

# MORE

## *People Worth Knowing*

JANE AND JOE DOAKES - FOLK DANCERS

Dear Subscriber:

You commented to the effect that the leaders introduced in "People Worth Knowing" were indispensable but that you would like to meet Joe and Jane Doakes - Folk Dancers. So I asked a research specialist to find and interview them. Time passed and I began to worry, dear Subscriber. I phoned to find out if I'd have an article for you in response to the letter you wrote me.

"Editor Vi", the researcher said, "I've been infiltrating, but haven't found any ordinary folk dancers. All those I've met so far are uncommonly wonderful".

"Keep looking", I moaned.

Weeks passed - finally, the following article arrived!

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Meet Joe and Jane Doakes - Folk Dancers. You meet them everywhere you go. They may not even appear to be the same couple you enjoyed dancing with last week, or chatted with over refreshments. They insist they are ordinary, "run-of-the-schottische" folk dancers. They've never run for an office and probably never will, but Jane can be counted on to run for the breadbox when the party needs sandwiches. She says there's nothing remarkable about HER always being ready and willing to bring sandwiches. What amazes her are the bachelors who've never made a sandwich, let alone a loaf of 'em, getting interested, asking questions and even reading cook books, then bringing the tastiest and most unique sandwiches of a party night. When asked what she thought about people who never brought sandwiches, Mary said, "Some folks don't have a kitchen - they're the ones who'll bring something they can buy. The others don't want the world to find out they can't make a sandwich".

("Vi: If this seems like a lot of talk about food, I've never seen people enjoy their food like folk dancers. They'll snack away at hot dogs all afternoon at a festival and go out and eat a seven-course dinner"!)

Joe Doakes is always helping set up sound equipment or decorations (or taking 'em down). A long time ago he bought Jane a dishwasher to save her pretty hands, but come party night, he's washed up the plastic-ware more times than most.

Jane and Joe are even more outstanding on class night. Reassuring smiles firmly fixed, they help the beginners - and enjoy the beginners' success in mastering a step even more than they enjoy mastering a dance they, alone, did not know before. At any festival or party a wallflower of either sex can be sure of a dance with the Doakes of the opposite sex.

(Researcher's Note: The Doakes say that one of the many wonderful features of folk dancing is that after a guy or gal can dance, he or she is not a wallflower any longer!)

The Doakes belong to two folk dance clubs, subscribe to "Let's DANCE", and are Associate Members of the Folk Dance Federation.

"Why two clubs"? they say. "We'd belong to seven clubs and dance seven nights of the week if we had the time and stamina".

"Folk dancers are all such fun to be with, and we like all types of folk dancing. One club has hardly any squares but has kolos, and the other has squares but few kolos. It sort of balances our International folk-dancing diet".

When asked why they perform activities that cut into their precious dancing time, such as handling our programs, manning the "Let's Dance" table or the information desk, or bustling around the kitchen, Joe answered, "When and where would we folk dance if no one did any of these things"?

Jane and Joe Doakes exemplify the ordinary true folk dancers. They so love to dance, they share their pleasure with everyone. They are one great big generous heart.

*Survey Sue*

(Editor's Note: Dear Subscriber:

ALL FOLK DANCERS ARE INDISPENSABLE.)



FRUITVALE FOLK DANCERS AT A RECENT PARTY IN OAKLAND

PHOTO . . N. GIANNINI



third generation Europeans here. Strongest in numbers, the music of the "Polish polka" orchestras found mainly in Connecticut, New York, Detroit, and Chicago, is characterized by lead trumpets and reeds with plenty of drums — music for the bouncy "Polish hop". Then there is the German-Scandinavian "oom-pah-pah" brassy bands such as the Six Fat Dutchman in Minnesota. Not the least in popularity by any means is the "Slovenian style" polka music of the newer variety mentioned above. These polkas and waltzes are considered the smoothest and most pleasant to listen to, at the same time being the gayest and liveliest, and having an excellent beat for dancing. This success can be attributed mostly to the fact that harsh or blaring instruments, heavy brass or drums are virtually never found (though some orchestras have used them efficiently); also these polka and waltz tunes are melodic and catchy.

The chief exponent of Slovenian music in the United States today is Frank Yankovic, also of Cleveland, who was named "America's Polka King" at a polka contest in Milwaukee a number of years ago, in which dozens of polka bands competed. His name is synonymous with polka music everywhere and his fans come from every national background. His repertoire consists not only of traditional Slovenian melodies, which have been skillfully arranged to appeal to all ears, but also of polka and waltz tunes of all nationalities who are fond of those dance forms. A polka or a waltz on the hit parade, or one that has sold in the millions (records and sheet music) is indeed a rarity, but Yankovic has had at least two of them: "Just Because" and the "Blue Skirt Waltz". Popular on radio and TV, but specializing in touring engagements, the window-card heralding the coming of "Frankie Yankovic and his Yanks" is eagerly awaited in all the towns in the midwestern "polka belt" and polka communities everywhere.

If the only contribution the few hundred thousand Slovenians have made to their adopted country has been a brand of gay polka and waltz music which has brought great pleasure to millions of us, that contribution certainly has been a worthy one!