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Public Schools To Close Oct. 28 For MEA Meeting

All Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills public schools will be closed Friday, Oct. 28 to permit educators to attend the 1960 State Teachers Institute at the Masonic Temple auditorium.

More than 5,500 teachers and administrators in Oakland county are expected to attend the annual conference sponsored by the Michigan Education Association.

Harvest Dinner

The women's society of Embury Methodist church will hold its annual harvest dinner and bake sale from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Oct. 20. For information, contact Mrs. Harold C. Hansen, 1068 Chapin, Birmingham.

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Mimicking the Teacher

In a special performance at Will-O-Way apprentice theatre recently, Birmingham area students joined other thespians presenting their talents to an audience. Doing an exercise in pantomime are (from left) Anne Lawrence, 340 Ferndale, and Edward Handley, 2776 Derby, with their instructor, Henrietta Hermelin. Celia Merrill Turner is director of the apprentice theatre on Long Lake road near Telegraph.

NATURE NOW

By Lydia King Frehe
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Trial, Error Costly With Poisonous Plants

Now that we are in the midst of another rich and colorful harvest, we are reminded once more of our dependence upon plants for a large share of our food.

However, many early discoveries that not all plants nourish and bless; some kill and harm. As his knowledge of growing things increased, he learned by trial and error to avoid poisonous plants. Today, chemical analysis confirms many of these early findings.

Recently reported was the story of a young child who became very ill after eating jimson weed. Another was sickened by sampling the fruit of a castor bean plant. Jimson weed or thorn apple (Datura) is an annual growing in



Mrs. Frehe



JULIE SCHMIDT

Troth Reveals Summer Rite

Mr. and Mrs. Burt Schmidt Jr., 2400 Devon lane, Birmingham, announce the engagement of their daughter, Julie, to Donald Arthur Nummer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Nummer of Detroit. Julie attended Western Michigan university at Kalamazoo and her university. He is affiliated with Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. A summer wedding is being planned.

cultivated as well as waste places. The poisonous principle is an alkaloid "hyoscyamine," which occurs in the leaves, root and seeds. In the above instance, the victim ate of the unripe seed pod of a plant growing in an alley. In small doses this poison is used as a sedative.

A COARSE shrubby herb, jimson weed belongs to the nightshade family as do the useful potato and tomato. Its large opposite leaves resemble in shape those of holly. The white to purple flowers are trumpet-like with a five to ten toothed edge. They are born at the axis of leaf and stem and mature into a prickly fruit.

We frequently see this plant along roadsides but it is more abundant as one moves southward. Your scribe learned early to avoid it from the rich plant lore passed on to her by her pioneer grandmother. It was a common weed on my grandfather's Ohio farm.

Another childhood memory is that my grandmother's lawn with its well kept flower beds, one always centered with a castor bean plant surrounded by geranium and coleus. This tall annual was cultivated for its ornamental leaves which are large and beautifully cut. The inconspicuous flowers turn into a spiny capsule, producing three shiny black seeds marked with a grey design.

THE CASTOR BEAN (Ricinus) is native to Africa. All parts of the plant contain "ricin," a severe irritant which in sufficient quantities poisons the blood bringing death to both animals and man. Many poisonous plants are used as medicine when administered in the proper proportions. The oil pressed from the castor beans is safe to use since most of the "ricin"—a protein substance—is left in the residue. It is used in paints, dyes, cosmetics, soaps, fungicides and plastics. It is also valuable as a lubricant. India produces most of our commercial castor oil.

When in Israel, we saw large fields of experimental plantings being grown with the hope of augmenting the country's insufficient

Four Area Women Exhibit Art Work

Four Birmingham area women are exhibiting art work at the Palette and Brush club exhibition at King's Interiors, 18445 Livernois, Detroit. They are Mrs. David Gee, 3736 Peabody drive; Mrs. Howard Hite, 270 Waddington road; Mrs. Kent McIntyre, 996 Timberlake road; and Mrs. Carl Tate, 1851 Cragin, Bloomfield Hills. The opening reception is from 2 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16. Week-day hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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