



Mary Seeman, Hildred Rice and Jeff Lyford team up to shuffle and step through *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, an American folk dance.



Dana Poling leads Rachell Hart, left, and Phaedra Stefanakis through a dance, while Jane McCauley Thomas (dark dress) holds daughter Emily.

Hoolyehs celebrate 20-year tradition of gathering for fun

Story by David Rodewald
Photos by Bob Lynn
of the Gazette-Times

Getting together and having fun is not new to the Hoolyeh Folkdancers — it's a 20-year tradition. In 1965, a group of teens who had been folk-dancing through elementary school decided they wanted to continue. Thus Hoolyeh was born.

Last Saturday, on the eve of the group's 20th birthday, about 100 present and former Hoolyehs gathered to celebrate. And celebrate they did. Old and young people skipped through about 50 dances with names like *Bavno Oro*, *To Ting* and *Teddy Bears' Picnic*. Some people stood outside the large circle-dances with their small children in their arms, following the steps.

For some, the occasion was a family affair. The McCauleys of Corvallis have danced together for generations.

Betty McCauley, the grandmother of the group, said she has enjoyed folk dancing ever since she and her late hus-



Judy Walgren/ Gazette-Times

A young participant in the First Annual All-Oregon Beginners' Folkdance Festival attempts to keep in step with music Saturday night at the Senior Center Ballroom. Children and adults joined to perform dances from countries such as Romania, Sweden and Israel.

1987

Old-fashioned fun

Folk dancers' sounds fill senior center

By Don Parker
of the Gazette-Times

The sound of clapping hands and stomping feet echoed through the Corvallis Senior Center Saturday night when about 120 people from throughout the state took part in the All-Oregon Beginners' Folkdance Festival.

The event, sponsored by the Corvallis Parks and Recreation Department, was the first in what organizers hope will become an annual affair, according to Mary Bucy, director of the Hoolyeh Folkdancers. The festivals would be held every year in a different city.

The idea for a beginners' festival grew out of classes put on by groups in Corvallis, Salem and Eugene with the cooperation of the Oregon Folkdance Federation.

To beginners Jaiaen Beck and John Pare of La-Comb, the festival was just a way to have some fun and get a little exercise at the same time.

Beck and Pare decided to sit out a lively Israeli dance in which a group of foxes, played by five small children, crouch in the center of a circle of adult "chickens."

"I live on a farm and I'm used to working hard, but right now I'm exhausted," Beck said as she watched a circle of about 60 dancers whirl around her. "I'm going to have to get in better shape."

Physical fitness is only one of the reasons people get involved in folk dancing, Bucy said. Many people join for the social contact and some use it as a way to learn more about other cultures.

Hildred Rice, who has been actively involved in folk dancing in Corvallis for the past 30 years, made that case even stronger.

"It's a way to foster understanding between people with different traditions, different ways of having fun. And to foster understanding is to further the cause of peace."

Even at the age of 79, Rice still attends the weekly dances. But the sight of a room full of enthusiastic first timers, dancing in a circle to a fast paced Swedish melody, brought just a hint of emotion to her voice.

"It's just marvelous. What more could I say but marvelous."

Rice stepped gingerly back and forth to the music while Les Berg of Eugene took the novices through a complicated step from Bulgaria.

"If you start to get lost, just move with the person you're with," Berg shouted above the laughter of a group of dancers as they nearly collided with another group.

"You know what a friend of mine used to say," Rice whispered as the noise died away. "There's only two kinds of folk in this world, folk dancers and other people."



Hildred Rice

About 21 years ago, Hildred Rice reluctantly attended a beginning class in folk dancing and hasn't stopped since. While a member of Corvallis Folk Dancers she was chairman of the February Valentine Festival held from 1953 through 1962.

Because Mrs. Rice could not resist the pleas of the teenagers who wanted to continue dancing after their "graduation" from the Junior Corvallis Folkdancers, the Hoolyehs were organized in October 1965.

A few years later she became director of the Junior Corvallis Folkdancers, when their teacher, Mrs. Irene Butts moved from Corvallis. The Juniors were started by Mrs. Butts entirely on her own, without any sponsorship. Currently, Mrs. Butts is director of a Folk Dance group in California.

Mrs. Rice also re-activated Corvallis Folk Dancers when the parents of the young dancers wanted their own group.

In 1971 Mrs. Rice was presented a gold card, granting honorary life membership in Northwest Folk Dancers, Inc. "in recognition of outstanding efforts in the development and expansion of the folk dance movement in the Pacific Northwest."

Hoolyeh (who-l-ya)

A teenage international folk dance group was organized in Corvallis in October of 1965. After some research into the words meaning, Hoolyeh was chosen as the name of the group.

Hoolyeh, (who-l-ya) a word appearing in several languages, has no equivalent English translation. It does illustrate the happy spirit of folk dancing and the Hoolyehs decided that was what they wanted to do. So now they say "Let's get together and have fun".

← Elsewhere
it says "is
"Hoolyeh" is
Israeli or
Lithuanian

from 1972 Gazette Times Insert
by Glenn Weber



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Hildred at 1986 Hoolyeh FISH Party

1972 Gazette Times
Insert by
Glenn Weber

by Glenn Weber
at Gazette Times
1972



folk dancers in action



**6th annual
hoolyeh
folk dance
festival**

april 28-29-30 **1972**
corvallis, oregon



Participation in folk dance camps was the highlight of the summer for members of the Corvallis Hoolyeh Folkdancers. Members of the group attending the Folk Dance Camp in Stockton, Calif. were, left to right, Mary North, Bonnie Rhynard, Dan Moore, Mary McCauley, Glenn Weber, Sara Leslie, Bekki Levenspiel and director Hildred Rice. North, Rhynard, Moore, McCauley and Leslie were on Hoolyeh Scholarships while Weber was on a scholarship from Northwest Folk Dance Federation, Inc.

Dance scholarships offered

Scholarships of many kinds and sizes are offered each year to folk dancers to help them attend dance camps where they can acquire recently researched ethnic material and dances.

Specially selected Hoolyeh Folkdancers are given a partial scholarship to attend Folk Dance Camp, a summer college credit workshop at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

This camp is the largest in the United States and offers its participants the opportunity to learn international dances from recognized authorities from this

country and abroad.

Local winners are chosen on their interest and participation in the group, dancing and teaching ability, and financial need. Scholarship recipients must agree that when they return home from camp they will present the newly learnt material to the other dancers.

During the camp, sessions are held on how to teach and conduct folk dance classes. Also offered are lessons on how to play the castanets as is a session concentrating on the singing of ethnic international songs.

Previous Hoolyeh folk dance

scholarship winners are Sara Leslie, Mary McCauley, Dan Moore, Mary North and Bonnie Rhynard — 1971; Debbie Hanus and Glenn Weber — 1970; Howard Booster and Karen McDonald, — 1968; Barbara Schemn — 1967.

Numerous other out of state scholarships are available to folk dancers and some have been awarded to local folk dancers.

Glenn Weber was one of two chosen to represent the Northwest during 1971. He attended Stockton Folk Dance Camp with this scholarship, presented by Northwest Folkdancers, Inc.