

**Artists with Disabilities Alliance (AWDA) -- 9-16-2003 Meeting
at Center for Independent Artists, 4137 Bloomington Ave. S., Minneapolis**

Notes by Paul D. Hanson and Jon Skaalen

Attending: Gail Burke, Suzanne Byrne, Paul D. Hanson, James Livingston, Laurie McKiernan, Terry Mayer, Zaraawar Mistry, Leslye Orr, Rachel Parker, Barbara Saunders, Lynn Schwartz, Jon Skaalen, Tony Wentersdorf, Janet Winckler

Meeting Host:

Zaraawar Mistry, artistic director of the Center for Independent Artists (C4IA) welcomed guests to his theatre space, located in the El Colegio Charter School. The mission of his organization is to serve as a resource to independent artists and facilitate or help carry out their artistic missions. This may involve providing help with production equipment, resources, mentoring, public relations, graphics, etc. as well as providing a rental space for rehearsals and performances. This year they hosted the second annual Frinj of the Frinj, which was an artist-determined series of 38 performances of 21 productions that varied in length and cost. The building also houses the Mira Gallery, which is curated by Tina Maria O'Brien. Perrine Dailey, an artist who is acutely hard of hearing, exhibited there earlier this year. Artists and arts organizations purchase memberships in the C4IA and pay fees for various services received. The school itself serves 80 students and emphasizes Spanish culture and language. The building will be renamed soon.

Artist Announcements:

Tony Wentersdorf attended an autoharp event in Kansas and has CDs for sale. He will be teaching autoharp and harmonica through Minneapolis Community Education.

Leslye Orr will present her participatory drama about Helen Keller, "Hand-in-Hand," on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the C4IA, of which she serves as co-director. This is a fundraiser for a school organization, but she invited AWDA artists to attend for free or for a small donation. The one-hour show, in which all participants close their eyes, will be followed by an informal half-hour discussion. (Note: Daylight Savings Time ends that morning.) Leslye's first book, *The People on the Corner*, has just been published and is available from her for \$15. She is looking into tie-in marketing of dolls, tactile equipment and an animation cartoon.

Jon Skaalen is hoping to finish a play script for an Oct. 22 Playwrights' Center reading.

Rachel Parker offered her experience and resources (with PACER Center) as an advocate for civil rights or vocational rehabilitation services (such as how to honor art as a career).

Laurie McKiernan is teaching a class in storytelling and performance art. It begins Sept. 27 for 8 weeks. She will be performing at Patrick's Cabaret on Nov. 7-8 at 8:00.

Janet Winckler talked about her needs to have opportunities to perform and sell CDs of her piano compositions. She is also looking for sources to fund studio time to record another CD. People arriving for the meeting heard her CD in the background, and she played three of her pieces during the meeting.

Lynn Schwartz talked about winning a photography award at the international art show at Sister Kenny Institute, displaying her art at the Minnetonka Center for the Arts and in the Artability at Apollo exhibit and designing greeting cards for Regents Hospital. "The Apollo Guys" were good to her, and they did not "Apollo Guyze" for being so.

Terry Mayer expressed her need to sell her art in some sort of open venue, like an art fair or gallery. She would like to have a web site where individuals could display their art once it is scanned and entered onto the web site. (The McKnight Foundation does host a free site, www.mnartists.org, but many people need help in setting up their pages.) She talked about pushing the limits of the arts enterprise to allow disabled artists to get into mainstream art venues alongside mainstream individuals. Allowing equal footing with others in the art field as far as displaying art and selling or making an income from art. She also talked about wanting to see more people with disabilities on TV shows.

Suzanne Byrne has finished her book about disabled kids; written for the age 10-18 group, it is in the editing stage, which must be completed by Dec. 31. She also referred to a publication called *Midwest Art Fairs*, which lists many events at which arts & crafts may be sold.

Gail Burke from the State Arts Board was present to serve as a resource (and she brought treats and large pads for taking notes in break-out groups).

Barbara Saunders said she was enjoying being around other artists with disabilities and assisting them with finding resources, etc. She just returned from a retreat and is organizing Sunday afternoon Peace Walks. The next one will be at Loring Park on Sunday, October 19th at 2:00. She advised arriving by noon. She also donated spiral notebooks to attendees for keeping AWDA notes.

Meeting:

The group discussed the start and end times of meetings and decided to invite people to arrive by 6:00 for socializing, to start the meeting at 6:15 and end at 8:15. After brief introductions of people present, the artists selected to share their work that night would have 15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting or as time allows depending on the meeting agenda.

Barbara reported that our volunteer website guru, MariJayn Duchene, has placed an online Artist Profile on the site and needs a website tester.

Barbara asked for a subcommittee to meet Oct. 1 and discuss use of "disability" as it applies to a name for the group. Volunteers were Barbara, Paul, Lynn and maybe Terry & Joy.

Barbara presented another Vision Statement for consideration: To empower artists with disabilities as people, artists and contributors of/to society through their connections with each other and presence in the community, thereby broadening the perspective of the community at large (or greater society/community). There wasn't time to discuss it further.

Agenda items that did not get covered included:

- * Star Program opportunity for computers
- * Break-out groups to discuss Support, Mentoring and Promotion priorities.
- * Future meeting site possibilities: Northern Clay Center, Patrick's Cabaret, Intermedia Arts, Bryant-Lake Bowl, Stevens Square Art Co-op, Bloomington Art Center, Hennepin Center for the Arts, Interact Center for Visual & Performing Arts, Anodyne Artist Co., Hopkins Center for the Arts, and other locations that would (hopefully) be free.

Events & Resources:

The Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC) Global Extravaganza (for Global Diversity Week) is Wednesday, Nov. 19th. They are looking for table displays from artists (no selling) and performers to participate.

9-12 Artist display time

9-1 Jewelry display time

12-1 Lunch and a presentation

12-3 Performers Act Out!

People who expressed an interest in participating are Janet, Tony, Pamela, MariJayn, Margo Rochelle and Lynn Schwartz.

The Dunn Bros. in Linden Hills offered an opportunity to display & showcase in late October or November. Tues.-Fri.-Sat. showcase, Thurs. 6-9, Fri.-Sat. 6-10 music, poetry, maybe jewelry, other art sales. More info later. Tara, Tony and Margo were interested.

Workshops on preparing applications for community arts and group performances are being sponsored by the Metro Regional Arts Council (MRAC) at several times:

Sept 12 at Bloomington arts Center

Sept. 15 & 22 at MRAC's office, 651-645-0402

Sept 16 at Interact

Open U Grant Writing Workshop is Oct. 14; Deadline Oct. 13. Call 612-349-9273.

Possibly set up a volunteer log so people can help the group in different ways.

Job Opportunities for artists come up occasionally in the Star Tribune and other media.

Check under Art, Artist, Graphic Arts.

Great Frame Up in Minnetonka is LOOKING for framers or for artists to train how to frame work for display; part-time or full-time; free framing of work if employee. 952-931-9212.

Next Meetings:

Next AWDA Meeting – Tues., Oct. 14 at Outsiders & Others, 1010 Park Ave., Minneapolis. Arrive by 6:00 for social time. Meeting start time 6:15. End time 8:15 p.m.

To suggest agenda items or help arrange aspects of future meetings, contact Barbara Saunders at 952-920-2090.