

Adult Education Expands During Year and a Half

By GIL HERMAN

A year and a half ago, Mrs. William Burlingame, 370 S. Glenhurst, made a request to the Birmingham board of education that paved the way for what has become an ever-expanding adult education program at Birmingham high school. In August, 1952 she asked the board if she could use classrooms at the new high school to conduct a course in horticultural therapy. The board recognized that citizens in the school district should have an opportunity to make use of the new school's facilities to conduct adult education classes, and they approved Mrs. Burlingame's proposal.

There weren't enough applicants for Mrs. Burlingame's course, and it never did get underway. According to Richard Featherstone, Torry school principal, who has charge of adult education, Mrs. Burlingame's course was designed to reach methods of interesting aged or infirm persons in horticulture as a means of therapy. It wasn't until the spring of 1953 that an adult program really got going at the school. In March, behind the sponsorship of the Birmingham Garden club, 160 persons signed up for a three session course in gardening. An instructor from Michigan State College was retained to teach the course. During last fall more courses were offered and more people signed up.

AT THE PRESENT time, nine courses are being taught to 11 groups comprised of 130 adults. Courses include: Cake decorating, Oil painting (beginning and advanced), piano (beginning, sewing (beginning and advanced), typing, woodworking and upholstery (two classes). Featherstone said plans are now being made for offering additional courses next fall. He added that until instructors can be arranged for, it is not known exactly what courses may be offered. Under consideration is a "do-it-yourself" course designed to assist householders in finishing attics, etc.

ONLY FOUR qualifications must be met to start an adult education course, according to Featherstone. It must be approved by the state, have a minimum enrollment of 12, an instructor must be available, and the facilities to teach the course must be present at the high school.

The board of education will not approve the expenditure of money solely to provide facilities for adult education, Featherstone said. Most adult education courses are taught by teachers of the district, who take on the job as a means of earning extra money. However, in some instances where a technical subject is taught, teachers are brought in from outside. Featherstone said that bringing

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in teachers sometimes involves more expense than the program can support. Instructors are generally paid \$2 per hour of classroom instruction. Occasionally an instructor is paid more, especially if he is involved in any great expense in travel to get to the classes, said Featherstone.

"ADULT EDUCATION in public schools is strictly a non-profit venture," Featherstone said. "However, we cannot afford to have such a program cost the district a lot of money so we have set up the program on the basis of self financing."

In most cases the cost of a course to the individual is \$2. This does not include materials. For instance, person taking a sewing course pays \$6 for the course and supplies her own needles and other materials.

In the case of the necessity of paying a high fee to an instructor the course may be slightly higher in cost to the individual.

MONEY PAID in by persons taking courses is used for teachers' pay, advertising costs and paperwork, Featherstone said. Another gardening course, such as the one proving so popular last year, is being planned for March. Featherstone said that last year's course was so well attended that a cash balance was left after expenses had been paid.

He said this money has been saved and may be used in paying some of the expenses involved in this year's course. This would possibly allow a smaller fee for persons taking the course, Featherstone said.

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