



## Shirley Temple's dance teacher is still at it

By CANDACE KNIGHT

A tiny, white-haired lady who will do a series of Russian leaps rather than walk from one end of her studio to the other, Jo Reid has been dancing for more than 50 years.

"I was 69 on Christmas Day. Sixty-nine. But I don't care. You know, I never grew up," reflected the Soquel tap and ballet teacher.

"I was a late starter," she said. At 17, having never had a dancing lesson, Jo Costello went to New York to become a ballerina. Her mother's parting words were, "You're too fat, too old, too stiff."

"But," she noted, "I was young and too stupid to think I couldn't make it. Besides I loved to dance, and I was willing to work."

Despite her total lack of experience, Mrs. Reid was accepted to one of New York's most prestigious dance academies, "The Albertina Rasch School of Dance." A quality Mrs. Reid's students say she is known for, disarming charm, led Mme. Albertina herself to sign Mrs.

Reid on. (This was after Mrs. Reid had accidentally shattered a huge crystal vase in the school's reception room.)

"I was always a good copycat," she said. "With 75 students, they never start at the beginning. I just got in there and worked like the devil." Within three months she was dancing with the advanced students. "I worked so hard I split my calf muscles, and now I look like a man," she laughed.

Early Depression days were good ones for her. She was in Paul Whiteman's "Rhapsody in Blue" ballet revue, and later the Rasch company performed with the Paramount public circuit which featured Rudy Vallee.

With the introduction of the "talkies," the Rasch company signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and danced in "a whole slew of movies," including "The Gold Diggers of 1933." Mrs. Reid occasionally sees herself on late night television. "I laugh like crazy," she said.

Later, she came to Hollywood and was hired as a dance instructor at the Meglin Kiddie's studio where she taught tap and ballet.

Among her students were Shirley Temple, Jane Withers and some of the "Our Gang" kids, she said.

In 1935, Jo Costello became Jo Reid, and soon after, retired to raise a family. She did some dancing during that time, but no teaching.

Twenty years later, she told her husband, Dave, she was bored and was going to teach again. "He told me I must be crazy," she said, "and I answered that, yes, I must be." In the early 1960s the "Jo Reid School of Dancing" was founded in Soquel.

Today, with close to 100 students ranging in age from 4 to 50, Mrs. Reid feels there aren't enough days in the week. A class doesn't go by without at least one person calling to inquire about class vacancies, she noted.

Children, "the babies," take lessons weekday afternoons.

Mrs. Reid's walls are covered with cards, drawings, pictures, paintings, and other gifts from the youngsters. She claims to be a worry-wart, and will ask the children over and over if they remembered a sweater to wear out of the building, if they are sure Dad will pick them up, or if they are too tired to stand outside waiting on a ride — why not come inside and sit down?

Some of the "youngsters" from her first classes now take lessons as adults. "I had her ten years ago when she was a baby, and here she is again," is often heard.

Mrs. Reid gives adult lessons three evenings a week. "We have a good time, don't we?" she said.

There isn't a specific difference between beginning and advanced lessons, and all levels of ability may be seen in a single class. Mrs. Reid, who believes more firmly in praise than she does in remembering names, will frequently say such things as, "Look at Lisa, uh, Laura, uh, babe here. What a beautiful arabesque!"

None of the students appear to mind, and several of them are known to answer to most anything.

Mrs. Reid stated she runs an informal school. "We do the ballet, but I don't teach a lot of arm work. If I did everything formal, like we did at Albertina's, we'd never get out of here. We're here to exercise and dance."

Exercise and dance she does, right along with her students. "I keep my blood going, and I stay young . . . so do my students," she said.

Her students don't seem to take offense at the "Now kick UP!" "I said DROP THAT HIP!" "Get your head around or the floor is going to hit you right in the face!" or "Come back here! Do it over!" Students are quick to point out they hear things such as "Goodie!" "Beautiful!" and "Now she's really a dancer!" as they do criticisms.

## Therapist volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed at the Duncan Holbert School for the Orthopedically handicapped to work in water therapy.

Swimming in a 93-degree pool helps handicapped people to succeed — succeed at skills that ordinarily they are not able to do, says Sue Holmberg, the school's water program coordinator.

It helps them relax their tight limbs, says Ms. Holmberg. In some cases, since gravity is not a problem in the water, it keeps them from falling. Best of all, she says, they love it. All students look forward to "pool time."

The problem is that right now there is a shortage of volunteers to help out in the school's water therapy program. Each pupil must be accompanied in the pool at all times by an adult or high school student.

Swimming abilities or experience with handicapped children is not necessary, Ms. Holmberg says, just the time and the patience to learn about the children.

Anyone interested in helping should contact Ms. Holmberg at Duncan Holbert School, 130 Herman Ave., Watsonville, 688-9141 or 722-4119.



These young ballerinas may follow in Shirley Temple's footsteps



**Sarah Haber, 6, limbers up with the help of Jo Reid.**

Mrs. Reid said she rarely goes downtown, to the grocery store, or to the bank without seeing a current or former student. She nearly always rates a hug.

With class sizes steadily growing, Mrs. Reid seems to be in demand more than ever. One student commented, "I was feeling really down today, that's why I came. Jo can cheer anyone up."

Her plans for retirement are this, "I'll dance 'til I'm 100, then I'll quit."

Albertina would have been proud.