

Who's Who in the Federation

DOLLY SCHIWAL



Photo:
Charles Emerson

"Welcome to 1969 - Everyone!" If the New Year were one continuous festival, this would no doubt be the greeting you would receive from this month's personality -- DOLLY SCHIWAL -- folk dance leader for 21 years.

This lady, who began folk dancing in 1947, as therapy to avoid a nervous breakdown from overwork and raising three children alone, has become one of California's leading instructors, and hardest workers on behalf of the Federation. Her own parents, Al and Billie Monett, organized the Happy Hoppers; the instructor passed away suddenly four months later and Dolly began teaching some of the children whose parents had been in the club. These, together with her own three, were the nucleus of the "Pantalettes" exhibition group. Dolly joined the Oakland Recreation Department in 1948, and has taught both children and adults for this organization ever since. Many clubs have enjoyed her instruction.

Dolly has served the Greater East Bay Council in several offices - - and began when it was known as the Oakland Folk Dance Council. She served three and a half years as Secretary, Vice President for two years, and is currently in her second year as President.

To list her many activities would take lots of space -- some of them include co-director of Woodminster, head of Registration for Oakland's first Statewide in 1952, Chairman of countless parties and children's festivals, instructor of Oakland Recreation Department's International Folk Dancers (ORD - if you've

wondered what that meant; now you know), chairman of the Federation Scholarship Committee for one year, and a member for two more, two years on the Institute Committee, and first organizer of the Feather River "Moonlight Festival" for Oakland Recreation Department.

Dolly is currently Director of Extension for the Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc., and if you're not yet a member, you may very well be soon! Since her election in June, quite a number of people have joined us as Associate members, thus our movement continues to grow.

An interesting sidelight concerns the "Pantalettes" group--- the children who started with Dolly stayed together as a group for 12 years and grew up together. Many of them remain friends still - - and thirteen marriages have taken place between young people whom Dolly has taught! She has been kidded about running a marriage bureau --- if you hear a young person call her "Mom" or "Sarge", don't be surprised.

Many kids who have been in Dolly's classes have been Scholarship winners - an outstanding example being Ron Bueno, of San Jose, who teaches and works on behalf of the Federation in that area. His wife, Liz, is also a former Scholarship winner and a member of Oakland Dance Arts Exhibition group.

Dolly is one of a rare sisterhood - - a native Californian, and received her education in this state, except for a brief time in Chicago, where she graduated from high school. She has sung with the City of San Francisco Adult Chorus and has danced in one form or another since age two. She appeared on the stage until high school. She earned her letter in tennis in high school, and also Junior College in San Luis Obispo, where she met and married her husband, and number one son, Bill was born. Son Bob and daughter Linda followed. All three are now married, and Dolly is awaiting the birth of her fourth grandchild in February.

When one reviews all that Dolly has accomplished, it must be considered that she had to overcome a staggering handicap in her youth. At the age of 16 she was completely paralyzed and deaf as a result of spinal meningitis, and she had to learn to walk all over again. She wore a back brace for a year and a half during this time.

One of Dolly's most outstanding recent accomplishments became one of the highlights of Statewide 1968 - the Chairmanship of the Hospitality Committee; 40 strong, and ready to assist anyone with a question or problem during the four days of the Festival. Those Alpine costumes were to be seen everywhere, and Dolly may very well have set a precedent for Statewides - let's hope so!

She's quite a gal and we're mighty glad to have her with us. Here's to another 21 years (?) -- you never can tell!

SUSY MARTINE