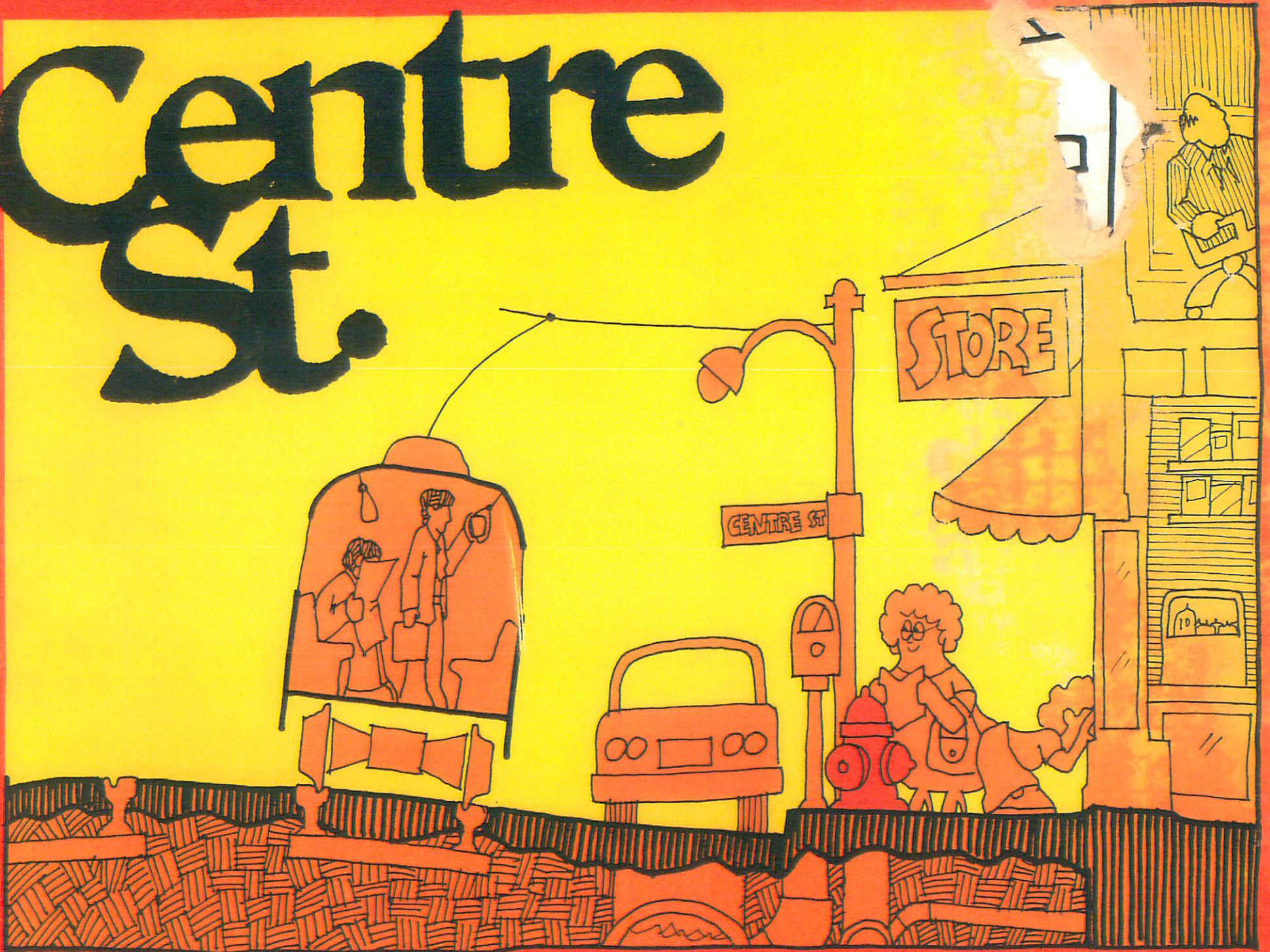


Centre St.



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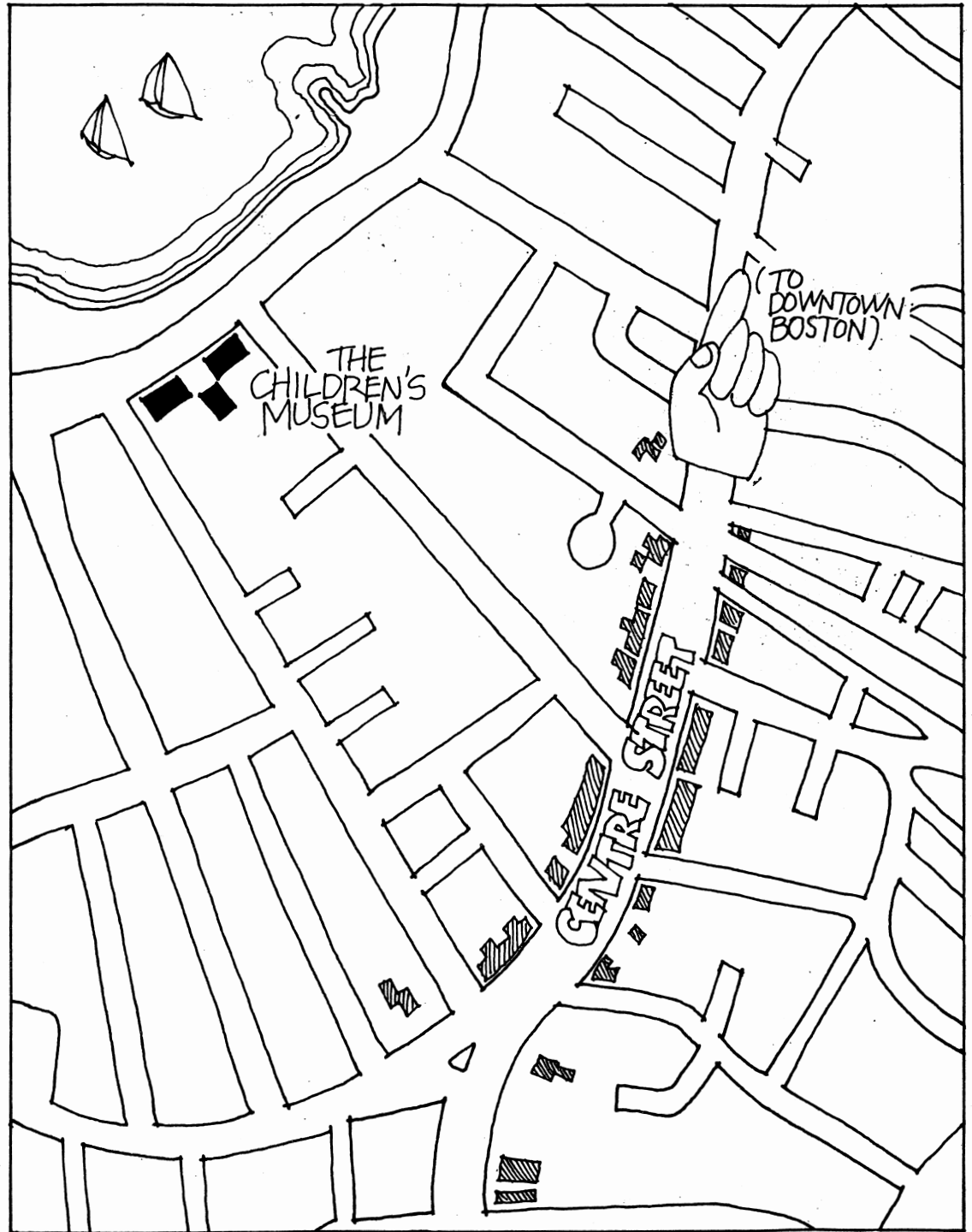
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CENTRE ST

AN EXHIBIT
AND FAIR

BY THE BOSTON
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
AND MEMBERS OF
THE CENTRE ST.
COMMUNITY IN
JAMAICA PLAIN,
MASSACHUSETTS.

THE CENTRE ST. EXHIBIT AND FAIR, AND THIS BOOK
WERE MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES.

The Children's
Museum wishes
to thank all
these people
and organizations
for helping out
on the Centre St.
Project:

ENGINE 28 FIRE STATION
HAILERS DRUGSTORE - KAPLAN
REAL ESTATE
ALBERT'S BARBERSHOP
FOWLER REAL ESTATE
THE TUESDAY CLUB
JAMAICA PLAIN BRANCH LIBRARY
KENNEDY BUTTER-AND-EGG
STORE
HARVEY'S HARDWARE
YUMONT'S HARDWARE
HANLON'S SHOES
JAMAICA PLAIN POST OFFICE 02/30
PUBLIX MARKET
BERNARDS OFFICE & ART SUPPLY
CLASSIC CLEANERS
PEARL'S HOMEMADE CANDIES
ARTICLES ANTIQUE STORE
DISTRICT 13 POLICE STATION
PAPA GINO'S PIECE-O-PIZZA
WOOLWORTHS
BARRY'S DELI
MITCHELL'S BAKERY

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
CHARLIE'S DELI
DUNKIN' DONUTS
THE FOOTLIGHT CLUB
JAMAICA PLAIN
SPANISH APAC
JAMAICA PLAIN
HEALTH CENTER
JAMAICA PLAIN
SUMMERTHING
BOSTON MAYOR'S
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AFFAIRS
JAMAICA PLAIN CITIZEN
HARWICH LITHOGRAPHERS
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TRANSPORTATION

EMILY SEREX
JAMAICA JEWELER
THE ERCO SHOP
HEATH TV
BOSTON FIRE DEPT.
BOB & ELLEN ESKIND &
FREE MEAL VIDEO
PRODUCTIONS
JAMAICA PLAIN
BICENTENNIAL
COMMITTEE
DANNY COHEN

THE WORDS IN THIS BOOK
ARE BY DAVID MERRILL
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Introduction

A healthy, livable city ought to be, among other things, a place where learning happens almost anywhere. In less complex places and slower-paced times, unexpected education was not uncommon. For example, when educator Caroline Pratt was growing up around the turn of the century in Fayetteville, New York, "no one had to tell us where milk came from or how butter was made. We saw wheat ground into flour in the mill on our stream and we could learn the secrets of half a dozen other industries merely by walking through the open door of a neighbor's shop."

Today, the greater use of glass as a building material notwithstanding, urban environments and the activities they harbor are more opaque than transparent. "The language of the cityscape," says MIT planning professor Kevin Lynch, "is as baffling as a news release."

The problem has been addressed from a variety of viewpoints. Educators have developed "schools-without-walls" to provide students with first-hand experiences in business, industry, and government. Among architects and planners, designs for learning in "The Invisible City" were the principal topic of discussion at the 1972 International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado. Sociologue Ivan Illich proposes to "de-school" entirely the process of education, envisioning cities as vast marketplaces for learning, where every citizen is a potential teacher.

Museum education concerning city life customarily has treated its subject matter in disciplinary fashion, interpreting physical, social and political history through the conventional media of formal exhibition. The traditional concerns of the museum—the preservation and interpretation of material culture and folkways—could, however, embrace more dynamic approaches to making the city understandable in human terms.

In the summer of 1970, the Children's Museum initiated a modest arts, crafts, and science program which was transported around Boston in an ex-laundry van. The program's success encouraged the Museum to establish a Community Services Division, with the support of Wider Availability of Museums funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Since its inception four years ago, the Community Services Division has taken an eclectic approach to the task of making the Museum's educational resources useful to community groups and schools. The Division staff of educators, craftspeople, musicians, scientists, early learning, cultural education, media, and design specialists regularly helps community center and school personnel to develop materials and activities for their programs, to recruit and train program assistants, and to utilize the resources of other of Boston's cultural organizations.

The Community Services Division also has had a particular interest in exploring the educative potential of city streets and neighborhoods. The Centre Street Project, an outgrowth of that interest, presented a four-month exhibit and a one-day street fair in the fall of 1973.

Centre Street is a shopping area and trolley thoroughfare for the community known as Jamaica Plain which surrounds the Children's Museum. At a glance, Centre Street is, as its name might imply, a typically undistinguished, middle-of-the-road urban kind of place, a string of grocery, variety, clothing, shoe, hardware, and drug stores, some delicatessens, one or two bars, and a church every few blocks.

The Centre Street Project utilized a small planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to present an exhibit and a street fair involving the people and establishments along three of Centre Street's storefront blocks. In April, 1973, equipped with little more than a general familiarity with Centre Street and an instinct for discovery, the Project staff began a minute investigation of the territory, variously described by people who

shop, work, and live there, as "average," "dull," and "dirty." "What's interesting about this place?" project staff asked many times over, up and down the street. "What's interesting about your place? Do you have special skills other people might like to find out about?" The Project canvassed close to 80 establishments along Centre Street, talking with proprietors about their skills, hobbies, stocks-in-trade, back-room curios, and willingness to participate in the exhibit and fair. The experience was eye-opening: a candy-maker turned out also to be a concert violinist; the toy dealer an artist. In his basement, the owner of the hardware store had equipment right out of a turn-of-the-century catalog.

A search of the Museum's collections revealed numerous artifacts related to the businesses and trades of Centre Street: churns which in another era would have produced the slabs of butter on display in the dairy store; children's games which were ancestors to those in the toy shop; predecessors of the tools on the hardware store's shelves. Slowly, the concept for the Centre Street exhibit materialized: it would be an environment for role-playing the activities of a neighborhood shopping area and a forum for Centre Street people to demonstrate their skills. The street fair would bring the tradespeople and their backroom techniques to the curbside for all to see, and, often, to try.

What follows is the story of the Centre Street exhibit and fair: what they were like and how they came to be.

WHAT

IS INTERESTING ABOUT A PLACE THAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS

AVERAGE DULL DIRTY



YOU CAN SEE SOME INTERESTING THINGS THAT WE HAVE BEEN FINDING OUT ABOUT AT THE

CENTRE ST. EXHIBIT

AND THE

CENTRE ST. FAIR

OCT. 1 TO NOV. 30 AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

OCT. 20 ON CENTRE ST. FROM GREEN ST. TO THE MONUMENT

IF YOU CAN HELP US TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CENTRE ST., CALL ANDY OR ALAN AT THE CENTRE ST. PROJECT OFFICE, 522-4800 X40

CENTRE ST. PROJECT

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

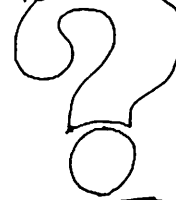
COMMUNITY SERVICES



¿QUÉ

ES INTERESANTE ACERCA DE UN LUGAR QUE HA SIDO DESCRITO COMO

ORDINARIO ABURRIDO SUCIO



USTED PUEDE VER ALGUNAS COSAS INTERESANTES QUE NOSOTROS HEMOS AVERIGUADO EN LA

EXHIBICIÓN DE LA CALLE CENTRE

DESDE EL 1º DE OCTUBRE HASTA EL 30 DE NOVIEMBRE EN EL MUSEO DE LOS NIÑOS

FESTIVAL DE LA CALLE CENTRE

EL 20 DE OCTUBRE EN LA CALLE CENTRE DESDE LA CALLE GREEN HASTA EL MONUMENTO

SI UUD. PUEDE AYUDARNOS A AVERIGUAR MÁS ACERCA DE LA CALLE CENTRE LLÁME A ANDY O ALAN EN LA OFICINA DEL CENTRE ST. PROJECT, TELEFONO 522-4800 EXTENSION 40

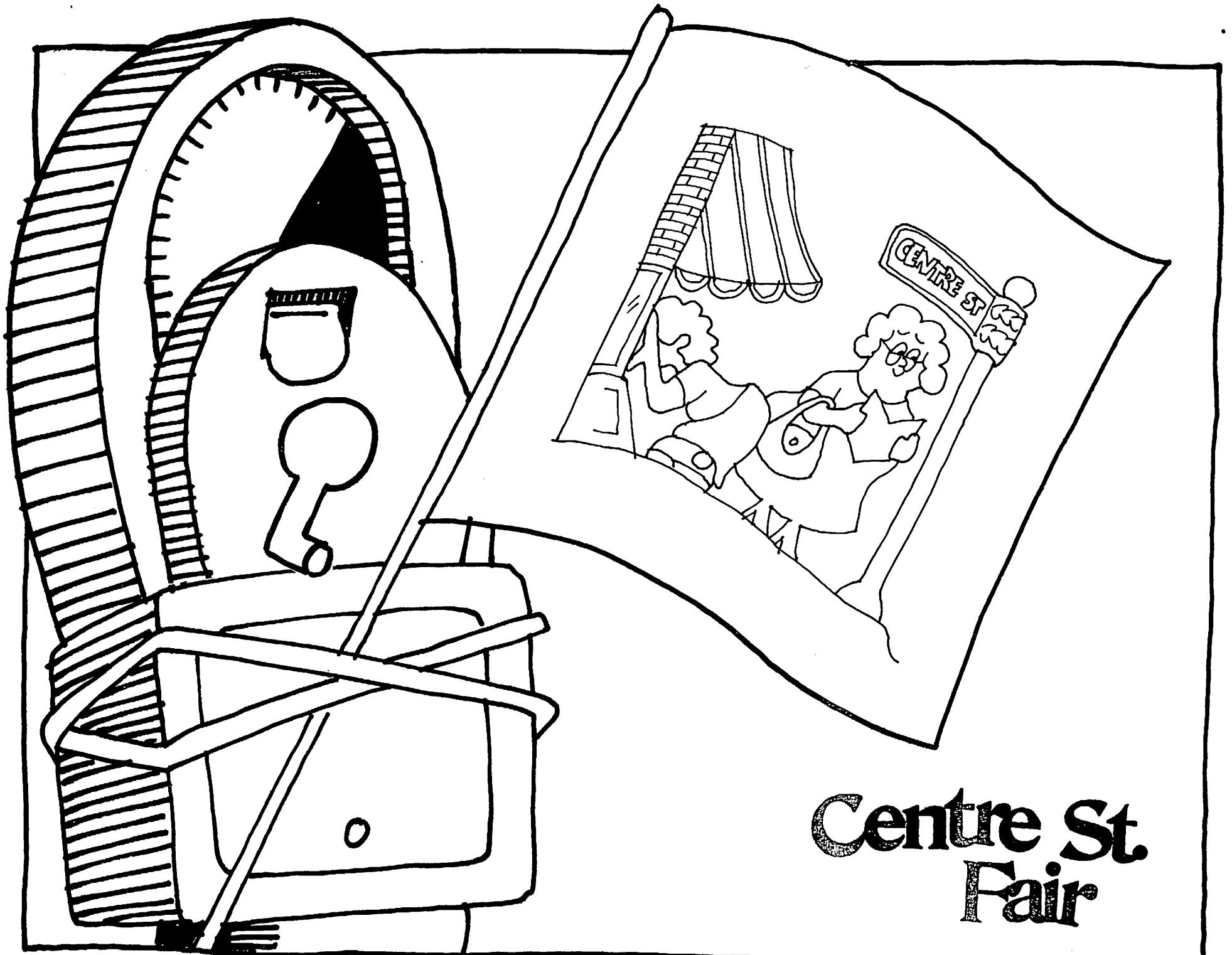
CENTRE ST. PROJECT

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

COMMUNITY SERVICES







Centre St.
Fair

The staff has gathered at fair headquarters in the Baptist churchyard at the head of the three-block Centre Street fairground. Up and down the street, fluorescent orange cones mark "no parking" areas. In two dozen storefront windows, maps and schedules announce the day's events. The antique fire truck from the Museum of Transportation is making its rounds from the Centre Street firehouse with the first group of young fair-goers aboard. Police Department dogs and horses are waiting at District 13 Station to be shown off to curious visitors. Along Centre Street, a ton of tables, hauled over that morning from an M.I.T. examination hall, begin to fill up with materials for the day's activities; at the dairy and hardware stores, demonstrations of butter-churning and bow-drilling are already under way. In the middle of it all, the banner announcing the fair hangs sodden over the street, soaking up the drizzle that has been coming down since early morning.

But it takes more than a drizzle to postpone the culmination of six months of planning. Besides, the weather report promises clearing skies by midmorning. The Centre Street Project staff, Andy, Alan, and Jim, trudge from store to store with assurances that the fair will go on. At Papa Gino's Piece O'Pizza, Bob Lanzillo is not daunted. He believes that a little rain won't hurt things. He's been warming up his tossing arm and getting pretty good lift for so early in the day. He's ready to toss a pizza big enough and high enough to cap a passing trolley car.

Under an awning at Kennedy Butter and Egg Store, Penny, of the Museum staff, churns butter for a damp knot of passersby. At Harvey's Hardware, Bernie, the Museum's resident inventor, pulls the leather-thonged bow that powers his homemade drill while raindrops soak his beard.

By ten o'clock things are unravelling. The orange cones which were supposed to prevent car-parking at the curb have been overrun by shoppers



seeking the shortest rain-spattered distance between their cars and the storefront doors; two or three cars drive away with cones hanging from their bumpers. The fair information booth, a pre-fab plywood job, won't go together for anyone and lays in pieces next to the registration table. Word comes from the Museum that the switchboard has been advising inquiring callers that the fair has been postponed. Andy hastens to the Museum to inform the switchboard that the fair is still on. By the time he returns, the rain has intensified. The three fair organizers convene, and at 11 a.m. the fair is officially called off.

The day's work has just begun. Each merchant has to be notified of the postponement. Permission must be secured from M.I.T. to keep their tables for a week. Rain date signs have to be made up and taped to store windows. Orange cones need retrieval from the gutter. Bernie and Penny collect their equipment and haul it back to the Museum. And, several hours later, someone remembers to tell the switchboard to give it up, that the whole thing has indeed been called off.

It is a glum staff that makes the rounds of the merchants that afternoon, passing the word. Not all of the storekeepers understand this despondence. After all, the fair hasn't been cancelled, only postponed. As Ernie Cohen at the ERCO Shop puts it: "Centre Street doesn't change. Centre Street will still be here next week."

Perhaps Centre Street doesn't change, but it does look better under sunny skies. For the second try, the weather is glorious.

Naturally, the fair staff have been preparing for rain all week. Alan has gotten permission to use the second floor of the Hanlon Shoe Building for indoor demonstrations. Andy has prepared posters to tell spectators where to go to find fair events under cover. In the week since the rain-out, broadsides announcing the fair's rescheduling have been distributed far and wide.

For as long as anyone can remember, there's never been a Saturday like this on Centre Street.

Bulges of people along the crowded sidewalks indicate demonstrations in progress. A mural takes shape on a barren brick wall. Amidst unusually dense traffic, a trolley car crunches into a VW bus delivering Museum supplies to one of the demonstration sites. In front of his deli, Al Barry is whipping up a meatloaf; a few steps up the street, Charlie Karatza constructs his Greek specialty, baklava, with careful layers of filo dough and nuts. Behind her storefront window, Pearl Poltorak molds chocolate lollipops. At Classic Cleaners, Al Pavone gives plant tours and demonstrates his steam press. Over at District 13, kids' nervous laughter echoes through an open cell block, and a steady line of fairgoers inspects the rescue van outside. While Bob Lanzillo does not throw a pizza big enough or high enough to cap a trolley car, he does teach the standard toss to onlookers at the curb. Dean Nimmer, the antique man, auctions trinkets and treasures on the corner. And the firefighters, who had not had time to secure permission from their superiors, open the firehouse doors anyway, so that fairgoers can get a good look at the shining equipment inside. When the alarm sounds, everyone makes way as the engines roar to life.

At the fair day's end, as the sun sets over the parking meters, the winners of the color-the-Centre-Street flag contest don their prize sweat-shirts emblazoned with a Centre Street crest especially designed for the occasion, and pose for a picture before heading home.

Pearl's Homemade Candies

"Pearl's is the only place I know you can go to for one orange gumdrop for your gingerbread house," says Jeri Robinson, the Museum staff member who worked with Pearl to develop a Fair activity. Bill and Pearl Poltorak sell only candy—ranging from penny candy and homemade penuche to fine German chocolates. The visitor to their shop is rewarded upon opening their door by the warm aroma of chocolate, the festive appeal of ornately decorated and brightly wrapped boxes and the tempting invitation of mounds of bite-sized candies.

Such a specialty business is one of a dwindling number. With union wages pricing the skilled workers out of the field, fluctuating prices affecting European imports, and the astronomical cost of sugar, homemade candy shops are becoming rare, and the painstaking methods of the old days are being replaced by speedy economical ones.

Pearl described the "chocolate dippers" who once made their living coating candy. "Machines do that now. They dip more efficiently with a thinner layer of chocolate. Then they brand the tops with a piece of metal like a fork. Of course, that's what makes homemade candies worth more: thicker chocolate. And fresher ingredients, too."

Pearl hand dips her own chocolates. She swirls each filling through a nest of warm chocolate. As she places it on a tray, her fingers stretch the last dribble of chocolate to mark the top of each cream with a twist that labels it raspberry, orange, maple, vanilla, or whichever. Most candy makers have their own codes of swirls. Once you've sampled a box and noted the designs you needn't poke around any more to find your favorites.

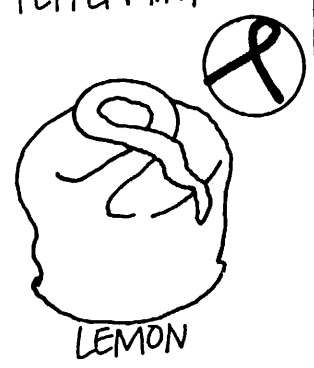
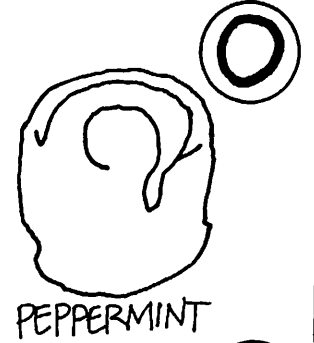
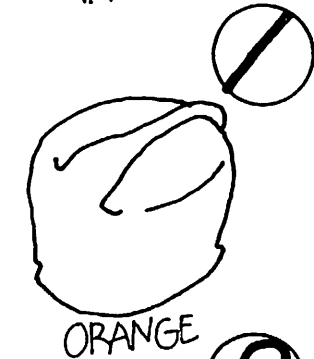
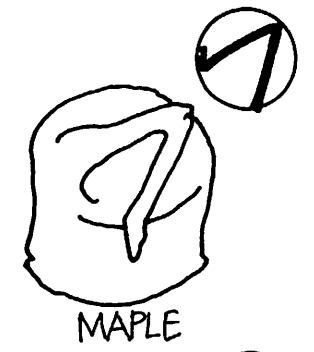




PEARL'S SWIRLS

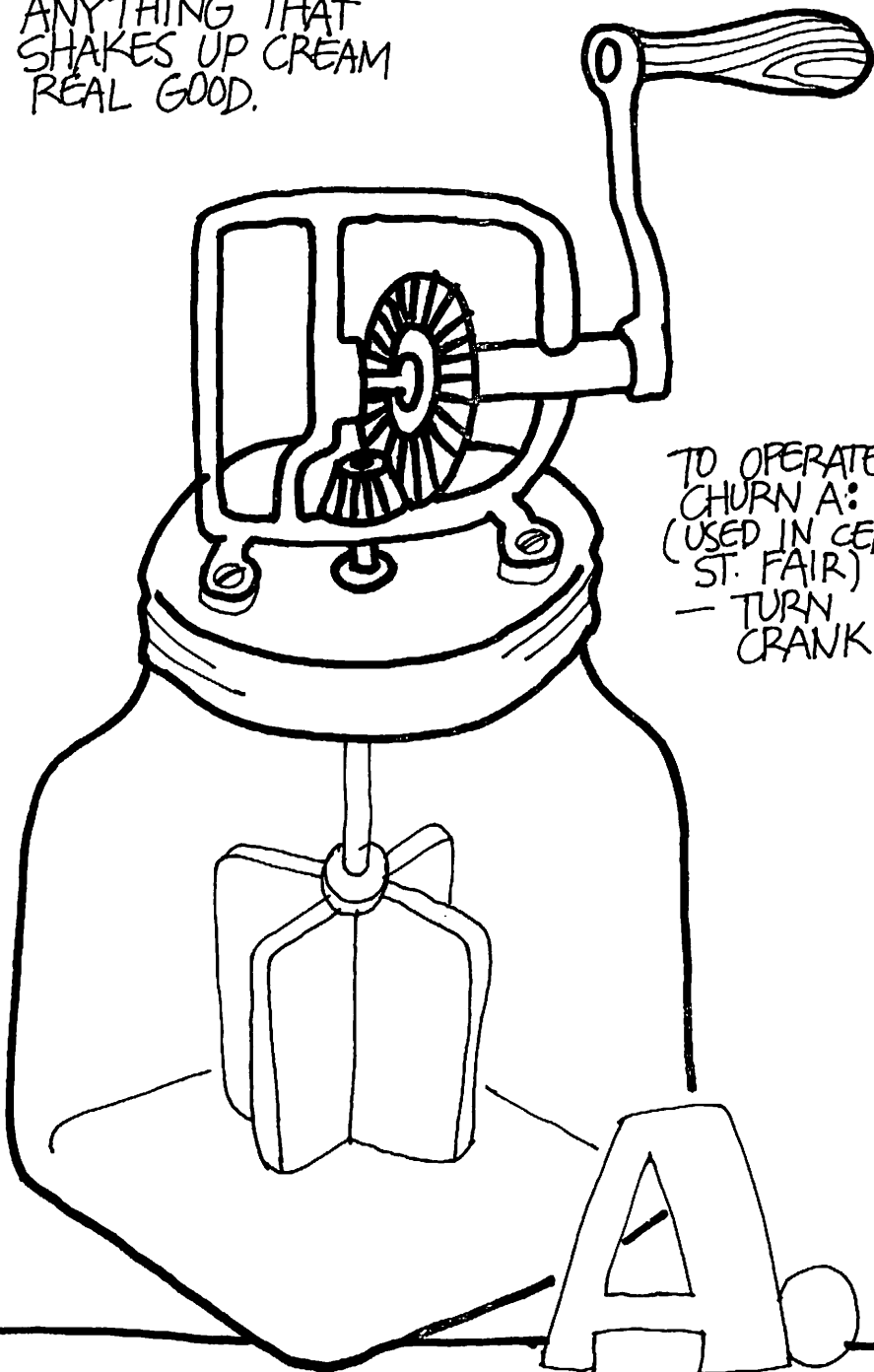
(AND BILL'S FILLS)

A PARTIAL KEY
TO PEARL'S CANDY
CODE - HOW TO
TELL WHAT'S INSIDE.



A CHURN IS
ANYTHING THAT
SHAKES UP CREAM
REAL GOOD.

AS THE WORLD CHURNS



TO OPERATE
CHURN A:
(USED IN CENTRE
ST. FAIR)
— TURN
CRANK



TO OPERATE
CHURN B:
INSERT
MARBLE,
SHAKE JAR.



Kennedy Butter-and- Egg Store

Kennedy Butter and Egg Store, one of a few remaining independent examples of what was once a widely-established New England chain of dairy stores, specializes in fresh foods. Bob Allen carves your order of butter from a 68 pound block in the refrigerated case behind the counter. He grinds your coffee to taste. He scoops your peanut butter from a 50 pound tub, runs your cold cuts through the slicer, and hand-dips your ice cream. If he's not too busy, he'll slice up the makings of a single sandwich and sell it to you with a bulkie roll so you can make your own lunch.

For fair day, Penny Sharp, of the Museum staff, brought to the table set up in front of the store three butter churns from the Museum's collections. Bob carried out from his shop containers of cream, salt, rags for wiping up, and bread. A cluster of fairgoers gathered around and chatted about butter-making as they took turns turning the crank that made the paddles slosh the cream around. Except for a few older people who remembered their grandparents doing it, none had seen butter churned before.

Butter-making is a mystical process: for a long time there's nothing apparent but foamy cream; then, almost unexpectedly, butter begins to clump together in the middle of the jar. The patient people who waited tasted real sweet butter on their bread, and got a firsthand look at an ancient process that has been obscured behind the shiny, mechanized workings of the modern dairy.

Classic Cleaners

"What's so dry about dry cleaning?" everyone wondered as they listened to clothes slosh around in a big machine in Al Pavone's plant. Al and his son Michael explained to their fair-day tourists that the clothes were washing in a chemical that is 99% water-free.

The basic operation is similar to the home laundry process, explained Al, except that the "washing" machines are bigger and use perchlorethylene—"perk" for short—instead of soapy water. "Perk" dissolves oil and grease, removes dirt and grit, and exposes other "hidden" stains on the clothes. It evaporates quickly, leaves no odor, does not harm most fabrics, and is safe to work with.

Of course, there are some stains which "perk" won't get out. Clothes soiled with coffee, tea, ink, lipstick and other stubborn substances are pre-treated at the "spotting" board with special chemicals which either remove the stain or loosen it enough to be flushed out in the cleaning process.

Al and Michael strongly advise against using "Aunt Clara's" home-grown stain remedies, which can cause irreparable damage to some fabrics. Even water on certain stains can do more harm than good.

Fresh stains are the dry cleaner's favorites; in most cases, the longer a stain has remained untreated, the less the chances of complete removal.

After spotting and cleaning, garments are pressed, bagged, and sorted by customer, bright and crisp until their next visit.

What with all the synthetic fabrics being turned out every year, Al mused that the chemical companies were putting silk worms and wool sheep out of business. The Pavones study monthly fabric bulletins to keep up with new arrivals on the clothing scene, and have a small library of books and literature to help them solve nearly any cleaning problem.





Charlie's Deli

BAKLAVA

1½ lb. WALNUTS
 ½ lb. ALMONDS
 1 LEMON
 1½ lb. FILO (dough)
 1t. CINNAMON
 ½ lb. BUTTER
 2 lb. SUGAR
 1c. WATER

1 MAKE SYRUP:
 HEAT 1 CUP WATER.
 GRADUALLY ADD 2 lb.
 SUGAR UNTIL DISSOLVED.
 ADD LEMON JUICE AND
 ALL. BRING MIXTURE
 TO A BOIL AND BOIL
 5 MIN. STIRRING CONSTANTLY.
 SET ASIDE TO COOL.

2 MAKE FILLING:
 HEAT ½ lb. ALMONDS
 AT 350° FOR 15 MIN.
 WHEN COOL, PLACE IN A
 PLASTIC BAG AND GRIND
 WITH A LARGE BOTTLE
 OR ROLLING PIN. GRIND
 THE WALNUTS IN THE
 SAME WAY. ADD 1t.
 CINNAMON AND 1t.
 SUGAR. MIX ALL TOGETHER,
 THEN SET ASIDE.

3 BRUSH THE BOTTOM
 AND SIDES OF A 9" BY
 14" RECTANGULAR CAKEPAN
 WITH MELTED BUTTER.

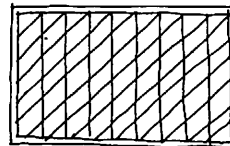
4 PLACE ONE LAYER OF
 FILO IN PAN, AND
 PRESS INTO BUTTER TO
 MOISTEN. BRUSH FILO
 WITH BUTTER. ADD 6 OR
 7 MORE LAYERS, BRUSHING
 EACH WITH BUTTER.

5 COVER THE TOP LAYER
 WITH HALF THE FILLING.
DRIZZLE WITH BUTTER
 TO MOISTEN NUTS.

6 ADD ANOTHER 8
 LAYERS OF FILO AND
 BUTTER ALTERNATELY,
 THEN THE REMAINDER
 OF THE NUT FILLING.
DRIZZLE WITH BUTTER.
 THEN ADD 12-15 MORE
 LAYERS OF FILO TO MAKE
 THE CRUST.

7 BRUSH THE TOP WELL
 WITH BUTTER, AND
PRESS DOWN THE
 EDGES WITH A KNIFE,
 TUCKING ANY RAGGED
 EDGES DOWN INTO THE
 SIDES OF THE PAN.

8 USING A SHARP KNIFE,
CUT PASTRY INTO
 DIAMOND-SHAPED
 PIECES AS SHOWN.



9 BAKE AT 350° FOR
 1 HR. 15 MIN. TOP
 SHOULD BE GOLDEN
 BROWN.

10 REMOVE BAKLAVA
 FROM OVEN, THEN
DRIZZLE SYRUP OVER THE
 TOP UNTIL LIQUID REACHES
 THE TOP LAYER OF CRUST.
 LET SIT FOR SEVERAL
 HOURS UNTIL LIQUID IS
 ABSORBED.

Publix Market

On a street of storefronts, Publix is the only modern chain supermarket - a small operation by today's standards, with a delivery service for its local clientele, but physically bigger than any other store on Centre Street, the Woolworth's next door excepted. In Publix's front windows, the inevitable red, white and blue supermarket posters announce the latest prices for hamburger by the pound, apples by the dozen, lettuce by the head. Inside, however, Publix's atmosphere is more personal than most supermarkets; manager Tom Malone and his staff know many of their customers by name, and most of the clerks, especially the teenagers, hail from the neighborhood.

On fair day, on the sidewalk in front of the store, Museum staff member Penny Sharp used Publix-contributed spinach, carrots and cranberries to demonstrate the making of paper with vegetable fibers. Penny blended her vegetables with old newsprint and water to form "slurry," which she poured through a small window-screen frame to create rectangular mats of damp fibre. Then, she ironed the fibre mats between sheets of newsprint to produce rough-textured papers tinted green, orange and red. Fairgoers decorated the papers on the spot and took them away as souvenirs.

Right beside Penny, Museum colleague Jorie Hunken demonstrated another craft with Publix vegetables. Jorie boiled up red cabbage, onion skins and cranberries to dye wool naturally. And she taught her onlookers to weave colorful decorations fashioned after the "god's eye" talismans of the Pueblo Indians, by wrapping dyed wool yarn around two crossed sticks.

To the crowds which gathered around Penny and Jorie, Tom Malone gave away cider by the glass. Later, when the Museum demonstrations had finished, he set out a washtub for apple-bobbing in celebration of the Halloween season.





A COLORFUL YARN

REMEMBER WHEN YOU SPILLED BEET SOUP ALL OVER YOUR BRAND-NEW PANTS, AND ALL YOUR BLEACHING AND SCRUBBING COULDN'T GET IT OUT? THAT WAS AN EXPERIENCE WITH **NATURAL DYE.**

NATURAL DYEING IS NOT ALWAYS TRAGIC. BEAUTIFUL COLORS FROM VEGETABLES AND PLANTS CAN BE STAINED INTO WOOL FOR USE IN WEAVING AND NEEDLEWORK.

WHAT YOU DO IS BOIL THE COLOR OUT OF THE VEGETABLE (WITH DELICATE THINGS LIKE FLOWER PETALS, SIMMERING WILL DO), STRAIN THE SOLUTION, DROP IN THE WOOL, AND RETURN TO THE HEAT UNTIL YOU HAVE THE COLOR YOU WANT. (TEST FOR COLOR BY SQUEEZING THE EXCESS SOLUTION OUT OF THE WOOL.)

MOST SOLUTIONS NEED A **MORDANT** TO SET THE COLOR SO IT WON'T WASH OUT.

ALUM (POTASSIUM ALUMINUM SULFATE - 2 TABLESPOONS PER GALLON OF WATER) IS GOOD, AND DOESN'T CHANGE THE COLOR MUCH; SOMETIMES **SALT** MAKES AN OK MORDANT.

EVEN WITH A MORDANT, SOME OF THE COLORS YOU GET WILL FADE IN THE WASH, AND SOME COLORS FROM BERRIES OR FLOWERS MAY FADE IN THE SUNLIGHT.

ENAMEL, COPPER, OR STAINLESS STEEL POTS ARE BEST. DYEING IN AN IRON OR ALUMINUM POT WILL DARKEN OR "SADDEN" THE COLOR.

ADDING **ACIDS** (VINEGAR, LEMON JUICE) OR **BASES** (SODA, AMMONIA) TO THE SOLUTION ALTERS THE COLOR IN FASCINATING WAYS. **EXPERIMENT** WITH YOUR SOLUTIONS BEFORE DOING THE ACTUAL DYEING.

SOME EASY-TO-GET DYE STUFFS ARE

- STRAWBERRIES
- BLUEBERRIES
- RED CABBAGE
- SPINACH
- CRANBERRIES
- GRAPE JUICE
- ONION SKINS
- BEETS
- COFFEE
- TEA
- OAK BARK*

*CONTAINS TANNIN, A NATURAL MORDANT.

SAMPLE RECIPES:

YELLOW ONIONS (YELLOW)
BERMUDA ONIONS (CHARTREUSE)

SKINS OF 3 ONIONS
2 TEASPOONS ALUM
1 SMALL SKEIN OF YARN (1 OZ.)

BOIL ONION SKINS IN ENOUGH WATER TO COVER YARN. SIMMER IN DYE BATH FOR 1/2 HOUR AND REMOVE FROM HEAT. RINSE IN COLD WATER WHEN COOL. HANG SKEIN UP TO DRY AWAY FROM SUNLIGHT.

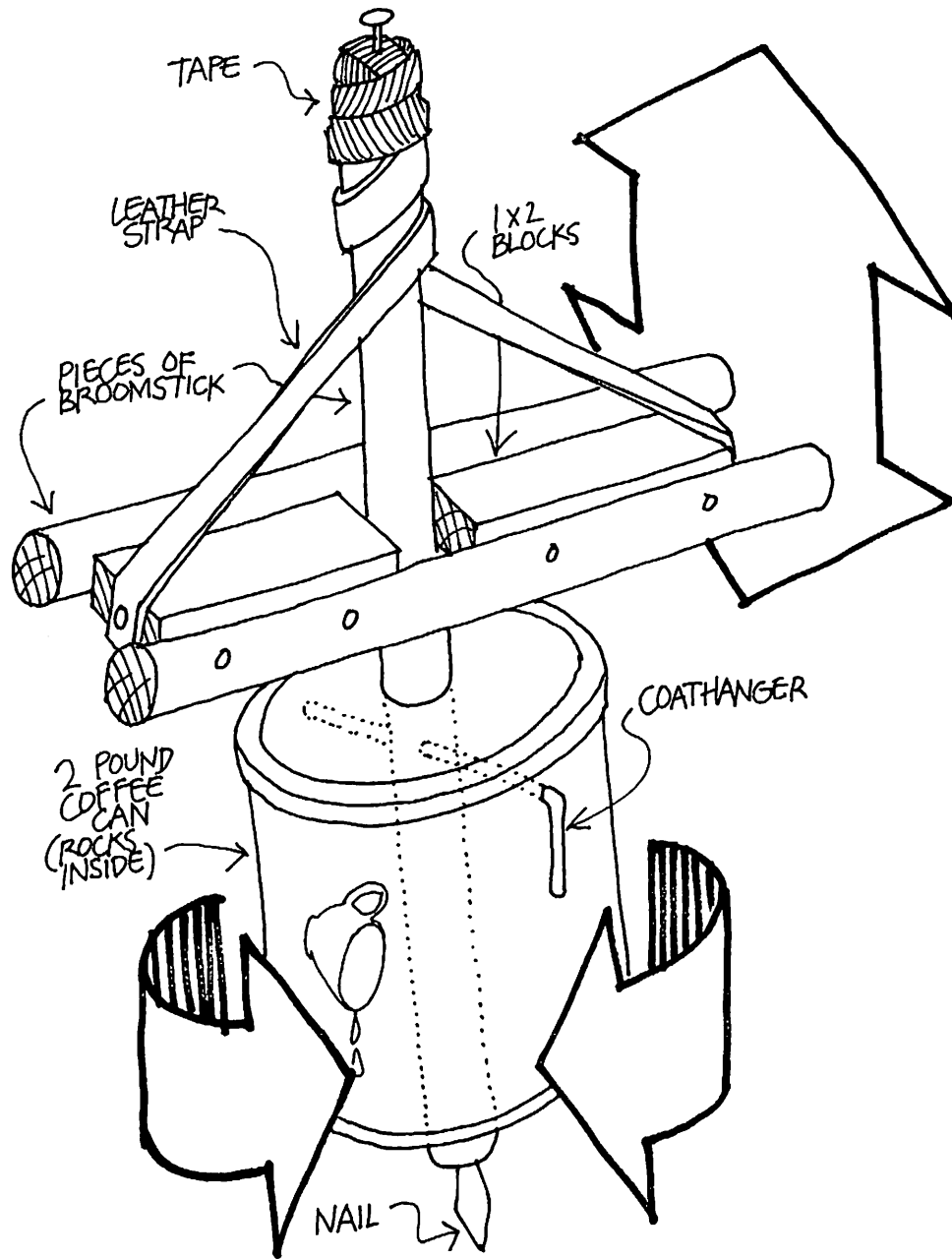
CRANBERRIES (PINK)
BLUEBERRIES (BLUE)

1 POUND BERRIES
2 CUPS WATER
1 SMALL SKEIN OF YARN (1 OZ.)

BOIL BERRIES IN WATER UNTIL THEY POP AND THE COLOR COMES OUT. STRAIN. ADD WET YARN TO JUICE. SIMMER 1/2 HOUR. REMOVE FROM DYE BATH AND HANG TO DRY AWAY FROM SUNLIGHT. **DO NOT RINSE** BEFORE FIRST DRYING.

DYEING IS A KIND OF ALCHEMY, A WAY OF FINDING OUT THE NATURE OF LIVING THINGS, A MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION. EXPERIMENT, AND ADD YOUR OWN TOUCHES.

TIN CAN DRILL



1. CUT AN 18" PIECE FROM AN OLD BROOMSTICK, THEN CUT WHAT IS LEFT OF THE BROOMSTICK IN TWO. NAIL THESE LAST TWO PIECES TO TWO 1x2 BLOCKS AS SHOWN, WITH JUST ENOUGH SPACE LEFT BETWEEN THE BLOCKS FOR THE 18" DOWEL TO SLIDE EASILY THROUGH.
2. CUT HOLES IN THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF A TWO-POUND COFFEE CAN BIG ENOUGH FOR THE 18" DOWEL TO JUST FIT SNUGLY THROUGH AS SHOWN. WIRE THE DOWEL TIGHTLY TO THE CAN (NEAR THE TOP) WITH A PIECE OF COATHANGER, AS SHOWN. (YOU WILL HAVE TO PUNCH SMALL HOLES IN THE SIDES OF THE CAN, AND DRILL THROUGH THE DOWEL TO DO THIS.)
3. NAIL THE MIDDLE OF A LEATHER STRAP TO THE TOP OF THE 18" DOWEL, AND NAIL THE ENDS OF THE STRAP TO THE BLOCKS IN THE DOWEL-AND-BLOCK HANDLE AS SHOWN. THE STRAP SHOULD BE JUST LONG ENOUGH TO HANG THE HANDLE ABOUT 1" FROM THE TOP OF THE CAN AT ITS LOWEST POINT. TAPE THE STRAP SECURELY TO THE TOP OF THE DOWEL.
4. POUND A NAIL PARTWAY INTO THE BOTTOM OF THE 18" DOWEL, THEN FILE THE PART THAT STICKS OUT TO A SHARP POINT. FILL THE COFFEE CAN WITH ROCKS OR SOMETHING HEAVY.
5. TO DRILL, FIRST TWIST THE HANDLE SO THAT THE STRAP IS ALL THE WAY WOUND UP, THEN PUMP THE HANDLE UP AND DOWN, GIVING THE CAN A BACK-AND-FORTH ROTARY MOTION.



Harvey's Hardware

In 1957, Tom Hughes took over Harvey's Hardware from Guy L. Harvey, who had by that time been in business in Jamaica Plain for more than 50 years. The back rooms and basement of the store are dusty showplaces of its history.

One day near the beginning of the Centre Street Project, Tom Hughes took the Project staff on a behind-the-scenes tour. He started by dusting off a turn-of-the-century Bigelow & Dowse catalogue, and went on to round up some items from its yellowed pages. First, he produced an oversized tin meatgrinder which the catalogue called an ash sifter. The device had once helped frugal homeowners sort unburned hunks of coal from the fire chambers of their steam heat boilers. Next Tom lifted a pair of iron ice tongs off the wall - the kind they'd have used during the ice harvests on nearby Jamaica Pond. Tom recalled the story of the winter day when the pond ice cracked with a sound like a 21-gun salute. Then he showed off his prized Edison phonograph and the wax recording cylinders full of tunes by Rudy Vallee and contemporaries.

Bernie Zubrowski, a developer of science devices and the Museum's hard-core user of hardware products, volunteered to work out a fair day program at Harvey's. He arranged for a window display of some of Tom Hughes's hardware antiques and found a phonograph megaphone at the Museum to fit Tom's speakerless machine perfectly. Bernie also decided to hold an informal drill-skills seminar contrasting his own version of a primitive pump drill with some devices from the Museum's early American collection, and with the newfangled models on Harvey's Hardware shelves.





District 13 Station

At District 13 Station, Captain Quinlan booked a line-up of displays and tours.

Outside, the police emergency van was open for inspection, with its crew there to answer questions about all the gleaming resuscitation gadgetry. In the basement of the station, cell doors clanged hollowly as visitors nervously tried out the view from behind the bars. Upstairs, teenagers talked professionally with police officers over exhibits of illegal drugs, confiscated zip-guns, knives, and assorted other weaponry, and burglar-proof locks.

Each year since the fair, District 13 has held an open house for the community.

Engine 28 Station

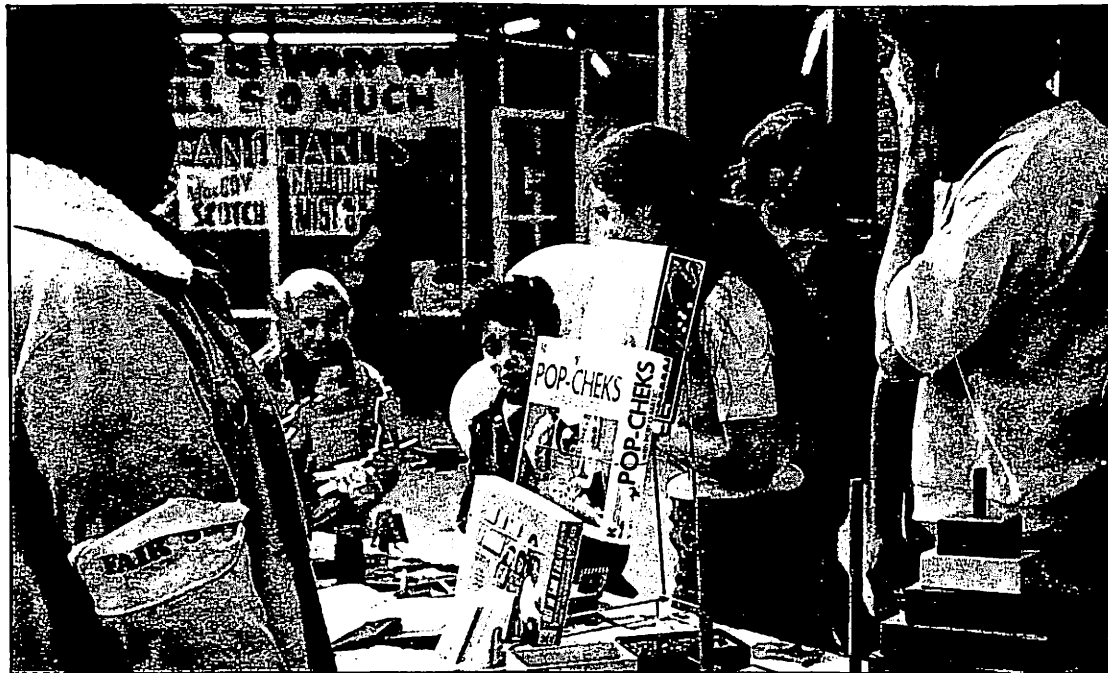
The Centre Street Engine Company of the Boston Fire Department has occupied the same building for more than 75 years, since the days of the three-horse steamer fire wagon.

On the first, rained-out day, the Museum of Transportation brought its antique fire truck down to the station house to give fairgoers rides around the neighborhood. To everyone's disappointment, the fire truck was scheduled to be elsewhere for the fair's rain date, and it seemed as if no activity would go on at Engine Company 28; the officers thought it wouldn't be safe to have people wandering in and out all day. But the spirit of the crowds moving back and forth in front of the station's open doors proved infectious that sunny day, and the bemused firefighters began to invite people in for a look-see.

Around mid-afternoon an alarm sounded, the visitors cleared the fire house, and the "exhibits" roared off with their deafening horns blaring.

ERCO Shop

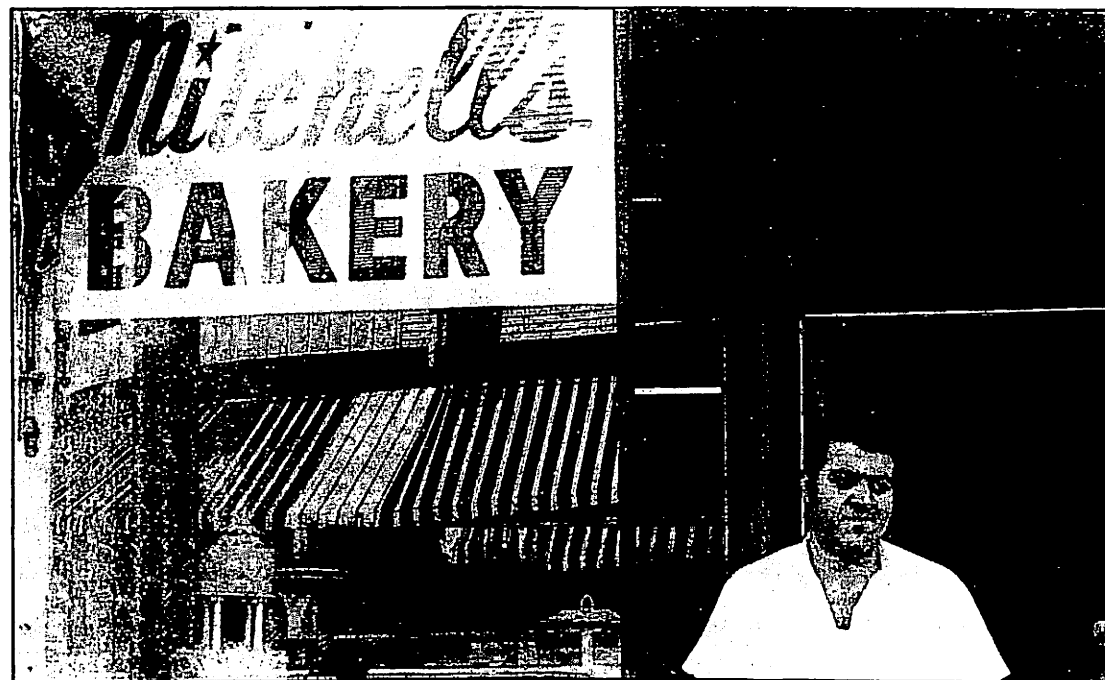
At the ERCO Shop, Ernie Cohen's toy and game emporium, new playthings from Ernie's shelves shared a table with old amusements from the Childrens Museum's collection. Fairgoers were able to play with several generations of some toys: early wooden versions of plastic building blocks; turn-of-the-century board games from Parker Brothers ("The Knight's Journey - a Game of the Fairyland Legends of the Middle Ages"); handmade dolls and their factory-made descendants. While Ernie tended the store, Jeri Robinson of the Museum coached the players.

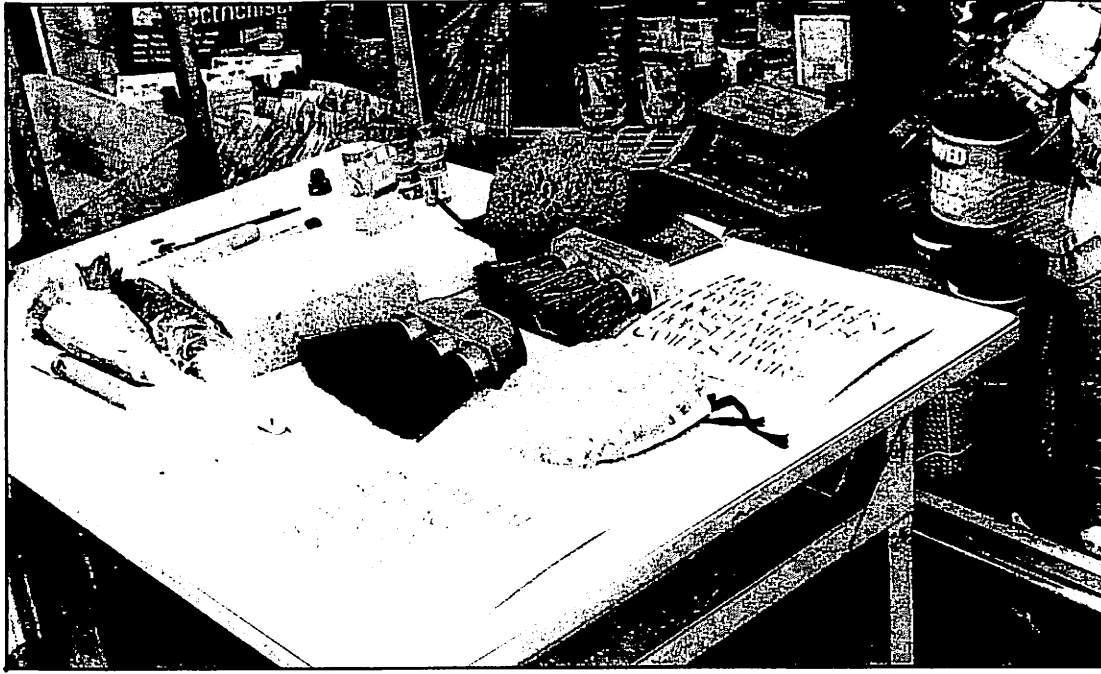


Mitchell's Bakery

James and Irene Caralis took over Mitchell's Bakery in 1968, adding such Greek delicacies as crunchy koulourakia twists and sugar-covered kourambiedes cookies to standard bakery fare.

On fair day, the Caralis's demonstrated their cookie-baking methods in the bakery's backroom kitchen. Then they passed out an ovenful of goodies amidst a flutter of eagerly-reaching hands.





Yumont's Hardware

Just in case you'd ever wondered what hog's bristles, sea sponge, hemp rope, sandpaper, chamois cloth, or flashlight bulbs look like real, real, super close-up, Yumont's Hardware lent a collection of hardware goods for microscopic examination. The microscope, part of a portable exhibit unit, was supplied by the Museum and set up on the sidewalk in front of Yumont's. In addition to the available hardware, fairgoers scrutinized their fingers, loose change, and slices of Papa Gino's pizza.



Bernard's Art Supply

An artistic double feature was prepared at Bernard's by Museum staff members Liz Hastie and Jan Goodman for the occasion of the Centre Street fair. Bernard's window, which featured a display of paper-craft puppets, masks, and decorations, served as a backdrop for the main attraction: the fine pedestrian art of fairgoer face-painting.





Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House

The kid's-eye view of Centre Street, painted by children from the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House over a mess of graffiti on the wall at Hailer's Drugstore, may be the most enduring result of the Centre Street Project.

Neighborhood House director Barbara Kibler and her young crew started their mural several days before the fair by covering Hailer's wall with white paint and sketching in a street scene design. Then, on fair day, they got fairgoers into the act with spare brushes and a loosely-organized paint-by-the-numbers scheme. Two more weekends of work and the Neighborhood House had completed a permanent ten-by-sixty foot aesthetic improvement on Centre Street.

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood House has offered crafts, arts, recreation and education programs to Jamaica Plain children and families since 1895.

Loring- Greenough House

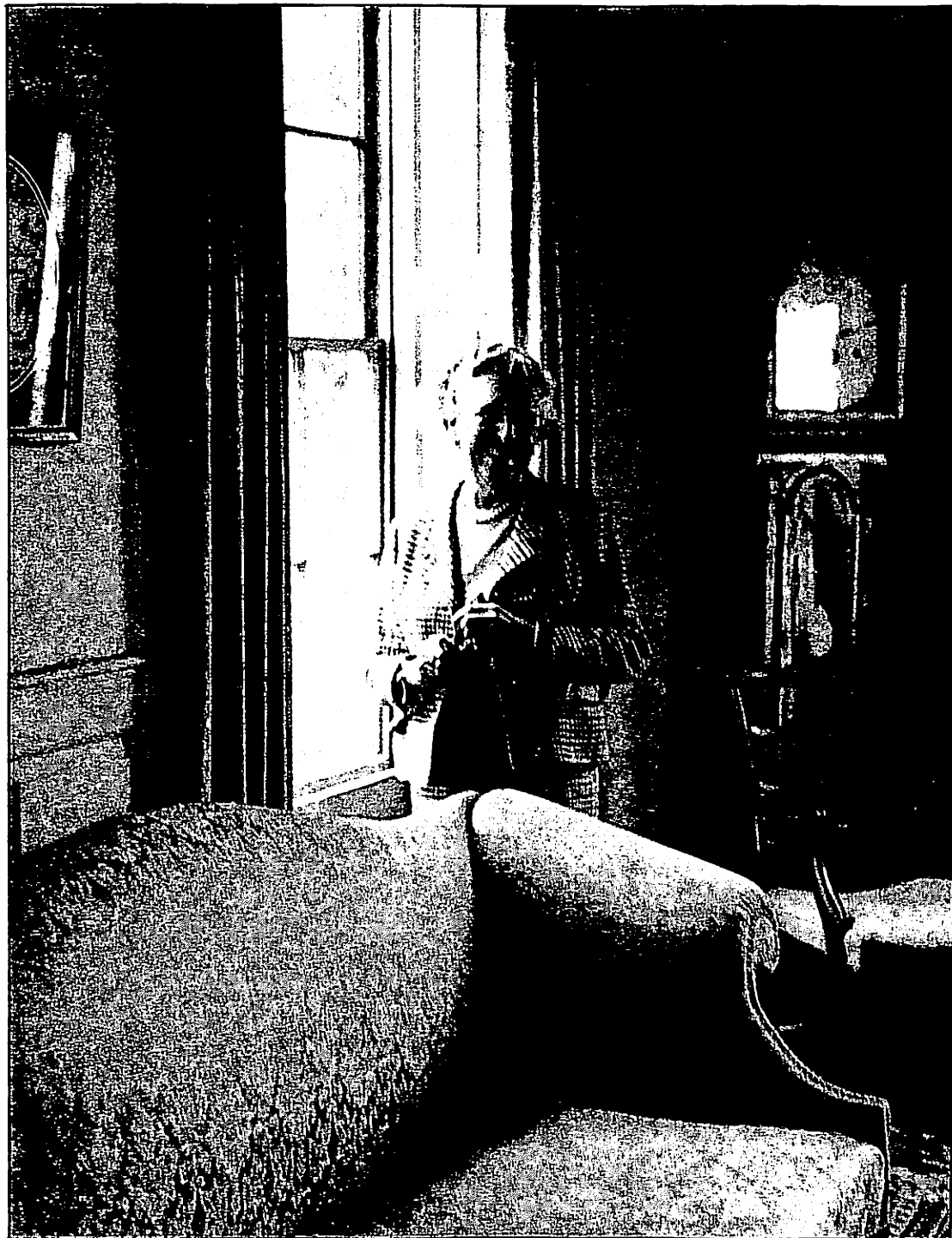
Joshua Loring was born in Boston in 1716. He served an apprenticeship at tanning, his father's trade, but disliked it and took to the sea. By 1744, he was captain of a brigantine privateer, profiting from the continual wars between England and France. In 1752, he bought a sixty-acre farm in Jamaica Plain. By then a British Navy Captain, he commanded naval operations on the Great Lakes in the French-and-Indian War. At the capture of Quebec he received a leg wound which caused him to retire.

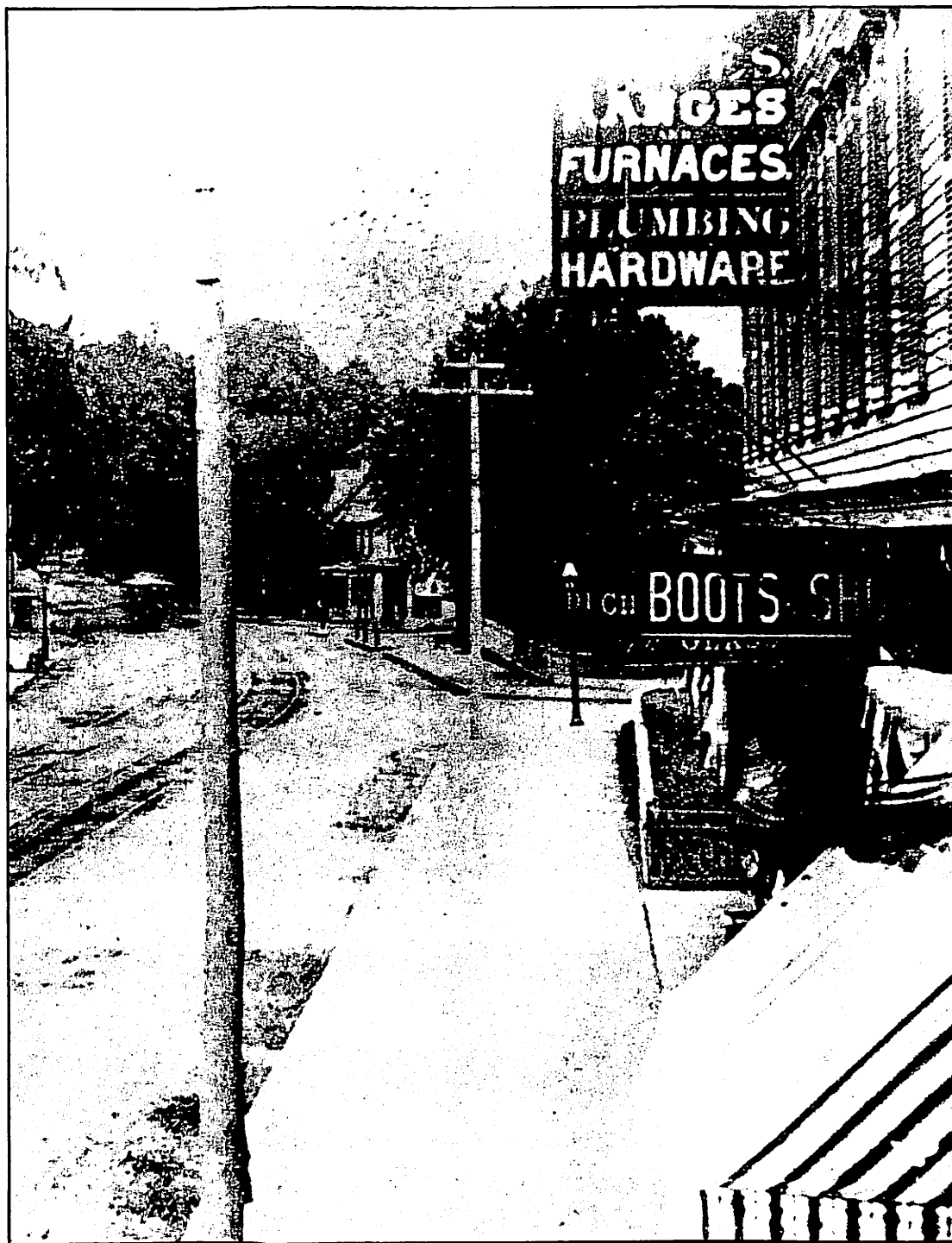
In 1760, he constructed a mansion, importing the frame and furnishings from England. He and his wife raised a family at this country estate, living on investments and his retirement pay from England.

In 1774, Loring's appointment to the Royal Governor's Council was viewed by the local pro-liberty faction as a usurpation of the people's election rights. He refused to give up his seat despite being "repeatedly mobbed and otherwise ill-treated," and ultimately fled to the protection of British troops in Boston. He never saw his home again.

American troops occupied the house in 1775 and plundered what remained of furnishings and stock. The farm served briefly as a Patriot general's headquarters, then as one of the first military hospitals in America. In 1784, Anne Doane, a wealthy widow, bought the estate for herself and her fiancé, David Stoddard Greenough. Five consecutive David Stoddard Greenoughs occupied the house over the next 140 years.

Threatened with destruction by a private developer, the Loring-Greenough House was purchased in 1924 by the Tuesday Club, a local social organization, to be historically preserved. On the day of the fair, the Club conducted guided tours for fairgoers.





In the 17th and 18th centuries, Centre Street was one of several routes radiating country-ward from the narrow neck of the Boston peninsula. From Boston Neck, Centre Street curved among hills and ledges and scattered farms, and through a village called Jamaica Plain, which consisted of little more than a church and a school.

In the earliest days, the village farms supplied Boston with fresh produce. As Boston prospered, Jamaica Plain's accessibility by carriage led wealthy merchants to purchase farmland for summer homes and country estates.

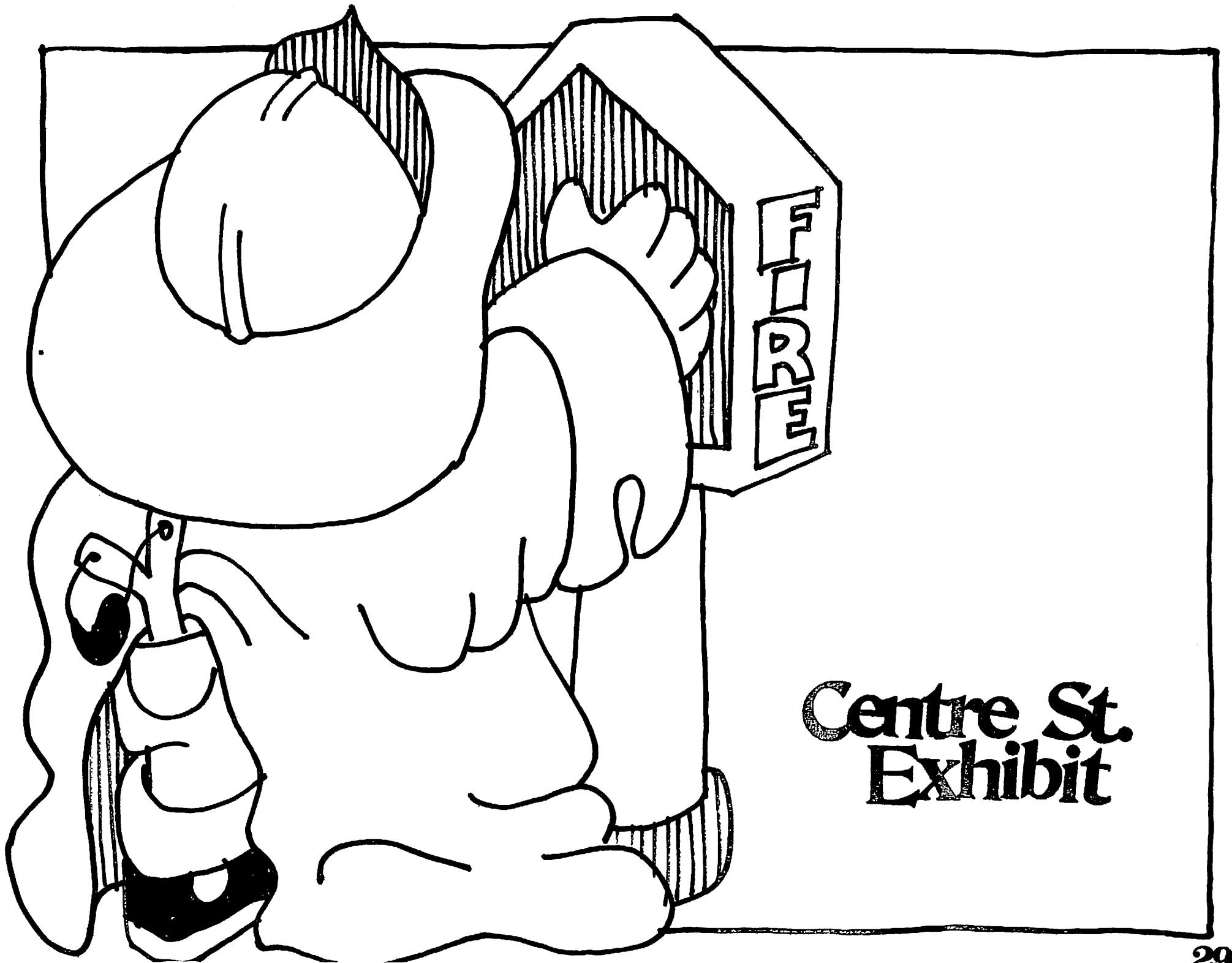
In 1834, a railroad line from Boston to Providence was built through Jamaica Plain. As a result, industries grew up around the nearby Stony Brook, a source of water power. A number of breweries and tanneries developed, each bringing a small community of workers. The railroad brought Boston's first commuters who, while not as wealthy as their country gentlefolk predecessors, nonetheless had the means to construct substantial houses in the vicinity of the railroad station. In the early 1870's trolley service along Centre Street made Jamaica Plain available to a wider group of commuters, still middle class, but less and less well off.

By 1900, Jamaica Plain had lost most vestiges of its country beginnings. The old estates were carved up into a maze of through streets, side streets, and cul-de-sacs. As the population grew in size, it grew more diverse, incorporating upwardly-mobile second and third generation Americans into its Yankee midst, including such Boston notables as Mayor James Michael Curley, whose mansion overlooking nearby Jamaica Pond featured shutters with shamrock-shaped cut-outs.

Today, Centre Street is a shopping place and meeting ground for people of many ethnic backgrounds: Yankee and Irish, Afro-American, Cuban, Dominican, Greek, Italian, Jewish, Latvian, Puerto Rican. Around Jamaica Pond, most of the latter-day estates, like that of Mayor Curley, have been converted to institutional use: nursing homes, hospitals, convents, schools, and the Children's Museum.

During a conversation in his real estate office, Robert Fowler showed us a framed 1891 map of Jamaica Plain that he had hanging on a back room wall. The day of the fair, he propped the yellowed map in his storefront window to give fairgoers a glimpse of old Jamaica Plain.





**Centre St.
Exhibit**

A trolley car noses into the Centre Street exhibit from the rear corner. In the driver's seat a diminutive trolley operator, eyes obscured by a too-large motorman's hat, spins the overhead destination sign as he peers through the front window, down imaginary tracks to the trolley's next stop: the corner of Centre Street and Burroughs, the stop for The Children's Museum. Behind the driver, the passengers view the passing scene in a slide show projected against a trolley window. "Centre and Burroughs! Centre and Burroughs!" the driver announces, and off steps a rider headed for the General Store.

Inside the store, the ornate brass cash register is ringing up a land office business, its young clerk of the moment barely visible behind the counter. The clerk's helper is tying up parcels with paper and twine and weighing them on the produce scale, while her helper applies a price stamper to the finished packages.

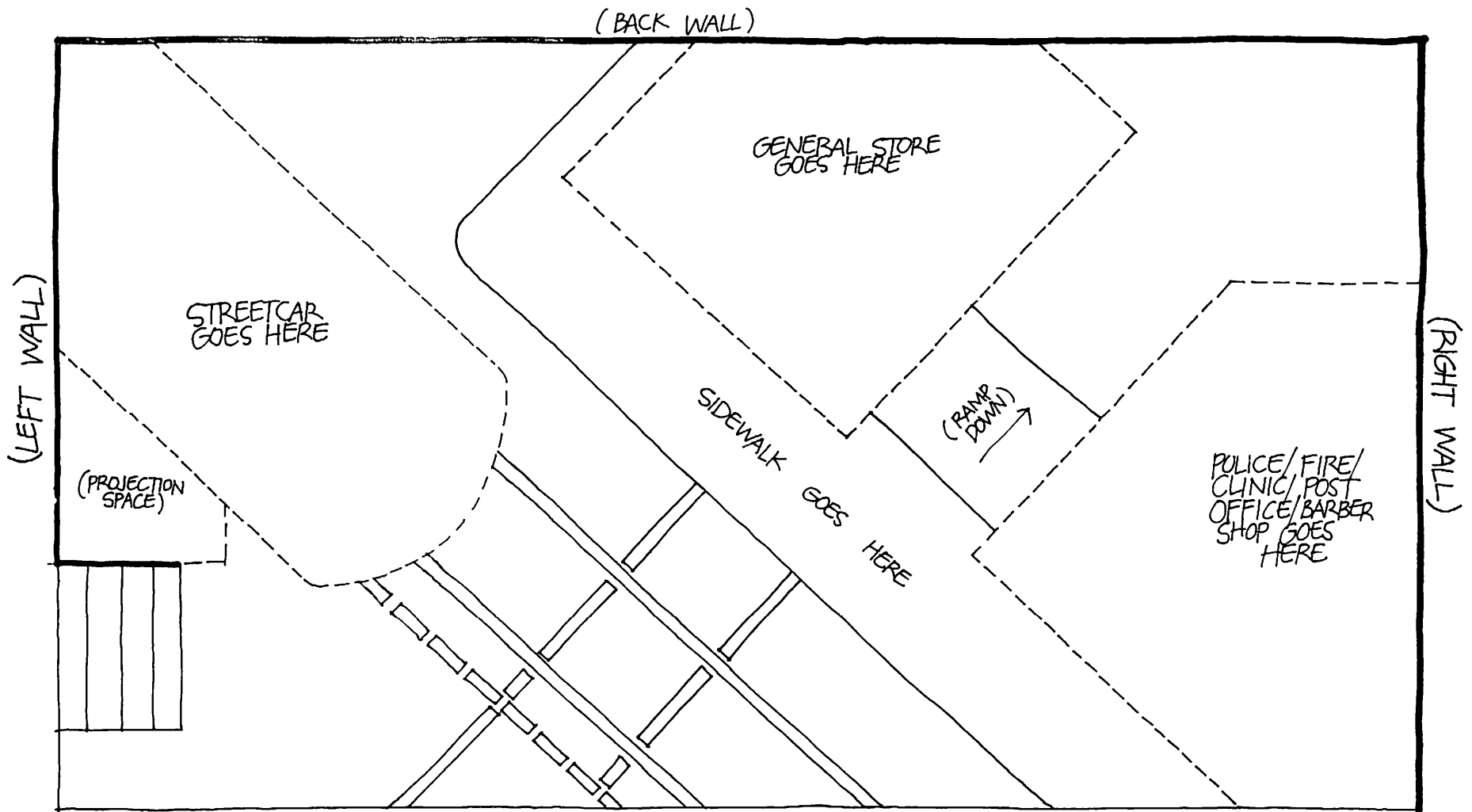
In the storefront dressing room next door, a full-length mirror reflects a parade of firefighters, police, and postal workers, nurses, doctors and barbers. A make-believe haircut candidate takes a ride, up, down and around in the barber chair while his friend slings a leather mail bag over his shoulder and delivers letters to everyone in sight.

In the alley between the two storefronts, several hard-hatted construction workers erect a wall and tower with brick-like, sand-filled milk cartons. And right out in the middle of the street, a group of would-be urban planners crayon an imaginary city on a long sheet of construction paper, placing wooden model buildings here and there about the scene.

Enter the pharmacist. This one seems to be the real McCoy; and sure enough, one of the group of neighborhood kids who frequent the Museum regularly walks over to say hello to Joe Donovan, who is usually the man behind the counter at Rogers Drugs on Centre Street. With help from a Museum staff member, Joe sets up a table-top laboratory. As a crowd gathers about, drawn by the sweet odor of crushed cloves, Joe demonstrates the proper technique for grinding with mortar and pestle.



(PHOTO BY LESLIE SELDIN)



THIS PAGE AND THE NEXT FEW PAGES ARE A CUT-OUT-AND-PASTE TOGETHER MODEL OF THE CENTRE ST. EXHIBIT AT A SCALE OF $\frac{3}{8}$ " TO THE FOOT.

HERE'S HOW TO PUT IT TOGETHER:

1. XEROX PAGES 32 AND 33 (IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CUT UP YOUR BOOK) AND COLOR THE COPIES ANY WAY YOU WANT WITH MARKERS OR CRAYONS.

2. REMOVE THE HEAVY PAPER INSERT FROM THE BOOK, AND COLOR THAT TOO.
3. CUT AND RE-FOLD A SHOE-BOX SO THE FLOOR PLAN JUST FITS INSIDE AS SHOWN. (SEE FIG. A) THE THICK BLACK LINE ON THE FLOOR PLAN SHOWS WHERE THE SHOEBOX "WALLS" GO.
4. PASTE THE FLOOR PLAN AND THE WALL ELEVATIONS INSIDE THE SHOEBOX.

5. FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE INSERT, CUT OUT, FOLD, AND PASTE THE STREETCAR, SIDEWALK, AND STOREFRONTS IN THEIR PROPER PLACES IN THE MODEL.

HINT: RUBBER CEMENT WORKS BEST.

Floor Plan

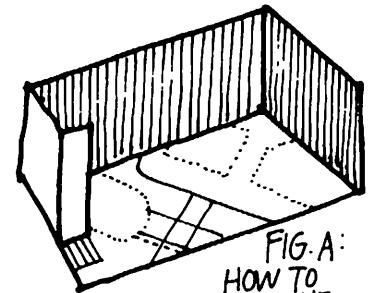
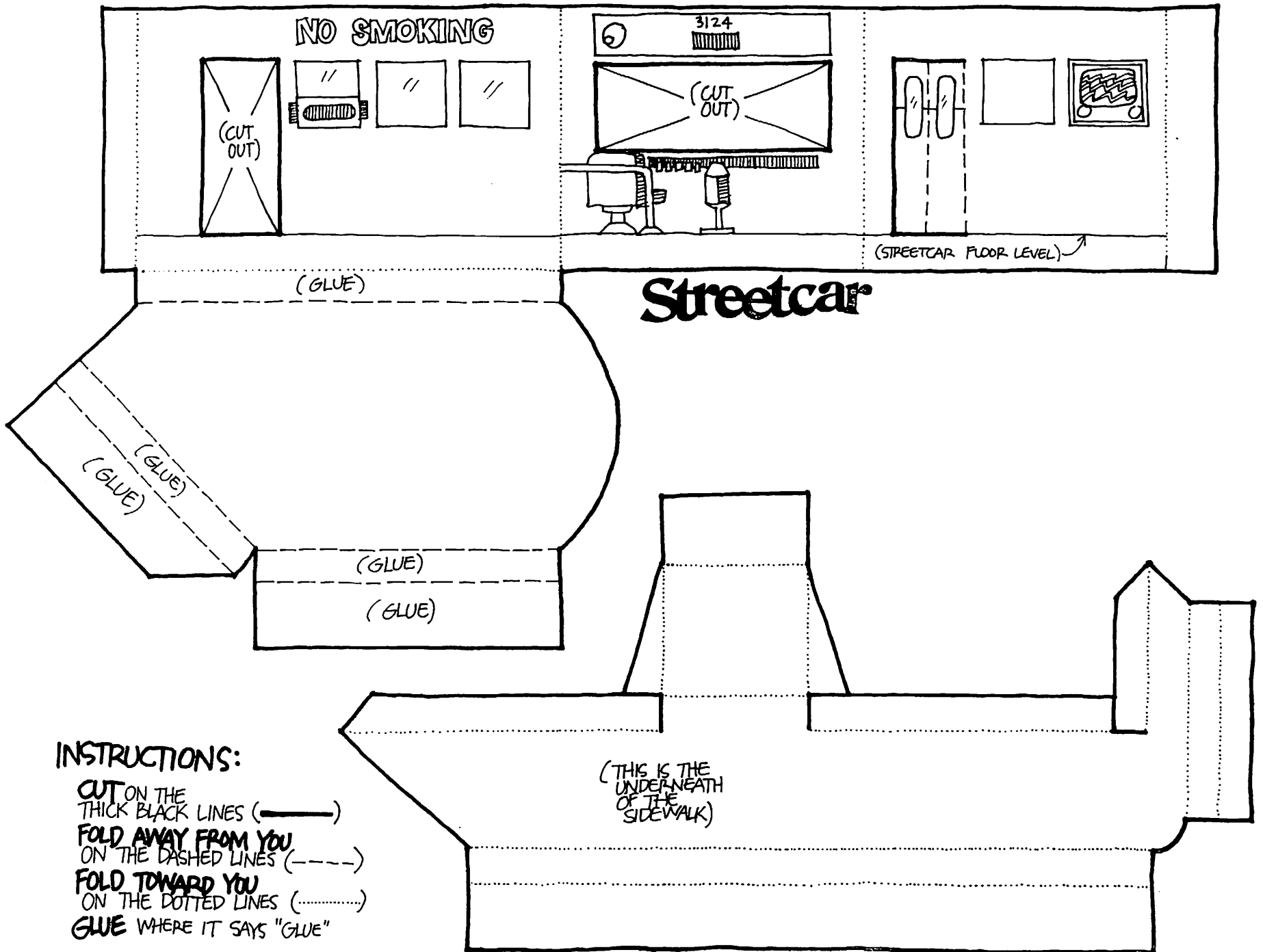


FIG. A:
HOW TO CUT THE SHOEBOX.



NO SMOKING

3124

(CUT OUT)

(CUT OUT)

(STREETCAR FLOOR LEVEL)

(GLUE)

Streetcar

(GLUE)

(GLUE)

(GLUE)

(GLUE)

(THIS IS THE UNDERNEATH OF THE SIDEWALK)

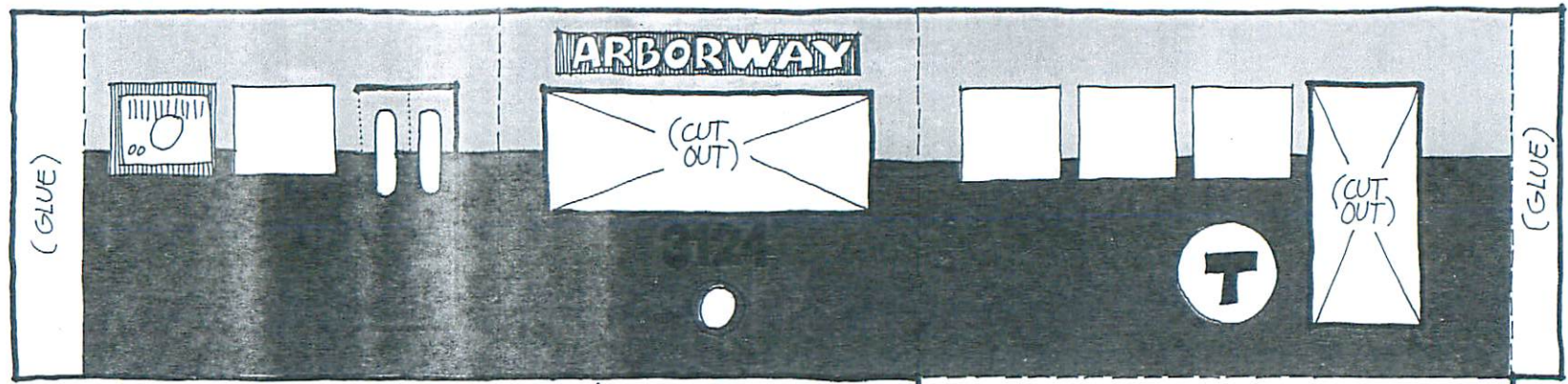
INSTRUCTIONS:

CUT ON THE THICK BLACK LINES (———)

FOLD AWAY FROM YOU ON THE DASHED LINES (-----)

FOLD TOWARD YOU ON THE DOTTED LINES (.....)

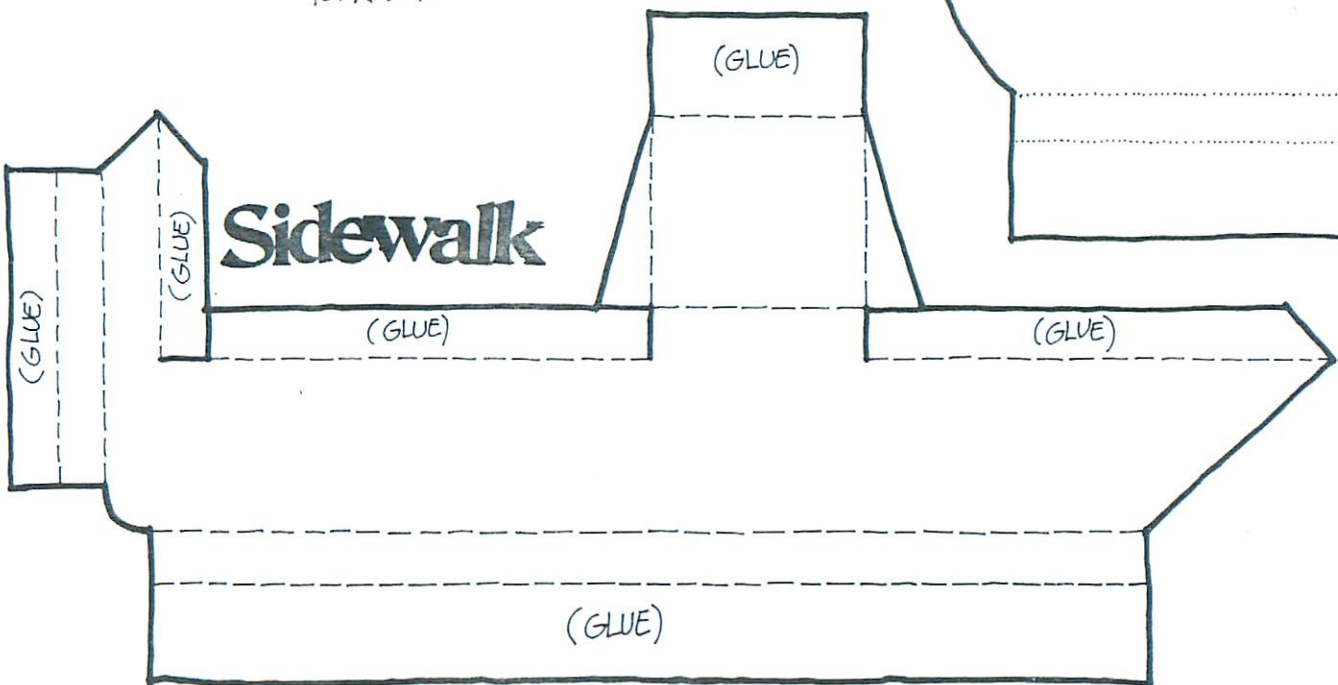
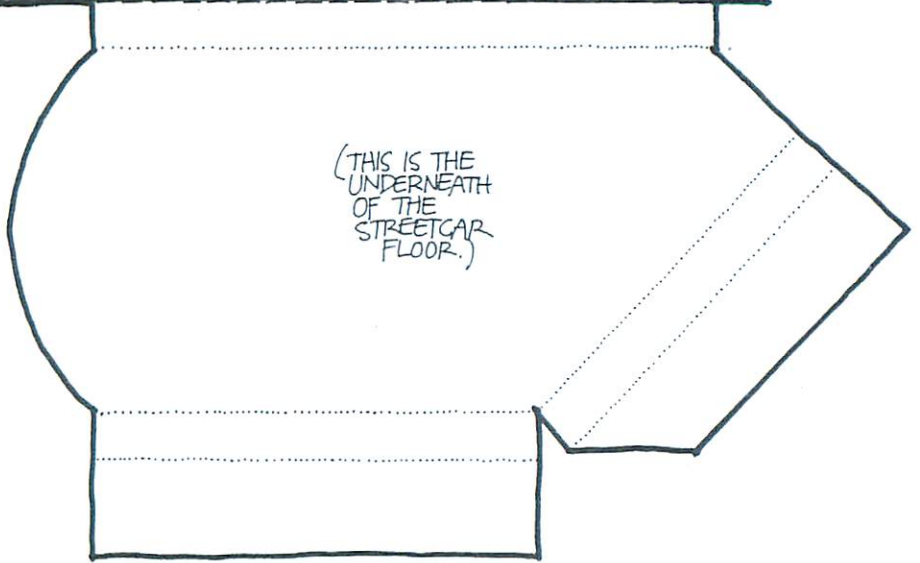
GLUE WHERE IT SAYS "GLUE"

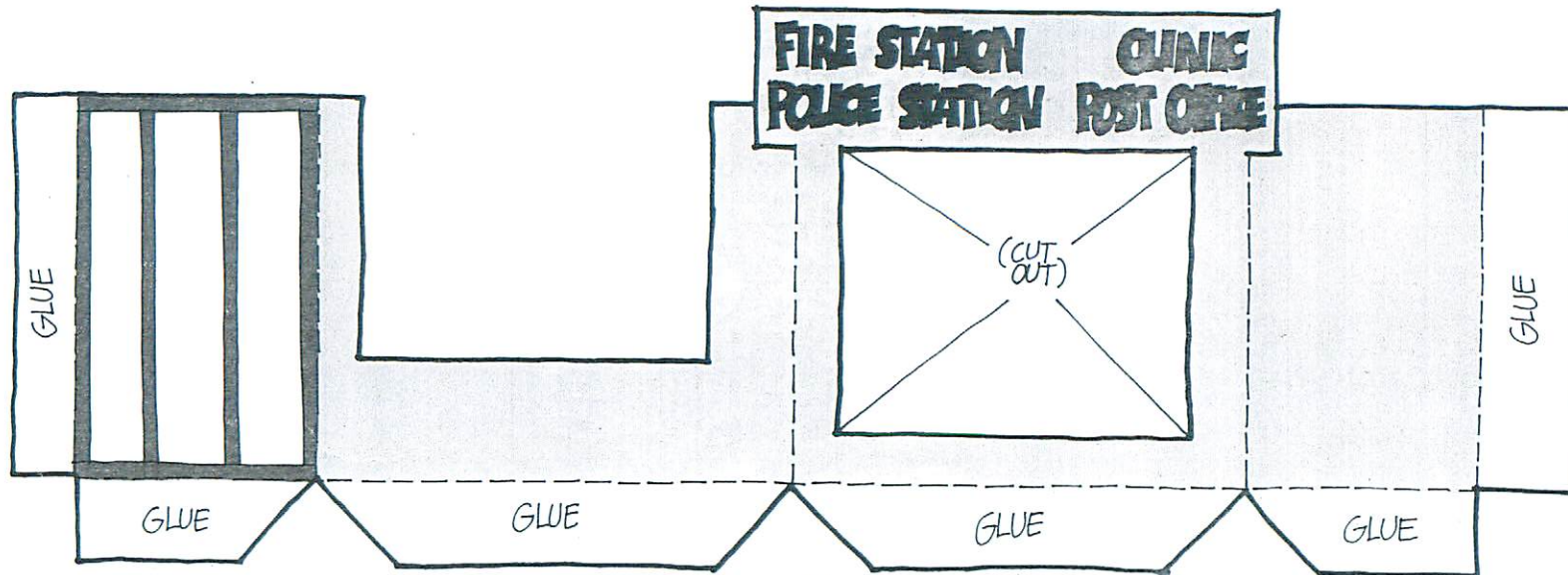


Streetcar

REMEMBER:

- MEANS CUT
- - - - MEANS FOLD AWAY FROM YOU
- MEANS FOLD TOWARD YOU

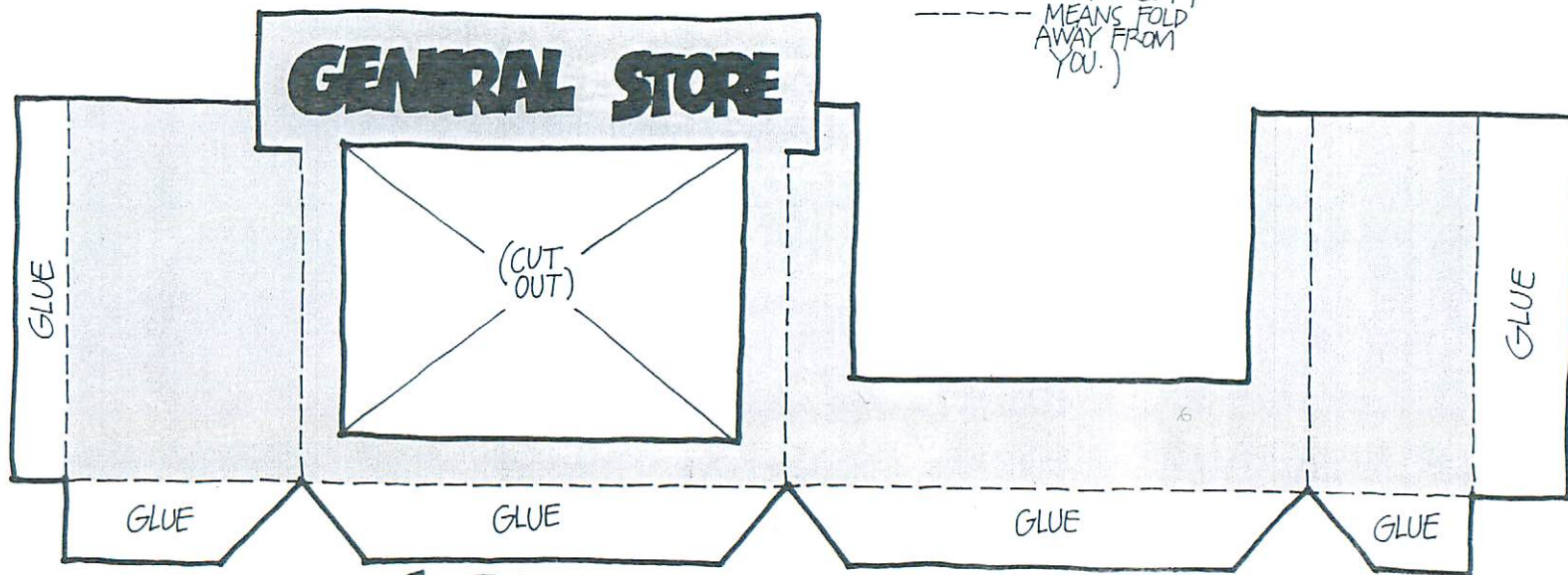




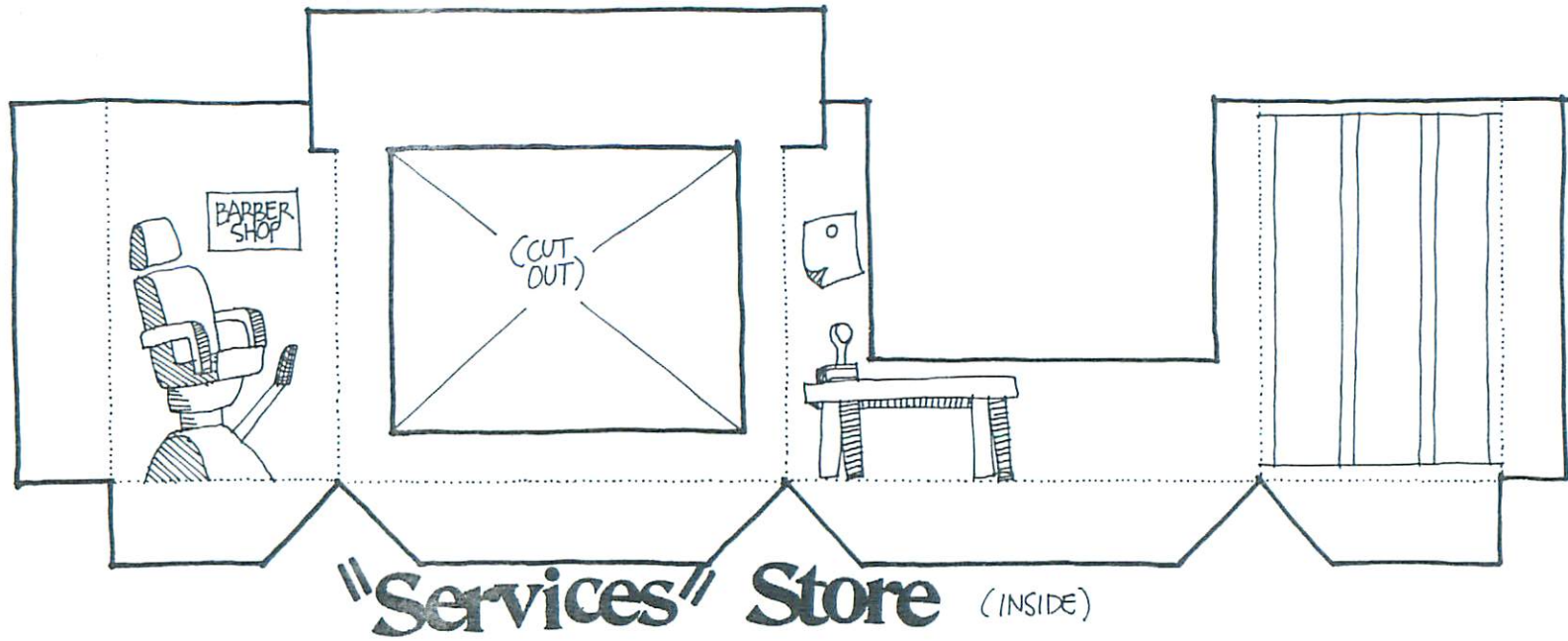
"Services" Store (OUTSIDE)

(REMEMBER:

— MEANS CUT;
 - - - MEANS FOLD
 AWAY FROM
 YOU.)

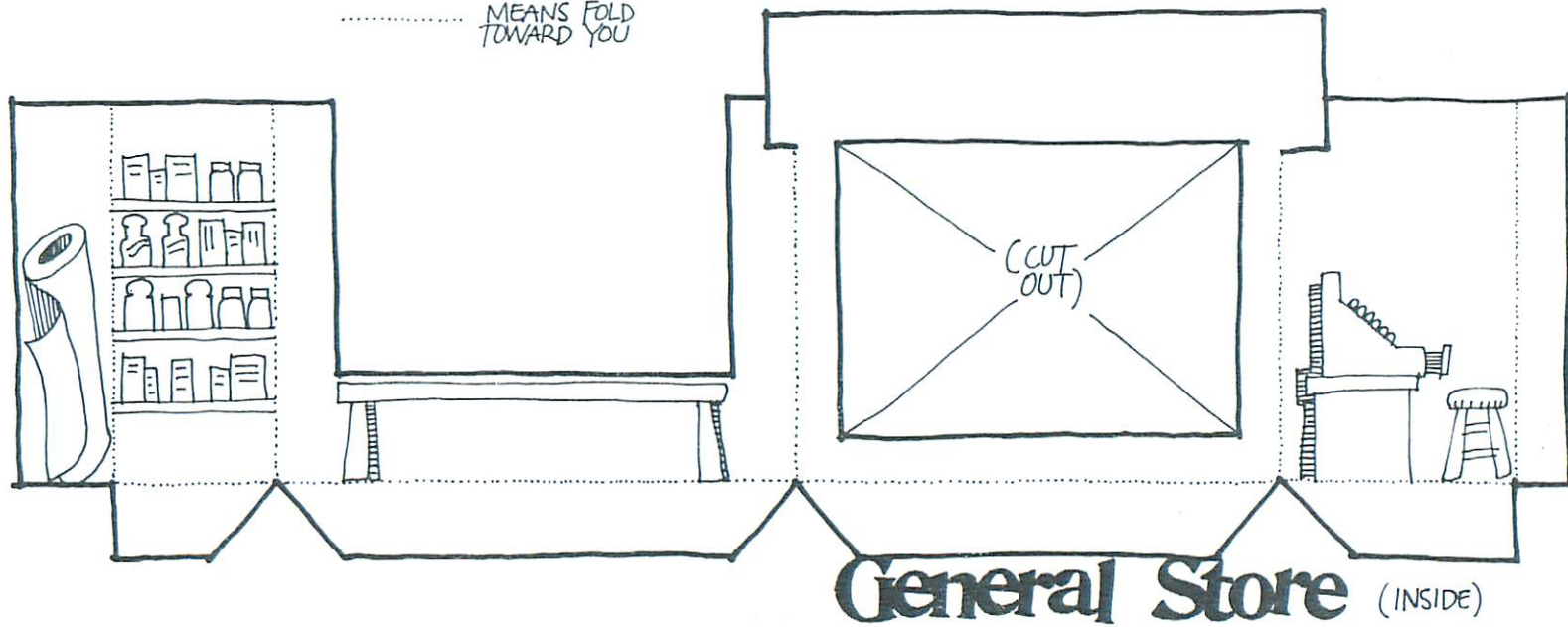


General Store (OUTSIDE)

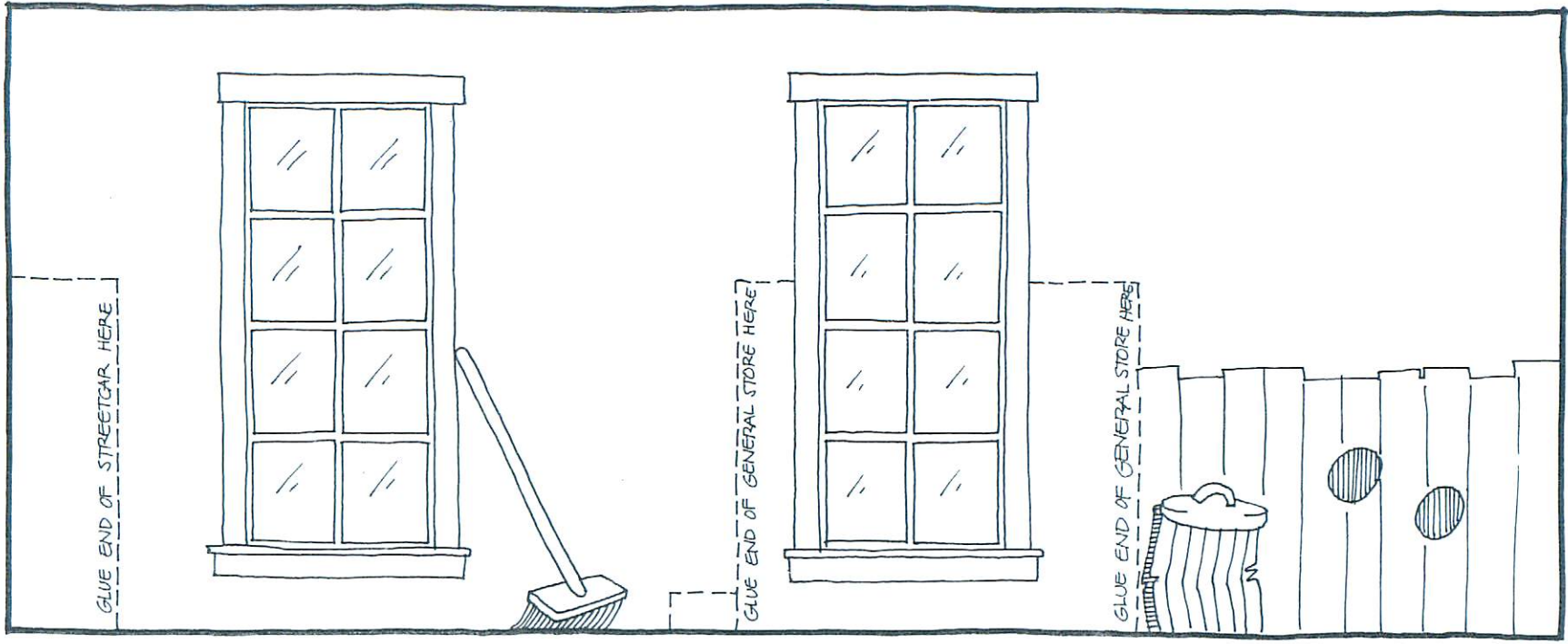


(REMEMBER:

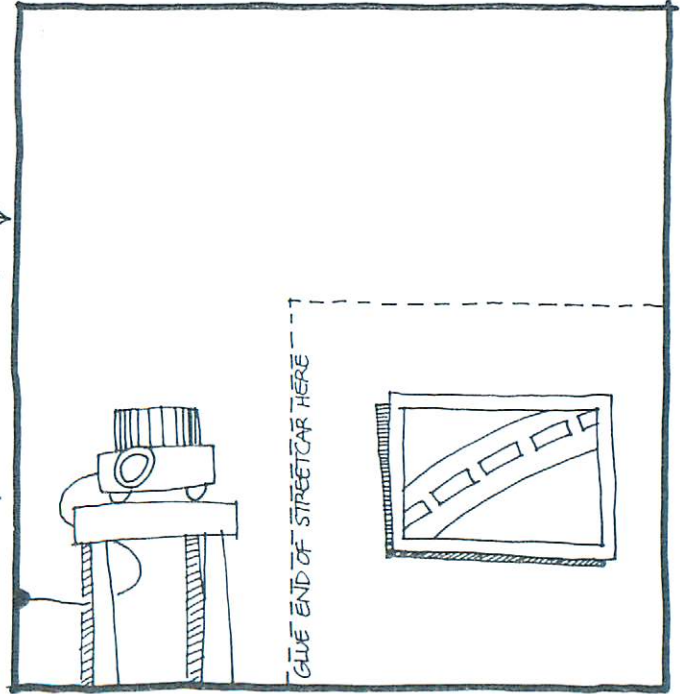
—— MEANS CUT
 MEANS FOLD TOWARD YOU



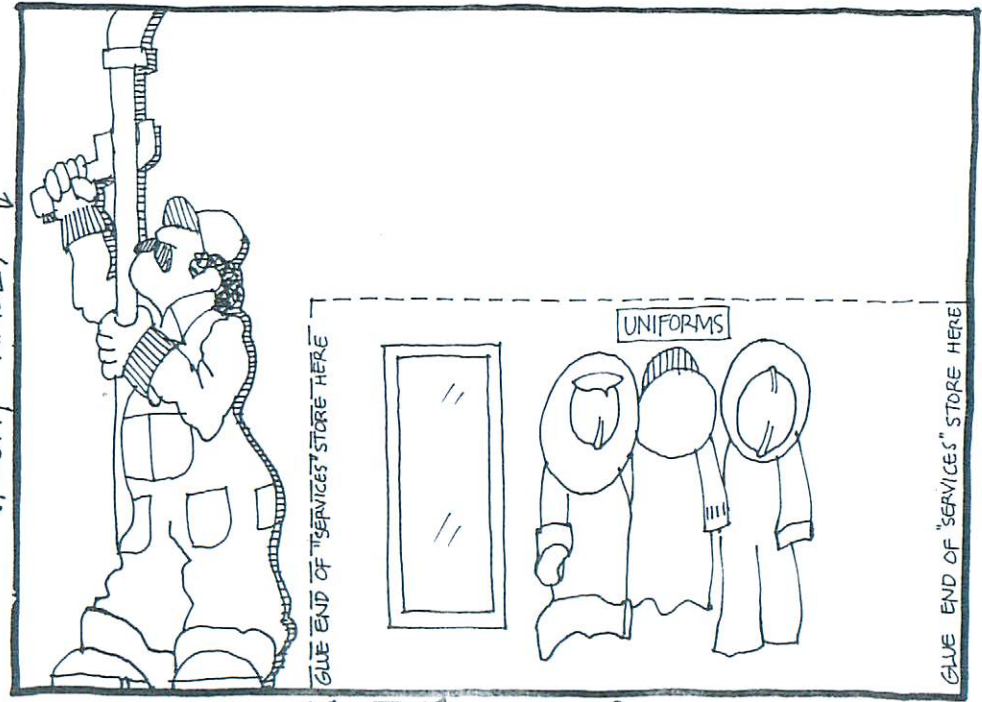
BACK WALL ↘



(LEFT WALL) ↘



(RIGHT WALL) ↘



(DON'T FOLD ON THE DASHED LINES ON THIS PAGE!)

Wall Elevations

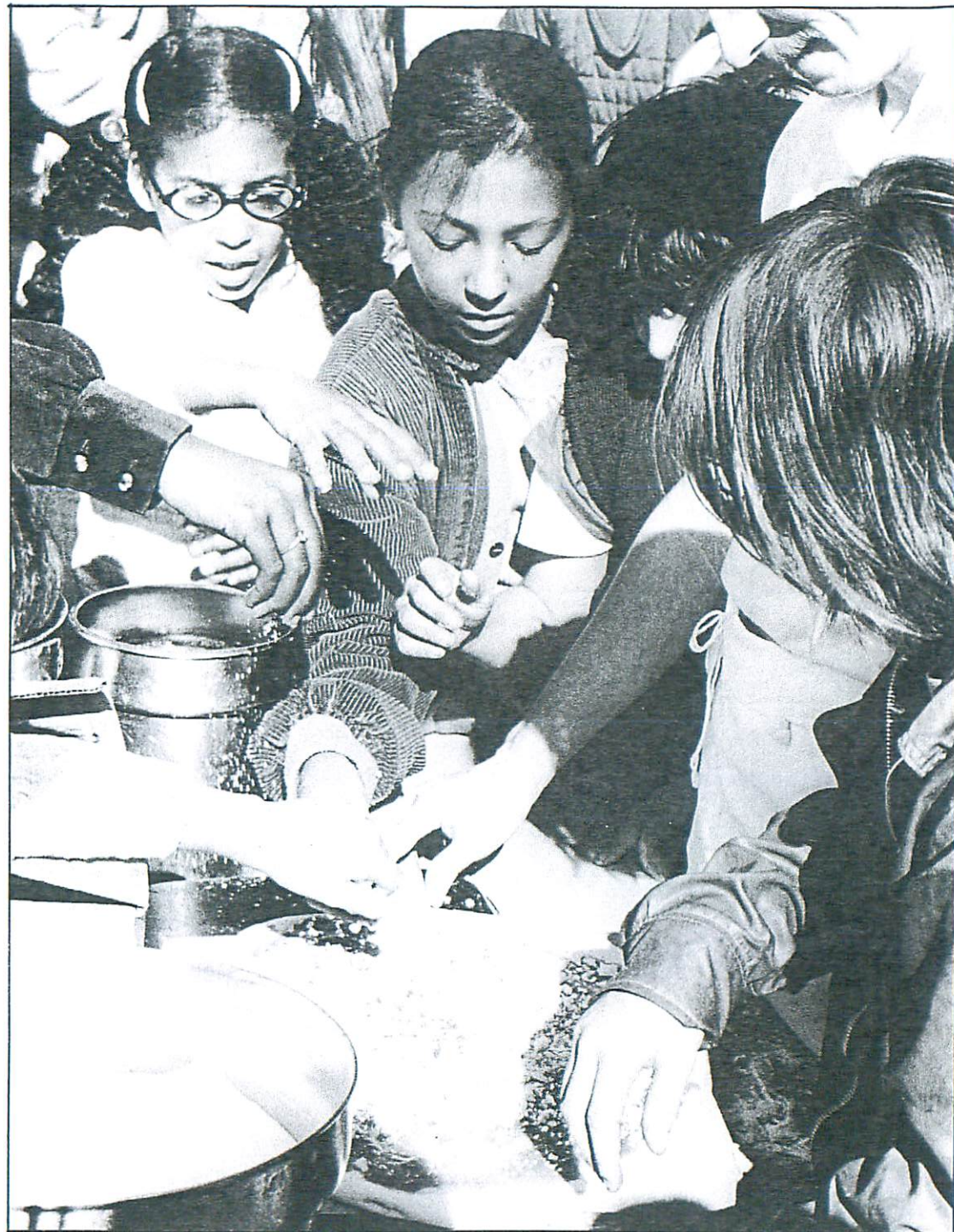
Papa Gino's

Bob Lanzillo of Papa Gino's Pizza is used to having people watch him work. He and his staff perform their pizza-tossing act near the front window of his shop. Like thousands of others, Alan Bell of the Project staff had often stopped casually at the window to glimpse pizzas taking shape, one after the other, in the air. One day he invited Bob to give his dough a toss at the Museum.

Bob took care of all the details. He brought dough and flour and tomato sauce and cheese and set up shop in the middle of the Centre Street exhibit. There kids plunged their hands into the warm, soft, stretchy dough and kneaded and tugged it, and tried to flop it into shape on their fists. Bob demonstrated the technique, spinning pizzas high in the air and landing them on kids' heads. By the time the dough was used up, the exhibit area looked as though it had been hit by an early snowstorm.

He had the foresight to have pizzas delivered from his shop so that the crowd, their appetite whetted by his demonstration of ladling the sauce across the crust and sprinkling it with mozzarella, could have a taste of the finished product.

Pizza dough has a high flour content, to give it elasticity, and it has to ferment, or "proof," a couple of hours to improve its strength. Spinning the dough creates centrifugal force to round the pie crust and spread it evenly across the diameter of the pizza. Making the dough, proofing and weighing it, are the hardest parts of good pizza production. The rest is a matter of using good ingredients - the best Italian and California tomatoes and puree for the sauce, and good whole-milk mozzarella cheese on top.





Barry's Deli

MEATLOAF

TAKE 6 SLICES
WHITE BREAD;
DISSOLVE IT (MIX WITH WATER
UNTIL IT BECOMES A PASTE.)
ADD

- 2 RAW EGGS
- 3 TBS. PEPPER
- 2 TBS. SALT
- 1 TSP. ALLSPICE
- 10 LBS. RAW HAMBURGER

KNEAD TOGETHER UNTIL
ALL INGREDIENTS ARE MIXED WITH
HAMBURGER. MAKE 2 5lb.
LOAVES. PLACE EACH ONE IN A PAN.
MIX 3 CANS CONDENSED TOMATO
SOUP WITH 3 CANS WATER; POUR
OVER EACH LOAF.

BAKE 1/2 HOUR AT 325°

TO MAKE VIENNA LOAF ARRANGE A
LINE OF HARDBOILED EGGS THROUGH
THE CENTER OF THE LOAF.

(AL BARRY DOES NOT MEASURE INGREDIENTS.
HE ESTIMATES AMOUNTS IN THE PALM
OF HIS HAND, A HABIT INHERITED FROM
HIS MOTHER, WHO NEVER MEASURED THINGS
EXACTLY EITHER, AND INGRAINED THROUGH
YEARS OF PRACTICE. HE LEARNED THE
RECIPE FROM HIS MOTHER, WHO PROBABLY
GOT IT FROM HER MOTHER. THE RECIPE
MAY BE OVER 100 YEARS OLD.)





Jamaica Plain Branch Library

Librarian Helen Adelson visited the Centre Street exhibit with a box full of breads from all over the world. "Bread's basic for everyone," she said. While Mrs. Adelson showed off her basic breads, the Centre Street exhibit staff taught onlookers how to whip up butter and peanut butter, those two basic spreads. Then came the tasting.

By the time Mrs. Adelson's exhibit had turned to crumbs, her audience had tried out: arān, challah, matzoh, pain, pan, chleb, tortillas, tacos, brød, brood, kenyer, and Brot.

Rogers Drugs

"A Prescription Pharmacy since 1867," reads the calling card of Charles B. Rogers & Co. In 112 years only five men have served as owner and pharmacist of this small, professional store. Joe Donovan, owner since 1965, has kept intact both personal service to a continuing clientele and the handsome, traditional style of the shop itself. The store's heritage is evident in the dark carved moldings of the original woodwork; in the shelves displaying hand-made bottles with gilt-edged Latin labels, full of powders and herbs used long ago; and in Joe Donovan's collection of pharmaceutical devices from a long-gone era of medicine dispensing.

On a Sunday afternoon in early October, Joe brought his old-fashioned bottle-filler and some mortar and pestle sets to the Museum. For a busy three hours, visitors ground up cloves while Joe filled glass bottles with colored-water "prescriptions" from his marvelous machine.

Assisted by Dorothy Merrill, a Museum staff member whose father is a pharmacist, Joe also participated in the fair by showcasing antique pharmacy paraphernalia in his store window: silver and Wedgewood china vessels, a pill press, powders, capsules, a brass suppository mold, and the essential Prescription Book, still used in pharmacies today. The Prescription Book contains a record of every customer's treatments - ingredients, doses, and usage instructions. By law, a pharmacy must keep records of dispensed drugs for two years. Most pharmacists, interested in the history of their own businesses, keep them much longer: Joe Donovan's Prescription Books date back to 1867, and contain a virtual history of the evolution of medicine.

R^{4y} 26-2-82 37186
 R - Bromid Sodium $\overline{3\text{ii}}$
 Chloral Hydrate $\overline{3\text{i}}$
 Morph. Sulphate $\overline{3\text{i}}$
 Aqua Camphor $\overline{3\text{ij}}$
 M: Sig. Take pain & sleepless
 2 spoonful in a wineglass
 2' water once in one to four hours

ON FEBRUARY 26, 1882, A PATIENT UNABLE TO SLEEP BECAUSE OF PAIN BROUGHT THIS PRESCRIPTION TO CHARLES ROGERS TO BE FILLED.

THE PRESCRIPTION CALLS FOR

- 2 DRAMS OF SODIUM BROMIDE, A NERVE SEDATIVE;
- 1 DRAM OF CHLORAL HYDRATE, A HYPNOTIC ALSO KNOWN AS "KNOCKOUT DROPS" OR A "MICKEY FINN";
- 2 GRAINS OF MORPHINE SULPHATE, A POWERFUL PAIN KILLER; AND
- 1 OUNCE OF CAMPHOR WATER, A PLEASANTLY SCENTED INERT BASE.

THIS IS POTENT MEDICINE BY TODAY'S STANDARDS. MORPHINE AND SODIUM BROMIDE ARE ADDICTIVE DRUGS, AND CHLORAL HYDRATE INDUCES AN IMMEDIATE, DEEP UNCONSCIOUSNESS. ALL THREE ARE DANGEROUS DRUGS. TODAY A DOCTOR MIGHT PRESCRIBE A LESS EXTREME PREPARATION - LIKE DARVON, FOR PAIN, AND A TRANQUILIZER LIKE MILTOWN OR VALIUM TO RELAX THE PATIENT ENOUGH TO PERMIT SLEEP.



Jamaica Plain Health Center

One day in November, visitors to the Centre Street exhibit got a chance to look inside themselves, with the help of nurses from the Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, a community-sponsored organization. They peered in each others' ears through the funnel of an otoscope, and down each others' throats with the aid of a flashlight. While some people's knees jerked to the tap of reflex hammers, others listened to their heartbeats through a stethoscope. A doctor gave one young visitor a demonstration physical, explaining the procedure to onlookers each step of the way. The weight- and height-conscious got measured and weighed, and walked off with their measurements recorded on tongue-depressors.

The nurses explained the Health Center's role as a provider of preventative medical services to the Jamaica Plain community, with back-up assistance from two major hospitals and from the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals.

Articles

The closest thing to a true people's museum is a good second-hand and antique store, not Ye Olde Antique Shoppe full of high-priced, high-falutin' crystal goblets and Chippendale chairs, but a down-to-earth emporium, a curbside attic. On Centre Street, "Articles" is the kind of place where you can pick up an 1898 illustrated history of the universe for \$1.00; for 50¢ an engraved printing plate advertising ladies' bloomers is yours for life. Buttons and bows, ancient sheet music and someone else's family album are Dean and Carolyn Nimmer's stock in trade.

How do they get all that stuff? Sometimes by antiquing along back country roads. Sometimes by going to close-out auctions at factories, stores and warehouses. One day, for example, Dean bought up a carload of lace flowers, the kind you'd see sewn to an old-fashioned lady's hat. For some reason, few customers seemed interested in the lace flowers. So, Dean came up with this idea for participating in the Centre Street exhibit: he would hold a mock auction in the Museum; to the top bidders would go those lace flowers, assorted printing plates and other curios from his overstocked collection. The bidding was not in dollars but in skills. "I have here a delicate rose," Dean called, "for the best bumblebee caller in the crowd! What do you buzz me?"

On fair day, Dean conducted a real auction in the middle of a Centre Street parking lot.





Heath TV

Looking in through the storefront window of Heath TV, Joe Lawton can be seen surrounded by picture tubes, transistors, antennae, wires, and dials exorcising ghosts from his customers' video world. Now, the images and information that the TV screen beams into your life may seem confusing enough, but how do they get there in the first place? Joe agreed to try out some tube talk at the Centre Street exhibit.

He brought in a TV and removed the back to reveal, at its business end, the "gun." He explained that the gun sweeps left and right, shooting electric energy at the back of the TV screen. The energy lights up hundreds of thousands of "phosphors" - microscopic chemical "bulbs" which coat the screen. Joe helped people understand how the lighted phosphors work together to make up the TV picture by giving them magnifying glasses to hold against the screen. The magnifiers showed that a color TV image consists of tiny red, blue and green dots arranged in triangles. The relative brightness of the dots in each triangle determines the colors you see in the picture. In various combinations the red, blue and green dots can be mixed together to produce almost every other color. The school of painters known as "pointillist" used this same principle to create vast landscapes, intricate still lifes and soft portraits with thousands of minute dabs of paint.

Videotapes

Several activities important to the Centre Street community could not be presented "live" in the contexts of the exhibit or the fair. Instead they were committed to videotape for viewing in one of the trolley car windows.

At the Jamaica Plain Citizen, the community's weekly newspaper, Nancy Dolinich, the Museum's media specialist and Bob Eskind, free-lance video artist, recorded the newspaper production process from the editor's desk to the loading dock.

How are the decrepit Centre Street trolleys cared for? Nancy and Bob visited the transit system repair shop.

Those morning donuts we all depend on - are they really fresh baked at the store every day? A videotape in Dunkin' Donuts' kitchen proved it, right down to the hypo-injected jellies and creams.

And Boston's finest at District 13, how do they spend their law-enforcing days? Nancy and Bob spent a day in a patrol car with two gung-ho Irish officers who knew every detail of the neighborhood, right down to who belongs to the laundry on the back yard lines. They visited the site of a recent break-in to see how the storekeeper was getting along; intervened in a fight between a woman and her landlord; answered the call of a robbery-in-progress; and videotaped the suspected culprits as they were marched into the station.

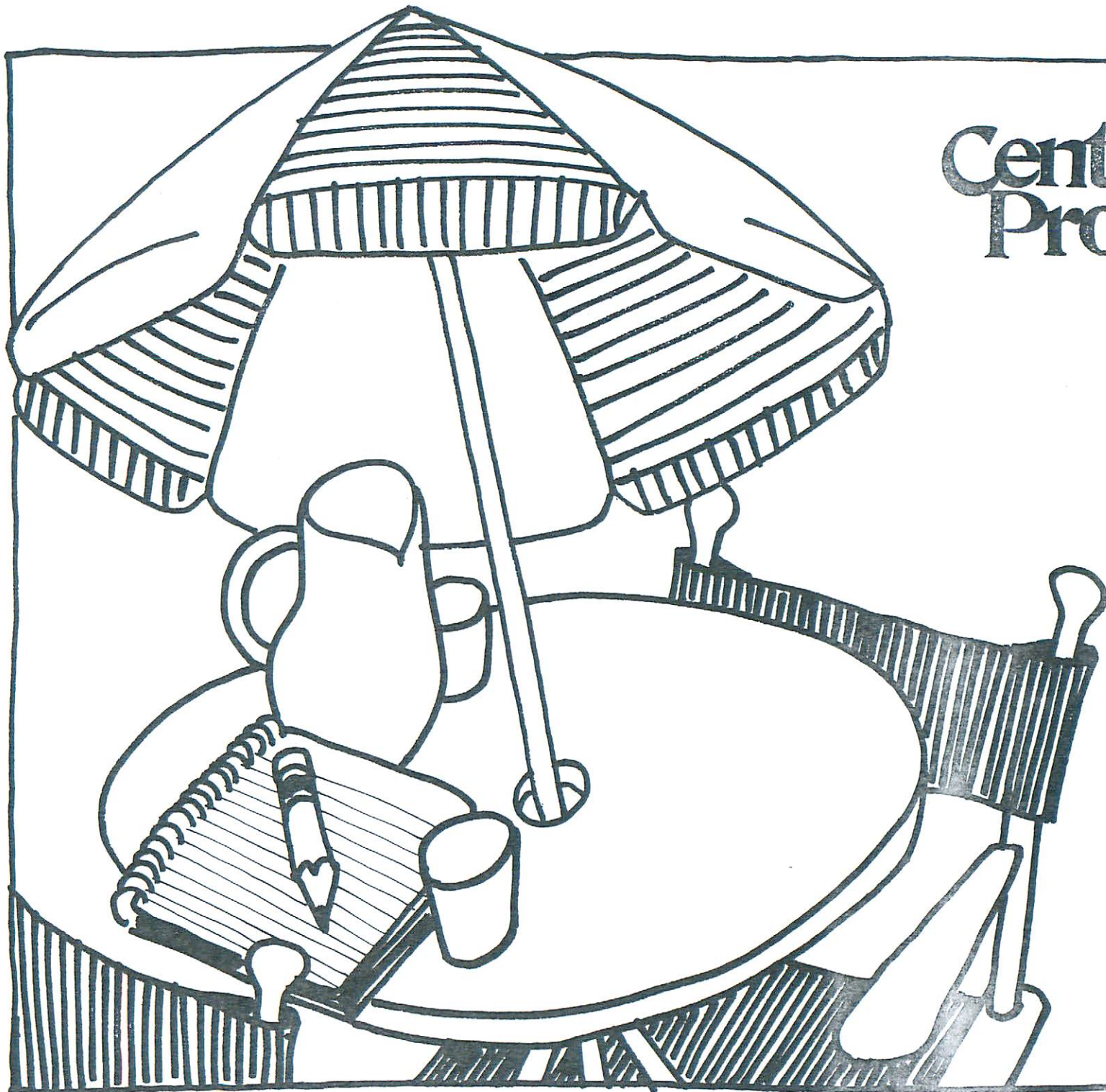
Ironically, not long after the end of the Project, all the videotapes were stolen in a burglary at the Museum.







Centre St. Project





Research & Development

True to its name, Centre Street traverses the geographic, social, and economic middle of the Childrens Museum's Jamaica Plain community. On one side of the street, neighborhoods are spacious, middle-class, and largely white; on the other side of Centre, the housing is more dense, the population increasingly Spanish-speaking and poor. In evolutionary terms, Centre Street stands about half-way between the good old days, suggested by its archaic spelling, and the point of no return, foreshadowed by the boarded-up storefronts at its nether ends. A recent architectural survey of the surrounding community praised the "full spectrum of 19th century styles represented," but complained that "the area is damaged by the undistinguished (Centre Street) commercial strip."

During the many months of proposal-writing and decision-awaiting which preceded the beginning of the Centre Street Project, it was a figment of the Children's Museum imagination that Centre Street people, places, and activities could be the subjects of an exhibit and an educational street fair. For the Children's Museum, Centre Street was, at the time of the Project's inception, a functional resource for program and staff needs. Friendly business relationships existed between the Museum staff and Centre Street proprietors, some of whom, like Henry Winkler at Yumont's Hardware, could recite virtual histories of Museum development work out of their books of invoices on the Museum's account. But no precedents existed for educational collaboration between the Museum and the Centre Street business community; nor, in fact, was there any strong evidence that the business people could themselves work together on a project of shared interest.

Conversation and shoe leather were the principal research and development resources for the Centre Street Project. By the time of its funding, the Project had been verbalized in Museum proposals to four different agencies, each having a slightly different educational and program bias. The concept -- to demonstrate the possibilities for learning in, from, and about a fairly average urban neighborhood -- had had its share of theoretical attention. A 1972 paperback publication, the Yellow Pages of Learning Resources, was selling out to city-lovers with 72 alphabetically arranged articles including "What Can You Learn from an Accountant?" "What Can You Learn at a Bank?" "What Can You Learn on a Corner?" But no one had ever actually organized a coherent, real-life demonstration of the assumptions underlying the theory that the urban environment can be an educational resource. Consequently, we had to start from the beginning. First, we planned an on-street community survey to learn about Centre Street's history, its contemporary activities, personalities and public use, its public image, and its future. The survey results would then guide the staff in developing content and designing the context for the Centre Street exhibit. Later, the Project would return to the street to organize the fair. The fair would occur on a Saturday three weeks into the exhibit's four-month run; personal contacts and familiarity with the street gained during the survey would expedite the intense preparation the fair required.

We began to attend the monthly meetings of the Jamaica Plain Businessmen's Association where discussion topics were expectedly remote from the Project's educational orientation: How could the Association commit money to Centre Street Christmas lights when so few merchants were willing to contribute? Wouldn't it be possible to pressure the city to enlarge the area's municipal parking lot? What's holding up the installation of these high-intensity, sulphur-burning street lamps? Clearly, the practical problems of making a living in a marginal business district were the primary concerns of the Association members.

At the outset, we had considerable difficulty communicating our objectives. Most shop-keepers doubted that any aspect of their work could be a subject of exhibition or demonstration; area residents were dubious that any special event could overcome Centre Street's dreary aspect and the creeping seediness often mentioned by respondents to the Centre Street survey.

Slowly, however, through drawings envisioning Centre Street on fair day, models suggesting the forms of the mock Centre Street exhibit, and seemingly endless conversations, we began to convert doubters into participants on a variety of levels.



CENTRE ST. NEWS

WALKERS AND TALKERS NEEDED

THE CENTRE ST. PROJECT IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR SURVEY OF CENTRE ST. AREA RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSMEN.

JOB TO BE DONE INCLUDE:

- CALLING UP PEOPLE (THE ONES WE HAVE PHONE NOS. FOR) TO SET UP INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS
- VISITING PEOPLE (THE ONES WE DON'T HAVE PHONE NOS. FOR) TO SET UP INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS
- INTERVIEWING PEOPLE FOR WHOM APPOINTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE
- PLANNING, INSTALLING, AND MANNING A "PERSON-ON-THE-STREET" INTERVIEW OPERATION.

ANYBODY INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH ANY OR ALL OF THESE TASKS SHOULD SEE ANDY OR ALAN IN THE CENTRE ST. PROJECT OFFICE.



"PERSON-ON-THE-STREET" INTERVIEW

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO MEET SOME REALLY INTERESTING FOLKS!



Survey

During the Centre Street survey we conducted personal interviews with nearly 100 business and community organization people, area residents and Centre Street passers-by.

As envisioned, the Centre Street exhibit was to be a reasonably conventional presentation of past and present life on and around Centre Street, incorporating Centre Street artifacts, old and new photographs, graphics, opportunities to try out skills of some Centre Street trades, and occasional demonstrations. Consequently, the survey interviews were rambling affairs, covering a wide range of topics, including: Which places on Centre Street are most important to you? What's the most interesting thing about Centre Street today? What's the best story you know about Centre Street? What does Centre Street need most that it doesn't now have? What changes has Centre Street undergone over the years? Do you have any pictures or objects which might be included in a Centre Street exhibit?

The time and effort consumed by the survey rapidly became burdensome for the small Project staff; and to make matters worse, the accumulating responses were failing to add up to any substantial result. On the other hand, the personal interview process was helping to spread word about the Project and occasionally did turn up a "find"—a special skill or possession which might be incorporated into the exhibit or the fair. It became apparent that brief, casual conversations would produce more such discoveries than the long, formal survey procedure, which was accordingly phased out. In the course of our less formal interviews, we began to think out loud about ways people could participate in the exhibit and fair. This impressionistic development technique allowed Centre Street people to try on for size a variety of off-the-cuff participation ideas; it also mercifully compressed the development process and led directly to an exhibit conception quite different from that which had been originally envisioned.

Exhibit

The Centre Street exhibit described repeatedly in our project proposals was to be a detailed study of the Centre Street community assembled by a community historian, a research specialist, a writer and a photographer. Naturally, our \$5,000 "planning" budget was no match for so imposing a task.

As first the formal, then the informal phases of the Centre Street survey trailed into mid-summer, and with the opening of the exhibit impending on October 1, the concept of the exhibit underwent a practical and philosophical metamorphosis. We recognized that a thorough presentation of Centre Street history was beyond our capacity to formulate. Moreover, given the active orientation of most Children's Museum exhibits, and the especially strong activity-directed consciousness of the supervisor of the exhibit space which would house "Centre Street," no static environment of panels and cases would do. Moreover, considering the regional character of the Museum's audience, everyone felt that the exhibit should not deal with subject matter indigenous to Jamaica Plain alone.

These considerations, combined with the survey finding that Centre Street people could participate in the exhibit most easily through loans of materials and equipment, led to a preliminary design for an urban-commercial streetscape employing artifacts from Centre Street and stage-set construction. The design provided a glimpse of Centre Street's past in a slide show and some of its present-day activities on videotape, but did not otherwise attempt to present a true-to-life portrait. Rather, a fanciful image of Centre Street became a means for visitors to enter behind the scenes and into the roles of a familiar street setting.

The exhibit, a stage-set slice of a commercial street environment, would incorporate many of the elements common to Centre-like streets everywhere. For appropriate materials and equipment, the exhibit would depend upon Centre Street establishments. Thus, many merchants who regularly sold the Museum basic supplies for exhibit construction became, for "Centre Street," voluntary suppliers of exhibit

objects. Centre Street paraphernalia incorporated by the exhibit ranged from supermarket, post office, barber shop and fire department uniforms to price stampers, a produce scale, and an ornate old-time cash register.

For some members of the Centre Street business community, exhibit participation went beyond the loan of objects to include personal involvement in exhibit programs. Giving a demonstration of personal knowledge and skills within the context of a museum exhibit was for every Centre Street participant an unprecedented experience. Some at first thought the idea patently absurd; the Project staff persisted, nevertheless, in encouraging personal appearances. The staff also provided technical assistance to the volunteer demonstrators, made the arrangements necessary to accommodate each demonstration within the exhibit, and occasionally assisted a demonstrator to develop his or her program.

To develop, design, construct, and run the Centre Street exhibit required a massive effort on the part of many Museum staff members outside the Project. Elizabeth Goldring, the developer for the exhibit area occupied by Centre Street, spent nearly all of her time over a three-month period working out the details of the exhibit program, gathering needed materials, and training young interns to support and manage the exhibit's role-playing aspects. Museum designers, carpenters, and technicians devoted a month to the installation of the exhibit. And educational developers of the Museum's Community Services staff helped Centre Street tradespeople plan their demonstrations.

When the Centre Street exhibit opened on October 1 for an extended five-month run in the Children's Museum's Visitor Center, its companion extravaganza, the Centre Street fair, was a mere three weeks from its scheduled day in the sun.

Fair

The engineering of the one-day Centre Street fair required an effort equal to, if not greater than, the development of the exhibit. During bleaker moments, when the apparent impossibility of getting together all the necessary permits, telephone pole pennants, no-parking pylons, and program placards weighed heaviest, and especially when the first day dissolved in a dismal downpour, it seemed as if an ephemeral eight-hour tail was wagging a cumbersome six-month dog.

When less harried, we could view the fair objectively as an important test of the Project's fundamental assumption. A museum exhibit could symbolically represent the genre "Centre Street;" but could the real Centre Street stand up and identify itself to the public on the sidewalk? The idea of a street fair - never mind the educational part - was something novel on Centre Street, where even parades, Kiwanis auctions, and charitable benefits had been few and far between. And, while many Centre Street merchants habitually contribute dollars, materials and food to these infrequent events, their personal involvement has always been minimal. And here we were, asking Centre Street people to be the event, not just to approve and support it! Words failed to help us communicate so exotic a notion. Of necessity, the Drawing was born.

The Drawing envisioned Centre Street as it would appear on fair day. We carried it along on every trip to Centre Street, even if the trip objective was only a salami on rye; because the opportunity to snag a commitment for the fair could and did knock at unexpected moments. Then the Drawing would be unfolded so the potential participant could imagine him or herself in the midst of a streetful of activity. For the fair, the Drawing would be redone to include everything happening that day, and printed as the centerfold of the community newspaper. The promise of such tangible recognition for fair participation made the whole crazy idea seem infinitely more real.

The fair, a one-time event much more grand in scale than the exhibit, provided Centre Street people with a communal context in which to demonstrate their wares, hows and whys. During the five months of the Centre Street exhibit, ten demonstrations by community people took place; the single day of the fair witnessed more than twenty events associated with Centre Street establishments.

The Centre Street fair encompassed several kinds of community participation other than demonstration. In a reversal of the exhibit's incorporation of Centre Street objects, the fair provided a setting in which Museum objects could be displayed on Centre Street: African necklaces in the jeweler's window; Indian sandals and Eskimo mukluks at the shoe shop; colonial tools at the hardware store.

Accommodating the displays, some of which were installed a week or more before fair day, required some sacrifices and presented some difficulties from the store owners' point of view. Most stores rely heavily upon their window displays as advertising, and displacement of their products represents a potential loss of sales. A related consideration was customer expectation that things in a storefront window could be purchased inside, and the possibility that customers might be alienated upon finding that attractive window items were not for sale. There was also extra work involved in rearranging windows to exhibit Museum objects. Finally, some people were hesitant about being responsible for presumably valuable artifacts. Anticipated problems notwithstanding, each of the five stores which displayed Museum objects during the fair expressed willingness afterwards to do it again.

Some community participation in the Centre Street fair occurred spontaneously. At the supermarket, for example, when a member of the Museum staff engaged fair-goers in wool-dyeing with vegetables contributed by the store, an employee augmented the curbside activity with apple-dunking and a cider giveaway. The fire department, which had originally declined to open its doors for safety reasons, permitted guided exploration as the street crowd swelled. And, not to miss a good retail opportunity, a second-story shoe store set up a

table on the sidewalk to hawk cut-rate galoshes in the sunshine.

Establishing the schedule of events for the fair was largely a process of match-making between likely Centre Street participants and volunteer Museum staff. The exhibit's demonstration programs—which were taking place as the fair entered the final planning stages—taught us a useful lesson: demonstrator success varied directly with the amount of support provided by the project. Consequently, a Museum staff member was assigned to look after each fair event. Museum people advised Centre Street people on basic issues (e.g. Should my event be inside or outside?) and on details (e.g. Should I show how I make chocolate lollipops, mint candies, or both?) Staff suggested supplements to demonstrations (e.g. take-home recipes for baklava) and arranged to use necessary Museum equipment (e.g. a ditto machine).

Finally, some programs involving special Museum resources (e.g. old-time butter churning at the dairy store) were developed and conducted by Museum staff with store owners contributing materials (e.g. heavy cream and fresh bread).

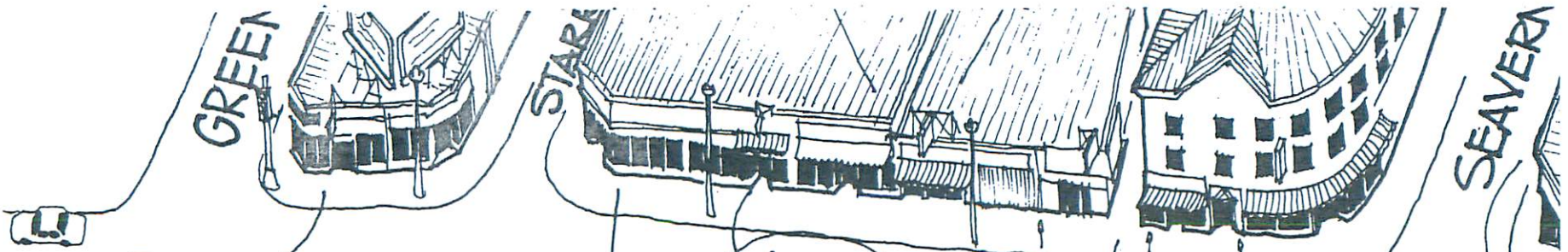
While the logistical details attending the fair's development are too numerous and pedestrian to recount in full, they were mercifully sparked with humor, as for example with our anxious concern about the difficulty of signifying the fair's very existence amid Centre Street's scrambled jumble of signs, lights, and traffic. Ideally, the whole Centre Street fair area would have been closed off for the day; but the trolley had to go through and the cars would follow. The overhead trolley wire prevented even the hanging of a fair banner across the street.

Our solution was to attach dozens of cardboard "flags" to Centre Street's parking meters, each silkscreened with the logo of the Centre Street fair. Unfortunately, our flags only increased the street's visual confusion. But not for long: as volunteers proceeded up one side of Centre Street and down the other, rubber-banding the cleverly-designed "fair signification placards" to parking meters, souvenir-seekers followed along behind, ripping them off one by one.

GREEN

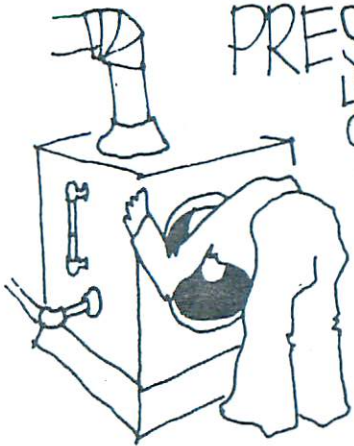
STARBUCKS

SEAVERA



PRESS ROOM

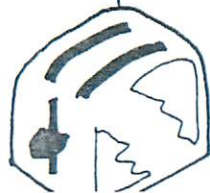
LEARN THE SECRET OF CRISP CREASES WITH AL PAVONE, OWNER-OPERATOR OF CLASSIC CLEANERS ON A PERSONALLY GUIDED TOUR OF HIS PLANT.



WATCH WORK

JAMAICA JEWELER ELI KRAMER'S WORKBENCH IS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS STORE. VISITORS CAN SEE WATCHES BEING REPAIRED.

OBJECTS FROM AMERICAN HOMES, 1940-1973
SEE CLOTHING, HOUSEWARES, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, PAINTINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, EVERYTHING UNDER 30 YEARS OF AMERICAN SUN AT THE THRIFT SHOP OF BOSTON.



BUTTER FLIES

AT KENNEDY'S WHEN YOU WHIP UP CREAM IN AN OLD TIME CHURN.



Critique

The Centre Street Project was an experiment in educational partnership between a museum and a community, an attempt to inspire learning and good times on a small segment of one city street. In a broader sense, the Project was concerned with the nature and quality of people's experience with urban environments, and the potential for institutions like museums to cooperate with their neighbors to promote learning and delight in the cityscape.

Our design called for a Museum exhibit and a street event which would complement one another, the first emphasizing Centre Street's similarities with other streets of its kind, the second serving to highlight the unique personalities, skills, and concerns behind the street's everyday facade. In reality, the two components of the Project reached two distinct audiences, each largely untouched by the intended companion experience.

The Centre Street exhibit, barely identifiable with the real Centre Street down the block, functioned effortlessly for the Museum's usual crowd of metropolitan-area visitors as an imaginary streetscape, with hands-on access to ordinary, but ordinarily off-limits street objects, the main attraction and the focus of visitor energy. Originally the exhibit had been conceived as a past and present portrait of the Centre Street neighborhood; but the more we thought about the idea, the duller it seemed. We doubted that a recitation of local history and a gallery of drugstore, grocery store, and bus stop photos could compete with the computers for game-playing, the animals for handling, the Japanese house for chopstick-eating, or with the dozens of other activity opportunities available everywhere in the Children's Museum. So we decided to tear a page from Walter Mitty's diary, and construct a place to put oneself in someone else's shoes, hat, coat, or smock.

The public response was unhesitating; the plain seldom failed to provoke visitors' fancies. Under heavy use, virtually every piece of street and store equipment in the exhibit broke at least once. Under heavy pressure, the exhibit staff, who were supposed to function as stage managers of the role-playing activity, sometimes felt like



patrollers on the beat. Adults, more restrained in exercising their fantasies than children, could be seen surreptitiously cranking the trolley-stop scroll, or explaining in earnest the meaning of all those numbers on the grocery store scale. Nothing was too mundane for scrutiny; under the roof of the Children's Museum even the parking meters had their day in the sun.

If the Centre Street exhibit convincingly demonstrated that the streetscape can nourish the imagination, it was the fair which truly focused imaginative attention on the real thing. Ironically, the Centre Street fair, which drew a local crowd of infrequent museum-goers, was the more museum-like in character of the two Project efforts, with displays and demonstrations the order of the day. More importantly, the fair came closer to realizing the goal the Project aimed for: for one day it dynamically altered the character of Centre Street, making it a more sociable and informative place through the combined efforts of the Museum and the community.

In producing the Centre Street fair, time and capacity to organize were our number one and number two resources, with abundant curiosity running a close third. The fair was hardly a priority for Centre Street's shopkeepers. On first consideration, in fact, the idea of spending an hour or two away from their work on fair day, conflicted psychologically, if not practically, with their primary business concerns. Consequently, the enlistment of shopkeeper participation was a slow door-to-door process, little aided by word-of-mouth from one shopkeeper to the next. Even on fair day, few shopkeepers toured the street to take in activities conducted by their neighbors.

Subsequent to the fair, however, an informal survey of the Centre Street business community revealed mostly positive opinions on the event. The most active participants, those who demonstrated their trades, enjoyed showing off their special skills to appreciative audiences; they felt that the Centre Street fair should be repeated in the future, and said they would participate again, although none could imagine taking on a greater share of the organizational responsibilities.

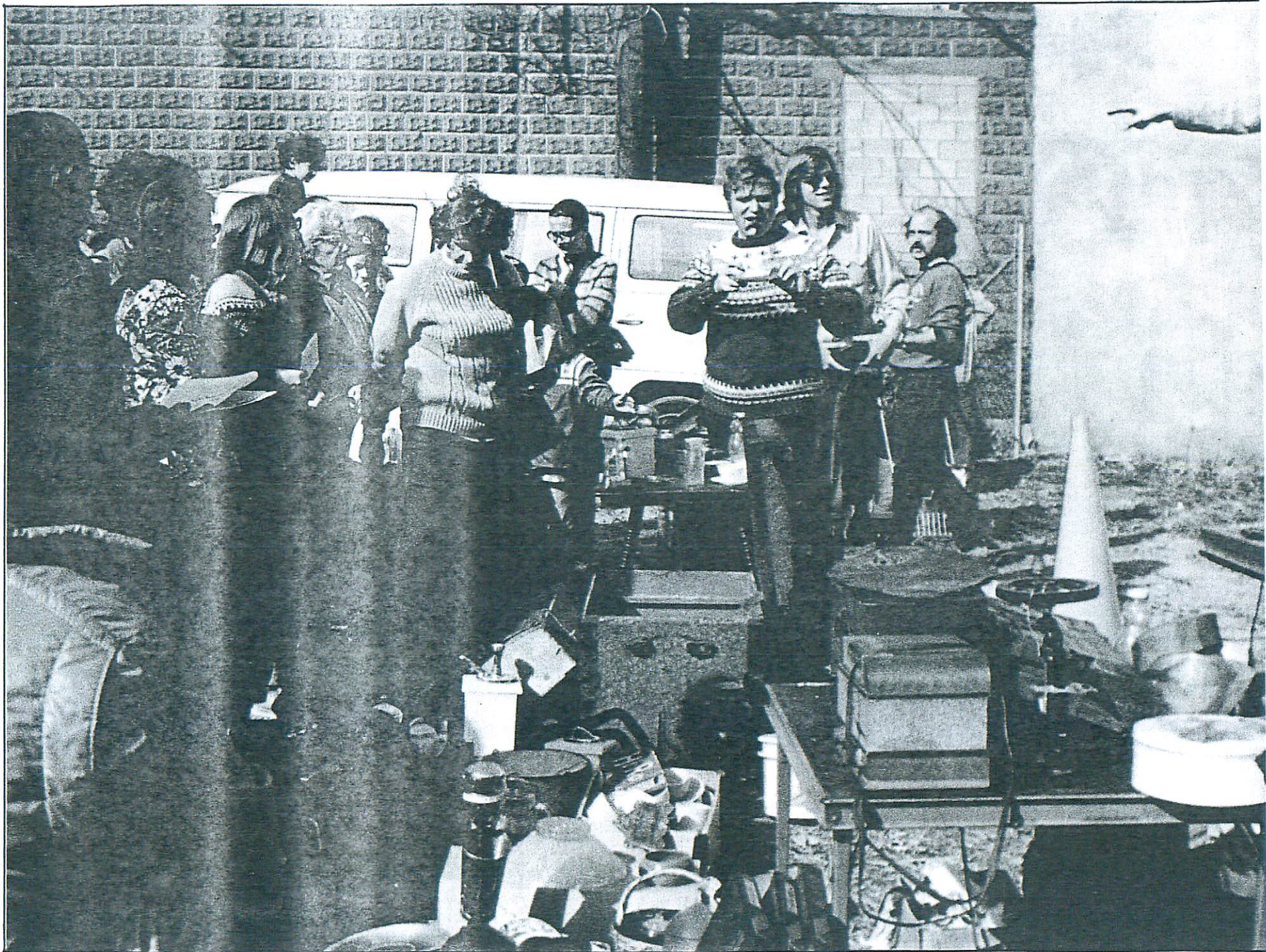
The more passive participants, those who contributed store windows for displays of Museum or personal artifacts, or materials for Museum-conducted demonstrations, derived less personal satisfaction from the fair, but appreciated the fact that "it got people down to the street who probably forgot we were here," a reference to the exodus of neighborhood customers to outlying shopping centers.

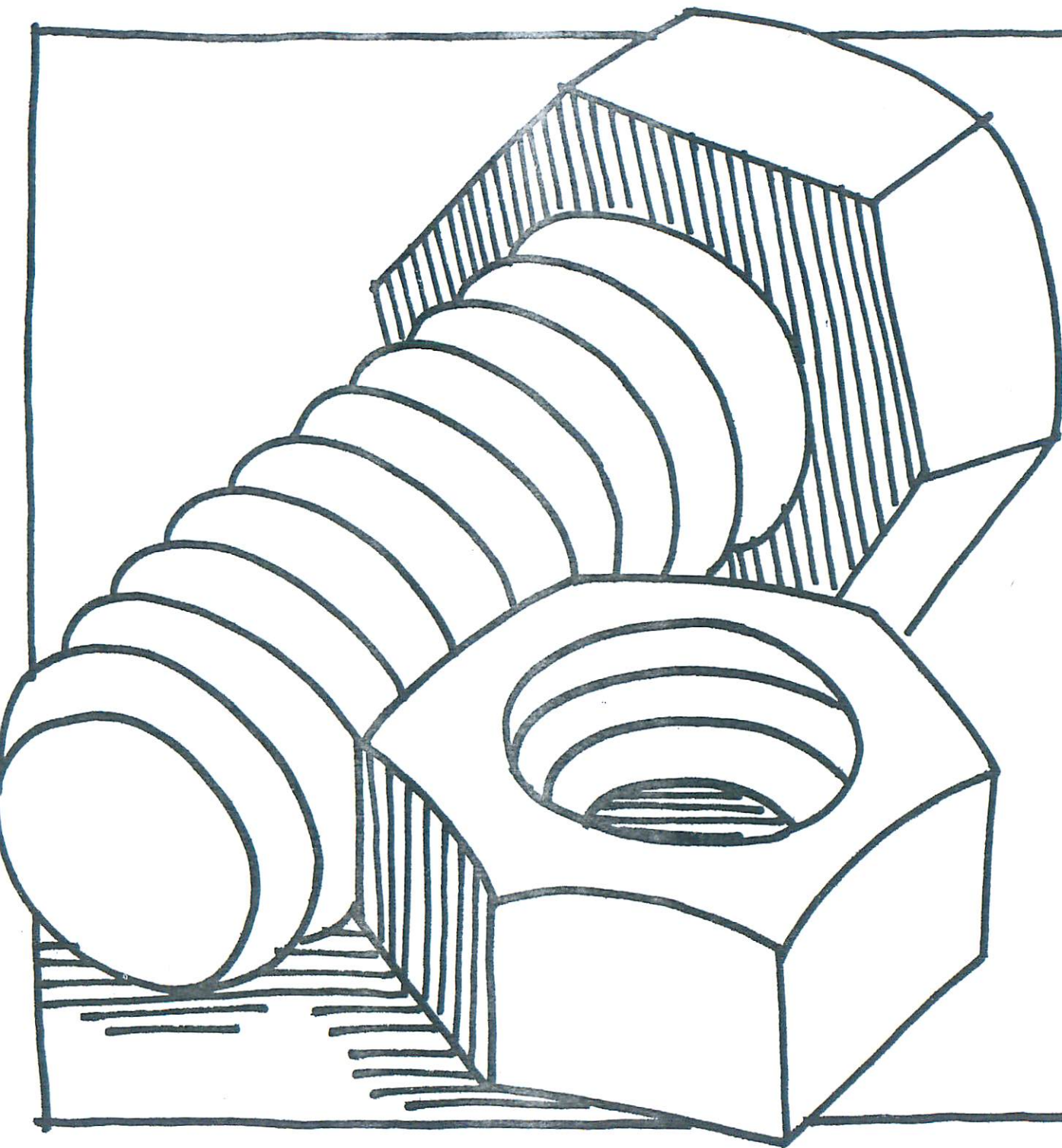
A corollary comment from a number of store-owners with walk-in trades—delicatessen and variety-store proprietors, for example—concerned the increase in business on fair day over a normal Saturday on Centre Street. By contrast, service-oriented establishments—hair stylists and some of the launderers, for instance—felt the fair-going crowd kept customers away.

Could an event like the Centre Street fair happen elsewhere; or was the effort uniquely a product of the Children's Museum's proximate and dependent relationship with the Centre Street business community? A year and a half after the Centre Street Fair, across town in East Cambridge, the Urban Awareness Program of the Boston Society of Architects (coincidentally funded by our own benefactor, the National Endowment for the Humanities) conducted a successful Centre Street-inspired "Cambridge Street Fair." And recently in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts collaborated with CAW Collect, a community arts group, to exhibit the traditional skills of Lower Eastside artisans, in the museum and on the Lower Eastside's streets as well.

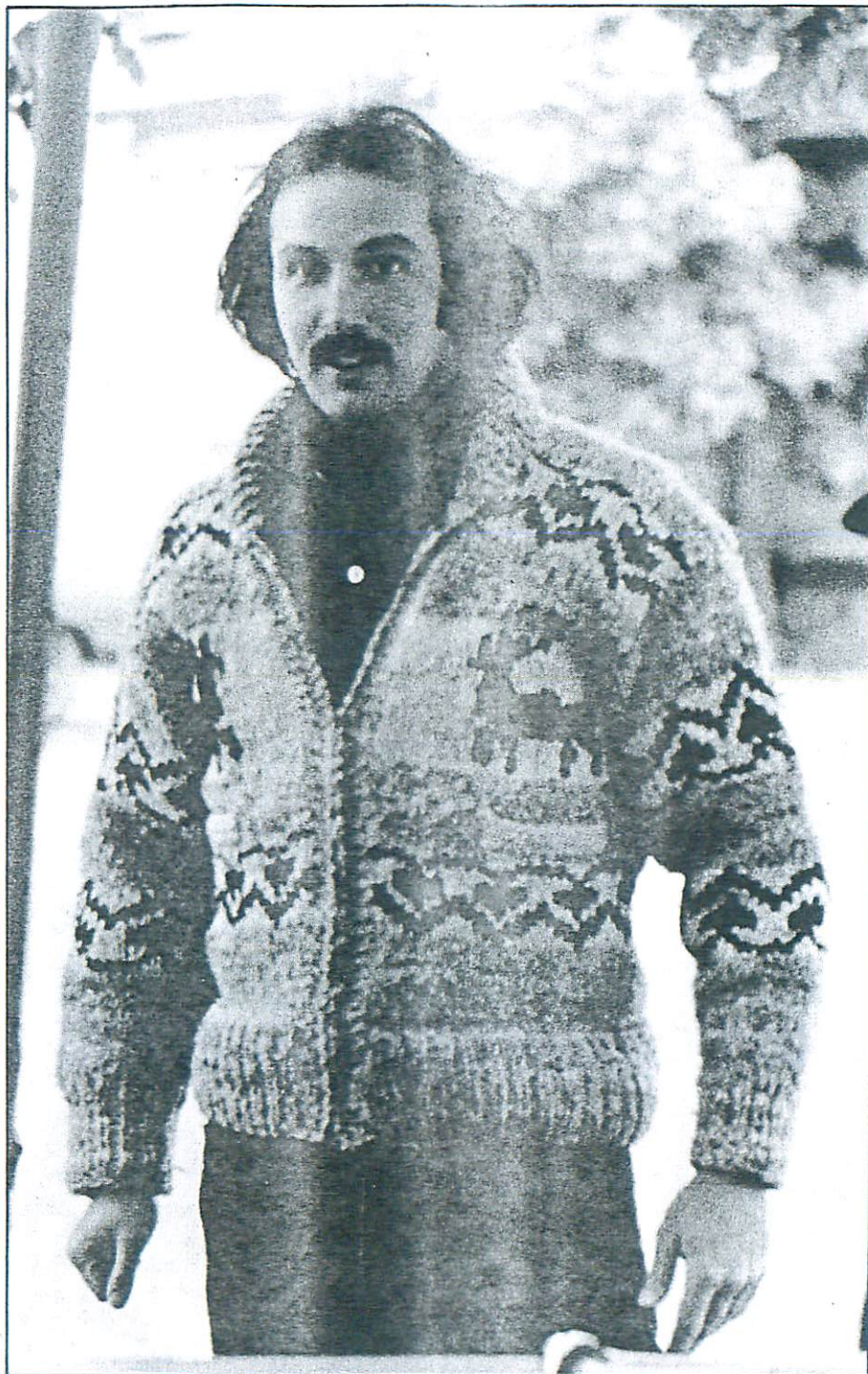
For the Children's Museum, the implications of the Centre Street Project were expansive. One direct result, a book entitled Citygames, takes a fresh look at five well-known Boston neighborhoods with activities for discovering detail in the environment. And plans for new exhibit development include a multi-story city street cross-section designed to support role-playing in Centre Street style.

With this book, the Children's Museum acknowledges a significant debt to Centre Street. In getting to know it, we learned a lot.





**Odds &
Ends**



The Project Staff

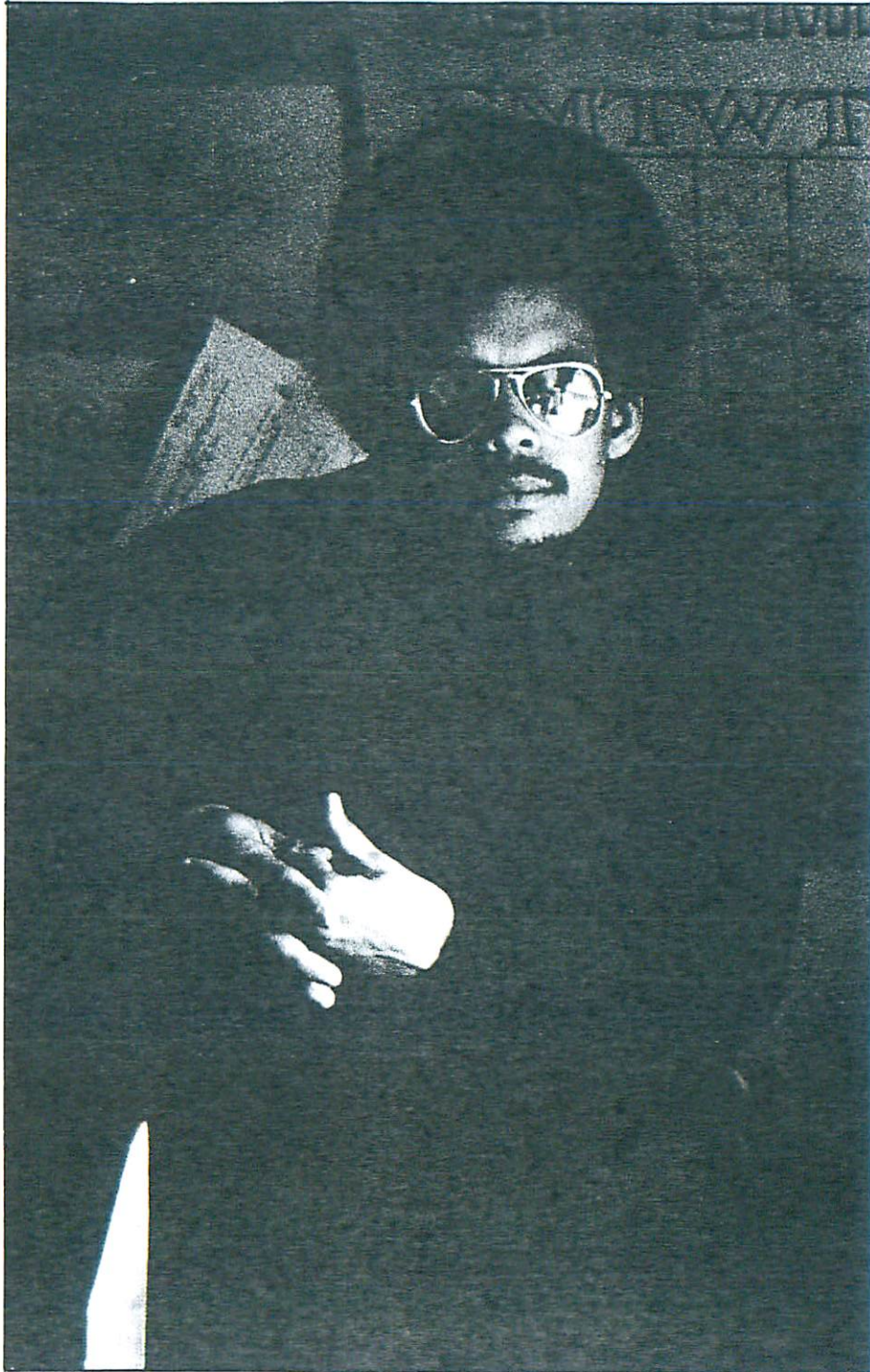
For its three principal developers, the Centre Street Project was related to a variety of personal concerns about education, neighborhoods, city streets and city life.

Alan Bell, a resident of the Centre Street community, a student at Northeastern University, and a college work-study inter at the Museum, was interested in Centre Street as a social place in transition from predominantly white and middle-income to increasingly Hispanic, black, and poor. Alan hoped that the kind of community self-expression possible through exhibits and street celebrations would help new and old residents get to know one another in positive ways — ways that would help maintain the street's friendly "hihowarya" attitude.

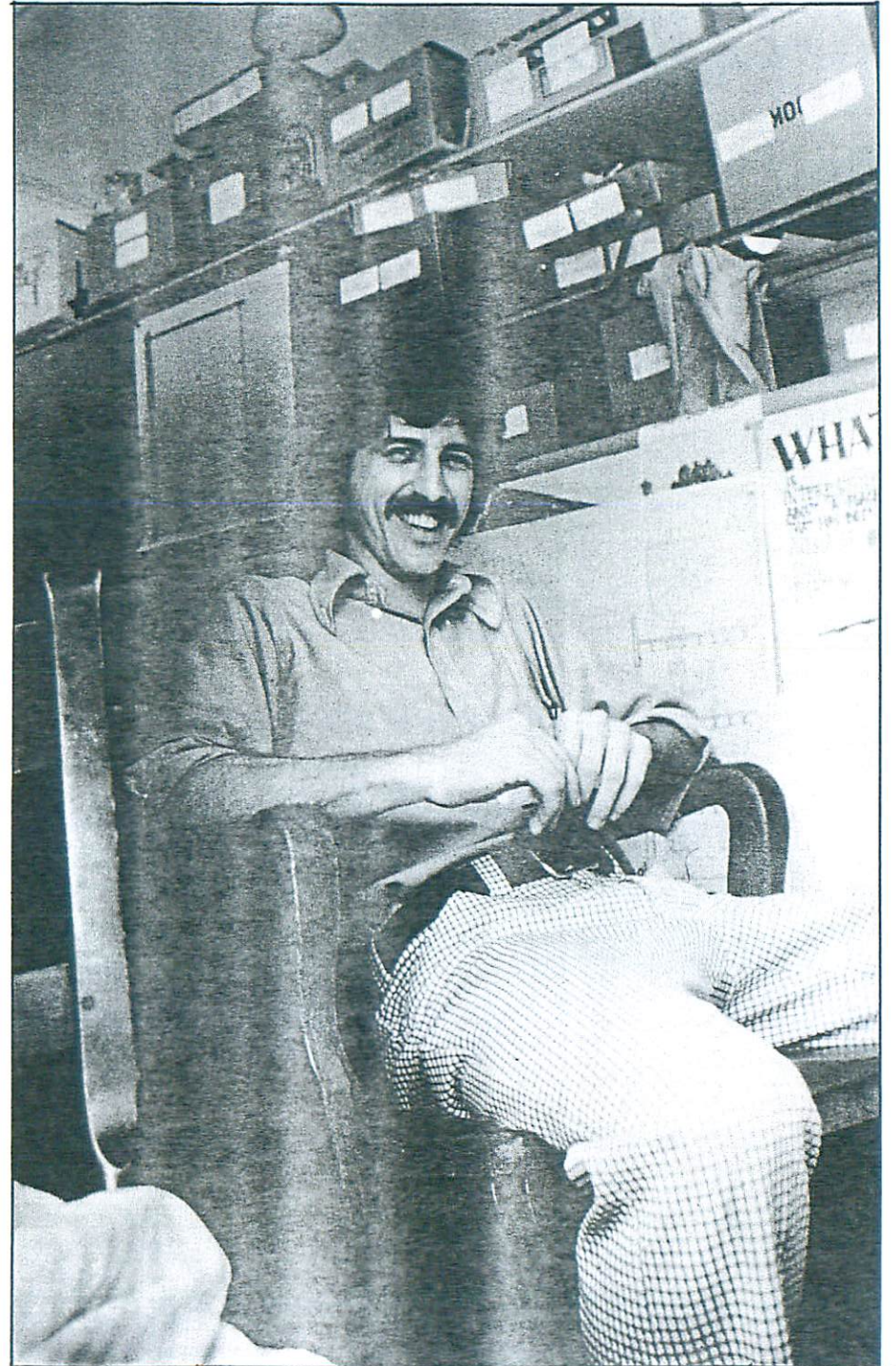
Andy Merriell, an architect and graphic artist concerned with helping people design things for themselves, looked at Centre Street as a space for community activity. Residents of the neighborhood frequently complain about Centre Street's dreary, uninteresting barren aspect. Andy felt the Project might be able to help people envision techniques for enriching the experience of being on Centre Street: new ways to use the sidewalks, doorsteps, walls, and windows.

Jim Zien, director of the Museum's Community Services Division, had been experimenting for several years with programs for learning about urban environments. "Open City," a previous project supported by the U. S. Office of Environmental Education, had looked into the possibilities for learning about Boston by riding the public transit system and investigating the neighborhoods around its stops. The Centre and Burroughs Street trolley stop, three blocks from the Museum, was a logical place for a more intensive investigation of the tenets of that project.

In converting these interests into an exhibit and a street fair the Project staff had the support of dozens of Museum colleagues: exhibit and program developers and staff interns, designers, artists, and craftspeople, scientists, secretaries, technicians, and carpenters who contributed ideas, skills, and enthusiasm enough to make glorious places of a hundred street corners. Among them: Elizabeth Goldring, Dorothy Merrill, Elizabeth Hastie, Bernie Zubrowski, Jeri Robinson, Susan Porter, Penny Sharp, Jorie Hunken, Jan Goodman, Tom Garfield, Charles Holley, Stanley Resnicoff, Edie Kraska, Peter Stumpp, Claudia Roth, Leigh Perham, and Alli Rosenwald.



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Funding

Like the trolley from Centre Street to downtown Boston, funding for the Centre Street Project was a long time coming and almost hopelessly run down. By June, 1973, when project work began, the Museum had applied for a total of \$179,557 from the National Endowment for the Humanities' Youth-grants division, the Architecture and Environmental Arts division of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Community Education and Interpretive Exhibitions program of the Humanities Museum division. Of all these applications, the net result was an offer of \$5,000 for further planning, leading to the submission to the Humanities Endowment of a more detailed and comprehensive project proposal.

Less interested in putting more words on paper than in trying out at least some of our ideas for real, we decided upon a gamble: to accept the "planning grant" to pilot this small-scale version of our grand Centre Street scheme. The \$5,000 grant would support a skeleton staff—a part-time program developer, a designer—and a minimal budget for materials for six months. The Museum would administer the Project at its own expense, and the Project staff would rely extensively on catch-as-catch-can help from other interested Museum members, stealing away hours, eventually days, from their own development work. In the final analysis the actual direct and indirect Museum costs for the Centre Street "planning" project amounted to almost \$20,000, not including the value of the time contributed by members of the Centre Street community.

At the conclusion of our "planning project" in November, 1973, the staff prepared a report to the Museum Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The report requested funds for a full-scale 18-month effort, based on the pilot work, at a cost of \$180,000. The Humanities Endowment responded with an offer of \$20,000 to "provide documentation and dissemination of the Centre Street project."

17. ABSTRACT

Centre St. is a business district and resident meeting ground for the community surrounding the Children's Museum. The Project Director is a resident of the Centre St. community, a university student and a Museum intern.

Purpose and Significance: To develop exhibits which 1) present historical, cultural, human and technological perspectives to contemporary life in the Centre St. community; 2) promote resident knowledge and understanding of community history and activities; 3) identify and distinguish the Centre St. community to outsiders; 4) demonstrate application of museum resources to community themes; 5) model subsequent development of educational exhibits within diverse Centre St. environments; 6) respond to the "City as the Exhibit" theme of the "Boston 200" Bicentennial Program. Plan of work: 1) Compile material concerning the physical, social, and business histories of Centre St., including documents, photographs, museum objects, and tape-recorded recollections of elderly residents; 2) assemble media documentation of contemporary Centre St., including photographs and video tapes of daily activity and behind-the-scenes work; develop a major exhibit of historic and contemporary Centre St.; and related showcase exhibits for selected Centre St. establishments. Use of grant funds: stipends (\$4200), clerical (\$1120), supplies (\$475), technical assistance (\$1550), overhead (\$1823).

(DEC. 6, 1972 APPLICATION TO NEH YOUTHGRANTS FOR \$9,168.00)

8. PROJECT ABSTRACT (RESTRICT TO THIS SPACE)

The Children's Museum proposes the Centre Street Exposition Project to demonstrate not only the potential of the museum as a community educator, but also the potential of the community as a public educator.

Centre St. is a business district and resident meeting ground for Boston's Jamaica Plain community. The proximity of the Children's Museum brings to its sidewalks many outsiders from other parts of the city and the world.

Within diverse establishments along Centre Street, the Museum would develop exhibits and programs which provide human, historical, cultural, and/or technological perspective to contemporary activities. Three project phases would undertake 1) a museum exhibition of historic and contemporary Centre St., including museum objects, recorded remembrances of elderly residents, and video tapes of hidden present day activities; 2) design of exhibits and programs for installation with ten Centre St. establishments, incorporating objects from our own and other museums' collections, media, and where appropriate, staffing by Museum work-study interns or community residents; 3) implementation, coordination, management, and evaluation of Exposition environments; arrangements for continuity through incorporation in Boston's 1975-76 "City as the Exhibit" Bicentennial program, for which the Exposition would be a major test and model.

(DEC. 6, 1972 APPLICATION TO NEH MUSEUM PROGRAM, COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITIONS, FOR \$115,894.00)

IV. SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION (COMPLETE IN SPACE PROVIDED. DO NOT CONTINUE ON ADDITIONAL PAGES.)

Edge: Jamaica Plain, a western edge of Boston, is bisected by Centre St., the community business district, and resident meeting ground. To the immediate west of Centre St., the spacious neighborhood of the Children's Museum overlooks Jamaica Pond and the wooded hills of a circumferential "green belt" designed by Frederick Law Olmsted; to the immediate east, dense streets dead-end at an above-grade railroad right-of-way, the rim of the inner city and site of a disputed highway corridor; to and from downtown Boston, trolley cars ply the middle of Centre St. The Museum's proximity brings many visitors to Centre St. (See map.)

Objectives: 1) to research and document the history, diverse activities, and critical issues which comprise and concern the Centre St. edge; 2) to prepare materials -- documents, photographs, videotapes, museum objects, other information resources -- for a Museum exhibit presenting historical, cultural, social, economic, technological, and environmental perspectives to life within the Centre St. edge; 3) subsequently, to collaborate with diverse Centre St. interests, eg. foodstore, bank, Little City Hall, to design public edge/ucation resources -- engaging information, exhibits, programs -- for their own environments; 4) to make the Centre St. edge a model for the "City as the Exhibit" program of the 1975-76 Bicentennial in Boston.

(DEC. 11, 1972 APPLICATION TO NEA ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS, "CITY EDGES", FOR \$49,540.00)

IV. SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION (COMPLETE IN SPACE PROVIDED. DO NOT CONTINUE ON ADDITIONAL PAGES.)

Currently, with planning grant assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Children's Museum is working with local residents, businessmen and community organizations to investigate the potential for Centre St., our community business district, to become an environment for public learning about the community's past, present and future. From June to November, 1973, we will 1) research and document the physical, cultural and economic histories, contemporary activities, and critical concerns of the community; 2) develop a pilot Museum exhibit presenting diverse perspectives on life in and around Centre St.; and 3) hold a Centre St. fair to try out on-street exhibits and programs interpretive of past and present community life. To build upon the current planning project and respond to the "City is the Exhibit" theme of the Boston Bicentennial, the Museum requests NEA assistance to develop a pilot Centre St. Exhibition: a three-block environment in which storefronts, interiors and street space incorporate graphics, media, museum collections, demonstrations and participatory opportunities for on-site learning by residents, shoppers and Museum-bound visitors. The Exhibition would be designed January-March, 1974; installed and piloted April-September; and evaluated and revised October-December for incorporation into the official Boston 200 Bicentennial program commencing April, 1975. Funds are requested for the 12 months January-December, 1974. Support for the Bicentennial year would be sought through NEA re-submission and from other sources.

(JUNE 29, 1973 APPLICATION TO NEA AID TO SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS FOR \$39,000.00)

8. PROJECT ABSTRACT (RESTRICT TO THIS SPACE)

The Children's Museum proposes five months of planning, June - October, 1973, to investigate the feasibility of the Centre St. Exposition Project previously proposed to the Museum Program under the December, 1972, application deadline for Community Education and Interpretive Exhibition funds. The planning will result in a more comprehensive proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a full-scale Centre St. Exposition Project to be submitted under the December, 1973 deadline. The Planning staff will research topics of potential interest to community residents and visitors, including community history and contemporary community activities and concerns; and will experiment with techniques for using museum resources to elaborate these topics in non-museum Centre St. environments. The Museum will employ previously tested methods of user-observation, exhibit and program design, try-out and revision in experiments with low-cost interpretive resources incorporating audio/visual media, graphics and participatory experiences. Experiments will be designed to provide information regarding procedures and costs for a full-scale Centre St. Exposition project. To accomplish these tasks, the planning staff will work cooperatively with the Jamaica Plain Businessmen's Association, the Community Council, the resident council of the local community school, the Jamaica Plain Bicentennial Committee, and the Office of the Boston Bicentennial's "City as the Exhibit" program.

(JUNE 6, 1973 APPLICATION TO NEH MUSEUM PROGRAM FOR \$4,955.00) ★ THE ONE THAT GOT FUNDED ★

8. PROJECT ABSTRACT (RESTRICT TO THIS SPACE)

Objectives: On the basis of insights gained from the Endowment-funded Centre St. Planning Project, a full-scale project will develop exhibits and programs for learning about the physical and social history of the Museum community; for encountering community work environments and human skills first-hand; for gaining historical and cultural perspectives on the materials and activities comprising community life; and for understanding cultural diversity in a community in social transition.

Program: Principal components of the project are 1) community-related exhibits and programs within a Museum-managed storefront space on Centre St., the business district for the Museum community; 2) exhibits of Museum objects in windows and interiors of other Centre St. establishments, related to the materials and activities of those establishments (e.g. colonial tools to view and even try out in the hardware store); 3) demonstration programs, courses, and on-site visits conducted with Museum assistance by community businesses, service organizations and individual residents; 4) special events which highlight and celebrate past and present community life.

Audience: 1) Community residents and other who frequent Centre St. to shop (estimated 5-10,000/day); 2) Museum visitors for whom Centre St. is the public transit stop (estimated 20,000/year); 3) Bicentennial tourists engaged in the Bicentennial "City is the Exhibit" program (no reliable estimate).

Personnell: Director, Jim Zien, Museum Director of Community Services. Community Coordinator, Alan Bell, Designer, Andy Merriell, both of Centre St. Planning Project, Community Historian, Exhibit and Program Developers to be hired.

(MAY 6, 1974 APPLICATION TO NEH MUSEUM PROGRAM FOR \$183,270.00)

The Children's Museum

The Children's Museum has developed a regional audience and worldwide reputation for its innovative educational programming for children, teachers, and parents. Long lines on rainy Sunday afternoons and during school vacation weeks attest to this overwhelming popularity. In the last decade, staff and programs have quadrupled. As measured by size of budget, the Children's Museum is now among the largest 10% of all museums in the country. Yet this has all been accomplished in an assortment of makeshift buildings on two and one-half acres of property on the southwestern edge of Boston.

First opened in 1913 at Pine Bank on the north end of Jamaica Pond, the Museum moved to its present site in 1936. Currently, the Museum consists of three major program divisions: a Visitor Center for exhibits, informal and group activities, and public services; a public Resource Center and curriculum materials circulating department; and a Community Services program offering educational training and assistance in resource development to schools and community organizations.

The Visitor Center attracts 190,000 children, parents, and teachers each year to eight in-depth learning environments — Japanese Home, Algonquin Wigwam, Computers, Living Things, Sit-Around, Grandmother's Attic, Grownups and Kids, and What's New — which are used as settings for group programs and individual visitor experiences. In other unmanned learning areas, children can make their own "movies" with zoetrope machines, examine a penny under a microscope, and experiment with weights and balances.

The Visitor Center is visited each year by:
140,000 family visitors who pay admission to participate in exhibits and informal activities;
20,000 children who take part in school group visits;
18,000 members of community groups;
10,000 additional visitors, either sponsored or too young to be charged; and
2,000 family and individual members who make repeated use of Museum resources.

In addition, we have a training program for college students and young professionals who staff the exhibits and learning areas in the Visitor Center. Sixty-two paid and sixty volunteer persons participate in this program each year.

The Resource Center, established with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, extends the Museum into the schools through adults who deal with children's learning.

The reference library is the most extensive collection of teaching tools in New England, and is open free to the public for browsing or reference. A Collection Renewal project has developed a new cataloguing system, relevant to the non-scholar, for the expanding collections of more than 35,000 animal, plant, and mineral specimens and 25,000 ethnological artifacts.

The Resource Center reaches 115,000 children in more than 150 school systems in New England and upstate New York, by means of:

2,500 circulations of Loan Exhibits and MATCH Units;
10,000 teachers, parents and group leaders who browse through the Resource Center and participate in workshops led by the staff.

The Resource Center also houses Recycle, a facility which converts by-products of industry to resources for arts and science activities. Recycle conducts regular workshops to guide teachers and parents in the use of recycled materials.

The Community Services Division assists neighborhood houses, multi-service agencies,

community centers, day care centers, Headstarts, youth clubs, and community schools to:

- develop materials and activities for learning in visual arts, crafts, music, natural and physical science, and early childhood education;
- train leaders of children's programs
- acquire, train and supervise student interns through college work study programs, the U. Mass/Boston University Year for ACTION program, and the Neighborhood Youth Corps program;
- design and adapt space for educational and arts uses;
- run summer arts and science programs;
- obtain assistance from other cultural institutions in metropolitan Boston.

Since 1972, the Division has supported children's education and recreation programs in more than 150 community agencies throughout metropolitan Boston.

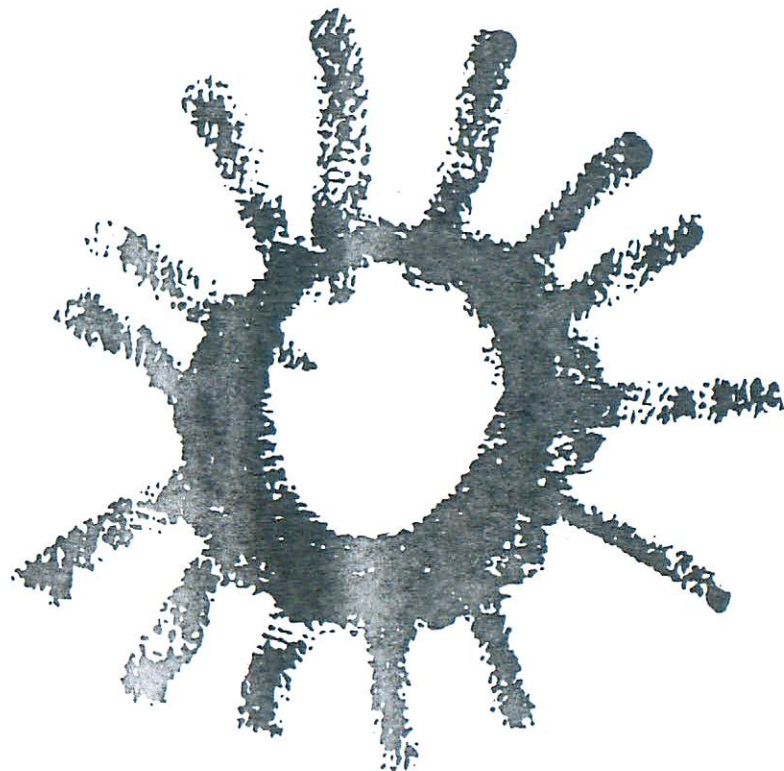
The evolution of the Community Services Division began in the summer of 1969 with a program of free bus service from neighborhood locations to the Visitor Center facility. In 1970 and 1971, a Museum "Earthmobile" carried art, craft, and science activities to neighborhood playgrounds and parks in conjunction with Boston's Summerthing program.

Additionally, the staff has developed materials and trained staff for two Cambridge Community Schools' mobile summer science programs; conducted natural history field trips with community groups for the Massachusetts Trustees of Reservations; directed a U. S. Office of Education-funded program concerned with children's ability to use public transportation to reach places for learning and recreation; and presented a unique street celebration and exhibit about the Museum's Jamaica Plain community, with grant support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Community Services Division has received three consecutive challenge grants, totaling \$115,000, from the Wider Availability of Museums Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. A major portion of the required dollar-for-dollar matching for the grants has been achieved through an annual Haunted

House benefit organized and sponsored by the Children's Museum Aid. Other sources of income include contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, fees from clients with ability to pay, and grants and contracts for special projects. Special projects for 1974-75 include development with the Office of the Boston Bicentennial of "Citygames," a book of activities for exploring Boston; and development of an "Ethnic Discovery" handbook for investigating cultural diversity in any community, under contract to the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program of the U. S. Office of Education.

The Community Services staff includes fifteen artists, crafts people, musicians, scientists, and early childhood specialists, a resource librarian, and an architect/designer. It is the only museum program in the country offering so wide a range of services and resources to schools and community educational organizations.



Footnotes

page 3

Caroline Pratt, I Learn from Children, Cornerstone Library Publications, New York, 1970.

Kevin Lynch, "The City as Environment," Scientific American, September, 1965, pp. 209-219.

"Making the City Observable," Design Quarterly 86/87, an issue devoted to "The Invisible City," the 1972 International Design Conference in Aspen.

Ivan Illich, "Education Without School: How It Can Be Done," The New York Review of Books, January 7, 1971, pp. 25-31.

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Winifred V. Anderson, Eva D. Boyd, Marion J. Dunham, Marguerite Souther, The History of the Loring-Greenough House, December, 1956.

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Richard Saul Wurman, ed., Yellow Pages of Learning Resources, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1972.

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"Hands and Heart, a look at the traditional skills of the Lower Eastside," a 1974 exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 29 W. 53rd St., New York, with associated events throughout the Lower Eastside. The exhibit and events were the products of a collaboration between the museum and CAW Collect, a Lower Eastside Community Arts Group.

"Cambridge Street Fair," a one-day street fair involving Cambridge schoolchildren and the merchants and storekeepers of the Inman Square area of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The event was organized by George Zimberg of the Urban Awareness Program of the Boston Society of Architects.

The Children's Museum, Citygames, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass., 1975.

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Gary Coates, ed., Alternative Learning Environments, Dowden, Hutchinson, and Ross, Stroudsburg, Penn., 1974.



ROBIN KALAYJIAN, WINNER, CENTRE ST. FLAG DESIGN CONTEST