

Creative Thinking Pays Off For Klamath Area In Modern Art Gallery Here

By ROBERTA BLOMQUIST

Klamath Falls and its surrounding community is one of the few spots in the West which has the understanding and the foresight among its citizens to realize that through creative activity, and cultural development, much of the desperation in the world today could be avoided. By art activity the meaning is not limited to visual arts alone, but to the whole field of creative arts—literature, music, drama and dance.

The people of this community have signified their stand on creative arts by allotting a park area containing a fine old house and space under beautiful old maple trees as the site for the new art gallery.

The old building is being converted into workshop areas which include a meeting room, a ceramic shop equipped with wheels and kilns, a weaving room with looms, a room for painting, space for sculpture, a print room, dark room, as well as space for other arts and crafts.

To realize fully what this all really means, one has only to look at some of the statements concerning world problems by great thinkers of today. Many learned professors and scholars, statesmen and students of psychology hold the theory which is so well defined in the following excerpt from a paper by Henry A. Murray, professor of clinical psychology at Harvard University:

"An emotional efficiency disease, a paralysis of the creative imagination, an addiction to superficiality—this is the diagnosis I would offer to account for the greater part of the widespread desperation of our time. Paralysis of the imagination, I suspect, would also account, in part, for the fact that the great majority of us, wedded to comfort so long as we both shall live, are turning our eyes away from the one thing we should be looking at—the possibility or probability of co-extinction."

The common language of the world has always been that of the arts. The great literatures of each nation of the world are as well loved and known by one nation as another. The great music of each country is played and loved by every other culture. The great paintings, sculpture and architecture are treasured in the world's museums without prejudice as to what peoples originated the masterpieces.

Our world of individuals and nations meets as one people in the arts. Since that apparently is our only point of agreement, it would seem logical to give more time and space, as well as energy to developing the arts, to developing the creative imagination.

The homo sapiens is driven by a compulsion to create and is filled with a desire to hear, touch, taste and see a creation which is beautiful, true and honest. Our present civilizations are such, especially in America, that mankind has less and less opportunity and incentive to fulfill this urge. Since the creative urge and imagination is an integral part of man, he must produce or become a neurotic.

He is bound by an urge, latent though it may be, to produce art in some form. To complete the neurological pattern he must display and exchange his creations with others. In following such a pattern on a world basis he may establish the understanding with others which barriers of language, religion, politics, mores and geography make difficult.

Perhaps the people of this community have not formulated a definite philosophy on this subject; perhaps no one has an exact answer, but that there exists here a strong feeling that something needs to be done about creative arts is evidenced by the effort put forth to plan and build a center where people of this wide area can develop their ideas and where they can exhibit their work as well as that of others.

With the completion of this project, yet far from finished, this community must stand as an example of what can be done by every area of like size. Already as others watch the progress steps are being taken to proceed in a like manner. School and homes, good as they may be, are not able to provide what a community art center can. Klamath Falls and the outlying community have realized this, and in so doing, have made an effort toward solving the problems of "the desperation of our time."



ROBERTA BLOMQUIST has worked consistently in the interest of the Klamath Art Association for many years and gave unstintingly of time to help raise match funds for the Art Gallery. Mrs. Blomquist heads the drama department at Klamath Union High School.

Weaving Kept Alive In Pioneer Craft Of Hand Classes At Art Workshop

By DALE CUSTER

It is appropriate that as part of the Centennial gift to the new Klamath Falls Art Center, handweaving, a former pioneer craft, is being generously included. There was a time in the past century when handweaving was done as a very necessary part of day to day living—when wool from the sheep or linen from the fields was processed and worked into articles of every day use.

Orchids to our grandmothers, who probably never even saw such an exotic flower, for their work in cloth making. Then came more abundant supply of machine weaving which, while taking a load from our grandmothers, relegated the old looms to the barn or store house.

There were a few of the old rug looms in use to make worn out clothing into floor coverings even as late as the depression when many farm women supplemented the family income by weaving the neighbors' rags into rugs. In recent years, there has come with our increased leisure and awareness of our heritage, a desire to revive some of the arts and crafts which produced so many lovely things while working as a necessity.

Fortunate is the individual who can restore the old loom—the reed doubtless will have rusted anyway, some parts may have been consumed by dry rot, a two-by-four may have been used to repair the shed—but essentially the basic parts are workable.

There is joy in an old loom and a responsiveness that a newly assembled one does not have. Yet in many cases an old loom is not so accurate or so flexible as a modern one. Our modern loom makers have a feeling for functional beauty that makes of a tool a lovely piece of furniture for a modern room or studio.

Some of the old looms are such space consumers that an added room or loft is necessary to house them; hence we are unwilling to assign either time or space for such cumbersome objects.

The new Art Center, setting aside two rooms for handweaving with five looms available at present, is offering increased opportunities for handweavers in this

area. When one considers the remarkable progress that has been made in past years with restricted facilities, it is encouraging to think what can be done with handweaving in the next decade.

An early workshop was held here as early as 1951 when Mary Fullington of Seattle instructed a number in handweaving. Some of our most devoted weavers became interested at that time. In 1955 David Hatch from the University of Oregon was here for a two weeks' course. Just recently in the fall of 1957 Dorothy Anderson taught a beginners' class who worked on looms rented from the University of Oregon.

There are many men and women in the Klamath Basin with weaving experience gained in West Coast colleges either in art courses or in work with textiles or clothing. Others have attended workshops in other sections of the country or have been instructed privately.

There are many excellent books and periodicals available for the How-To-Do-It-Yourself individual—even correspondence courses. There are local craftsmen qualified to instruct or assist any would-be handweaver.

Weavers are most exacting and at the same time most helpful to beginners who wish to learn. With looms being used increasingly in our public and private schools for arts and crafts, it would be a great help to our young people to be able to see weavers at work, use looms under skilled instructors and experience the satisfaction that comes from working with the basic tools of existence.

Increasingly, in a time when more and more men work daily

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with abstractions, it is desirable for each individual to have a hand craft as a starting point from which to grasp reality. There is nothing more real than stretching a warp thread and crossing it with a weft to make a useful article and a beautiful one.

It is interesting that the expression "warped personality" applied to individuals whose tensions have become too great for normal adjustment is seldom applied to handweavers. Could it be that in this basic operation there is an experience so normal that it avoids warping personalities? Weaving in our hospitals for handicapped persons is accepted and special looms and techniques have been developed to help these individuals.

Traveling exhibits of beautiful weaving will be brought to the new center so that those of us who are interested can have an opportunity to study and learn to appreciate these lovely things, and so we may be more discriminating in viewing machine made articles. There are many such traveling exhibits available and we will look for them in addition to expanded showings from our local handweavers.

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