

Folk Dancers -Lost & Found

by Larry Getchell

ROBERT CHEVALIER

We have chosen as the next folk dancer for our "Lost and Found" column, a fellow who's career in folk dancing started in the early 1940s. He is Robert Chevalier who's dedication to the movement over several decades certainly deserves mention. Prior to his introduction to the art he was busy six days a week operating a bicycle and ski rental shop. As many as three of his customers convinced Bob he should look into this new activity, folk dancing. He gave it a try and was immediately hooked. As a member of Changs International Folk Dancers, in 1946 he met the lovely Kathleen and shortly thereafter they exchanged marriage vows.

Not satisfied to just accept without offering something in return, Bob took over as Editor of "Let's Dance" in 1953. In his first issue he featured Your Column and Mine", reserved for news from all Federation clubs.

Some eight years later, Robert Chevalier was elected President of the Folk Dance Federation of California, North, for the 1961-1962 term. Something he felt opened up a good discussion among Council members was his policy to ask just prior to adjournment of Council Meetings, Can you think of anything that would benefit the organization?"

In 1964 at the Dimension in Dance Statewide, Bob Chevalier gave each Past President, both North and South, a postcard calling for a meeting immediately following the Installation Brunch, for the purpose of forming a new Past President's committee. This meeting was held and one may consider it the forerunner of the present day Past President's party along with the recognition of all Past Presidents on Statewide programs.

Bob's and Kathleen's active participation in folk dancing gradually ended as the years went by. As to how these years were spent, we refer you now to their reply to our inquiry and we quote:

"Retirement has been a busy time for me. After 30 years of a six day work week in the bicycle business I changed occupations and maintained two buildings for the State of California. A five day week; paid vacations and all.

Like Vi Dexheimer, for the next sixteen years Kathleen and I have traveled all over the West. We wore out two Volk-wagons, an International TravelAll and a Chevrolet van. we rode Amtrak to Washington D.C. and we rented a car and drove to Niagra Falls, saw the Fall Foliage colors, then to Chicago and flew home. We also went across Canada by train to Quebec. Rented a car and drove around the scenic Gaspe Peninsula and then flew home. Later another trip by Alaska Ferry to Juneau via the Inland Passage. Another year we took a sightseeing

bus from Seattle up the Alaska Highway to Anchorage and from there flew to Kotzebue and Nome above the Artic Circle. The same year we also went to France for about a month, headquartering in Paris.

Things have quited down. We bought a 1993 Ford Escort and have yet to drive it to San Francisco. To stay busy, Kathleen works on her weaving. I have gotten into Video and I put almost all my slides and 8 mm movies onto Video. It is a slow job. I belong to a Video group where I have to make a video every two months - short one. Thanks for considering me."

Bob and Kathleen still have a soft spot in their hearts for folk dancing. They seldom find time to attend any affairs but did spend three days in Dublin at the 1992 Statewide as did some 20 or more Past Presidents from the North and 6 from the South. If as may happen, the 1996 Statewide is held in the San Francisco Bay area, we suggest they heat up that 1993 Ford and join in the fun.