

Trabing

Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing



She Helped Shirley Temple

"She'd never recognize me now, of course.

"Oh, it's been so long ago, and I can see already you're getting snooty about my age."

Well, yes. Forgive me.

Jo Reid, former dancer with the American Ballet, and later in the early talkies (oops!) was Shirley Temple's dancing teacher when the golden haired tyke was being primed for her first movie.

Ever since then, she has worked with children and now runs a noisy, but successful school in Aptos.

But to digress — Mrs. Reid, a whitish-haired, likeable lady whose conversation leaves one with the impression that she's late for two other appointments — twirled through a career in ballet.

The Depression stunned such cultural dancing and Mrs. Reid danced her way to Hollywood because, "I had to eat."

"I hate to say this, but I was part of the 'Gold Diggers of 1931,' the 'Earl White Vanities' and with Paul Whiteman's ballet corps before he was really known.

"This led to work in the talkies and later films.

"I remember the heat of those kleig lights. It made our eyes swell and we had to hold potato halves over our eyes.

"Every once in a while I see myself on the late TV movies—the other night it was 'Flying Down To Rio.' I laughed like the devil. My husband was asleep and I went in and woke him up and said: 'Hey, get up, want to see your old lady in the movies?'"

★ ★ ★

"Well, I became associated with Shirley Temple while working with a dance studio called Meglin Kiddie. It had an 'in' with the movie studios and trained most of little actors in those days—the early 30s, if you must know.

"Some of the kids from the Our Gang comedy were assigned to me. I had the personality department and tap and some ballet.

"Shirley Temple was assigned to me when she was two and a half years old. Her mother was dynamite. She knew exactly what she wanted with Shirley. She said she would be Ameri-



Mrs. Jo Reid

ca's sweetheart before she was four—and she was.

★ ★ ★

"That Shirley was a dreamboat. Outstanding and brilliant. I'd stand her on a table and move her feet about with my hands, one foot at a time and I do remember what a sense of understanding she had.

"But it was tough on those little kids.

"On dance numbers I'd stand on a platform behind the camera as a prompter for the youngsters being filmed. They became so nervous sometimes they'd wet their pants and, oh, it was hectic!

"I had Shirley about five months. She was such a smart and nice little girl and became known for getting her lines and dance steps perfect on the first take.

★ ★ ★

"I like working with kids and have about 55 students now and we do have fun, despite the 'I gotta gos' and the 'When do we quits,'" she said.

"Dancing gives kids a sense of balance and poise—keeps them fit and trim. People come to me with awkward kids who have two left feet, but dancing brings them around.

"I have only one boy in the class and that's a shame.

"You know professional male dancing isn't sissy at all. It's the hardest darn work there is."

Occ
To
Mu
Gern
refres
with d
day du
A Go
brillo
The
at The
There
pa ban
liam T
songs
ciety a
as the
The
tend th
each w
nual Ca
penses.
the kic
member
SETON
South
Seton I
nounced
ment pr
the scho
in its 1
nouncer
John J
presider

Pleasure Horse Show Winner