



The Alliance For Cultural Democracy

Date August 85

Number 4

BULLETIN MIDWEST

Editors GudePounds

This publication is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Dear ACD members,

A question emerged as I talked with people before the June Meeting. It came up in different ways and it grew out of different experiences...but it was a recurring one that became a major focus in our planning for this year's national conference and for the work which will flow from it. The question: How can we build and maintain an organization that reflects in its reality--its membership and its work--our ideal of many different communities co-existing and working together? It's not a new question, but an essential one for the Alliance. It is a question which needs to be asked and re-asked as we continually assess the relationships among peoples--different racial groups, urban and rural communities, seniors and youth, men and women, gay and straight people. It is a question whose answers are best found in a dialogue among these diverse communities.

IMAGINATION can play a critical role in this search for answers by bringing many different people together and providing the opportunities to share our cultures, and to talk, work and party together. The Board and NOC members have developed an agenda that we think provides such opportunities and which includes a diversity of presenters and workshop leaders. We are counting on you to help too, by working to make sure that lots of different people come to Chicago. We have funding proposals that you can use to locally raise travel monies, etc. Let me know if you'd like copies. If you need more ACD brochures or posters, contact conference coordinator, Allen Schwartz.

I've included an outline of the final agenda of the conference. A more detailed agenda, with names and locations, will be sent out with the next issue of Cultural Democracy, in September. Most of the conference will take place at the Wellington Church, 615 W. Wellington, Chicago.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know. My permanent address and phone number:

RD 1 Box 196-A
Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814) 627-3241

See you in Chicago!

Lina Newhouser
Board President

FUNDS FOR IMAGINATION

We would like to remind all Illinois artists, arts administrators and interested people that technical assistance funds are available from the Illinois Arts Council to help defray the expenses incurred by persons attending conferences that offer information or training pertinent to their work in the arts or arts related fields. Imagination is one such conference/ workshop, and a spokesman for the IAC technical assistance programs has told us that funds can be available for people who can show that attending will increase their effectiveness in their work. Most technical assistance grants will cover up to 50% of a persons expenses including transportation, lodging, per diem, and registration fees. For instructions and application forms for Technical Assistance Grants, you may call:

Illinois Arts Council 312-793-6750
100 W Randolph St., Suite 10-500
Chicago, Il. 60601

or Jerri Cain-Tyson 309-298-1618
115 Browne Hall
Macomb, Il 61455

People from states other than Illinois should contact their own state arts councils for information pertaining to technical assistance grants of a similar nature to that of the IAC.

imagination!

October 11-14, 1985

Friday, October 11

3-6pm Registration

7-10pm Opening event--cabaret style, including:

- * a variety of short performances
- * short talks--welcome to conference, what is ACD?, self-determination as conference theme.
- * dancing and time to visit
- * open slots for comments from the floor
- * time slots for discussion of specific topics
- * time for adding to the "conference mural" that will grow during the weekend.

The idea for this evening is for the event to be about the people(s) who are at the conference and for the performances to help create a sense of community.

Saturday, October 12

9-11am The Ground We Are Standing On Plenary presentation of works and discussion with representatives from urban, rural and immigrant/exile communities.

11:30am Lunch (Provided through conference fee)

1-3:30pm Workshops (see list at end of agenda)

4-6:30pm Working It Out Plenary with presentations of works and discussion with representatives from labor and education communities.

8pm- Party with dancing and performances (possibly an open cabaret)

Sunday, October 12

10-12:30pm What Sea Do We Swim In & What Kind of a Fish Does It Make Us? Plenary with presentations of works and discussion with representatives from the Black, Asian-American, deaf and artists' communities.

12:30pm Lunch (provided)

1:30-4pm Workshops (see list)

4pm ACD Membership Business Meeting

8pm Film and Video Screenings

Monday, October 14

9-11:30am All Fired Up Plenary with presentations of works and discussion with people working on the issues of Native American land and water rights, militarism, farm foreclosures, and South African apartheid.

11:30am Lunch (provided)

1-4pm IMAGINATION: Creating a Cultural Bill of Rights This will be the culminating event of the conference, one that we build for throughout the conference. The plan is to come out of this event with the first draft of a Cultural Bill of Rights which would articulate the vision of cultural democracy, and be a tool we can use throughout the coming year as we add to and refine it through the regional policy seminars and local organizing. At the 1986 ACD conference we will adopt a final draft of the Cultural Bill of Rights and then put it out into the world.

- Agenda for the meeting:
1. What is the vision of cultural democracy & self-determination?
 2. What are the obstacles to achieving this vision?
 3. How can these obstacles be overcome?
 4. Cultural Bill of Rights--develop and endorse.

Workshops

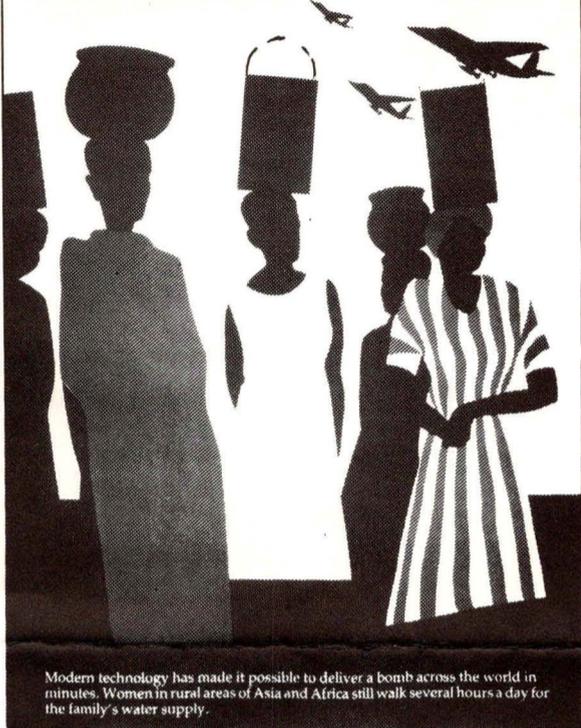
The plan is to place a set of workshops between two plenary sessions, so they can build off one plenary and into the next one. Below are the topics that have been suggested so far. This list may change some by the conference, but probably not much.

1. Community Cultural Centers: Organizing & Maintaining Them
2. Drama by the Community for Reflection & Action. Is this called Animation?
3. Central America: Intervention/ Exile/ Sanctuary
4. Alternative Fundraising for Small Organizations
5. Open Dialogue II Organizing Caucus
6. Artists Working in Institutions
7. Black Art/ White Art (multi-racial work)
8. The Whisper Project
9. Demonstrations as an Art Form
10. Media Access/ Cable
11. Alternative Publications
12. Terms/ Language
13. Chicago Mural Tour
14. Working with Youth
15. Working with Elders
16. Displacement

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES- \$45 ACD members; \$55 non-members; \$25 unemployed. \$70 ACD membership and conference registration. Add \$10 after September 30. For information and registration, contact: Allen Schwartz, ACD; 2262 W 119th Pl. Blue Island, IL. 60606. 312-388-3871



PEOPLE NEED WATER NOT WEAPONS



Modern technology has made it possible to deliver a bomb across the world in minutes. Women in rural areas of Asia and Africa still walk several hours a day for the family's water supply.

NORTHLAND POSTER COLLECTIVE: FIGHTING FOR A PLACE ON THE WALL

One of the greatest difficulties facing progressive cultural workers is the problem of how to get our work circulated. Once the poem, play, dance, picture, etc. has been created, it still has far to go to reach the hands, eyes, and ears of the people it's intended for. The existing cultural distribution systems are geared toward profit making and are not very open to works which challenge their cozy status quo. Nor do they offer a fair return to the artists for their labor.

As muralists, theaterworkers, musicians and writers have been increasingly forming networks of mutual support, poster-makers have remained relatively isolated from each other (outside of local areas). Some have stopped producing posters because of the cost and difficulty of distribution.

The Northland Poster Collective, a six-year old poster-printing collective in Minneapolis/St Paul, is pursuing one approach to solving this problem for political printmakers. In early 1984 we began systematically contacting artists and collectives around the country and laying the groundwork for a national poster distribution system.

The centerpiece of the project is the Northland Poster Catalog, a mail-order catalog of some 85 posters and several cards. The posters cover a wide range of social concerns and styles. Artists receive 60% of the income received from the sale of posters. The response to the project has been enthusiastic from the artists and the progressive stores who form the foundation of the distribution network.

Our goal is to provide a source of income to politically committed artists to allow them to continue their work while reaching ever-wider audiences with the pro-human values reflected in that work. We think it's possible to achieve this without the dependence on corporate and government monies, the lack of which has so crippled many community arts organizations.

The catalog is available for \$1 (refunded with your first order) from:

Northland Poster Collective
127 N Washington Ave, Room A
Minneapolis, Mn. 55401

Ricardo Morales

ILLINOIS REGIONAL MEETING

Thirty people gathered in Champaign for discussion and presentations at the ACD Illinois regional meeting on Saturday, April 13th. A long and lively discussion ensued about strategies of cultural work with communities. These are a few points voiced during the discussion:

We often talk to the community as if "we" are apart from it. We are a product of the culture imposed on us. Communities of people are markets to be exploited. Rather than ignore the popular culture people are already fond of ("authentic cultural expression?"), we can show that the culture being fed to us is produced. Michael Jackson is a creation. Exposing popular and commercial culture is a first step. Negating is useful up to a point; then we need to go beyond the mocking and posit what culture could be.

Since pre-packaged, pre-prepared culture provides the major images most people have, a radical re-thinking of the structure of society is required to offer new images. In working with kids (and adults), take the frame off cultural products—take apart the cultural forms we know. Show that they are created, analyze how they are created, encourage reflection and the desire to create our own culture. Critical thinking is necessary. We can offer choices to the existing popular culture and help people make their own art.

A note of warning: do we exploit the people we're actually trying to help? In an animation situation, whose words do we use in creating an art piece? We have a responsibility both to ourselves as artists and to the community we work with.

Culture is a process, a social relationship. It is usually talked about as a thing, framed as a commodity. Culture is a two-way process (unlike tv). Something unpredictable happens when two people talk together.

At the beginning of the session, Annetta Pedretti, a Swiss writer, described a process of one-to-one letter writing which we used during the day. At any point, one person could write a letter to another person about a specific concern, or about something that he or she didn't get a chance to say during the large group discussions. Copies of the letters were posted on a wall throughout the day for people to read, so another "conference" happened simultaneously with the scheduled events. This writing functioned both as a private (addressed to one person from one person) and a public (displayed for the entire group) communication.

Annetta noticed that the most exciting aspects of conferences she has attended have been discussions during coffee breaks, not the actual large-group presentations and discussions. In lieu of designing a conference made up entirely of coffee breaks, she developed the letter writing process to provide an undercurrent to the large group activities. She has published pre- and post-conference books based on an accumulation of all the writings. We will try a similar idea during the national conference in Chicago.

The afternoon of presentations included a performance by Candace Walworth entitled "Writing Against the Grain", in which she flipped back and forth between two speakers, each speaker embroiled in her habits, one talking directly about habits, one taking them for granted. Ron Sakolsky explained and showed current work being done as mail art (based on theme) and correspondence art (one-to-one correspondence). GudePounds showed slides and talked about their work as street art collaborators, as well as current work by other members of the Chicago Public Art Group.

Bob Feldman

PUBLIC ART CONTROVERSY by Cynthia Weiss of Chicago Public Art Group
(formerly Chicago Mural Group)

Two recent works of public art are now under seige by a public demanding their removal. One, Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc", a sculpture commissioned by the General Services Administration for the Javitz Federal Building in Manhattan, has received national attention. The second, a fresco by Chicago artist Irene Siegel, commissioned by the City of Chicago's Percent for Arts Program for a new regional library, has sparked a local controversy. Both works have generated heated public debate, and raise complicated questions about the role of the public in public art. For community artists with dual allegiances to neighborhood self-determination and the integrity of artistic expression, these questions are doubly complicated.

The sculpture, "Tilted Arc" is a 120 ft. long by 12 ft. high, curved steel wall. Since its installation in 1981, office workers have complained about the graffitied, rusting wall which divides the plaza in two. Last March, GSA regional administrator William Diamond, set up a public hearing to determine whether to relocate the work. At the hearing 58 people spoke out in opposition, and the 118 defenders, (including public figures like Joan Mondale and Senator Javitz) raised issues of free expression, censorship, the need for unqualified government support for the arts, and the merits of Serra's work.

Among the artists testifying in Serra's behalf, there was a shared desire to defend "one of our own." The question we are confronted with as community artists is who is one of our own? Blaise Tobia, an editor for Art and Artists, in the issue dedicated to the Serra hearings, asked, "Do the majority of artists really have more in common with Richard Serra or Leo Castelli (Serra's dealer) than they do with the working people of the Federal Plaza?" Richard Serra has said in an interview, "The work I make does not allow for experience outside the conventions of sculpture as sculpture. My audience is necessarily very limited."

As community artists we do not define our constituency as the art community, but rather as the entire community that will view our work. Our audience is not limited. The concerns of office workers, or children or union members who will watch our plays or view our murals are incorporated in the creation of our work. Serra's definition of his site-specific public art is that his work is determined by the topography of the site. We expand our definition of site specific to include the ethnicity, history, sociology, and human spirit of our work sites.

To create work in dialogue with an audience assumes that there is trust and shared values with that audience. In most cases that's true; we can educate people to our ideas and they deeply educate us. But what happens when we come across a section of a community hostile to our values? Muralists have often been confronted at preliminary meetings with antagonists who believe murals are ghetto art. These factions have opposed mural themes, organized against projects, and in a few instances, insisted upon the removal of completed murals. At these times, the drama played out at a community level becomes part of the larger political picture. Supportive community members are our allies, but so are defenders of free expression, enlightened politicians and supporters of the arts.

As much as I dislike Serra's attitude, sympathize with the Federal office workers, and even agree to the idea of the sculpture's relocation, I am uncomfortable when I recall the vitriolic testimony at a recent public art hearing in Chicago. A resident from the neighborhood of Irene Siegel's fresco attacked her work with ugly remarks and threatened a law suit to remove her work, warning, "I know there is a precedent for such action with the Richard Serra piece in New York."

The specifics of the Siegel debate differ from Serra's. The regional G.S.A. in New York has voted to remove Serra's work; the Chicago Office of Fine Arts has made a firm commitment to protect Siegel's work. There is a similarity with the

selection process used in both projects. Both were criticized for lack of public participation. Work for the Sulzer Regional Library was selected by an advisory panel to the Percent for the Arts Program. The panel was composed of the director of the library, a community resident and artist, the director of a prestigious Chicago gallery, and the City Architect. After viewing slides, artists were recommended and these recommendations were approved by the Public Art Committee of the Chicago Council on Fine Arts.

The committees did not see final sketches for any of the artists' works. Siegel presented preliminary sketches, but the community representative was not at that showing. The artists were not asked to meet with any community groups nor make any public presentations of their work. This was particularly upsetting to the Ravenswood community leaders who had been involved in planning other stages of the Library's development.

Siegel's mural which depicts scenes from Virgil's Aeneid is painted in bold colors in an expressionistic style. She has hand-written quotes from the Aeneid as well as from Pablo Neruda in many sections of the four walls. The librarians hated what they saw as they watched the mural unfold. They contacted the city to complain and then the local alderman. Siegel was asked to stop her work until a community forum could be held. Close to 200 people attended the meeting.

Critics testified against the mural; they hated the written quotes, which to their eyes resembled graffiti; they felt it would lead to more graffiti throughout the building. Others objected to the images of war and destruction, and to the painting style which they found inappropriate to a community meeting room used by children. They were furious that no one had consulted them about the nature of the work, and they felt powerless to change it at this point.

It is easy to sympathize with the community's concerns; Siegel's work might not be appropriate for that room. If the Percent for the Arts guidelines encouraged consultations with the community, and if Siegel had talked with those concerned before she designed her work, the controversy might have been avoided. Yet we need to defend the right for art to be messy, difficult, or new. Safe art that offers no challenges can't be guaranteed even with community involvement. Aesthetics is messy here. Where to stand on the battle lines is not clear.

The mural quickly became politicized in a politically and racially polarized city. The anti-Harold Washington alderman's proposed legislation would empower aldermen to choose three community representatives for every public art advisory committee, and reduce the arts expert members to one. The results would be a less democratic system than the one he hopes to correct.

The public hearing concerning his legislation was filled with ironies for the community artists in attendance. One woman testified that she thought the mural should have contained images of people from the neighborhood, another that it should have celebrated Slavik heritage. Expressions of cultural identity we (CPAG artist) have chosen to portray in our work were being mandated as the only right way to paint a mural. Community artist and Hispanic arts leader, Jose Gonzales, also testified. He explained the importance of public participation and cultural expression in the creation of his work, but he said that each situation and each artist was different; he'd be the last person to dictate that every artist should work as he did.

The public's role in public art is being debated across the country. Being in the middle puts the community artist in a special role. We should take this opportunity to deepen the debate and raise the issues that need to be raised: that there must be ample opportunities for dialogue between artists and their public, that plurality of expression must be defended, and that good public art and artists should by definition anticipate an audience.

PERSONAL/POLITICAL WORKSHOP?

Sitting here in Champaign-Urbana, going through a personal mid-life relationship crisis, I am wondering how to write this so that it doesn't sound like I am writing it from a "sensitivity training, get it touch with one's own feelings" seminar. Being aware of the fact that many of the problems that led to my current crisis are situational in that they stem from the difficulties of being a self-employed, travelling, progressive artist in Reagan's 1980's, I also wonder, "Am I nuts, or what?" Do other people who do similar work have similar problems integrating personal and family life with the craziness of trying to swim upstream politically, culturally, financially and creatively in this society?

My awareness that some of you are dealing with the same questions stems from conversations between workshops that I had with many of you at the last national conference in Washington, D.C. There was a shared knowledge, especially among those of us who have been doing progressive cultural work for a long time, that our work creates havoc in our personal lives, and that there is dismay about that since many of us have considered ourselves to be living examples of the phrase, "the personal is political."

During Doug Patterson's workshop on Cultural Animation, many of our concerns, voiced in a first go 'round of the circle, seemed to be mostly on the personal end of the personal-political dialectic. I became aware of the need for us to do a cultural animation project with ourselves, not only to be able to solve our personal dilemmas creatively, but to be more effective politically.

At the national conference in Chicago, I would like to find a time and space dedicated to the sharing of some work-related personal concerns, with an eye towards learning from one another in order to design some creative solutions; a personal animation workshop for amateurs. Is there any interest out there among you ACD members, or am I nuts or what?

Debbie Langerman United Mime Workers
P.O. Box 2088, Station A
Champaign, IL 61820

URBAN TRADITIONS publishes a newsletter called "Expressions" and hopes to publish a book this fall on the roles of ethnic and traditional arts in Illinois communities. The group is a project of the American Jewish Committee's Institute for American Pluralism, and is located at 55 E Jackson, Suite 1880, Chicago 60604. Call Margy McClean at 312-663-5400.

SPERTUS MUSEUM OF JUDAICA, 613 S Michigan Ave, Chgo., will have an exhibit, "Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art", Sept 15-Dec 27/ There will be a Family Day Arts Festival on Oct. 13 and an exhibit of contemporary Jewish art in Chicago. For info. call 312-922-9012.

THE BLACK THEATER ALLIANCE OF CHICAGO will host a convention of the Midwest Black Theater Alliance on Oct. 11-12, featuring 11 performances at 9 locations. For locations and times call 312-288-5100. The Alliance is located at 7558 S South Chicago Ave., Chgo.

MIRA will publish this fall its 1985 edition of the Midwest Directory of Latino Artists/Organizations. One of the group's current projects is to create a Museo de la Raza, featuring a Chicano Studies Center to be named after slain labor organizer Rudy Lozano. MIRA will cosponsor with the Museum of Natural History an exhibit, "The World of Agustin V. Casasola: 1900-1938", Sept 12- Nov 8. There will be various speakers and films during the exhibit, including Carlos Monsivais and Felipe Arenberg from Mexico. Each Thursday, a free admission day at the museum, an event will be scheduled. MIRA is arranging special buses to the museum on those day from different parts of the city.

THE PEACE MUSEUM moved recently to 430 W Erie, Chgo., one block west of its old spot. It is now 3 1/2 years old and has mounted 16 exhibitions. The Museum is the first of its kind in the nation: a museum dedicated to exploring the issues of peace and war through visual, literary and performing arts. Although there are many war memorials, there has never been a museum in the U.S. dedicated to raising public consciousness about the issues involved in building peace.

The Peace Museum provides peace education through exhibitions, films, lectures and festivals, as well as through educational outreach, research, and awards programs. The Museum is also developing a Peace Resource Center and currently makes books, posters and other material available through its museum store.

The next exhibit will open Sept 15 running through Dec 31 and will be called, "Child's Play: An exhibition of toys and games for parents, teachers and children". Two recent exhibits have traveled to Ireland, "The Unforgettable Fire" (Hiroshima/Nagasaki), and "Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.- Peacemaker". Other recent shows were the "The Ribbon", frieze panels on the theme 'what I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war'; "The Writing on the Wall - An Exhibition of Work by Calligraphic Artists"; "1000 Buttons", peace buttons and posters; and a contest for a logo, "Give Peace a 'Look'". The Peace Museum is now a scheduled stop on the city's Culture Bus West. For more info. call Mark Rogovin, 312-440-1860

AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN

BROADCLOTH '86

Phyllis Jane Rose sent us lots of exciting and inspirational information on the current projects of this professional women's theatre. Unfortunately, space and cost prevent us from sharing it with you this issue--we'll be forwarding the information to the editors of CD. Briefly, it is an outline of a multi-faceted plan in effect at AFOM to become a more multi-racial/cultural/generational performance company. AFOM is also seeking scripts from women of color for consideration for Broadcloth '86 to be produced by MCAW (Multimedia Crosscultural Alliance of Women).

At the Foot of the Mountain
2000 S Fifth St
Minneapolis, Mn. 55454-1337



MARCH (MOVIMIENTO ARTISTICO CHICANO) has a traveling exhibit of posters and graphics by the Royal Chicano Air Force (Sacramento CA) from the period 1973-1980. It will be on exhibit during all of July in Madison WI at the Survival Graphics School of Art, 853 Williamson. Poetry readings and music will be scheduled in conjunction. This show was recently at Chicago's Casa Aztlan and the Heartland Cafe. In the past year MARCH sponsored a series of monthly poetry readings and musical performances at the Galeria Iquique, 532 S Plymouth Ct., Chgo. They hope to do this again starting in the fall. MARCH member Carlos Cumpian is editing and anthology of Chican poetry, "Cosecha Aztlan", to be published in July. It will cost \$3. In November, MARCH will cosponsor a show with MIRA, entitled "dia de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead), at Inkworks, 19th and Bishop, Chgo. Call Carlos Cortez at 312-935-6188 for info.

MEMBERS TO ADD TO MAILING LIST

- Jno Cook, 3819 N. Ravenswood
Chicago, IL 60613
- Jim & Moie Crawford, Star Rt., Box 168B
Hustontown, PA 17229
- Brian Cutean, 505-B East 47th Street
Austin, TX 78571
- Muriel Dimen, 312 W. 20th Street
New York, NY 10011
- Ferd Eggan, 3032 N. Racine
Chicago, IL 60657
- David Fichter, 503 Franklin St. #1
Cambridge, MA 02139
- Norm Fruchter, 577 Sixth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215
- Grassroots Leadership, Si Kahn, President
400 E. Tremont Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28203
- Monty Hempel, 147 Dartmouth Place
Claremont, CA 91711
- Ingrid Kallick, Channing-Murray Fndtn.
1209 W. Oregon St., Urbana, IL 61801
- Miki Liszt, 1922 Greenbrier Dr.
Charlottesville, VA 22901
- Velma Love, S.C. Arts Commission
1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201
- Mainly Fine Art, c/o Labardee
1422 S. 7th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85713
- Susan McCarn, 1313 T Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
- Susan Perlstein, Elders Share the Arts
425 E. 25th St., Rm. 825
New York, NY 10010
- Esther Parada, 616 Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60304
- Neil and Laura Seldman, 3201 19th St., NW
Washington, DC 20010
- Ira Shor, 100 Bank St., #4E
New York, NY 10014
- Anne Silverman, 39 Powderhouse Terrace
Sommerville, MA 02144
New York, NY 10014
- Donna Slepach, 317 Bughton
Oregon City, OR 97045
- Small Family Orchestra, P.O. Box 8681
Atlanta, GA 30306
- Stephanie Smith
Cultural Education Collaboration
11 Ocean St., Dorchester, MA 02124
- Cheryl L. Yuen, 312 Malden
La Grange Park, IL 60525



Congratulations to Margaret Gude of Boston, a new ACD member and the first registrant for the Imagination conference.

THE BOULEVARD ARTS CENTER is a new teaching, performing and exhibit center. Serving the southwest side of Chicago, residents of different races and nationalities have the opportunity to tell their stories, express the aspirations of their communities, and share the richness of their different and common cultural heritage with the rest of the community through murals and exhibits, dance, theatrical and music performances and literary productions. This summer, the Center is sponsoring an Employment-Training Program for youths. Groups of youths will be working with professional artists in five skill areas. Upcoming events include:
 Aug 24- Arts and Ethnic Festival
 Aug 30-Theatrical and Dance Production
 Sept 15- Fall term begins
 Sept 21- Childrens Play
 Oct 20- Exhibition by John Pittman Weber
 Nov 10- Family Arts Sundays begin
 Dec 7&8- Children's Art Festival

UNESCO UPDATE

In response to my article on the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO in the Northeast Bulletin (April, I.ii.), Arlene Goldbard wrote to me (as part of a longer personal letter) about another significant issue involved in the U.S. withdrawal that was not covered in the article. She agreed to have this printed here:

"The official terms of the debate, the rules, are set by the Reagan administration. Naturally, they want to set them in terms of the moral panic about the New World Information Order and racist images of African bureaucrats whooping it up in Paris on the U.S. taxpayers' dollar. You've approached the core of the issue by saying that UNESCO is too democratic; the Reagan administration doesn't want to be part of any global assemblies that operate on the principle of one country, one vote. But it's more insidious than that."

"American cultural products (records, TV programs, films, and so on) find some of their largest markets abroad. The Motion Picture Export Association and other industry groups want to insure the 'free flow of cultural products' internationally; that is, they want to eliminate tariffs and trade restrictions in this area. This is a strictly American crusade in that ours is the only industry large enough to need global saturation to sustain it. Third world countries and other countries like Australia, France, Belgium and Canada have only been able to develop indigenous media industries by doing two things: limiting the amount of American product that can be shown on broadcast (usually by requiring a certain amount of 'domestic content' as the Canadians have done); and taxing incoming American product to support indigenous industries. Without these measures you wouldn't be seeing the big Australian film boom the last ten years or so have brought. You would, however, be seeing 'I Love Lucy' reruns in every country on the planet."

"The MPEA and other Hollywood lobbies have Reagan's ear, needless to say, and I think their relationship goes a long way in explaining the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO. So does John Fobes, the former head of the U.S. Commission-- or at least that's what he said when I asked him. Don and I tried to get some leftist journals to publish something exposing the Hollywood connection, but they either were convinced not to care much by all the wild rhetoric about threats to freedom of the press, or were convinced that UNESCO is too flawed to defend by all the wild rhetoric about mismanagement (in an agency whose total budget amounts to a mote in a speck on the national debt)."

Bob Feldman

NEWS FROM THE OZARKS

Talking with Tom Ashcraft, an itinerant sculptor, and Bob Dyer, poet and singer along the Missouri River, it becomes clear that most of the organized art energy around here is coming from women's groups. Among on-going and recent activities:

An hour video documentary by Denise Henderson on American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier now held in the federal prison medical center in Springfield, Mo.

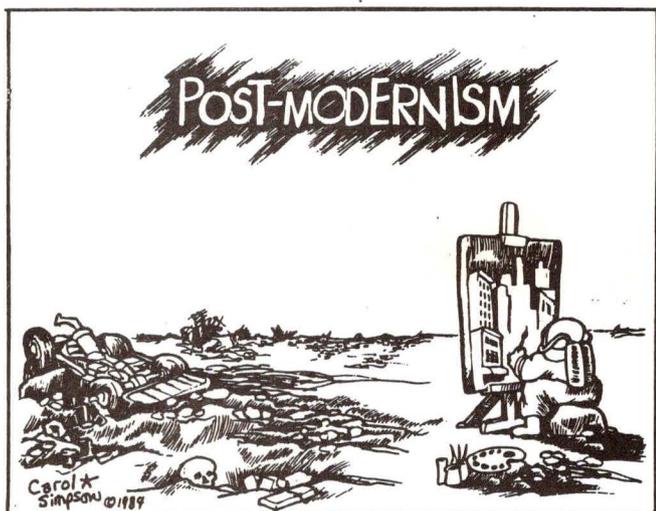
Numerous benefits involving music of all kinds throughout the Ozarks for Jacki Malone, an accupuncturist barred from practice by the state of Missouri.

Doug Wixson, completing a study of Jack Conroy and the political writers and their community in the Midwest during the Depression.

Carolyn & Dan Woodward who opened the Rolla Art Museum and Gallery last spring which so far has featured shows ranging from "50 Rolla Artists" to drawings by Rockwell Kent.

Herisen Concert in Rolla in April, with 30 or so women doing music, followed by a learn-in on Central American issues by the Rolla Peace Issues Group.

Sandy Primm, Rt. 6, Rolla, Missouri



KIOSK CULTURE

In recent discussions with other artists about the nature of public and political art, the conversation frequently turned to the problem of distribution. To some the act of distributing their work is equal in importance to the content of the work itself because the context of distribution so colors and forms the work. When examining the dissemination of art works, it is useful to compare this to the established infrastructure for the dissemination of the commercial or commodity culture. In doing this type of analysis, it becomes clear that the infrastructure of the commercial/fine arts' world and that of the general commodity culture are cut from the same cloth. Indeed, the publicists and advertising agencies perform the same roles and tasks whether selling margarine or the Alvin Ailey Dancers.

Many consumer goods are marketed these days by reference to some pleasurable or interesting feeling rather than by reference to specific qualities of the product itself. In much the same way, the fine arts are marketed by the undefined but ever-present suggestion of the "uplifting" experience of culture. Oftentimes, the art being promoted is as canned as the promotion for it. The work is philosophically limited by the assumptions and necessities of its distribution.

If we are dissatisfied with the results we get from a "commodified" culture and seek to replace it with something else, it is important to recognize that the means of distribution of such culture are critically important and deeply entrenched. The commercial media which comprise the distribution infrastructure are among the strongest cultural forces in our society. If in the advancement of democratic culture we take recourse to these distribution networks, their underlying proprietary, anti-democratic character can undermine our goals by their standard procedures. So while alternative presses and community access cable do offer an opening to democratic culture amidst the proprietary norm, they provide a weak foundation for a culture of mutual aid and participation. The freedom of the press is still reserved for those who own one. And it's called community "access" cable, not community "owned" cable. There is an admission charge, political or financial, levied by the cable operators and municipal authorities.

The ideal distribution method of a popular democratic culture is also its propagation or cultivation. It starts at home, where we live, among our neighbors. We need as our foundation cultural base communities, and we need to create the infrastructure to support and facilitate these bases. What now exists in neighborhoods, on the street corners and front steps, at the bars and around the kitchen table, as gossip and local smalltalk can be elevated to more serious discussion and more thorough appreciation of who we are and what we can do together.

The public spaces in most communities are in key aspects not public spaces at all. Someone owns the buildings and the lots they're on, and the city "owns" the streets, sidewalks, parkways, and lamp-posts. All of these spaces are used, but haphazardly and inefficiently. Their utility is at the discretion of the authorities. Political slogans, stickers, gang markings, children's chalk games, dance posters go up; the rain washes them away. Ironically, it is the so-called "nice neighborhoods" whose cultural deadness and passivity is clearly evidenced by the lack of any such public expression, an isolating neatness which keeps neighbors at home in front of the tube.

Because the streets, sidewalks, light poles, etc. were not specifically designed to accommodate expressive statements, some permanent, prominent place needs to be reserved on each city block, or at some other reasonable proportion to population in rural areas. It should be a social place, for messages, however casual, poems, children's pictures, posters, a place to congregate and talk and read. The kiosks found in Europe and on many college campuses in this country offer an example. The message walls in Cuba, maintained by

the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and the wall-posting of newspapers in China offer more vivid models. In small rural communities, the post office or general store once provided such a basis for community communication. In an urban setting, block clubs might be a starting point. The key is to begin with whatever forms of community exists already.

In proposing something like a kiosk as an important instrument of culture, I am aiming at a conception of culture that is about empowerment. We must consistently and as a matter of course go beyond the formal practice of the various arts and look to the transmission and generation of values inherent in the medium when we make culture. This is not a new idea, but as artists we tend to gravitate back to our disciplines or practices as the locus of our thinking. The gallery, the theater, even the occasional mural, precisely because they are occasional, too infrequent and present as an exception, are not community resources with wide bases of support or utility. They can become more at the heart of the functioning life, but we must have a bridge. Changing the theaters or galleries, painting more murals, even one on every block, will not do this. A new physical element of community life, something that people can use to reach each other between visits to plays, galleries, speakers, films, or meetings--something practically on our doorsteps, because it's hard to get most people on a TV diet to lift a finger to get another view.

You may argue that a new physical element alone, without the social changes to support it, would be fruitless. When people are inert, with the passivity bred by mere culture consumption (whether "high" or "low"), changes in the environment are needed to change them by making new demands on them. Lately most of these changes have been negative, with mill closings and factory shutdowns, farm foreclosures and layoffs. People have gone through many changes because of these things; why not a change for the better? There can be no ultimate failure from reaching out to people at this basic level of offering them a medium of communication.

Tom Vega-Byrnes

ARTS IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Western Illinois University College of Fine Arts Development is looking for money to complete a color videotape that tells the farmer's story through the lenses of videographer Tom Finnerty of Chicago and narration of James Ritchie, a journalist from Versailles, Missouri. A script for the film was written by Joe Arpad, folklorist from Bowling Green, Ohio, in consultation with Chip Dodsworth and rural archivists, philosophers, and historians. WIUCFAD has worked with Two Rivers Arts Council representatives to develop the script.

The Two Rivers Arts Council and CFAD have just received the finished video documentary of the 1984 Cultural Animation Project done in the community of Bushnell, pop. 4000. Five amateurs from Cherry Creek, Inc., worked for eight weeks in that community to reactivate an awareness of shared values, history, goals, beauty, problems, folklore, and dreams. The videotape entitled, "Windows-on-the-Prairie", documents the Bushnell cultural animation process.

All of this has to do with the cultural milieu of west central Illinois, a place where rural, midwestern culture trickles out of the fields like the black loam itself to float off into someone's memory recorded in a story for the book series, *Tales from Two Rivers I, II, III*. West Central Illinois is becoming something else - its culture is in transition. Its artists- some of them- are holding up a mirror to show the people living here something of what is passing and something of what is coming.

Jerrilee Cain-Tyson

LET THE PEOPLE'S VOICE BE HEARD!

Holidays in the U.S. have a way of losing their meaning. Religious holidays can become festivals of consumerism; patriotic holidays symbolized more by fireworks than by the anti-imperialism they commemorate; veterans days memorializing the sacrifices of people in wars whose meanings have been forgotten, or more recently, re-written. Few of our holidays commemorate the majority of our people, the working people, their struggles and their history--yet holidays are an important ritual element in a culture.

May 1986 will be the centennial of an event which has spawned the most internationally celebrated holiday, labor day or International Working Peoples Day. In May of 1886, a group of socialists, union and community organizers organized an enormous march for the 8 hour day. In Chicago Lucy Parsons, a black ex-slave, her husband Albert Parsons of blue blood New England stock, and their two children marched at the head of 80,000 workers of a dozen different nationalities speaking a plethora of languages. The newspapers screamed "Hang an organizer from every lamppost" and called the children "anarchist sucklings." Two days later a peaceful crowd protesting the murder of strikers by the police were attacked by the police; a bomb was thrown, no one knows by whom, and the Haymarket Affair was begun.

Amid international outcry, an infamous witchhunt and frame-up ensued in which four men, including Albert Parsons, were hung and three sentenced to prison. No evidence ever linked them to the bomb--one because he had contributed \$2 to buy the press that printed the leaflet that called the meeting where the bomb was thrown. The states attorney stated that the defendants were no more guilty than the thousands who followed them, "Kill them and you've stopped the movement."

A million watched the ten mile long funeral procession for the martyrs under strict police orders that no one could sing or whistle. And the movement never stopped. The infamous crime is commemorated around the world every year in a holiday which symbolizes the struggle throughout the 20th Century and the world for union rights, human rights, civil rights, peace and justice.

The Haymarket Centennial Committee of Chicago has resolved to the brave the outrageous arrows of redbaiting and rightwing national policy to create through the arts a month long celebration in May of 1986 of the spirit of struggle of working people. Mobilizing diverse groups in the religious, academic, arts, union, ethnic and media communities the Committee is putting together a city wide program of concerts,

readings, theatre, exhibits, the establishment of a peoples labor park, and several conferences. With the support of the city government these events and others like community storytelling circles will be an important opportunity for cultural education. Artists John O'Neal, Pete Seeger, Ed Asner, Bernice Reagon, and Meridel Le Sueur are among those who have sent their support and offers to participate. Who else but the peoples cultural workers could keep our history, our songs of struggle, our dreams and visions alive?

"this is the coming forth they all died for... back in seed time. It is happening from that little square in Chicago...this is what gives them strength, some backward reflection so they can remember the future...Should be images of the hanging... nooses turn to freedom, and twelve foot high puppets. Slogan should be Parsons' last words 'Let the Voice of the People Be Heard'

"From the back of the wagon in Haymarket to Nicaragua to Africa above it all it should show the fruits of the struggle come to ripeness, verging on a new world, the great struggle in Gary to open the mills, thousands of unemployed steel workers, sanctuary workers... I'll come in a wheel chair if necessary. Must be joy in entering the moment. I keep thinking of those hoods and nooses, take them off, you are wonderful to go on love"

Meridel Le Sueur

In May 1986, the eyes of the world will be on Chicago. Let the world see the other America. Plan to be here and bring your art.

For information, contact Allan Schwartz

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