

Fantasies in fabric attract the young set

By LORRAINE McCLISH
A display that's attracting a lot of attention from the younger set these days is called "Fabric Fantasy From Children's Books" in the Farmington Community Library which comes from a group of seven women who call themselves "The Needlethreaders."

Dorothy Harwood, who heads the group, watched some of the children staring, giggling, pointing, or asking questions, while the display was being hung this week, and said, "This makes it worthwhile. It's all worth it."

"That's why this idea was originated—to get children interested in reading—to get children involved with books."

The wall hangings caused enough attention to provoke children's librarian Jill Locke to drop whatever she was doing and guide the preschoolers on an impromptu tour through the exhibit.

"IT'S A GLORIOUS feeling," Mrs. Harwood continued, "to see this

"Other librarians have told me that the children will begin to ask for some of the books now that we've illustrated."

The Needlethreaders' finished works might be described as fabric collages. They are made up of a variety of fabric appliques, with bits of yarn, beads, sequins, fringe and trims, enhanced by embroidery, to reproduce the same effects as the original picture.

All of the book illustrations are displayed with the wall hangings so viewers may see the close relationship to the original.

The Needlethreaders come from many cities throughout Oakland County to meet in Mrs. Harwood's home each week to get advice, plan and choose the pictures they will work on.

"WE SPEND A lot of time in fabric stores, and we've probably been through every children's book that's ever been illustrated finding things we like, learning which can and can't be done," Mrs. Harwood said.

The leftover remnants from the shopping tours and contributions from friends of odds and ends go into what Mrs. Harwood calls her "rag room." The rag room has become a permanent part of her house since the collecting began for such as odd buttons, bits of fur, or anything that might be used as trim in the future.

Only two of the Needlethreaders (including Mrs. Harwood) have an art background. Otherwise, they are all professional women from many fields and many, a few years ago, "didn't even know how to sew well enough to put up a hem," Mrs. Harwood said.

"So we spent a lot of time in studying pictures, seeing them in different ways, fading patterns within the pictures and learning just what goes into pulling a painting together."

MRS. HARWOOD is an artist, art instructor, and art coordinator who has done fabric design, pottery painting, sculpturing and jewelry.

She conceived the idea of the fabric

collage about eight years ago when creative stitchery was becoming popular. But the group she is working with now didn't get under way with the idea of putting together a full scale exhibit until 1972.

The show on display in the local library is their fifth. In addition to the children's collections, they have done one on Jewish themes, an ethnic exhibit that was on display at the Old World International Market and a collection of Christmas cards that was hung this past season in the Detroit Women's Club.

So far as any of the Needlethreaders know their exhibit is unique.

WHEN THE SHOW leaves the library it will go to the Troy Public Library. Meanwhile another collection will be hung in the West Bloomfield Elementary School.

The exhibit will remain in the library 1277 W. Twelve Road through Jan. 30.



At left, six year old Craig Bower looks up at an illustration from "Things That Sometimes Happen" by Abi. Above center, an illustration from "Golden Frog" by Surani, and above right, a picture from "The Ox of the Wonderful Horns" by Bryan. Below

left, the bird comes from the Will Bragg Book "Fun With Applique and Patchwork" and below right, an illustration from "In The Forest" by Hutn.

