

# Garden clubbers dress up the center for the holidays

By LORAIN McCLISH

Members of the Farmington Garden Club returned to decorate the Farmington Community Center for the holidays, a gift of time and know-how they've given to the center since it opened.

The club is the oldest in the area, organized in 1932, federated with the National Council of State Garden Clubs and Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan in 1934, and has served as the parent club of "so many others its hard to remember," said garden clubber Laura Lochbieler.

Hill and Dale, Forest Park, Botsford, Livonia Federated and Lone Pine Garden Clubs are a few of the spinoffs that got footing over the past 45 years from the area's first group of gardeners.

The club made the news most recently with an award for community beautification from Keep Michigan Beautiful about a month ago, though awards are not that uncommon.

Its purpose is to aid in conservation of resources, to encourage civic improvements, to sponsor junior gardeners and to study the arts of flower arranging and gardening in all aspects.

"And we do just that," Mrs. Lochbieler said.

ONGOING PROJECTS include granting two teachers from Farmington public schools tuition for a conservation school in Higgins Lake;



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sponsoring junior gardeners; and working in garden therapy.

Members are sent as representatives to the two area beautification committees. Regular workshops are held to see that convalescent homes get fresh flower arrangements periodically. Members finance, plant and maintain the community park in Farmington, and monthly flower arrangements are placed in the two Farmington libraries.

"But the community center is our adopted home," Mrs. Lochbieler said. "We store some of our Christmas things in the attic here. We decorate the porch and the sun room and the living room every year and we finance, plant and maintain selected gardens on the grounds."

The group meets at the center and has done so since the center opened.

The decorations that guests will see in the center this season were put together by Mrs. Lochbieler and a committee that included Peg Moore, Jessie Lind, Emma Carlee and Sue Phillips.

"OUR BIGGEST meeting next year, one we are all looking forward to is when Mrs. Oliver Dunstan will be our guest speaker," Mrs. Lochbieler said. Mrs. Dunstan, of Dunstan's Flower Shop in Pontiac, is the woman who has supervised the Christmas decorations for the White House for some time. Her talk is called "Our First Ladies in Fashions and Flowers," and will tell about some of our First Ladies' tastes when she visits in March.

Current president of the club is Mrs. Harve Bock, whose vice presidents are Mrs. William Blakeney, Mrs. Rodney Denton and Mrs. Charles Audette.

Other officers for the 1977-78 year are Mrs. Robert Brinkman, Mrs. Frank Ritchie, Mrs. Lawrence Raymond and Mrs. Howard Perry.



Crimped rings, the kind used as frames when making a wreath from fresh materials, are wrapped with gold foil, topped with a ribbon, a dove and some greens, for brightening up several dark spots in the community center. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



Palm leaves and other dried materials sprayed gold, a crimped ring, and fresh greens make up the arrangement that now stands on the grand piano in the center's living room. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## The Community Center depends on its friends

By LORAIN McCLISH

With a heart full of Christmas spirit and an eye on April 15, the Farmington Community Center asks to be remembered when Farmington area residents make out their Christmas checks this year.

"The center needs contributions to help balance its 1977 budget," said center director Alberta Taylor. "To date, the 1977 Fund Drive is far short of the \$40,000 it urgently needs to continue serving the community."

The center does not lack for patronage.

Its classes and activities are full of people—all ages, all sizes, taking everything from ballet to estate planning. They take the trips to the cultural events in and about the Detroit metropolitan area. They buy tickets to the lectures and participate in all of the social events.

It is rare when some listing is cancelled for lack of interest. It is far more common for the offering to be sold out days ahead of the scheduled event.

"WHEN YOU SEE or hear how busy the Farmington Community Center is, you might assume that it must be taking in plenty of money," Mrs. Taylor continued. "But no community center

of this kind can be self supporting."

"The center's activities generate at least 70 per cent of its income, but the other 30 per cent is vital to its existence, and that 30 per cent must come from its friends.

"Friends," Mrs. Taylor describes, are "those civic minded people who see the advantages of a community center and are willing to put it in their annual budget."

A misconception that many people hold, Mrs. Taylor believes, is that the Farmington Community Center receives tax monies or some kind of United Fund support, and this, she emphasizes, is not so.

The center is operated by a small staff and a volunteer board of directors with policy making responsibilities and decisions.

Its guiding philosophy in offering classes and workshops, as well as hosting trips and special events, remains centered around the concept of high calibre instructors and limited enrollment.

MRS. TAYLOR thinks of the center as a local endeavor.

"You can see where your money is going and take pride not only in the breadth and quality of the programs offered, but in the historical beauty of its building," she says.

"It is a warm and friendly place that provides a meeting ground for dozens of Farmington organizations and gives newcomers a chance to get acquainted with their neighbors.

"It's a very real sense it is an investment in your property for it helps make the Farmington area a more attractive, livable place to live."

All contributions are tax deductible. Checks are to be made payable to Farmington Community Center and sent to the center at 24705 Farmington Road, Farmington 48018.

The doors are always open at Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road, providing a meeting ground for dozens of

local organizations and an opportunity for newcomers to get acquainted with their neighbors.



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Laura Lochbieler (at left) and Emma Carlee designed several of the center's Christmas arrangements this season in a cooperative effort. Club members furnish all of the

materials for the decorations, as well as all of the containers. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)