

## Love of 'Make Believe' Used In Education of Children

Children's love of "make believe" is being used by child development specialists as a new approach to education for the young.

A workshop in "Creative Dramatics for Children" was concluded recently in the College of Home Economics, the first project of its kind to be held at Cornell. The pioneering effort was sponsored by the Department of Child Development and Family Relationships.

Twenty-one mothers, teachers, and others who work with community groups, attended the 5 days of discussion and demonstrations conducted by Miss Muriel Sharon of New York City, Miss Sharon, director of the Children's

Theater of the Young Men and Young Women's Hebrew Association of New York City, has taught in the Dance and Drama Department of Ohio University, is a member of the Actor's Workshop in New York, and has acted in summer stock.

A group of 12-year-old Ithaca boys and girls were Miss Sharon's laboratory material as she demonstrated how to conduct a class in creative dramas for children.

### Her Procedure

Here was her procedure:

First she quieted the lively group and conditioned them for working together through rhythmic exercises done to the beat of a tom-tom. Then came "large movement" activities — casting a fish line, digging a trench, raking leaves, in pantomime.

"You are raking leaves," the director suggested. "Don't just show me — really do it." Mass movement relaxes and reassures shy children, according to Miss Sharon.

A sensory exercise usually followed. It involved some such activity as smelling and tasting an imaginary pan of fudge until the children almost felt the delight of eating real candy.

### Ready to Create

With their imaginations flowing freely and their senses sharpened, the children were ready to create and take part in a play.

"Acting isn't just learning lines," Miss Sharon explains. "Acting is the ability to 'really do' in an imaginary situation. It must come from the impulse to do—the impulse must come before the words."

Then, together, the director and children make up a play. Sometimes plot was evolved by the children as the director prompted them with such questions as: "If a boy were run over by a truck, how would he feel?"

What would his mother do? How would she feel? What would the truck driver do? "Sometimes the director told a story—a fairy tale, possibly, or a story from classic literature or poetry. After the children had heard the story, the director, through questions, helped the children "feel" the characters and their emotions.

Sound effect recordings were used to stimulate emotional reaction to the plot.

### Children Work Out Setting

Casting was done by drawing lots, or through group decisions. With a bit of prompting from the director, the children worked out the setting, action, and dialogue.

"Creative drama has endless possibilities as a subject matter teaching device," Miss Sharon contends. "When children take part in learning with their emotions as well as their intellects, their experience is vivid and will be remembered."

"This teaching method also is training in the value of working together—in the basic principles of democracy," she added. Acting exposes the whole person—physically, mentally and emotionally, Miss Sharon maintains, so, through creative drama the child discovers himself and gains confidence in himself.

"And, after all, isn't realization of self the most important thing that comes out of education?" she asks. "Only as we understand and realize ourselves do we become social persons, able to work together constructively."

## Hartssock Elected Legion Treasurer

Frederick R. Hartssock of Ithaca was elected treasurer of the Sixth District American Legion in Johnson City Sunday.

The district reported a membership of 11.34 per cent, which topped its quota for the year and entitles it to lead the annual parade of Legionnaires at Syracuse Aug. 10.

Other officers chosen were: Commander, Walder Dumond, Delaware County; First vicecommander, Vincent Mee, Broome County; second vicecommander, Louis Powdertaugh, Chemung County; third vicecommander, Austin Hoover, Tioga County; chaplain, Roger C. Underhill, Broome County; sergeant at arms, Roy Galven, Oneida County; director of Boys' State, Peter Preveti, Cortland County; director of Mountain Camp, Port Ferris, Otsego County.

Clarence Morse was chosen Ithaca delegate to the American Legion convention in Los Angeles, Calif. Leland Metzgar was named alternate.

## FREEVILLE

Freeville—Miss Beatrice Edsall is visiting Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Rabinowitz of Ovid.

T/Sgt. Robert Fellows and Mrs. Fellows of Alexandria, Va., were guests last week of his mother, Mrs. Georgia Fellows.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Schultz and son Eddie were Sunday guests of Mrs. John Schultz in Jordan.

Louis Corney of New York is spending some time with Mrs. Georgia Fellows.

Charles Lampman of Ithaca was a guest Tuesday of his mother, Mrs. Georgia Lampman, and brother, Frank Lampman.

Mr. and Mrs. John Collins and family were guests Tuesday of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Bowen of Moravia.

Mrs. Ray Willey is a patient in Cortland County Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Starkey are spending some time at their cottage on Owasco Lake.

Mrs. Ethel Bush, formerly of Freeville, who is spending some time with her son, Neill Bush and Mrs. Bush, in Virginia, recently underwent a major operation.

Mrs. Paul Merritt visited her mother, Mrs. B. F. Butman, in Red Creek from Tuesday until Friday.