

Dr. Laura Plonk, Former Citizen, Is Subject Of Newspaper Feature

Dr. Laura Plonk, well-known former citizen of Kings Mountain and co-founder with her sister of the Plonk School of Creative Arts of Asheville, was recently the subject of a feature story in the West Asheville News under the title "The News Personality of the Week."

The story, as written by Bertha Haley, staff writer for the News, follows:

Miss Laura Plonk is Director of the Plonk School of Creative Arts. She with her sister, Miss Lillian, founded, and organized this school in 1924, and Miss Laura has been Director since its opening. Miss Lillian has been assistant Director of the school since 1925.

Miss Plonk was born on a farm near Kings Mountain, N. C., the daughter of William Lafayette Plonk and Martha Ware Plonk. Her father, to whom the Plonk School of Creative Arts is dedicated as a monumental tribute, was for thirty years on the Board of Education of Cleveland County, North Carolina, and for twenty years during this time, he was its Chairman. He was also on the Board of Education at Kings Mountain public schools for a number of years.

Miss Plonk has always had a great love for reading, and while at Plonk School House, she read all the books in the school library. She had her preparatory education in connection with Lenoir-Rhyne, in Hickory, N. C.

She received her A. B. degree at Lenoir-Rhyne College, and she also received a diploma in the Speech Department. While at Lenoir-Rhyne, she was active in sports: tennis, horseback riding, and captain of the basketball team. She was also on the Staff of the Year Book, and she was valedictorian of her graduating class.

From the above school, she attended Boston School of Expression, now Curry College.

She returned to Kings Mountain public school, at that time Lynwood, and opened her studio. She started with one student, and at the end of the year had assembled forty enthusiastic pupils.

She returned to Curry College, in Boston.

She was a student of Mrs. Florence Evans of the Boston School of Public Speaking, and she has the Physical Education, Teachers' and Philosophic Diplomas from Curry College of Speech.

Miss Plonk has taught in various schools and colleges in the South, and at Wheaton College, Norton

Massachusetts. She was also instructor at Curry College of Speech Boston, Massachusetts for several years. While there, she directed 150 plays, several of which have been presented in Asheville.

The student body at Curry College was anxious to make Miss Plonk its Dean, but she refused this and various other flattering teaching positions to open a School of Creative Arts in the South.

Miss Laura Plonk and her sister, Miss Lillian, had planned and dreamed of such a school that would be training in living as well as in theory. So, in 1924, with a sole financial backing of \$400.00, two scholarships from their brothers, they with undaunted courage returned to Asheville to open this school, which may be called a laboratory for research methods in better education for children and grown-ups, where the mind, body, and spirit, must be developed for a complete and a full and happy life.

In May, 1924, right after plans had been made and the first prospectus was printed, the Misses Plonk suffered a serious loss by the death of their father who was their guiding light in this tremendous undertaking of planning their pioneer ideas of education and living through the medium of the Speech Arts.

For the first five years, the school functioned in the summer only, first at David Millard High School and later at Montford High School. In 1929 Miss Plonk realized the necessity of a winter school, and the immediate urgent step was finding a suitable place. After careful consideration, Grove Park School was selected. And in 1929, the entire property of this school became known as the Southern Workshop.

Southern Workshop was often misunderstood by the public, because it carried the designation used by handicraft and industrial organizations. So, graduates and students asked that the name be changed to one that would adequately describe the true character of the teachings of the School. Southern Workshop was discarded, and since 1939, when the school was moved to One Sunset Parkway, the school is known as the Plonk School of Creative Arts.

The Plonk School of Creative Arts is situated in the heart of nature's lovely garden, and is surrounded by warmth of these vari-colored, enchanted mountains. In this beautiful setting of pines, hemlocks, and lovely shrubbery, the students can find peace and contentment. Each

student is given individual attention, and he is guided in the development of mind, body, voice, character, and spirit.

This school is a "Training in LIVING as well as in LEARNING." It is not a school of Drama, as is so often thought, but it is a School of Creation. It meets all the requirements of the State in the Pre-School, Primary, Elementary, and High School Departments.

The College Department offers courses credited toward College Degree in: Literature, Creative English, Speech, Public Speaking, Vocal Modulation, Voice and Diction, English Grammar, College Spelling, Remedial Reading, Languages, Music, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Pantomime, Dramatic Interpretation, Acting, Radio Technique, Bible, Character Building, Spiritual Training; A Diploma from this School means that the student has the knowledge, training, and an understanding for teaching, acting, reading, directing and producing plays, and above ALL, the knowledge of living a full and creative life.

The useful activities of Miss Plonk are non-ending. Her hobby is work, more work. Her real love is the classroom where it is her intense desire to teach students to become useful men and women.

Miss Plonk is Chairman of the Speech Defects Committee of Buncombe County. Her aim is to prevent rather than cure defective speech.

On October 6 and 7, 1930, under the personal direction of Miss Plonk, the Kings Mountain Historical Pageant, commemorating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain was presented at the Auditorium in Kings Mountain, N. C. This tremendous undertaking is a procession or pageant of scenes of the Revolutionary War leading up to the great victory of the Mountain Men at Kings Mountain.

Miss Plonk is a member of the Kappa Gamma, Quota Club in Asheville.

The Key Word of this remarkable young lady is "Constant change, growth, and unfolding," on the beginning of the twenty-sixth year of the Plonk School of Creative Arts.

"Any success which I have achieved or may achieve, I attribute to the ideals instilled in me at the Plonk School of Creative Arts," is in part one of many letters received from students all over the United States praising the good works of the Misses Plonk.

Since 1924, the Plonk School of Creative Arts has directed more than

Scout Leaders To Meet 22nd

Boiling Springs, Nov. 10.—The annual Scouter-Cubber Round-Up of the Piedmont Council, Boys Scouts of America, will be held at Gardner-Webb College here on Tuesday, November 22, at which time leaders and committeemen from the counties of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford will gather for training, fellowship and inspiration. Some three hundred are expected to attend.

The Round-Up will start with an assembly in the auditorium of the college at 4:00 o'clock the afternoon of the 22nd. County District meetings will be held for Scoutmasters, Troop Committeemen, Leaders in Cub Scouting, Commissioners, Advancement, Finance, Organization and Extension, Leadership Training, Camping and Activities and Public Relations. At 6:30 a business meeting of the Executive Board will be held and at 7:30 a banquet in the college dining room. The principal speaker of the occasion will be Dr. Roswell C. Long, pastor of the Westover Hills Presbyterian church of Charlotte, a former president of Lees-McRae College and an active member of the Regional Committee of the Boy Scouts of America. Officers for the coming year will be elected.

Youth Day To Be Observed Sunday

Sunday is Youth Day for the Southern Presbyterian church. In observing this day the Young People of the First Presbyterian church under the direction of the Director of Religious Education, Miss Josephine

two hundred programs for civic clubs, churches, and other organizations in Asheville and surrounding towns.

Among the many plays presented at the Plonk School, are "Sun-Up," by Lulu Vollmer; "Lady Precious Stream," by S. I. Hsiung; and "Enter Madame," by Gilda and Dolly Byrne.

On June 2, 1949, Miss Laura and her sister, Miss Lillian Plonk, were awarded the honorary degrees of Doctor of Art from the Stanley College of the Spoken Word, Boston, Massachusetts.

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4. Any resident of the continental United States may compete except employees of the Crosley Division of the AVCO Manufacturing Corporation, retail dealers of Crosley appliances, wholesale distributors of Crosley appliances, their advertising agencies and their families. Contest subject to all federal, state, and local regulations.
5. All entries on the red Entry Blank for the Crosley Local Dealer's Contest must be delivered before December 1, 1949, to the Crosley Dealer from whom the entry was obtained.
6. All entries on either the red Blank for the local contest or the green Blank for a national contest that are mailed, must be postmarked before midnight, November 30, 1949.
7. Mail or deliver in person your red Entry Blank for the Crosley Local Dealer's Contest to the Crosley Dealer from whom the Entry Blank was obtained. Mail the green Entry Blank for the National Contest to Betty Gieser, Director of Home Economics, Crosley Division, AVCO Manufacturing Corp., Box 1388, Cincinnati, Ohio.
8. Entries will be judged and prizes will be awarded for originality, sincerity and aptness of thought. Judges' decision will be final. Duplicate entries will be awarded in case of tie. No entries will be returned. Copies, contents and ideas therein become the property of the Crosley Division, AVCO Manufacturing Corporation.
9. All winners will be notified by mail, phone or telegram. A list of the winners of the Crosley National Contest will be available on request from Crosley Division, AVCO Manufacturing Corporation, 1328 Ashland St., Cincinnati 25, Ohio, approximately two months after the close of the contest.

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