

# The Alliance For Cultural Democracy

## BULLETIN

SUMMER 1987

Southeast Editors:  
Nancy J. Meyer  
Mary Ostenso



Peter Gourlain

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Travelers,

I am writing this to all of you while sitting on the airplane, returning home to ACD Central from my participation in the "Voices of Dissent" conference in Philadelphia. It was exciting to sit on a panel representing the Alliance next to Ronnie Gilbert, Ishmael Houston Jones, and Adrienne Jennick, and to hear Bernice Reagon, Moe Foner, Howard Zinn and others talk about their work. There were quite a few ACD members at the conference, but most people had never heard of the Alliance or our work and this was a great opportunity to introduce ourselves. I'm sure that we will gain a number of new members with a huge thank-you for that going to Matt Schwartzman, Mark O'Brien, and Jenney Milner, who not only let us put ACD brochures in everyone's conference folder, but actively encouraged people to join the Alliance as a way of continuing the dialogue and work begun at the conference.

The ACD members at the conference were at work with the N.Y. and Pennsylvania regional members meeting to decide and plan how they can continue to be active in their region. There was also a meeting for people from Philly who are interested in organizing themselves into an ACD chapter.

Regional organizing is the key to ACD's growth and success as an alliance. It solves, immediately, some of the problems voiced by the membership over the years about the lack of action and activity by the alliance between national conferences, it fulfills the desire of the members for more communication with one another, and the need for ACD to be more geographically representative. But most importantly, regional organizing and local grassroots activity will bring ACD closer to being a model of cultural democracy at work, and will help us realize, together, a restructuring of ACD that will invert the pyramid from Board-run to member-generated programs.

Already, quite a few of the regions have met and or have plans for meeting. Boston area ACD members held a coffee house, and N.Y. members have met with PA., the Midwest is planning a get together for early June in Michigan, Omaha members have met, and folks in Minneapolis are busy planning for our Board meeting to be held May 30 and 31 in their city. California ACDers have met to begin to plan for the next ACD conference/festival/event planned for the Spring of 1988.

So, if you haven't met with other ACD folks in your region since Boston, consult your membership list, or the list of conference participants and create a mailing list of activist and community artists, and all interested friends in your area, and call people together. If you want any suggestions for how to go about it, give me a call at 217/328-3025, and for sure if you've already done something in your area or region, let me know!!!

**Good News:** Board members Mark Miller and Maryo Ewell have finished a long awaited first draft of the Bill of Cultural Rights. A copy will go out to all of you this summer for your comments, criticisms, and additions. Congratulations to Mark and Maryo for their hard work!

**Bad News:** Even though we have been working steadily on developing a fundraising strategy for ACD and there are good possibilities coming our way for grants, at the moment we are still in a financial crunch! Please, if you haven't renewed your membership, do so now. If you're feeling full and there's a roof over your head, send a donation to ACD to help us continue the work. Make checks payable to Neil V. Sieling and send them to him at 3625 Bryant Ave., S., #1, Minneapolis, MN 55409. Every little bit helps.

Happy Summer!

Deborah Langerman  
President



"Apartheid No" (detail) VALERIE MAYNARD

# Alliance For Cultural

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MANDATES FOR 1987-88 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This year's conference was a watershed event for the Alliance in many ways. Growing out of some painfully evident problems, and ongoing frustrations within ACD, yet also as a result of renewed energy and commitment to tackling some of the persistent difficulties and roadblocks in the building of our alliance and its work, a number of "mandates" or areas of concentration were voiced by the membership during Imagination II and should shape our work for the months ahead. In Boston, we made a commitment to work on the following areas of growth for ACD:

The mandates that we take with us from Boston as voiced by the membership and participants in Imagination are the following:

- \* the need for ACD to address the issue of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic diversity within the Alliance; the need to begin this task by addressing the questions of racism
- \* the need for the Alliance to be more active, to provide more concrete services to members
- \* the need for stronger regional organizing and more regional activities
- \* the need for a paid staff to handle nuts and bolts
- \* the need to form alliances with other organizations

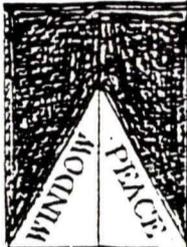
# Democracy



The National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA) was founded in 1978 to strengthen and enhance local arts agencies in the US and to assist the executive and volunteer leaders of these organizations. NALAA publishes a quarterly newsletter, Connections.

National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 413  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202/483-8670

### WINDOW PEACE



"Window Peace," a one-year activist art project was organized by New York City artist, Susan Kleckner. 51 women artists participated in this project which incorporated "collaborative political performance/action." Artists worked jointly on a written journal, documentation and organization, and each artist created her own installation or performance for the window depending on the aspect of peace she wished to focus on. The works were exhibited in the storefront window of SohoZat in New York City.

The public could both view the work and visit with the artists. Some of the participating artists addressed the public on the issue of food and peace (the window and sidewalk were filled with greens and sprouts to sample). Exhibits also included a performance piece centered around the women of Los Alamos, a week-long blindfolded performance; and an encampment by women from Greenham and Seneca.

For additional information contact:  
Susan Kleckner  
3 York Street  
New York, NY 10013  
212/219-1066

NEED A T-SHIRT?

IMAGINATION '87 Conference T-shirts are still available. Ask your nearest ACD Board Member or call or write: ACD, P. O. Box 2478, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820.

### RESOURCES

Woman of Power: a magazine of feminism, spirituality and politics. Issue six, Spring 1987, is on "Art as Activism." (Back issues/\$6 each; 1 year subscription of 4 issues, \$22) For more info:

Woman of Power  
P. O. Box 827  
Cambridge, MA 02238  
617/625-7885

### MEMBER'S CORNER

My name is Susan Taylor. I am a dancer, teacher and writer. My intentions through my work are to empower people to believe in themselves, to be all they can be. I like to move in a spirit of celebration. And I am trying to live a life that integrates my whole self with the natural world and the human community. My attraction to ACD is based on individuals I have either met or read about who share visions of participating in a happier, healthier world.

Note new address:  
210 S. Moody Ave., #4  
Tampa, FL 33609

My name is Mary Ostenso. I am one of the editors of this issue of the newsletter. I have an MA in visual art; I am an experienced registered nurse; I own and operate my own day care business which includes providing care for my own 4-year old son. I am attracted to community, real or abstract, and things which tend towards healing community fragmentation. For me, both art and organizing move in this direction. I am attracted to ACD in two ways; first it is a community and in its very process of being it nurtures organizers. The second is that since I now live in urban Alexandria, VA it is a way for me to stay in touch with rural thinking and communities, important to me because I grew up in rural Minnesota.

Liz Lerman celebrated the 10th Anniversary of her Dance Exchange with a fund raising dance gala at the French Embassy. Liz Lerman of Washington, D. C. is a former ACD board member.

Legs as soft and smooth  
as the day you were born.

BORN  
KICKING!



♀

pp

New Soft & Fine second

IKON  
P. O. Box 1355  
Stuyvesant Street  
New York, NY 10009

## THE ARTS EXCHANGE: BUILDING A MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER

The Arts Exchange is a multi-racial, multi-disciplinary, community arts center located in an old elementary school in one of the in-town neighborhoods in Atlanta. It was started when neighborhood people and artists from the community started to dream about having a facility that was truly controlled by the community, and that actually reflected the diversity of the community. There was (and still is) no other genuinely multi-racial arts facility in the entire city.

The Arts Exchange is in one of the few really integrated areas of the city, black, white, hispanic, and asian all live in close proximity. The white population contains a lot of young, middle class gentrifiers, as well as a long-established, but very poor, Appalachian mill community, Cabbagetown. The city government is relatively progressive and predominantly black, while the power structure, the "old money," is still very much white. We still fight the same battles: almost all public support goes to the established arts institutions, like the Ballet, the Symphony, the High Museum of Art (Coca Cola money!), etc. Three and a half years ago, a group of 5 community people petitioned to lease the old Grant Park elementary school for \$100 per month from the School Board. The idea was to lease out the classrooms as artists' spaces to fund the basic operations, and then to raise money for programs and staff. I can't begin to describe the blood, sweat and tears that have gone into the facility, both in terms of getting the physical building operating, but also in building the kind of relationships among people and in the community that make this venture work.

We've had every problem imaginable, from constant vandalism in the early years, and punks beating up concert goers in the parking lot, to our insurance getting cancelled, to the city and state funding agencies thinking we were totally crazy to try this at all. But we persevered. Now we have a Paul Robeson Playhouse. We have a fully-equipped recording studio. We have a dance studio. We have a Summer Arts Camp for community kids that rivals programs anywhere in the city, and that makes money. We have programming that is genuinely multi-racial. We are able to provide concrete support, in terms of facilities and logistics, to organizations and issues that are part of the "voices of dissent" in our community. We are at full occupancy, with a tremendous diversity of artists

and disciplines. We have a group of artists going to Bluefields, Nicaragua next fall, after wangling City funding and support to do it. We have festivals in the neighborhood parks and streets. And we are financially solvent! Best of all, we have a voice, and growing clout in the politics of arts in the city.

There were, and still are, many tensions in a process like this. Creating a multi-racial, functioning institution in a racist society like this is a tall order. Atlanta is racially polarized to a tremendous degree (although, after a year of living in Columbus, Georgia, I can really appreciate Atlanta more). We consciously chose the theme of international arts for the Arts Exchange, both because it focused on and celebrated the racial diversity in the community, and because it allowed us to "sell" the Arts Exchange to funders as part of Atlanta's efforts to promote itself as an "international city." But calling yourself multi-racial, and being so, are two quite different things. There were some of us, black and white, who had built relationships of trust from working together over the years. This fact, and a unity of purpose around what we were trying to build, sustained us through some pretty tough times, and served to pull some of the other folks together.

We rolled up our sleeves, and learned to trust each other through doing the work, and hashing things out. We fought some battles, and I know there will be more, but I think the strength of the vision of what we wanted to build overcame a lot of the suspicion, mistrust, and stereotypes that we began with. I also think that the majority of the active Board members, both black and white, shared the opinion that if we wanted a multi-racial facility, it wouldn't work to let the chips fall where they may in regards to the choices of tenants and programs. The momentum of the racism all around us, and the fact that white artists are usually better funded (more able to pay rent) and better provided with resources to develop their work would lead us to being, eventually, another all-white, or, at best, mostly white, facility. We consciously balanced the racial make-up of the Arts Exchange. We focused on non-white and non-middle class programs and services. We have many white artists and organizations at the Arts Exchange, now but we knew they would come on their own, and they did. Now we have a good mix. We made very conscious decisions about what kind of place we were building. continued pg. 5

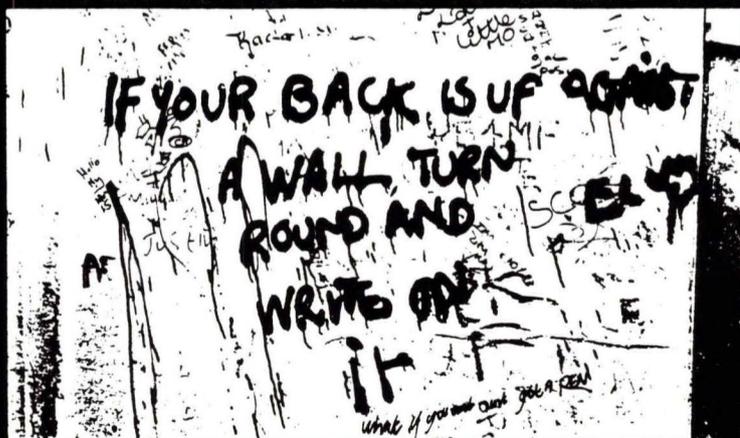
### Growing Up With War: SALVADORAN CHILDREN'S ART A Drawing and Photo Exhibit

In December 1986, seven women from Ahimsa went to El Salvador and Honduras. While in the displaced person's camp San Jose Calle Real in El Salvador, they collected children's drawings and took many photographs. Since their return, they have made these drawings and photos into a professional and moving exhibit called "Growing Up With War: Salvadoran Children's Art."

This exhibit is available for your use. Ahimsa's priority is that it be placed in places where people don't know what's happening in Central America.

If you're in the Seattle area, you can see the exhibit during the month of June at the Friends Center (4001 9th N.E., 547-6449).

For information about the exhibit or to give suggestions about where it could be shown - call Kathleen Holloway (206 329-5844) or Rebecca Johnson (206 243-9366), or write Kathleen Holloway, 317 17th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112.



## LOUDER THAN WORDS

Jill Posener's sequel to *Spray: It Loud* contains over 100 photographs of graffiti taken in Australia and Britain. Graffiti is provocative and funny, uplifting and encouraging, this powerful, challenging way of commenting on the world we live in. By graffiti it appears as handprints and walls are recovered a fresh images ripe for additions from the spray can. Jill Posener's photographs and accompanying text serve as document of our time, an essential record of the wit and power of the graffitiists.

# FCC TRIES TO TUNE OUT COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS

Lina New houser brought this article to our attention.  
Lina is a past ACD President.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has—under the reign of Chairman Mark Fowler—been ingenious in finding ways to take diversity out of the public airwaves. The latest victim is community radio.

In what is the first decision of its kind in U.S. communications history, FCC Administrative Law Judge Walter Miller last November withdrew the non-commercial broadcasting license of the Dallas community-based Agape Broadcasting Foundation and turned it over to the wealthy fundamentalist Criswell Center for Biblical Studies.

"It's virtually unprecedented," said Agape attorney Sam Buffone, who is appealing the decision. "The commission has always had a hands-off policy in the past with non-commercial stations." While the Commission has changed its policies over the past six years to favor the wealthy, the Dallas case indicates it is now taking a more active approach to ensure that the airwaves are placed in the right hands.

Agape Broadcasting Foundation, during its management of station KNON-FM, managed to create something Dallas had never heard before: a true community station—"The Voice of the People," as its logo says. Dedicated to serving Dallas' low-income and minority communities, of which there are many, KNON broadcasts Vietnamese music, gay public affairs, American Indian programming, a "labor hour," bilingual news and music and, of course, "Radio Jalapeno" and other Texas programs. "If that ain't serving the community," argued a writer for one community magazine, "then grits ain't groceries."

The Criswell Center for Biblical Studies is an arm of the First Baptist

Church of Dallas, the largest Southern Baptist Church in the country with an annual budget of \$9 million. Criswell's board members include the vice president of Hunt Oil Company, a CEO of another Texas oil company, trustees of several banks, attorneys, investment bankers and a physician. Criswell already holds broadcasting licenses in Abilene, Weatherford, Brownwood, Palestine and also another non-commercial license in Dallas. Their Dallas station currently broadcasts religious programming to the entire city.

Of the five non-commercial frequencies licensed to Dallas, according to Jim Schutze of the *Dallas Times Herald*, three are now owned by "conservative Christian organizations." The other is a classical music station. Agape in 1983 became the first station to broadcast bilingual programming in this heavily Hispanic city.

Judge Miller found Agape underserving of an FCC license in part because KNON had been off the air between 1979 and 1983 and had thus, he argued, not served the community responsibly. In 1978 the station's transmitter was destroyed by a thunderstorm. In 1979 KNON filed for permission to broadcast from a new site. The FCC did not

grant their request until 1983. KNON had been broadcasting for two years—each year doubling its number of community supporters—when the Criswell Center launched its license challenge in 1985. KNON, which had finally raised enough money from its listeners to increase its power, was forced to spend its savings on legal fees.

Miller also ruled that Agape had not been candid with the FCC in its relations with community group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), and that ACORN was a closet owner of KNON.

KNON station manager Jeff Murray says that KNON and ACORN share an interest in empowering low-income and minority constituents, and that it is necessary and more effective for them to work together. "Of course we cooperate with organizations that share our concerns. That's what community radio is all about." Murray believes that the judge's accusation is more appropriate for Criswell and First Baptist. Criswell requires its board members to belong to First Baptist, whereas Agape has no such requirement for its board.

The low-income, minority and previously unheard-from residents of Dallas are not tuning out. On Dec. 6, 1986, more than 5,000 people marched through downtown Dallas (and past the First Baptist Church) in an eclectic parade that included rap artists, high school marching bands, Gray Panthers, low riders, Africans for KNON, local politicians, gospel singers, gay rights groups and country musicians.

Still on the air, awaiting a final verdict from the FCC, KNON has launched its most ambitious fundraising drive to date. The station needs money to pay legal costs of appealing the decision.

—Caroline Senter



MARK FOWLER

Note: Reprinted from In These Times, Feb. 11-17, 1987.

Caroline Senter is the Director of the Affiliated Media Foundation Movement (AMFM), an association of community groups, labor organizations and broadcast facilities working to set up community-based broadcast stations committed to social change. For more information contact her at:

AMFM  
401 Howard Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504/524-5034

## FLASH!

Lucy Lippard will be speaking at the University of Maryland, College Park Campus, on September 22nd at 8:00 PM as part of a graduate poly-seminar entitled "Feminism and Structures of Knowledge." Lectures are open to the general public. For more information, contact Nancy Meyer at 301/454-3841.

## SPRINGTIME IN WASHINGTON

The last weekend in April brought 75,000 to Washington and 10,000 to San Francisco marching in the Mobilization For Justice and Peace in Central America and South Africa.

Susan McCarn of Washington, former ACD board member, was cultural consultant to the Saturday morning pre-march festival.

In a related activity, Monday morning 1,500 people protested covert death planning at CIA's Langley, Virginia, suburban Washington headquarters. 557 of those engaged in civil disobedience committed themselves to being arrested.

## CELEBRATE SISTERFIRE!

"the nation's pre-eminent women's music festival"  
-Washington Post

This year, this multi-cultural, open-air event showcases Pulitzer-prize winner, Alice Walker and over 80 musicians, including Sweet Honey In The Rock, Holly Near, and Odetta. SISTERFIRE also is: theatre, dance, poetry, humor, storytelling, clowns, and more than 100 craftswomen.

Festival location: The Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, MD (free shuttles available from area metro stops).

Dates: June 27-28

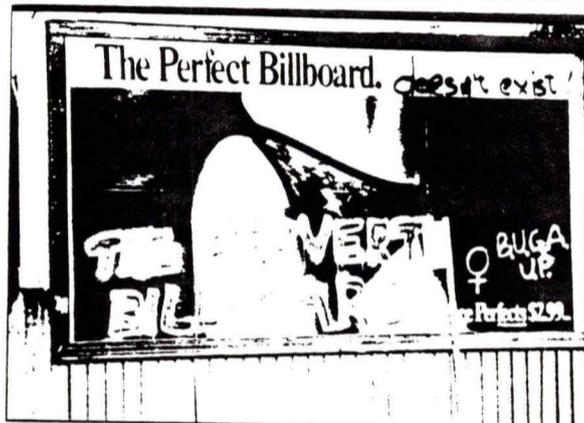
Fee: \$19/one day (\$22 at gate)  
\$30/weekend (\$35 at gate)

For information call: 202/438-1010

## ROADSIDE THEATER - A TRAVELING ENSEMBLE

Roadside Theatre is a traveling ensemble theater and a part of Appalshop, a media-arts and education organization located in the heart of the coalfields of the Appalachian Mountains of east Kentucky and southwest Virginia. The theater's actors and musicians were born and reared in the region, and the company has spent 12 years developing original plays drawn from mountain history and culture and touring the plays locally and nationally. For more information, contact:

Roadside Theater  
Box 743  
Whitesburg, KY 41858  
606/633-0108



“ The streets are public places. Graffiti is an expression of the experiences and ideas of people who live on those streets, but don't own them or the houses or the businesses. Graffiti creates solidarity between all those people. It isn't academic, it's immediate and doesn't require money. I like watching reactions to my graffiti. Is it painted over, or added to? Sometimes the reactions make me think again, maybe add something else. It's like asking questions.

One graffiti I did was on a church wall. I put 'Isn't your God a Misogynist?' It helped break one of my own taboos, while expressing my anger at religion. It felt good.

Graffiti Melbourne

## THE ARTS EXCHANGE: BUILDING A MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER

There were also social and economic tensions, tensions between the "gentrifiers" in the community, the artists, and the older residents. There were tensions between the Arts Exchange folks and funding agencies who see community arts as "pretend art" or crafts and recreation at best. There were tensions between tenants and Board, since we all blamed each other any time anything went wrong. There were, and are, tensions between the pragmatists and the idealists, and many of us who are somewhere in between... "Why not take money from Coors? Even if they do fund the Contras? If we don't take it, they'll just give it to some other arts group..." (We didn't take it.) There were many tensions between those of us who want things to happen right away, and wanted everything to happen on schedule and be perfect, and those of us who took a more long-term view of things. There were tensions between those of us who want to fight to get the funding, resources, and recognition that we know community and political art deserves. But there has been room for just about everybody at the Arts Exchange. We knew

what we were trying to build. There were some casualties, some burn-out along the way, but things are really starting to flower. We broke a lot of eggs, now we're tasting the omelette.

I would like to invite any of you who are in Atlanta to come by the Arts Exchange and see what is going on. If you want to get on the mailing list, call 404/624-4211, or write Alice Lovelace, Director, The Arts Exchange, 750 Kalb Street, SE, Atlanta, GA 30312. I would also like to suggest that at the San Francisco gathering, we have a panel or workshop that presents the lessons and skills of those of us who have been through the process of creating a facility like the Arts Exchange, and other multi-racial arts institutions in other cities. It can be done, and I think one way for ACD to contribute to the process of forging a multi-racial community arts movement is to present and help people use these lessons.

-Sally Alvarez  
(former President of the Board of Directors of the Arts Exchange)

Our thanks to the following individuals and organizations for the financial and labor support of this newsletter: Sally Alvarez, Nancy Meyer, Liz Lerman, Mark Miller, Mary Ostenso, Jon Spelman, Susan Taylor, Highlander Research and Education Center, Eco Theater, Judy Branfman, Debbie Langerman, Rebecca Rice.

## Join Us—Only Together Can We Build Cultural Democracy

**Individual Membership** (\$25/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cultural Democracy** Subscription only  
 Individuals (\$15/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organizations and Institutions (\$25/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Contribution (tax deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizational Membership:**  
 Budget under \$50,000 (\$30/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Budget under \$100,000 (\$45/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Budget under \$200,000 (\$60/yr) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Budget over \$200,000 (\$75/yr) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail the above information to Neil V. Sieling, 3625 Bryant Ave. S. #1, Minneapolis, MN 55409. Make check payable to Alliance for Cultural Democracy (U.S. currency only).

Also, please put the ALLIANCE on your mailing list, and, if possible, enclose a brochure or other information about your work for the ALLIANCE's files.

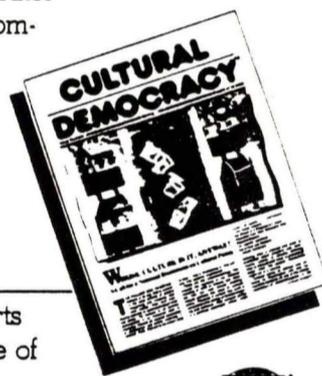
Thank you for joining the effort.

**The Alliance for Cultural Democracy** is the only nationwide, nonprofit organization for community-based arts programs and activist artists. The Alliance's members are visual artists, theater workers, musicians, writers, media artists, dancers, arts administrators, and others involved in community and cultural work in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

**The Alliance exists to**

- provide a forum for sharing and exchange among its members
- publish a newsletter, **Cultural Democracy**
- consult with community groups and public agencies
- carry out research on community arts and cultural policy.

Through analysis, advocacy and networking, **The Alliance For Cultural Democracy** supports community participation, encourages respect for cultural diversity and emphasizes the relevance of the arts to an economic and political democracy.



**HIGHLANDER RESEARCH  
 AND EDUCATION CENTER**  
 ROUTE 3, BOX 370  
 NEW MARKET, TENNESSEE 37820

NON-PROFIT ORG  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 Permit No. 04  
 New Market, TN

Judy Branfman  
 327 Summer St.  
 Studio 3  
 Boston MA 02210