

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 7 JULY 1991

Summertime Project Tip:

Bring the Project Update to the beach and be the envy of all around you.

UPDATE



Gone, But Not Gone...

Mina Hammer, Administrative and Production Assistant extraordinaire, who was with the Project for two and a half years, took her leave of us at the beginning of June to work with a bunch of singing Bolsheviks. She always brought good cheer into the office with her sunny face and smiling disposition, and since she's gone all the kids just mope around the office (I wish!). However, we all know that she'll work with us again soon. Meanwhile, in her absence, we have named a fish after her, so her bubbly presence is still felt. Jenny Gersten, hot off the Bachelor of Arts presses from Oberlin College, is the "new Mina." Jenny originally interned with us in January, and she actually came back...go figure.



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Mina rides into the sunset
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Speaking of fish, June 16, 1991, was the first anniversary of Sparky's death (for those of you new to the Project, or who missed the gala, Sparky was a goldfish whose unfortunate, untimely death is a fish-bone of contention around here), so we bought a new fish to break the bad karma and called it Sparky II. Sparky II died the next day (some people feel it was doomed due to its association with its namesake). Determined fish-keepers that we are, we now have Sparky III and Mina, who seem very happy and well in their new home. L'achiem!



Replay

In the last *P.U.*, fifteen kids who were Playmakers from HumanNature and The Dream Theme were taking classes with Daniel Judah Sklar to take the next step in playwriting. On April 26th those 15 kids went with 12 actors and 5 support staffers to the Forest Inn in Tannersville for an artistic retreat/workshop. Over the weekend, everyone got to go horseback riding, and they rehearsed their plays. On Sunday each play was given a reading and was then discussed by all participants. The general feeling was that the kids had truly progressed in their writing. The next step is going to be a Project experiment. Fourteen kids will be going back into the classroom for a week of Re-writing classes with Daniel. Following that week, five plays will be chosen to be presented at E.S.T. for a one-time performance on August 13th. These plays will be acted, directed and stage managed by the kids, under the supervision of Larry Nathanson and Michaela Murphy.



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*Replayers on horseback
hit the trail in
Tannersville*
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Ten Will Get You Plenty

Our tenth anniversary gala, "Ten Will Get You Twenty," on June 3rd at the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center was a smash success. We had two performances that night, both to packed houses. Forty-five children and forty-five adults from Project past and present graced the stage, singing songs from Project yore. It was wonderful to have everyone back together again. We are eternally thankful to those people (you know who you are) who donated their time, or other goods, to make the evening such a hit. We think you're all the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Speaking of bread...the gala raised over \$20,000 net profit. Hurrah! This will help to fund this summer's One-on-Ones at Block Island and Cape Cod.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **Funding**

In other funding news, sincere thanks goes to:

Nathan Cummings Foundation:	\$40,000
The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation:	\$10,000 (two-year grant)
Con Edison:	\$ 1,000

We would also like to take a moment to thank Rozanne Gates who celebrated her birthday on May 19th with a party for all of her friends. In lieu of gifts, Rozanne asked everyone to make a donation to the Project. Due to Rozanne's and her friends' generosity, we raised over \$1,100!

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **One-on-Ones**

Sure, it's hazy, hot and humid outside but we know it's summer when the kids come into the office waving their certificates of achievement and diplomas and asking when we're going away. The first One-on-One trip we'll be taking this year will be to Block Island, Rhode Island from July 21 - July 28. Adult participants include Richard Dresser, Spalding Gray, Fracaswell Hyman, Bruce MacVittie, Roma Maffia, James McDaniel, Willie Reale, James Ryan, Ann Talman, Wendy Wasserstein, Joe White and Jeff Williams. The second trip will be from August 18 - 25 in Wareham, Massachusetts (Cape Cod). So far, those adults scheduled to go to the Cape are Cecilia Arana, Becky Browder, Carl Capotorto, Joel Coen, Mary Kane, Craig Lucas, Peter MacNicol, Frances McDormand, Kevin O'Rourke, Christopher Randolph, Willie Reale, Kathryn Rossetter, Edith Thurber and Pamela Tyson.

The theme for the One-on-Ones this year is "The Food Chain" (Willie's one-track mind/stomach strikes again!) The Block Island plays will be presented at E.S.T. from Thursday, August 1st to Saturday, August 3rd at 8:00 p.m. with matinees on Saturday and Sunday, August 4th, at 3:00 p.m. The Cape Cod plays will be performed from Tuesday, August 27th to Friday, August 30th at 8:00 p.m. Please be sure to make reservations in advance because the tickets will sell like hot-cakes (so to speak).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **Nights On The Town**

This spring did not only bring forth lots of sunshine and flowers, it also brought the Project lots of complimentary tickets. On April 13th, seven kids and three adults ran away to the circus...The Cirque du Soleil, that is. The

Quebeçoise company charmed the adults and kids, but as 8-year-old born and bred New Yorker, Annette Myrie pointed out, "It's very hard to understand what they're saying if you're not French like me." Merci, Annette, and Grand Mercis to Susan Chicoine and Kevin McAnarney for giving us the tickets. On April 24th, nine kids saw a performance of "Once On This Island" on Broadway. Thanks to Stephen Graham for the Caribbean voyage - too bad we couldn't use our sunscreen. "Day-O" Yup, on May 8th, eleven kids, accompanied by some grateful Project volunteers and parents, saw Harry Belafonte perform in a benefit concert for E.S.T. at Avery Fisher Hall - thanks to Robert de Rothschild and Bob Saldenberg for those. The Mets gave us fifteen tickets to see the Giants lose to the Amazin' Mets. Con Edison gave us five seats which we used as a "girls night out" to see the Yankees play the Oakland A's on May 10th. On June 20th, INTAR on W. 42nd Street invited us to see "The Have-Little" by Migdalia Cruz, about a 15-year-old girl growing up in the South Bronx. After the play, the kids had a long discussion with the cast about the play. Thank you all for helping enrich our kids' lives.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **Tid Bits**

* PlayBack continues. On June 7, 3 kids (Shamine Gibson, Jessica Cordero and Danielle Ferrin) went away with 3 adults (Daniel Judah Sklar, Sybil Rosen and Jan Buckaloo) to Jan's house in East Hampton, New York, to work on plays together. Performances of all nine PlayBack plays are currently scheduled for October.

* "52 Comes Through," our TheatreSports improv team, participated in an all-city tournament on April 20th and finally got first-place (it was a three-way tie, but hey, it's still first place!).

* "Three Minutes from Broadway: The Story of The 52nd Street Project," the thirty-minute film by Lyn Greene and Josephine Dumas, was broadcast on WNET in June. We hope this broadcast will lead to future showings on other stations across the country. Stay tuned...

* Ben Barenholtz, a member of our Board, and Project friends and supporters, Joel and Ethan Coen, have kindly offered us a preview screening of "Barton Fink," their new film that won the Palm d'Or at Cannes this year, as a fundraiser for the Project.

* C.B.S.'s "Sunday Morning" with Charles Kuralt is planning a story on The 52nd Street Project. A crew will be joining us on Block Island.

□ On Saturday, September 14th, the Project will be screening a teleplay by Willie Reale that was produced in 1983 with 15 Project kids, professional actors including Treat Williams, Kathy Bates, Robert Joy and Brent Jennings and featuring Miss Elaine Smith.

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Replication

We are rolling along merrily with Replication, moving into the final stages before we go to press with volumes and volumes of all the past Project scripts and manuals on Playmaking and other Project programs. Eventually we will be able to send out these booklets to all those interested in doing something similar to The 52nd Street Project in their own neighborhood.

June Ballinger has taken up the position as artistic director and Susan Willerman as Playmaking teacher at Graham-Windham for a Playmaking program this summer. The performances for these plays will be in August - call the office for more information.

Meanwhile, on the other coast, Project volunteer actress-writer Leigh Curran is starting a 52nd Street Project/West. She has already laid a lot of ground work, and has moved out there this month so we wish her loads of luck. Keep your eyes peeled for One-on-Ones Hollywood style soon.

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Our Readers Write

My Life Story
 by Danny Noonan, Project writer/actor

The first time I met The 52nd Street Project is when I was a bit young - as a matter of fact I was only 7. I was in P.A.L. and found a door, I opened it, people named Marsue and Mina were there. I talked to them and days later they asked me to act in a play. I did, and that's how I met the Project. Now I'm 10.



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Our correspondent right before his tenth birthday. His horse, Mitzi, is six.
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And, from Jessica Soto at Camp Walden in Maine, this long and pithy letter:

Dear Guys:

How are you doing? Camp is great. I made a lot of friends, and everyone is so nice. I miss you all so much. Love, Jessie. P.S. Are the fish dead yet?

Anyone wishing to write Jessica at camp (where she'll be until mid-August) is encouraged to. Her address is: Camp Walden, Denmark, Maine 04022.

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Willie's Poetry Corner

At this point, I'm ashamed of the amount of comic mileage we've racked up as a result of the death of Sparky, the Project goldfish. Some readers might even employ the word 'milk' in the verb form. However, being a dairy loving kind of guy, I'm dusting off my stool to write this little ditty set to the tune of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer".

SPARKY THE PROJECT GOLDFISH
 LIVED INSIDE A PROJECT BOWL
 THEN MINA FOUND HIM FLOATING
 SHALL WE SAY FILLET OF SOUL

SOON THOUGH WE BOUGHT A NEW ONE
 AND WE NAMED HIM SPARKY TWO
 HE LASTED HALF AN HOUR
 ALL THE KIDS SUSPECT MARSUE

LATER ON THAT VERY DAY
 WILLIE CAME TO SAY
 WHAT A SHAME THAT SPARKY DIED
 WONDER WHAT HE'D BE LIKE FRIED

OH HOW THE CHILDREN LOVED HIM
 AND THEY SHOUTED OUT WITH GLEE
 CUT UP SOME LEMON WEDGES
 WE'VE GOT PLANS FOR SPARKY THREE!



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52nd Street on stage for the finale of "Ten Will Get You Twenty"
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