



Helping Steven Stephenson is part of Mrs. Ellen Wallis' job as art consultant. The consultants give the class basic instructions and then let the children do as much as possible on their own.



Ellen Wallis presides over one of her art classes at Flanders Elementary School. She is one of eight art consultants to Farmington elementary schools who supplement the students' art education.

Art instruction brings good times, new insights

Elementary art classes teach more than how to recognize a good-looking stick man.

"Children are natural-born artists," said Mrs. Ellen Wallis, an art consultant for the Farmington Elementary schools.

"The emphasis today is more on creativity than on having all the projects look the same," she explained.

Mrs. Wallis is one of eight consultants who help to bring art instruction to Farmington elementary students.

Under the direction of Beverly Ellis, each of the consultants visit between two and three elementary schools on a regular schedule.

"It's the only elementary art program that the schools ever had," said Mrs. Ellis, who's worked in the district for 18 years.

"With the closing of Ten Mile Elementary we'll have one consultant for every two buildings," she said.

CONSULTANTS WORK together with teachers to coordinate their art projects with regular lessons.

"In another school where I teach, the children did Eskimo art block prints," said Mrs. Wallis.

"It was a big thing. The children went to the library and researched the project."

"It came about from their studying Eskimo culture, and turned into one of the biggest art appreciation projects," she said.

Besides Eskimo sculpture, straw godseyes became a part of a lesson on Mexican and South American legends and art.

The multi-colored straw constructions are hanging in a corner of Flanders' hallway, for students and visitors to admire.

"Sometimes the teacher will pick

up on one of our projects," Mrs. Wallis said.

A class learning about Indian life got a chance to explore their art by making versions of Kachina dolls. The dolls were used originally in ceremonies.

"We created ours from cardboard tubes and boxes," said Mrs. Ellis.

SOME PROJECTS ARE UNDERTAKEN for the fun of creating something.

Mrs. Wallis' students at Flanders Elementary School are using sawdust and wallpaper paste to make puppets. Each child is free to give his puppet a distinct characteristic.

"Twenty years ago, many schools didn't have art classes or the ones they had were very structured. All the art lessons came out looking the same," said Mrs. Wallis.

"Today, the emphasis is on creativity."

"We want the children to feel good about art. It doesn't matter what the project looks like. It's the experience, not the product that's important," she said.

Students in her fourth grade class at Flanders may have been concerned about the product but they were enjoying the experience.

Walter Mozurkewich stood near the paint cart daubing brown paint onto his puppet's head.

"It's Yogi Bear," Walter explained. "It was going to be a racoon but it turned into a bear."

He shrugged and kept on painting.

HIS CLASSMATE Laurie Finley was busily adding some color to Daffy Duck's cheeks.

On the other side of the room, John Tureaud was proudly exhibiting his creation—an interplanetary dweller of the future.

"It's an interplanetary whatever," he said, finding words inadequate to describe his art.

The entourage was rounded out by Super Bear. Steve Stephenson explained that he was inspired to create a super bear by the blue and silvery white cloth body that was made for the head.

The children learn to appreciate art while enjoying themselves, according to Mrs. Wallis.

"Elementary children aren't ready for an art appreciation lecture. Their attention span is too short. They want to do, not watch," she said.

But one of the most important aspects of an art lesson takes place outside of the classroom.

"The biggest thing is for parents to be appreciative of a child's activity."

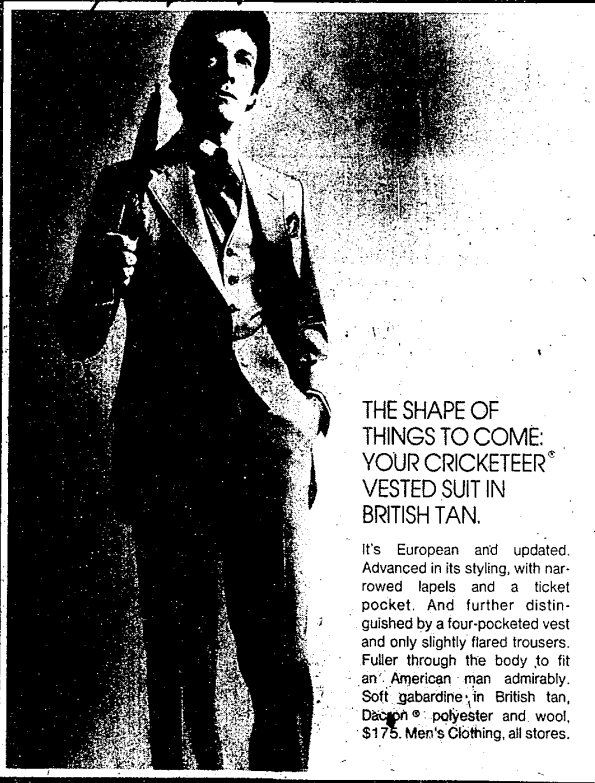
"If the child's painted a purple sky, they should try to avoid asking why he didn't paint the sky blue," she said.



Walter Mozurkewich adds glue to his puppet's head. Although he started out making a squirrel, he was satisfied with the final result—a Yogi Bear puppet.

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Colleen Finley decides where her squirrel puppet needs touch-up paint as part of her fourth grade class at Flanders School. Some of her classmates fashioned bear and duck puppet heads. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)