

WHO'S WHO

IRENE WEED SMITH

"Folk Dancers Are Fascinating" may not be the most original phrase ever coined, but it is nonetheless true. It is amazing the interesting people who are attracted to this activity, and to discover the knowledge and experience which each contributes in his or her own way. Such a person is April's Guest of Honor IRENE WEED SMITH, San Francisco Native Daughter, and Folk and Ballroom Dance instructor. A graduate of Lowell High School, Irene holds a B.A. degree in the field of Psychology-Philosophy and obtained her M.A. in Recreation-Education. She possesses a Lifetime Standard Teaching Credential, and is registered with the American Recreation Society.

Her background in all forms of dance is extensive - her accomplishments many. During her school years she spent much time studying all aspects of dance. Summers found her in Hollywood, California, specializing in Hawaiian Dance, Ballroom and Spanish. Her instructor in the latter was the late Jose Cansino.

Irene has devoted much of her time to working for the USO program, and also the YMCA. In 1950 she became Women's Program Director for the USO-YMCA branch in Waukegan, Illinois, organizing and training volunteers, and teaching Ballroom and Folk Dance as well. She made the acquaintance of many dance leaders in the Chicago area and became a member of the Dance Masters of America in the Windy City. At the end of the Korean War, Irene returned to San Francisco, and joined the local YMCA staff, instructing teen-age and young adult Ballroom classes.

She has served in many capacities - catch a few of the highlights: Women's Program Director for the Monterey USO Service Club; instructor on the staff of the 1951 Summer Session Dance Workshop at Mills College in Oakland; Choreography and Instruction at S.F.'s St. Paul's High School, for their participation in operettas and musicals at Sigmund Stern Grove; attendance at the Camp for Living Judaism, at Saratoga, California, in May, 1957, on a Scholarship from Temple Emmanuel, to study Israeli dance and culture; attended the Dance Caravan First World Dance Convention in Paris, France, 1965; arranged programs for the annual Shriners Hospital Easter program, a function dear to her heart, and one which she still performs; instructor in a wide variety of classes for the San Francisco Recreation Department; at present, is assigned to instructing in Folk, Ballroom, Ballet, Creative Jazz and Exercise; instructs Senior Citizens classes - the list is a long one.

Irene has her own private dance studio -- you may have attended one of her classes. She has also seen a good deal of the world -- observing ethnic dances and cultures in their own surroundings. Where? Cannes, France -- Ballet Boarding School; Madrid, Spain -- Spanish dance in all its fiery glory; London,



Irene Weed Smith

Photographed by ROMAINE