

TEACHER OF THE MONTH

MEET . . EDITH THOMPSON

ByDominic Ciampi

" . . . Hand over hand, around the ball; when you meet your own, that cute little doll . . . ". That's EDITH at the mike!

"Who's Edith?", a newcomer will ask. Many thousands of dancers throughout these United States (including Canada and Hawaii) know her and know her well. But to the uninitiated and newer dancers in the folk dance movement, Edith is — a vibrant bundle of humanity with boundless energy, who may pop up at any section of the country for a seminar, institute, camp session, at any given day.

Edith started square dance calling while in college. It happened when there was a group all hep to square dance and no caller was available. So Edith simply began to call some of her father's old-time calls, and she has been at it ever since.

Her mother, Mrs. Bee Barnett, P. E. Teacher and Recreation worker, formerly of Eureka, was a folk dance teacher. Her father called square dances and carried Edith in his arms while dancing and calling. Her mother used to play the old square piano for country dances, and as long as the music kept going, Baby Edith behaved as she lay on top of the piano.

Edith started teaching folk dancing in 1924 with the Kindergarten children her mother was teaching. When her mother was called to the phone, Edith continued the teaching of the dance steps and the songs.

Edith now teaches the Bustles and Beaus in Burlingame, the Barronaders in Palo Alto, Parochial and Public School classes in the Peninsula area, and is a member of the faculty at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp. Her enthusiastic presentation of folk and square dancing has endeared her to her thousands of pupils.

In 1936 Edith married Neal Thompson. They live at 733 Fourth Avenue, San Bruno. They have two lovely daughters, Mrs. Patrick Stallcup of Fort Collins, Colorado, where Pat is a Professor of Ornithology; and Elida Thompson, a young business woman of San Francisco, who is now living in the family home in San Bruno. The Thompsons have a grandson, Jimmie Stallcup, mighty young, but mighty important.

Mr. Thompson is a dancer of exceptional ability and both Edith and Neal danced with Grace Nicholes' Folk Artists for several years. Any ordinary festival or dance becomes a gala occasion when the Thompsons walk in. They add zest, fun, and hilarity with their presence.

Her circle of friends was greatly widened by ten years of operating the the Folk and Square Dance Barn, near Richardson Grove, California.

Edith's philanthropic work is not too well known. She prefers to do this work quietly. For the last six years she has been working with the Girl Scouts and with the Nuns at a home for delinquent girls. Her work in this particular field has added a great deal to their morale.

This year, 1961, Edith and Neal celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary. Most of these twenty-five years have been devoted to recreation dancing.



EDITH AND NEAL THOMPSON

Photo . . . Henry L. Bloom