

Winter boutique keeps garden classes going

By LORRAINE McCLISH

After a six-week summer lay-off, the Hill and Dale Garden Club members are back together again, planning for another year of garden therapy classes and their Christmas Boutique that will be combined with a Christmas Walk through seven decorated homes.

In the words of the club's new president, Eileen Woods, "Sign up, ladies. We're back in business."

The Christmas boutique and walk is the club's biggest fund-raiser, given on alternate years when members are not busy with a flower show.

"We work on it all year long," said chairman Grace Bulman, "and it's just more than we could do every year if we're going to do it right."

Doing it right has made the event one of the most prestigious in the area.

The boutique carries only hand-fashioned, useful as well as decorative, home accessories, created from only natural materials.

Committees made up of ten garden-clubbers have been assigned to each of the seven homes that will be decorated in motifs running from an English tavern room to ultra contemporary.

"EVERY ITEM will be authentic. No plastics. That's an unwritten law here,"

but one that is strictly adhered to," Mrs. Bulman said. "The tree I'm working on will be decorated with silk flowers, lace ribbon and baby's breath, and we'll need at least 100. So you see why it takes all year."

"This keeps me off the streets and out of the stores," she added.

The big thrust toward the Christmas event, set this year for Sunday, Dec. 9, aims to keep the garden therapy classes going that began more than 10 years ago in a William Grace Elementary School classroom.

The women are now preparing for the lessons that will be given to 300 handicapped youth enrolled in Farmington Public Schools.

"Everyone works on the garden therapy project," Mrs. Bulman said. "That's a mandate, whether you are collecting, bagging, saving, or going into the classrooms."

Those who are collecting are saving anything from caps on aerosol cans to yarn for a classroom project. The baggers are getting the necessary materials together to be handed out to the students. Those going into the classroom use from 45 minutes to "as long as it takes" to complete the lesson at hand.

NANCY ADAMS heads up the garden

therapy project this year.

She is prepared with two lessons a month with and a project that can be accomplished by the 300 who are afflicted with a wide range of mental, physical and emotional handicaps. Many age groups are always involved.

Her criteria is that the project must be enjoyable, must have an educational value, must include some horticulture

knowledge, and must have an aesthetic value as well.

"They call us 'the garden ladies' and they have applauded when I came in the room," said Mrs. Woods. "That's what keeps us keeping the garden therapy going."

"We don't take the place of the teacher," Mrs. Bulman said. We let the

kids go at their own pace, let each kid do what he can do, balancing our time as well as we can with half artistic and half educational activities."

Club members, who have moved their meeting place from the Farmington Community Center to larger quarters in Farmington Hills Community Library, return to the center for their Christmas boutique.

"It is homey and gracious and part of our hearts are still here," said Mrs. Woods.

Club members plant and maintain the center's old-fashioned cutting garden, designed to blend in with the decor of the historic house, and to keep fresh flowers available for decorating its many rooms.



New officers and committee chairwomen for Hill and Dale Garden Club this season are (from left) Eileen Woods, Grace Bulman, Nancy Adams, Bessie Hamm and Gladys King. Mrs. Woods is club president.

Mrs. Bulman, Mrs. King and Mrs. Hamm head up the season's fund-raiser, and Mrs. Adams is in charge of the group's garden therapy classes for 300 handicapped students in Farmington Public Schools.



To lunch by helicopter

Waitress Sandra Carolan knows people who will drive many miles for seafood at Clamdiggers, but this week she met the first guests who flew there for lunch. Ms. Carolan was so intrigued by her party from Westside Sand & Gravel, in Northville, she gave the quartet a tour of the kitchen; then they gave her a tour of the helicopter. Ms. Carolan says there is plenty of room for parking at the Farmington Hills restaurant, both for cars and helicopters.

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