

IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED JUNE SCHAAL

by Charlie Emerson

You may remember that in June, 1989, June had a massive stroke on her right side and made a miraculous recovery. On September 18th of this year she had a massive stroke on her left side. She never regained consciousness and passed away on September 30th.

June loved folk dancers and folk dancing with all her heart. After her family this was the main focus of her life. She believed she could be most effective in teaching and pursued that role unwaveringly for about 45 years. June taught in such varied areas of folk dancing, on such a widespread basis and with such expertise that those of us who knew her well couldn't understand how she did it all.

She never missed a Teachers' Training course. She attended University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp for over 30 years and the University of California at San Diego several years. She also attended Santa Barbara, Idyllwild and Maine camps, and until recently nearly all of the Folk Dance Federation Institutes and Workshops.

June's teaching career has been international in scope and widespread in the Bay Area. She taught children's classes in the parochial schools in Sonoma and Vallejo. Through the years she taught adult classes in Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Napa, Yountville, Vallejo Oakland, El Cerrito and San Leandro. She taught for the University of Southern California at Idyllwild and in Maine. She made several trips to Europe to teach in Finland, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Portugal. While there she llearned many dances to bring back for our pleasure; one of the most notable was Bal in da Straat. Just a few years ago she was teaching five adult classes a week. Her students have always had great praise and appreciation for her untiring patience and sympathetic helpfulness, particularly with beginners. June was instrumental in getting scholarships for prospective teachers, and followed up by helping them with records, breakdowns, advice and whatever was needed to get them started. She organized several exhibition groups to dance for shut-ins and also for us folk dancers' pleasure at festivals in Northern California. Who can forget the many many parties she put on all over the North Bay and Oakland? We remember the fine collection of ethnic costumes she brought back from Europe that is now to be preserved and shown in the Oakland Museum as the "June Schaal Collection." She had a beautiful collection of ethnic dolls. Everyone enjoyed the wine caravans, the dancing in the park and the exhibitions she organized for the pageantry of the Sonoma and Napa Valley Wine Festivals.

While we folk dancers were extra special with June, few people had a greater love for their fellowman at large than did June. In times of need friends and neighbors could always count on June for help. She was one of those rare individuals who was so sensitive to their needs that she often fulfilled them without being asked.

She took active part in the work of her church and lodges. She and Wendell had a grocery store and post office in Vineburg for many years where she worked hard and long. June lost her son, George, in 1959. She is survived by her husband, Wendell, and her daughter, Jackie.



June Schaal continued

Personally, I am deeply grateful and honored that I had the good fortune to teach, learn, dance, exhibit and work with this great lady for over 30 years. It was a rare privilege, an ongoing inspiration and a very great pleasure indeed.

We will all sorely miss her warmth, love and concern, but let us be thankful that we basked in her affection for so many years. While she named the Sweetheart Festival for St. Valentine's Day, I'm sure it will now become in our hearts a memorial to our "Sweetheart", June. We plan to continue it just as she would herself.