ACD National News...

MAYDAY IN MINNEAPOLIS

Early May saw ACDs national gathering take place in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Some 200 cultural activists from around the country gathered for three days to share their art, ideas and themselves around a host of topics and concerns within the movement for cultural democracy. Particular focus at the Gathering was on the organizing for the Columbus Quincentennial Project of ACD, as well as the Declaration of Cultural Rights and a series of working groups planning an expanded version of Cultural Democracy, the ACD magazine, and discussion of a new journal or magazine devoted to topics of art and politics. The Gathering was also honored to have Alan Bolt from Nicaragua and Margaret Randall as special guests.

After two days of mostly mental labor, culminating Saturday night in a party and dance, the Gathering ended Sunday with ACD members participating in the annual Heart of the Beast Mayday parade and pageant, a beautiful community celebration including puppets, children, music and a parade which snaked its way through Minneapolis to Powderhorn Park, and turned into a pageant of giant land and waterbom puppets enacting a story of birth, survival, destruction and rebirth on the planet. Its sheer scale and beauty, along with the tremendous amount of community support and participation, is a living lesson in the principals of cultural democracy, and an inspiration to all of us lucky enough to have been there.

Our hats off to Heart of the Beast, and to the wonderful efforts of the Gathering organizers in Minneapolis, especially Denise, Juanita, Ricardo, and the many other folks in Minneapolis whose superhuman efforts kept us dry, warm, fed and happy over the weekend, especially when much to the surprise of us balmy West Coast types, it began to snow on Friday night! And a special thanks to Wastewi and Olivia, who helped remind us all of why we were there.

(For a complete wrap-up and report on ACD’s National Gathering, see the upcoming issue of Cultural Democracy.)

NEW NATIONAL DIRECTORY

ACD’s new national directory of ACD members is available with listings of 100s of cultural activists, artists, and community organizers from throughout the nation.

Each listing contains the name, address and contact numbers of the individual or organization, as well a brief description of what they do, who their constituency is, what issues they address, skills offered, and connections they’re tied into (read “networks”). As an additional indexing help, each listing is keyed with several icons (ok, you Mac users!) that help identify certain key elements in each listing. For a copy of the Directory, write ACD Directory, P.O. Box 7591, Minneapolis MN 55407.

ACD GOES ON-LINE!!!

Not to be left behind by ATT and Time-Warner Inc., ACD has entered the information age and is now on-line (as in “computer”), linking itself nationally and internationally to thousands of computer and data-base users throughout the world.

How have we accomplished this amazing technological feat? Through the pioneering efforts of Matt Schwarzman and his IBM clone, the Alliance now has a bulletin board on PeaceNet, the international computer network dedicated to peace and justice organizing work. The bulletin board is called 'acd.general', and is available for posting notices about upcoming events, cultural projects, thoughts and dreams of ACD and its members and allies.

Through membership in PeaceNet, individuals with any kind and any level of personal computer and equipped with a modem (a device that links your computer to the same wires your telephone uses) can send and receive personal messages with other members; post notices; send telexes; and stay in touch with over one thousand organizations and five thousand individuals across the U.S., the Americas, Great Britain and Europe. As an example of the potential and actual use of such a network, activists involved in the recent events in China and Alaska kept each other and the rest of the world informed through the use of just this kind of technology, and it’s time we put it to use for cultural activism, as well. After all, cultural democracy includes access to technology, as well as other tools.

How do YOU get on-line? Technophobes take note!

If you have a personal computer (IBM, Apple, MAC, or clone), a modem costs as little as $75-100. Membership and use of PeaceNet can cost as little as $130 a year, and "gateways" or access points in every major city in the U.S. make dialing up the system almost always as cheap as an in-state phone call.

Once you’re “on-line”, the system can be used for collaborative writing projects, news updates, cross-country planning, and general correspondence and thought sharing. It also hooks you up with the work of activists in every sphere of progressive organizing, and allows you to access other bulletin boards involved with rainforest organizing, nuclear issues, etc.

For more information on getting "on-line", and from whom and where you might get help to tool-up in your area, call IGC (Institute for Global Communications) at (415) 923-0900 or Mat Schwarzman at (415) 346-8031. And if you have items that you’d like listed on the Bulletin Board, send them to Mat at 625 Scott St. #201, San Francisco CA 94117.

Quincentennial Project

1992 will mark the 500th anniversary of the official European invasion of the Western Hemisphere. The United States, along with its counterparts in Europe and Latin America, is gearing up for "official" celebrations of the date. However, indigenous groups in North and South America, Central America and the Caribbean, along with progressives in the Europe and the United States, are gearing up for a different version of our Hemisphere’s 5000+ (not a typo) year history.

At the Gathering in May, a network of people was established around the country to carry on work around the Quincentennial. As part of the plans, ACD will be initiating a call in the US to artists and activists to participate in actions and campaigns telling the real story of the so-called "discovery". In addition to the call, ACD will be publish special materials, like a poster, and developing a curriculum/study-guide for teachers, as well as will working in various regions to encourage and activate local projects. ACD will also act as a national clearinghouse for information on the various activities/actions in the US and elsewhere.

For more information and to be in touch with the ACD Quincentennial Project, contact Ricardo Levins-Morales/ACD, PO Box 7591, Minneapolis MN 55407.
The Death of the Non-Profit Theater: A Draft in Transition.

(Writer's Note: This is not a research study, but rather, an observation. Take it as such.)

The non-profit theater as we know it is dead. Those of us who have worked on the various boards of these various theaters are no more than muggins. We are living on the residue of the past and will soon find ourselves gamehunting out of flesh and chow.

Those of you who know the statistics will probably argue that the non-profit sector is still growing. But how is it growing and which sector? Like every other sector of the U.S. economy, non-profits have increased their debt substantially in the last five years. Using the card game that is our principal operation in the U.S. economy, non-profits have increased their debt substantially in the last five years. Among the small and medium non-profits, failures and near failures (dwindle or close down or close out) have increased rapidly, while larger institutions maintain a sustainable pattern of growth.

This is a reflection of the economic division in our society as a whole, i.e. the rich get richer, etc. The obvious factor is simply that division in our society as a whole, i.e. the rich maintain a sustainable pattern of growth.

The idea of a non-profit arts sector has vanished for at least ten years. It has been an illusion that we could eke out a lower middle class livelihood doing the things we loved. Some have managed to do so, but for the vast majority, the non-profit was either the convenient and less obvious entry point for entering a number of other labor markets (commercial acting, union technician, small business, etc.) or it was a constantly sought after but never found game in the hope of the S$100,000 a year job with benefits and vacation pay. In the eleven illusion squandered in an era of perception within the growth of the non-profit arts. For a relatively brief in the late sixties and early seventies, we tended to believe that the most, and artists and actors producers could create and sustain viable organizations.

But in those same years as if a Pandora's Box had been opened, as friend after friend took their little theater or music group and turned it into a money making operation under the new 501c3. With CETA staffs, multi-year grants, and sustained public funding, there was a feeling of power in the land. The outcast artist, whether living in a cooperative or private hovel, trimmed his beard or shaved his legs in order to make themselves presentable to the prospective funder. And it worked. A boom industry was created.

But when I arrived in San Francisco when I arrived, the sense of boom had faded. A third of the companies in the People's Theater Coalition had folded in the preceding two years, and although a few groups had taken their places, it was clear this was not an era for expansion.

Very few analysts stated the obvious: The economic Darwinism of the Reagan era. Even in those larger groups could argue better, work faster and prove themselves by the self-rationalisation of the their own history. By the beginning of the eighties, many smaller groups had gone. By then, the illusion had shifted. We were sinked. We were in denial. I want to postpone my decision things did not get better, and now that we are about to leave the world. Wrong. We may have already died and not recognized it.

The illusion must fall. The whole illusion of the non-profit arts has been to try and create some middle ground between the arts. The prevalence of the NEA supposes neither the socialist perception of art as social force and available to the general public use and enjoyment, nor a purely capitalist one of it as a reflection of a transcendent, yet abstract force of enlightenment best understood as a cultural commodity to the artists themselves. Even if you don't like the choices, it provided for a relatively stable environment for art.

So what is the middle ground? Or is there middle ground? Does art have an intrinsic value itself? Carville and others stand outside the parameters of social and political pragmatism? Or course not. But don't we need to confess that the artists themselves, in the grants we write and the panels we sit on, and in the formal policies of the public agencies and private foundations, we all must profess that art is separate, and not essentially responsible to its patrons or the under-finished mass. Although art would be redefined as a source of entertainment, we can ask our public need: Jesse Jackson or Jesse Helms? And that if the real debate in society, is it not? Witness the current (and successful!) attacks by Jesse Helms on the NEA. Perhaps the right has no illusions about where they stand.

The Nicholson of the eighties, many smaller groups have disappeared. You can run from mortality, but you can't hide. This is the end of a long run. Most of us are faced with two choices. The first is to accept ourselves to a corporate environment and put out our effort at the disposal of business, or we for becoming professional organizations.

A hybrid of these two is now being encouraged in the newspapers of multi-culturalism. But this supposed melding of corporate interest and community needs will fail on the face of it artists and businessmen reach a final impasse about what is the best interests of the. ‘community’. Like most non-profit managers, I'm big on diversity. I want to create a multicultural world, and the next I'm having breakfast with an entrepreneur talking about taking into MTV and performing displays in corporate lobby. Both scenarios are attractive. In one, I step from the stage of the revolution to the pinnacle of the corporate ladder and bigger and bigger producing, and opt for the satisfaction of touching with people where they live. In the other, I create a sustainable livelihood and perhaps have a real influence on mass culture.

I don't know, but in my heart I know it doesn't exist. Like all of us I will have to die.

(Jose Lambert) is an ACD Board Member and Executive Director of the People's Theater. Send your comments to Joe at LOTW, Building B, F Mason Cir, San Francisco CA 94123.)

Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD)

This new book by the Rosenberg Era ARL Project (REAP) contains works by many artists and writers, including Picasso, Alcoen, Sue Ne, Cec Dickie, Richard Allen, William Better, J.A. Doctorow, and Robert Amstein. Available for $200,000 per copy. Contact the ACD, 7550, Berkeley, CA, 90292, phone (213) 396-0880.

Union for Democratic Communications

The UDC is sponsoring a conference on Grassroots Communications for Democracy, Social, Cultural, Political Change, the weekend of October 26-29 in New York City. For further information contact Mark Shulman, Conference Coordinator, City College of New York, Dept. of Communications, Film & Video, 150th St. and Convent Avenue, N.Y., 10031.

Curbitone Press
Curbitone is a publisher of high-quality cultural gems. Their most recent release is Have You Seen a Red Curtain in my Weary Eyes and it is the literary work by Tumian Borge's writings that include poems, essays, short stories and auto-biographical narratives. Other publications by Curbitone include works by Roque Dalton, Ernesto Cardenal, and Nimrod Workman, available for $11.45 including postage and handling from Curbitone Press, 321 Jackson Street, William & Mary, 1201-232-9190.

Appaloosa Catalog

Appalooship, the community-based arts company concentrating on preservation of the Palapal culture via film, video, music, theater and photography and theater exploring its 20th century history in its catalog of records, tapes, books and even videocassettes the range of Appaloose life and culture. A special feature is the video section, which includes everything from Appalachian MTV (just kidding!) of Lily May Ledford, the original banjo picker to Nimrod Workman, to a recently released video featuring the Appaloose Native American Traveling Theater, John O'Neil's Jubezueg, Tales and Appaloosian's own Route 66 Theater. For a copy of the latest catalog contact Robert Films, 505 S. Madison St., Whitesburg KY 41858 or call us 1-800-545-7467.
Bay Area Quincenntennial
A group of ACD members have formed a Bay Area Quincenntennial Working Group to begin planning and networking for Bay Area activities and projects around the Columbus Quincenntennial (see ACD Na
tional). Already the group is in touch with SAHIE and the third world and is considering closely with indigenous groups throughout the hemisphere, and has begun to brainstorm ideas for projects and events including ACD's participation in the January "Reimag
- ing America" event (see below).

We'd like to become involved in the Western Region's Quincenntennial organi
zation, call Betty at (415) 527-1401 or Mat at (415) 346-8931.

MULTICULTURAL

The Alameda County Arts Commissi
on in the Bay Area took its first steps toward meeting the needs of its diverse communities during the recent meeting of its Multi-Cul
- tural Task Force in Oakland.

More than fifty artists, educators, writ-
ers, dancers and arts administrators came together to talk about the need to communi
icate with each other and collaborate to better address issues like racism in the arts and at
-tacks on affirmative action, building communi
- ty cultural centers, making art-making more accessible to neighborhoods, and improving art education in the schools.

The Multi-Cultural Task Force meets again Sept. 18 at 7 pm at Konceptus Cultural Center, 2226 21st St, San Francisco. Call Betty Kanu at (415) 527-1401 for more information.

Changes...

Goldharr and Don Adams, founding ACD members and longtime cul
- tural activists, have a new address. You can reach them now at 875 Watson Rd., Eilak H 94582. Their phone is still (707)- 462- 0169.

SMALLtalk

From Colorado we've received SMALLtalk, a newsletter of the Sustain-
- able Mountain Agricultural Alliance (SMALL), a network of folks in the Southern Rockies who share the goal of developing and supporting successful, sustainable farm-
ings systems for the higher elevations of the world.

Talking Gourds: A Mountain Cele-
- bration of Ethnobotanics takes place Sept. 14-24 in Telluride sponsored by SMALL and the Telluride Performing Arts Institute. Admission is $10, and a host of poets, artisans, scholars and "word-burbling coyotes" will get together in the Telluride bike, perform, listen and tell poetry across cultures.

For information on SMALL and Talk-
- ing Gourds, write Art Goodtimes, Telluride Institute, Box 1778, Telluride CO 81435. Or call Art at (303)-728-4402.

LATE ARRIVALS...

While we're on ACD member news, we have some good news, even great news from back East. Debra Wise and David Fichter are expecting their first child this fall, and ACD Board Member Lisa Knauer reports that her expected arrival is greatly and gratefully active these days. And, Lisa Newbouser, former ACD President, present Executive Director of the Lexington Country Arts Council, and newly appointed member of the Pennsylvania Arti
- mia Advisory Commission on State Grants to the Arts, is still expecting. (Lisa, how do you find time to work on the farm?) Is this some plot the ACD Board cooked up to boost membership, or are we experien-
cing our very own ACD Baby Boomlet?

Summer 1989

Dear Friends:

Can't be involved in ACD just now - but here's my latest logo. Timing inspired by recent news but concept created by Reagan's censorship activities. Good luck...

KO
ACTIVE RESISTANCE
Demands

ACTIVE SOLIDARITY
Support the Struggle for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Diego Rivera, La Conquista, Cuemavaca, Mexico
SEEING DOUBLE
SEEING DOUBLE, the new San Francisco Mime Troupe’s new show on the Middle East, hits the road in October with tentative tour dates in the West starting in October and on the East Coast in late November.

The plot is a classic Mime Troupe setup of mistaken identities, misplaced persons, great physical comedy and fine songs. The script was a unique collaborative effort combining the talents of Israeli actor/playwright Sinai Peter and Palestinian-American writer/performer Emily Shihadeh, along with the Mime Troupe’s longtime resident playwright Joan Holden and musical director/composer Bruce Barthol.

For tour schedule, and booking information, contact Stacey Powers, SFMT, 855 Treat St., San Francisco CA 94110. Or call (415)-285-1717.