

# THE EDGE

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of our community, and he tries to act, not unilaterally, but as a member of that community. In the eight weeks the Family Dog has been on the Great Highway, eight different light shows have been allowed to play there.

"My interest in starting the Avalon three years ago," Chet told me Friday night in front of the picket line, "after I had come through a long bout with met edrine, was to change America in some way. And if this becomes just a straight gig, I can't do that either."

**"WE'VE GOT LIGHT AND SOUND: NOW LET'S GET IN TOUCH!"**

-Mike Bloomfield

Bill Graham, it is said, has a moose on his office wall with a talk balloon that says "the name of the game is draw."

"How do I get people to come see a good act like some gospel group from Chicago?" Graham asks. "The answer--a big name draw act, then your artistic act. Last week I had one of the greatest acts I've ever booked, the Everly Brothers, and I lost \$6,000."

"Now who in the fuck are you," he asked the Guild, "to tell me, a businessman, to support your art? In my opinion, you are not a draw."

The several meetings with the Light Artists Guild were charged with theatre, from the street theatre of the "psychedelic strikers" to the drama of the grandest impressario of all, Bill Graham.

Graham met with the group Tuesday afternoon at the Family Dog. A strike had been set for the Fillmore that night, and he was there to avert it.

As the meeting opened, Chet threw the I Ching. "The waters on the surface of the earth flow together wherever they can," was the word. "Holding together brings good fortune."

"If it isn't there," Helms said, "I don't know where it is."

Graham was the subject of the day. The Guild had struck the Family Dog first, apparently on the principle that you hit Chrysler before General Motors. Only, as a friend noted, Chet Helms isn't Chrysler.

## JERRY ABRAMS



photo by Copeland

"Bill Graham has a monopoly in this town only because you give it to him," Chet told the brothers. "You can't depend on him to do it all, and then call him a dirty capitalist for doing it. I don't think Bill Graham has all the power. I don't believe that one person can totally control an environment without at least tacit subconscious consent."

Bill Graham, a capricorn, is a volatile man. He breathes fire, some would say indiscriminately. That afternoon he had the "leaders" of the Haight community in the palm of his hands.

"Chet runs this place on a dream," the fiery eyed impressario led off, "and a very good dream. But he will be a failure till the day he dies, because he's too much of an idealist. The world has no appreciation for Christianity as Chet is preaching it."

Graham focused on the point that the Guild had informed him of the strike even before trying to negotiate with him. The meeting became a contest between the aggressive capricorn figures of Graham and Jerry Abrams of the Light Artists Guild. As the meeting grew more heated (fired by Graham's baiting) it became clear that the person who could put on the best drama would win the day.

And Abrams wasn't up to the fire of Bill Graham. "They disrespected a businessman!" Graham screamed, pacing the floor like a caged goat. "Who are they to tell me what to do with my money? You stupid motherfuckers! This isn't mudslinging! This is the facts!"

Graham managed to raise emotion to a pitch, lighting into everyone who opened his mouth. I accused Graham at one point of being the man with all the bread--bread taken from our people--and he reflected for a couple of moments, and gave a quiet and sober reply.

"We've made mistakes, but we've been fair and honest. How many of you in this room ever got a check from me that bounced? How many benefits have I thrown for the community, benefits that have taken money out of my own pocket? How many groups made it with our help? If I had come off the street, and gone into this, you could call me a cop out. But I'm not one of you. I'm a businessman. Effective January 1," he laid it out at last, tears coming to his angry eyes, "I'm through in this town. The doors of the Fillmore will close for good."

His voice filled again with anger as he laid his last hurrah on the Haight community. "What the fuck has this community ever done for itself?" Graham asked. "Where are the cheeseboxes on Haight Street? In New York, you got people giving speeches on corners, playing chess in the park, a guy over there talking about revolution in Idaho."

"But do you know what you got here? You got a fucking vacuum. For four years, you haven't done shit. There's a man who once told me about this community. 'It has got neither the balls nor the ability to change the world it hates.' I hope to God he's wrong."

"I hope to God your basic concept about who you are changes, because if you don't do it--the IBM machine will. You know what this town needs? It needs maniacal good producers, maniacal good organizers."

Around him sat the so-called leaders of the Haight community. They listened intently to Graham, the only among them who had been able to Do It, and keep doing it. Graham looked around the room, and he laid it out cold to the peace-love, do-your-own-thing gentle brothers: "None of you will ever get in a position to step on me," he said, (paranoid to the end) "because none of you has the fucking balls."

And not one person in the room questioned that statement. "I hope because I'm splitting, you will find out who you really are, and not sit around on your asses crying, 'I am an artist, I'm an artist,' but pay your dues, and get a job on the side if you have to."

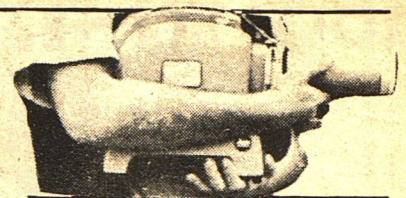
"The greatest tragedy for me in the last 20 years, wars aside, is this community, because it could have done so much."

And that rang deep and true. But then Steve Gaskin, who directs the Sensitivity sessions at the Family Dog Monday night, said, "Bill, we've heard that rap many times before. You took the choice between love and money. You got the money--don't come looking now for the love."

Graham rose in all his fury, his face blood red: "To accuse a man of showing emotion!" he howled. "You slimy human being, you low motherfucking slimy--"

And the peace-love people wandered among each other in confusion, and somewhere in there the Guild called off the strike at the Fillmore--obviously defeated by Graham's masterful performance, and with Graham railing, and Chet Helms changing, arms upraised, "We were just getting to the nitty gritty of the problem, we were just getting to the nitty gritty of the problem."

Graham (Don't touch me!) charged out the door. Shortly thereafter a hippie stumbled through the door, bleeding from the head after being hit by some drunks. A brick came hurling through the window while people mumbled about the right to "do your own thing". Peace and love, brothers, peace and love.



CHET HELMS

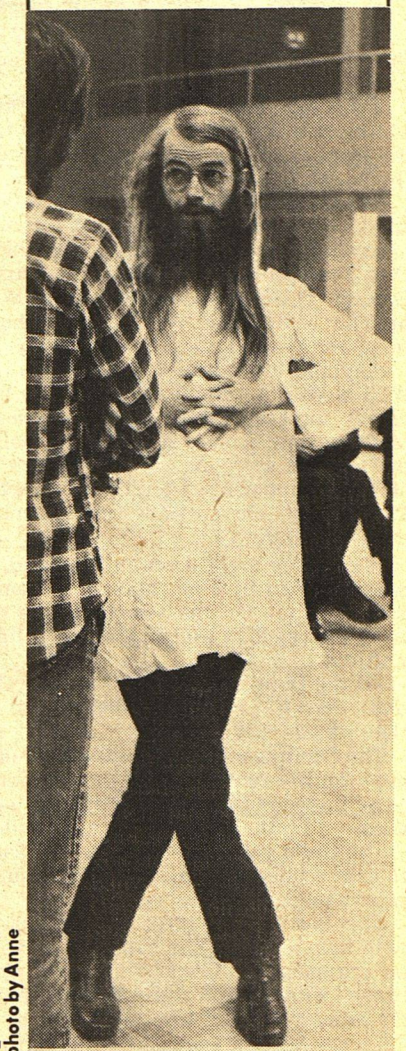


photo by Anne

## STAGE TRIBE

A new tribe is being formed in Berkeley--a tribe which wants to make theater a rich revolutionary experience for everyone.

"We want to avoid the prostitution of our talents and new culture," Elliot Tanzer, group manager, says. "The old theater is dead. A new theater electrified with revolutionary vision will take its place."

Tanzer feels a play can be the focal point for the tribe, a coming together of talented people. From there the group will move to guerilla theater, light shows, films and all other media.

Brothers and sisters interested in joining the theater tribe should meet on August 9 and 10 at two pm on the second floor of the Free Clinic on Haste Street. For more info call 843-6338 or stop by 2143 Woolsey St.

## Wild West Struck

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000 heads a night comes out to \$450,000. A probable gross more than a dozen times the sum of his two biggest expenses.

And tucked away in the mimo-ed budget are the facts that the single largest expense is neither Kezar nor PG&E, but salaries for the council staff--\$36,000.

Furthermore, the total of the entire budget balloons to \$146,000.

Yet for 12 hours of music at Kezar, the Festival may well turn over a profit of 200%!

And if we take Donohue's word that not a cent of any profit will enter the councilmen's pockets--then why the fuck are they charging \$3 a head at Kezar?

Answer: any profits will be used to create a permanent Arts Center to be run by the artists themselves.

Well, if this Festival is any indication of how the artists (Donohue, Graham, Gleason, etc.) operate, then it will not be Gracie Slick or Joe McDonald who are crashing in the swivel chairs at the new Center.

You know what this is all

about? These fancy mod businessmen have set up the Festival in such a way that they can tax us, the hip/radical community, for a Cultural Center we have never decided on.

Where it's at is that these arrogant, bullying businessmen want to impose a structure upon our culture which will guarantee its commercial consistency and their status as the rock and roll powers that be. More than a modest beginning for the systematic control of our culture.

A leaflet from the Haight Commune lays it out:

"There are two kinds of culture: PEOPLE'S CULTURE and CULTURE FOR SALE. People's culture comes from the people. It is the free expression of life/imagination/Energy; isolated human beings reaching out to each other with noises/gestures/visions to create a new and common reality."

"Culture-for-sale is a rip-off that converts People's Culture into a synthetic substitute for reality and sells it back to the people it was stolen from."

"We make no distinction be-

tween Culture and Politics. Life is what is crucial! The insane perversion of power in present day Amerika has defined our life styles as political, all right. OUR POLITICS IS HOW WE LIVE! ... And all cultural categories are false except as People's Culture opposes Culture-for-sale. The struggle between the two is a necessary part of the struggle for life, against the forces of non-life."

The thoughts and words uppermost in the minds of the Haight Commune come down to one simple sentence: "We're talking about stopping the rip-off culture--starting now."

As of the moment, there's a strike and a national boycott of the Festival. Further information will come via strike, bulletins from the Haight commune c/o ON STRIKE, 1428 Haight St., S.F.

## NEW U

The Free City University is getting together in San Francisco, with classes for the summer session starting August 18.

There's a \$5 registration fee to cover paper work.

A catalog will be available this Monday, the 11th. Headquarters for the Free City University are at 449 Turk St. The phone there is 474-4747, 7 am to 9 pm.

## PIGS SLAPPED ON CLOVEN HOVES

BPD Chief Baker has reported on his underling pigs' nighttime rampage through the Peoples' Park Annex on June 6. Under headings like Damage to Trees, Structure Damage, Removal of Badges, and Excessive Force, his investigation of his officers is reported.

"Serious accusations of police misconduct" in the San Francisco Chronicle and Berkeley Barb are reported in the "Rumors" section of the report.

"Rumors" included beating a dog to death, throwing a kitten in the fire, smashing a dog's leg, and throwing a crippled man into the fire.

But, try as he might, the good chief was unable to verify these accusations.

The report states, "There is agreement that most structures were either pushed over or otherwise dismantled, that most tents and lean-tos were collapsed, that all bonfires were extinguished, that many empty bottles and jugs were broken, that a number of plants were trampled either accidentally, or deliberately in some cases, and that some trees, both large and small,

were bent or broken."

As a result, the field commander was suspended for two days and a sergeant for one day. Two sergeants and an inspector were reprimanded. And patrolmen have been advised to "maintain unit integrity WHATEVER THAT MEANS."

Baker closes by hoping that these events, "while regrettable," won't overshadow the "dedicated, intelligent service, which has rarely been equalled anywhere in this nation. They have acted in a restrained manner while besieged by taunts, verbal abuse, and physical objects which could injure, maim, or cost them their lives. They have been criticized, vilified, and often damned with qualified faint praise, but through it all have continued to strive toward providing the entire community the type of police service it deserves. (emphasis ours) You may be assured they will continue to do this, always guarding their proud tradition and heritage as Berkeley policemen."--R.H.