

# Creativity Finds Many Expressions

By MARGARET MILLER  
Women's Editor

What is this thing called creativity? How do you recognize it in yourself, and how can it be developed?

Must it have a purpose? Should it pay a profit? And does it have a price?

Questions like these came into focus in a panel discussion that was part of an art show put on by the Creative Council of Oakland University's Continuum Center in Southfield last week.

FIVE PANEL participants represented a wide variety of women today — their common denominator the spark of talent that has surfaced to change their lives.

There were two young mothers — a fashion designer well on her way to a successful business and a dancer who teaches but won't perform for money.

There was a young grandmother whose talent for writing has been a gradually-developing pleasure over the years. There was a peace movement leader who found her particular outlet because of her son's childhood fears, and an actress and continuum leader who's learned to apportion herself to make life good for her and for her family.

Their definitions of creativity and ideas on how it works differed widely. But on one point they were pretty much agreed — that the best part of the creative process is in the doing rather than the end product.

Putting the panel together was Mrs. Barbara Hoffman, instructor in the creative

problem workshop of the Continuum Center, who said she had long hoped to set up a discussion of this sort.

"We tend to think of artists as a race apart," she said. "But there are many ways for beauty to be expressed, and for most it's just part of life."

ANDEE WHITE of Spring Arbor, 26-year-old designer of a line of children's clothes, told the gathering of 50 or so women only half jokingly that she hoped to make a million by the time she's 30 and to "buy a Jaguar — a red one with leather upholstery."

For her, she said, creativity involves more than just the designing. There's a business sense, and the ability to get along with people and "find out what buyers want and tell them creatively why your line is best."

But she admitted that it was a wrench for her to turn part of the execution of her designs over to others because "you give up some of yourself."

Carol Halsted of Birmingham, a dance instructor at OU and a member of the Festival Dancers, said her first dance training was "as a puppet carrying out other people's ideas."

"Creativity began when I started to teach, when I helped children not just dance but represent their own ideas and feelings in their dance," she

said. "Constant exploring and experimenting — that's the creative approach."

BETTIE CANNON of Birmingham, a free lance writer, looked for her definition to the Greek word *Poiesis*, which means "make" and is a root word for poetry.

"Creativity means 'make' to me," she said. "I make poems, I make short stories, I make humorous articles, I make the beginnings of many books."

"I also make soup and clothes and terrariums, and I've made babies. I know that all of us use about a tenth of our creative power, but the part I use gives me a fuller, richer inner life, concrete tasks to perform and rare pleasure — I can lose myself."

Lillian Genser of Oak Park decided, when her little boy became confused over civil defense drills, that war was a "totally irrational" thing, and eventually she became director for the center for teaching about peace and war at Wayne State University.

"Creativity means self-expression and productivity and communication," she said. "But for me, creativity has to be geared to some social good."

Address Joyce Ramsay of Southfield, program coordinator for the Continuum Center, suggested you might

think of creativity as a mother with a child holding onto each hand. "The mother is imagination, one child is drive and ambition, and the other is personal resources," she added. "I'm most creative when I find them all working together."

TWO QUESTIONS drew the most attention as the panelist and audience began a bit of "raping" — the matter of whether commercial use of talent stifles creativity and the effect of a mother's creativity upon her family.

Both drew sharply divergent ideas.

Andee White pointed out that there's not much use of trying to sell the results of your creativity if you don't bend a bit to the market, and a member of the audience agreed that "there's no need to defend the fact that her creativity brings in money."

"But Mrs. Halsted insisted that she won't perform for money 'because if you're paid, you have to please the public, and I want to please me.'"

Mrs. Ramsay, Mrs. Genser and Mrs. Cannon all found they related their activities to the effect time away from the family would have on husband and children.

"My work keeps me out of my children's hair," said Bettie Cannon, who has several grandchildren.

Joyce Ramsay said she had to come to terms, over the years, with the fact that she needs time away from being wife and mother to be "me" and she had found that it was good for her husband and daughters too. But it took a while to realize this, she admitted.



EXCHANGING IDEAS on creativity are panel members Carol Halsted, left, Lillian Genser, Andee White, Joyce Ramsay and Bettie Cannon. (Observer photo by Harry Mauthe)

Lillian Genser mentioned that her husband had been most supportive and that her sons were gradually becoming more understanding when meals were late.

But Andee White and Carol Halsted, a generation younger, had no such adjustments to make. They agreed they never really considered functioning only as wife and mother, and their husbands agreed.

BARBARA HOFFMAN summed up the meeting by mentioning that the meeting

reminded her of an old adage: "You can count the seeds in an apple, but you can't count the apples in a seed." We can see the creativity brought here today, but we don't know how many creative ideas are being taken away."

A couple of members of the audience bore her out by suggesting that they try to use the creative approach to home situations. And, said one woman who had made a bit of a trip for the session:

"For me, it's creativity every time I conquer a new expressway."

## School Taking Enrollments

The Christ Child School, for children between the ages of six and 14 with learning disabilities, has a few openings for new students.

Interested parents should call the school, located at 3111 Lahser Road, Birmingham. The school is open to all children, regardless of race, creed or religion.

Two new teachers have joined the staff. They are Jerome Martin, formerly of Wexford, Pa., and Mary Wilsher of Birmingham.

Martin spent two years with the Peace Corps teaching English in Malawi, East Africa, and two years with the

U.S. Army as an information specialist in Vietnam. He also taught English in a Vietnamese grade school.

He received his MA degree in special education from Duquesne University and taught this past summer teaching in a hospital in Hillsdale.

Miss Wilsher received her BS degree from Western University in June. She majored in special education in teaching emotionally disturbed and mentally handicapped children and minored in an integrated creative arts program.

## m. m. memos

The headline in the women's section of one of our competitors caught my eye, so I decided to read about the remarkable mother who was feeding her family on a sum unbelievably low.

But when I finished reading I decided her way wasn't for me.

It seems she buys a four-pound beef brisket for her family of seven and figures to get three or four meals from it.

Now that beef brisket we cooked last weekend was half gone at one sitting and our family isn't as many as hers and anyway only two-thirds of us eat.

Well, she explains, meat goes further because she uses an electric knife and slices it thin. The old psychology, you know. My offspring, I fear, know how much meat they're getting no matter how you slice it.

You don't need to serve as much meat if there's good home-made bread and potatoes, she says. With everybody on a diet?

And then she uses tidbit leftovers for a meal that's all hors d'oeuvres. My family would gobble those and then ask what's for dinner.

So much for dreams of being an economical cook, and back to the old piled-up grocery cart.

—Margaret Miller

## After 50 Years

# Farmington Grads Meet

It all started when Dallas Harger, who graduated from Farmington High School back in 1920, decided to put together a history of his class. All 10 members.

Now retired and living in Rockwood, Mich., he had some contacts among his former classmates, and called the Farmington school administration offices for some more leads.

At the end of the telephone line in the office of administrator Byron Oliver was his longtime friend, Mrs. Winifred Leet Otis, who graduated in the class of 1925. Her class had 25 members.

They decided a reunion was in order, and that it should include the classes of 1920 through 1925 since, as Mrs. Otis put it, "we all knew each other so well."

STARTING with one representative from each class, the grads started their letter writing pointing to a date for the gathering.

Mrs. Otis said she sent two sets of letters to nearly all the members of her class. Early in the summer a Sept. 12 date was set, and the graduates and their husbands and wives — 85 in all — gathered that evening in Farmington's new Holiday Inn.

A lot of those present still were living in Farmington and the surrounding communities.

Besides Harger and Mrs. Otis, there were Mrs. Treena Quinn, retired Farmington

city clerk, Ora Goers Joy, Marguerite Moore, and Edna Praeger Vivier. Also on hand were four members of the Wisom family, Mrs. Dorothy Smith, who graduated in 1923, Kenneth (Pat) Wikon, of the class of 1924, Mrs. Adelaide Jamieson, 1927, and Ralph Wikon, 1931.

OTHERS CAME from all over the country for the reunion.

Arriving just in time to sit down to dinner were Clyde Harmon, and his wife, who live in North Dakota. Virginia Nichols Laing and Marie Walling Parker both made the trip from the Miami area.

Coming from Arizona were Margaret Creager Smith and Verma Leet Newstead.

Gordon Turner, class of 1923, came from Cheboygan, where he worked many years as a newspaperman. Lucy Banks Pratt was there from the Garden Lake, a town near Sault Ste. Marie where she and her husband operate a resort.

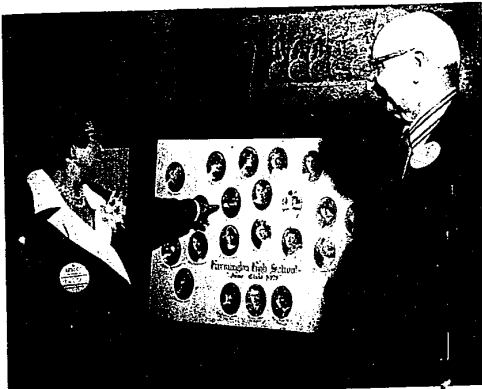
PLENTY OF STORIES were exchanged and recalled, but Mrs. Otis' favorite moment came when she started to introduce one lady to a gentleman standing nearby.

There was a mutual recognition, and the lady graduate exclaimed in delight:

"We used to walk to school together and he carried my books."



"IT'S BEEN a long time," said Margaret Creager Smith (above, left) and Lucy Banks Pratt as they greeted each other in the reunion of Farmington High School classes of the early 1920s. They both graduated in 1924. At the left, Winifred Leet Otis shows Dallas Harger her picture among the class of 1925 graduates. Mrs. Otis and Harger headed arrangements for the reunion. (Evert photos)



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