

The Last Word

Tom Pace

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Theatre is the imaginative reconstruction of time, character and human action to create a performance event. It may be a play, readers theatre, storytelling or poetry reading. No matter what form it may take, theatre is a dramatic expression of the human condition. Theater helps us understand the self, the others around us, and the "world" as it interprets the past, explores the present, and anticipates the future.

It is such a unique experience of human communication that the institution of the theatre must never be allowed to die. It is to this end that the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association is dedicated. In a society that stresses technology and science, it is difficult for our schools and colleges to find adequate funding for creative arts. The older generations must give their spiritual and financial support to these programs in order for the younger generations to become proficient in this form of human interaction.

Karen Erickson

*President of the Illinois Alliance for Arts Education
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The arts are central to life, they surround us in the fabrics we wear, the walls we decorate, the music we play, the stories we listen to or watch. The arts communicate when conversation fails us; reach and touch places that common rhetoric cannot begin to reach. In intergenerational arts projects, I have observed communication through movement, playful touch, creating and telling stories, acting life moments, and making interpretive sounds that have had altering effects on the participants.

The arts bring joy, connect us to our humanness, and provide a language so universal that it bridges us to others. We often don't acknowledge the arts as basic to survival. Yet time and again we are reminded that it is the arts that sustain us, connect us, interpret our thoughts, and heal. The arts are a powerful creative force that is not limited by age, occupation, or economic condition. They belong to everyone.

Don Prince

Retiree, Student Financial Assistance Program

I am aware of all the urgency to toughen the curriculum, give more time to math and science, make school harder--and get rid of the frills. Then I reflect on my own education and the impact it has had on my life.

I studied math and science from elementary school through college. But they have been an insignificant part of my life. As a young boy, I listened to my sister practice the piano as I played with my toy cars; I still recognize from my childhood days, works by the masters--Chopin, Beethoven, Bach. In elementary school, we had both music and art appreciation. In high school and college, I participated in band and chorus.

Today, my wife and I are involved with our church choir, Northwestern University choral, orchestral, and theatre productions and attend the Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts.

I rarely factor math equations or search for chemical unknowns, but the frills seem to have stuck with me. Too bad they are being relegated to after-school activities so that there is time for children to be cast into a narrow, rigid, test-happy mold to satisfy social and parental pressures.