

# Garden club member turns professional

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

One of the busiest women at the Founders Festival last month was Julia Darian who was so pushed she had to give two of her teenage daughters a crash course in making corn husk dolls in an effort to keep pace with the demand.

The husks, soaked in water to make them pliable, were twirled into little figures by Mrs. Darian, Linda and Denise at the rented booth and "some of them were even sold still wet," she said.

It was the first commercial venture for Mrs. Darian, a Hill and Dale Garden Club member, whose booth was filled with three dimensional wall hangings, dried flower arrangement and wreaths as well as the popular dolls, some sold by themselves, others encased in glass boxes in a variety of settings.

The upshot of her first few days in business is that she has been asked to place some of her pieces for sale in a craft shop in Livonia and she has enough orders for custom made pieces to keep her busy until Thanksgiving.

**SHE WORKS FOR** the most part with natural materials, "has a basement full of weeds and field flowers drying out on a clothes line" and "is constantly on the lookout for a pretty piece of wood or an unusual looking branch."

She's used orange oranges sliced to resemble a flower or a petal, and she's used herbs and spices to scent a wreath.

The accessories in her home at 14605 Glen Orchard are almost all the results of her own handwork, and prior to the time her daughters convinced her she should try her hand at

selling her works, much was given as gifts to relatives and friends.

Mrs. Darian has been a member of the Hill and Dale Garden Club for about 16 years, a club she joined to help her cultivate her own outdoor garden. Interim speakers, club workshops on flower arranging, lore she picked up on dried flowers and working to contribute to club fund-raising boutiques brought her to creating the variety of things she now turns out.

She said she attended most of the workshops offered by the club, attended a few classes offered by the Farmington Community Center and "then went home and put my own ideas to work."

Throughout this time she worked as a volunteer, through the garden club as an instructor in garden therapy for the multiply handicapped in Eagle School, which has been a long-time service project of Hill and Dale.

"I'VE ALWAYS LOVED flowers," she said, "and it was so satisfying to watch them learn to love them too."

Her tenure in the garden club has also earned her a respectable number of blue ribbons from shows for fresh flower arrangements, and Christmas decorations made of natural materials.

The orders for custom-made items she has waiting for her now are for the three-dimensional wall hangings, sometimes called jesso pictures, that are dried natural materials arranged on a board enhanced with acrylics or stains. In addition to these, she has a number of orders for door wreaths to be completed by fall in fall colors.

When asked if her daughters would be helping her out with these assignments, she responded, "They sure will. They'll probably be doing a lot of cooking and a lot of house cleaning while I'm down in the basement."



## Program teams at-home day-care with school

Two Birmingham women are pioneering a day-care program billed as "the best of two worlds" for preschoolers.

The program utilizes both in-home day care mothering and group exposure through nursery school attendance.

According to Carolyn LaSavage of Birmingham and Nell Phillips, director of the Beverly Hills Early School, Beverly Hills, pre-schoolers benefit from both the personal attention provided by the day-care mother and the educational, personnel and equipment advantages available through the school structure.

"We're geared to families who need all-day care for their children, such as single parents or working parents," explained Ms. Phillips. "Everyday I get calls from parents looking for all-day care. It's a dream of mine that we don't have to parent all day in one building," added the former director of a day-care center. Emphasizing that she was not criticizing day-care centers, Ms. Phillips said, "Trying to effectively meet the needs of 40 kids from 8:30 to 5, five days a week, was overwhelming."

Along with day-care centers, parents have had the option of utilizing the services of day-care mothers licensed by county social services departments. Children are brought into the home and cared for consistently by one woman.

**SINCE MS. PHILLIPS** and full-time, day-care mother, Ms. LaSavage, have teamed up, the two traditional approaches have been worked into a new, child-care alternative.

For two and one-half hours, three mornings a week, Ms. LaSavage brings her son and three day-care charges to this Beverly Hills Early School. The remaining hours are devoted to at-home care.

"They are getting training I can't give them and they are getting group exposure at the school," explained Ms. LaSavage, a six-year veteran of day-care mothering. "It's a learning environment I can't provide. The children need the challenge of

getting feedback from a bigger world which the school can give," Ms. Phillips commented.

"But then they can come home and rest," Ms. LaSavage added. The program, initiated by Ms. LaSavage, has been operating informally for a year. It will be continued in September when the school session renews.

**THE WOMEN** said they hope to enlist more day-care mothers in the plan once it is officially launched.

Ms. LaSavage said that by developing a network of day-care mothers in the county, training programs and classes could be offered to the women. They would also benefit from working with the professional staff members at the school, she said.

Ideally, the program would also insure parents of always having child care available. If one day-care mother were ill, children could be lodged in another participant's home.

Parents, Ms. LaSavage suggested, would also have access to more information about their children's development.

"They will have input on his behavior in both large and small groups," she said, explaining that both the day-care mother and the school personnel will be available to parents for consultation.

One drawback of the program in its formative stages may be its cost, the women said.

Currently, Ms. Phillips explained, the price of weekly day-care mothering averages \$35. Weekly fees in private day-care centers average \$40, she said.

By contrast, average weekly costs for the satellite program is \$47 due to the payment of fees to both the day-care mother and the school.

**"THEORETICALLY,** the program sounds like a good solution but it hasn't been used extensively yet," said Doris Sponseller of Rochester, instructor in early childhood education at Oakland University.

"I'm supportive of it as a pilot kind of a program because I think there should be alternatives available to parents and I think this is one alternative

that may benefit a lot of children."

According to Ms. Phillips, programs utilizing networks of day-care mothers have been developed in Kalamazoo and Saginaw.

Referring to the Oakland County program, Ms. Sponseller said, "Their program is unique because they are not receiving supplemental funds." Eventually, Ms. Phillips said, funding may be sought for the program.



Hours at school offer playground equipment



School sessions are added to at-home day-care