

## SPE REDISCOVERS EDUCATION

The Society for Photographic Education, faced with a tight budget and a history of escalating administrative problems, recently decided to make two changes of some significance in its policies. These decisions, though voted in at a mid-September meeting of SPE's executive committee (i.e., the 16-member board's four officers), were approved by the entire board in a mail ballot.

The board's first decision was that SPE should address the matter of photographic education more directly. The organization was, of course, founded 20 years ago at a time when there were few photography programs, to promote high standards in photographic education and to foster the practice of art photography. The connection with education has at times receded so far from the organization's consciousness that some sectors of SPE's constituency wondered why the "E" was there at all. The board's decision will be achieved in four ways. First, future editor(s) of SPE's quarterly, *Exposure*, will be instructed to include material about education in each issue. Second, a photographic educator, rather than an individual who is mainly a working photographer, will now be honored at SPE's national conference. Third,

an *ad hoc* committee will be created to study the problems of academic retrenchment in institutions which teach photography. Fourth, a committee on education is now in the planning stage. It will be charged, at the minimum, with gathering data about photographic education for the last 20 years.

According to the SPE's chairperson, Martha Strawn, this renewed emphasis on education—or rather, this rediscovery of the organization's original goals—seemed the most practical way of focusing the energies of a diffuse and sometimes disputatious group. Strawn added that, with a tight budget, a stated priority makes it easier to decide what an organization can or cannot undertake.

The board's second series of decisions involved taking certain moves designed to create what Strawn calls a "transitional" atmosphere, in preparation for the board's formal deliberations, scheduled for March of 1983, on what the SPE is supposed to do with itself. (That is the time set for the final report of SPE's steering committee, created recently to recommend goals and priorities.) The most important decisions here involve fundraising for the organization and SPE's

publications. SPE will now attempt to hire a fundraiser on a commission basis. It will hire an advertising manager for *Exposure* and for the Society's newsletter on the same basis, a fundraising job, which had previously fallen to the editors of the publications. *Exposure* will, for at least the year following Gretchen Garner's departure as editor, be produced by a series of guest editors, who will work in conjunction with a publications committee, and (a) managing editor(s), who would be responsible for production. The exact logistics of this arrangement, which might well prove exceedingly complex, are yet to be worked out.

There were, said Strawn, two reasons for not moving immediately to hire a new, full-time editor for *Exposure*. First, the board felt there was not sufficient time to search thoroughly for the best candidate, and it did not wish to be rushed into a long-term commitment. Second, the board had some reser-

ventions about continuing *Exposure* exactly as it has always been done, at least until the steering committee's report is in: the last two editors—Charles Desmarais and Garner—both came under pointed criticism from the board, and both chose to resign.

The board, being under some financial pressure, decided in addition to reduce the amount of money SPE guarantees *Exposure*, from approximately \$6,000 to \$3,500 per issue, leaving the balance to be garnered (or not) from advertising. It recommended that *Exposure* reduce its production costs and its number of pages.

Strawn emphasizes that these decisions are intended to jar the administrative habits which have been created by what I would call SPE's gradual transformation into a bureaucracy. "It's like loosening the soil before you yank out the plants, to transplant them or to put in new ones," she said.

—Catherine Lord

## BRITISH PHOTO PRESS FOLDS

The British photographic book distributor and publisher Travelling Light has gone out of business. The decision followed the organization's receipt of a "dilapidations order" from its landlord—a blow which weakened Travelling Light's already tenuous financial footing.

Travelling Light was founded in 1977 by Michael Blake, Heather Forbes, and Peter Turner—all former members of the defunct Co-Optic photographic cooperative. During its five years of existence Travelling Light be-

came one of the leading distributors of photographic books in Great Britain and Europe, introducing over 70 titles. Books published by Travelling Light include *The Teds* by Chris Steele-Perkins and Richard Smith, as well as titles featuring, among others, Raymond Moore, Brian Griffin, Marc Riboud, and Paul Wombell. Seven additional books were scheduled for production, including Martin Parr's *Bad Weather* project.

## COMBINATIONS LOST

After five years of publishing, Combinations Press is suspending operations. The announcement was made by Combinations editor-publisher Mary Ann Lynch, who cited the imbalance between rising printing and postage costs and decreasing sales. The press was best known for the production of *Combinations: A Journal of Photography*, a 48-page periodical devoted to contemporary photography, poetry, and short fiction related to photography.

*Combinations* carried no ads, and received grant support only once, in 1979, from the New York State Council on the Arts. The

bulk of its income came from its 500 subscriptions and from intermittent single copy sales. *Combinations'* average press run was 1000 copies. The press also produced the chapbook *Jack Sal: Mark/Making*.

According to Lynch, the closedown isn't necessarily permanent, and the journal may reappear under more favorable circumstances. For now, refunds are being made to subscribers. Back issues of *Combinations* are available for \$4.00 each, plus \$0.75 postage. The address is: Combinations Press, Middle Grove Rd., Greenfield Center, N.Y. 12833.

## THE THIRD DEGREE

The Arts Resources Corporation, in cooperation with the Center for Arts Information in New York City, is conducting a national survey of arts information centers, i.e., those organizations or services—be they federal agencies, state arts councils, or artists' resource centers—which function as information clearinghouses for the non-profit sector. The basic idea is to improve access to various funding programs by initiating a system

of networking. The survey will identify centers, define their purposes and constituencies, and describe their holdings and programs.

The project is expected to culminate in a national conference of arts information centers to be held early in 1983. Information centers may receive questionnaires by contacting the Center for Arts Information, 625 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

## LETTERS

### PRAISE! PORTER! PLEASE!

To the editor:

I'm writing about Carl Yusavitz's review of *Bern! Porter! Interview!* ["Received and Noted" section, Summer 1982]. Margaret Dunbar's interviews do far more than "scratch the surface" and a justifiable incredulity in the presence of Bern Porter would not be considered naive. Both a brilliant scientist and an original and significant poet, grandfather of the self-published artists' book, first American publisher of Henry

Miller and Dick Higgins, editor, gallery director, early proponent of photography as an art form, Bern Porter deserves to be recognized and hailed for what he is: a unique American genius of both art and science. That the visuals of this handsomely designed book (both hand rubber stampings and original artists' stamps pasted in!—plus Bern Porter's singular graphics), which are unique amongst contemporary books, were not at all mentioned is sorely regretted, if I dare say so myself.

Mr. Yusavitz would benefit by another look; reflection and the confidence of knowing that he is dealing with a genuine artist ought to add a touch of humility to his treatment of his vast subject, well served in this book.

—Carl Pittore  
Rome

**COVER:** From *Standing Up* ("Linda" section, 1981) by Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge. See "The Production of Meaning: An Interview with Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge," by Martha Fleming, page 10.

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