute committees, but his main activity has been in the Stone Avenue Playground beginners class and more Southern California folk dancers have started in his class than any of the other local teachers combined. He uses his infectious enthusiasm and some mighty persuasive arguments to get "graduates" from his class to join local folk dance clubs - since his class members come from all areas of Greater Los Angeles, they don't necessarily join Westwood, but many do - and ultimately take an active part in the folk dance movement in Southern California.

Dave has held office in Westwood in the past; he was at one time a member of the Gandy Dancers and Santa Monica Folk Dancers, but Westwood was his first love and primary concern and remains so to this day. Incidentally, Dave was the founder,

## MEET THE DANCING SLATERS (continued)

teacher and first president of the folk dance group at UCLA --- this in 1946! Dave says marriage has slowed him down some - he only dances four nights a week now when once he danced six nights! Some slow-down! The Slaters have a good marriage and a charming family. They plan to dance together as long as they can do so. No doubt, as soon as sons, Danny and Stevie, are big enough, they, too, will folk dance. Meanwhile, remembering their own stumbling beginnings, the Slaters, senior and junior (girls) devote their time to helping beginners learn to enjoy the hobby which has given them much fun, friendship and -- each other.

*Liesl Barnett*