

Federal government creating hostile arts climate

We have a federal government that is using the arts to blunt voter dissatisfaction. By cutting already lean grants to artistic institutions and by letting politicians grandstand against art purchases, the government has created a hostile climate towards the arts in the hope to give the appearing of doing something about their many years of fiscal mismanagement.

In this depressing situation that may art-concerned groups of volunteers that keep the arts alive in their communities are, by comparison, an encouraging sign.

In Halton Hills we have quite a few of these groups. About some of them I have written in the past, about others I will report in the future. Today I will tell you about a group aptly called "Arts Alive", its history and its plans.

The Halton Hills Cultural Centre in Georgetown opened in October 1981 with a two-week long celebration of various events in the theatre, the gallery and the library. Every year after the administration of the Centre treated October as a special month for putting on special events. When the fifth anniversary of the centre came along in 1986, the centre manager, Hank Huhtanen, felt that the community should get involved in the planning of the celebration. A group of volunteers formed quickly, consisting of Ralph Ursel, Lois Fraser, Linda Parker, Wendy Buykes, Paul Brisby and Maureen Walker, and these people, with the supporter of Hank Huhtanen, chief librarian Betsy Cornwell and Joy Thomson from the recreational department organized a rousing week with performances by The Georgetown Little Theatre, The Georgetown Globe Productions, The Georgetown Choral Society, The Sensation Jazz Band, plus two performance nights of all the Halton Hills schools and four daytime performances by Sandra Beech, a professional actress who performs to nursery and kindergarten audiences. Last but not least the first classical brunch with the guitar duo McAllister and Wilson took place. This had been the brain-child of Ralph Ursel who,



John Sommer
IDEAS AND THE ARTS

sadly, did not live long enough to see it happen.

In 1988 the remaining members from the original group formed "Arts Alive" and, again with the support of the town, organized a week in May that will not be outdone for some time. Let me give you that amazing program:

May 1, 1988: Remembering Ralph. A classical brunch with harp and flute music by "Diver-timento".

May 2 and 3: Mouse Tales. Music, mime and puppets for children.

May 4: Business and the Arts. A luncheon talk by Lyman Henderson.

May 5: A variety show by students from Halton Hills schools.

May 6: A senior citizen's tea with entertainment. Later, at 8 p.m., performances by The Georgetown Little Theatre, The Georgetown Globe Productions and The Acton Citizen Band.

May 7: Gerard Brender a Brandis and Lynn Barrett-Cowan demonstrating wood engraving and watercolour techniques, and at 8 p.m. a performance of Bryan Day and the Sensation Jazz Band with guest singer Zoe Kendall.

In May 1989 "Arts Alive" had a Remembering Ralph - classical

brunch again, this time with David Harding, viola, and Mika Chang, piano. The National Tap Dance Company came from Toronto for two performances, and Heather Esdon gave a one-woman-show called "Big Girls Cry". This year the satirical revue "Second City" came to town, and the Remembering Ralph - classical brunch will take place on Sunday, May 13 (Mother's Day) and will feature a flute and guitar duo with the name "Ambience".

A newsletter "Arts Alive News and Reviews" will come out for the first time this May. It will be a quarterly and it will cover all art activities in Halton Hills. There will be a calendar of events, an in-

terview with an artist, and a Children's Corner in each issue. A mailing list for the newsletter is in preparation. Please call Linda Parker at 853-0361 if you want to get on it.

And if you have time to spare and an interest in the arts, please join "Arts Alive". As in every other group of this nature, new members are welcomed with wide open arms.



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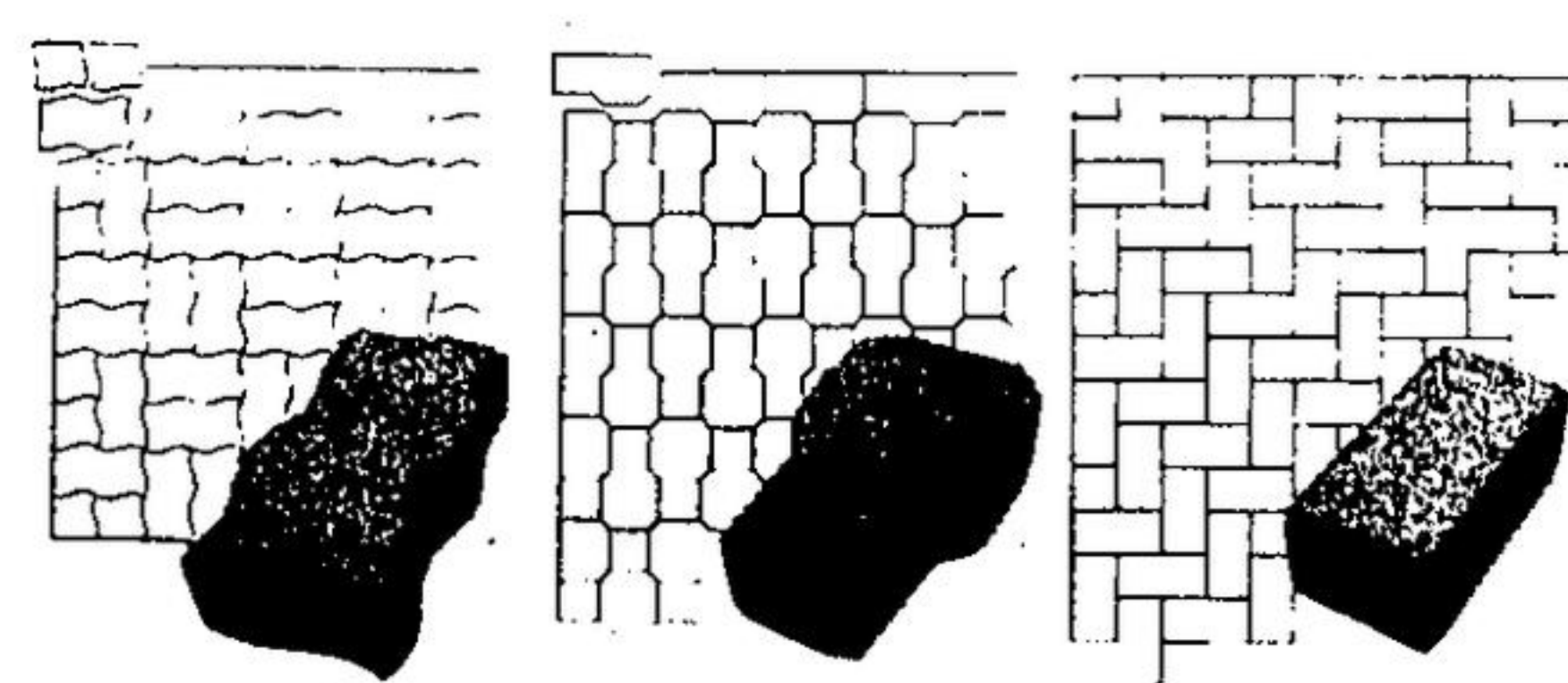
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