

Supporters of arts sing optimistic tune at rally

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

You didn't hear anyone singing "Happy Days Are Here Again," but those at the Arts Alive '92 rally Wednesday morning on the lawn of the state Capitol in Lansing weren't singing the blues, either.

The rally was sponsored by the Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan and Michigan Advocates for the Arts. This is the third year a demonstration of support for the arts took place.

Last year's event, called Art Attack, solemnly noted cuts in state

aid for the arts. This year's rally celebrated the strength of the arts in Michigan. Those present pledged and encouraged advocacy on behalf of the arts and seeking financial support from other sources.

"The arts are alive and well in Michigan," Judy Happonis, chairwoman of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, told the gathering of 200 people.

The committee, formed by Gov. John Engler in September 1991, will develop a new agenda of art support, Happonis said.

"I expect and hope that you will

see a blend of public and private support. I think you will see an emphasis on education. It is essential for young people to have creative opportunities in the schools. Creative problem solving helps all students in all areas of their curriculum.

"I think you will see a further development of partnerships. . . . A flourishing cultural environment is essential to this state."

Staying strong

The feeling was shared among comments from area representatives before the program began.

"I think we'll all persist. I think we're just going to see a rather conservative period," said Kenneth Gross, executive director of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. "I hope to see something exciting happen, some new energy from the recent graduates. I'm very committed to restoring some of the networks."

"I think we're going to stay as strong as we possibly can," said Susan Friedrich, former interim executive director of the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

"The past year proved the arts have a lot of staying power."

"I don't know that funding will be better but I hope that things will be better, that communities will start coming together and talking about how to fund the arts," said Wally Klein of Birmingham, past president of Cultural Council of Birmingham Bloomfield and now with Business Volunteers for the Arts.

Challenges

Arthur Ellis, Department of



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZULLY

Rallying together: Lorraine Chambers McCarty (left) of Royal Oak, an instructor at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, Wally Klein of Birmingham and BBAA executive director Kenneth Gross talk at Arts Alive '92, a rally Wednesday on the lawn of the Capitol to celebrate the strength of the arts in Michigan.

Caucus formed

MAA president Alan Suits introduced members of the recently formed Legislative Arts Caucus. They include Rep. Maxine Bermon, D-Southfield; Sen. Michael Bozell, R-Birmingham; Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills; Sen. William Faust, D-Westland; and Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills.

"Thirty-three legislators have agreed to be not only supporters of the arts but genuine advocates of the arts," Suits said. "The best thing you can do is make your physical presence known to them."

"The caucus is to 'try to build bridges to the Capitol and the community.' Dolan, one of five caucus co-chairmen, said apart from the gathering. "Try to be more active locally, (have) arts promoted locally."

Arts Alive featured a student competition. Poems, drawings, photos and collages carried the theme, "What the Arts Mean to Me." Among the winners chosen from the 172 entries were Alec Sanger, 5, of Troy and Rebecca Berdy, 17, of Birmingham.

Alex said in a drawing that "Art Means Coloring." Berdy's poem, "Senses," declared that "Art is not only a word, but a feeling, moving and gripping. Dripping with substance, emotion."

"What would the world be like without art? It would be a pretty

miserable place," the Sealight senior said after the rally.

Those attending had the chance to sign a "Declaration of Arts Support" meant as a visual symbol. Free posters were distributed, and T-shirts, mugs, buttons and video sold.

Funding fought

A counter demonstration was staged by a few protesters near where Arts Alive took place. The protesters, who said they supported art education but not taxpayer financing for the arts, carried signs with such messages as "The Illegitimate Art State," "Tax money should buy roads, police and school books, not art," "I don't need your money . . . why do they?" and "Health care doesn't need public funding."

"We are protesting public funding for the arts. Art should be self-supported," said one of the group, Greg Brodeur of Flint, a professional novelist.

The rally included time for constituents to meet with their legislators. Architect William Kestor gave a tour of the Michigan Historical Center, two blocks from the Capitol. The center featured art work by Michigan artists David Barr, Sergio De Giusti, Al Hintz, Richard Kozlov, Gerhard Knoll and Glen Michaels.

Winning words: Rebecca Berdy of Birmingham, 17, was awarded a certificate signed by Governor John Engler. Berdy won in her age division in a competition. She wrote a poem telling what the arts mean to her.



Signs of support: Rosanne and Cameron Duncan, Concerned Citizens for the Arts president, look on as state Rep. Lynn Bank's, R-Livonia, examines buttons proclaiming "arts alive" and similar slogans. Mugs, T-shirts and videos were also sold at the rally.



Drawing dissent: A few protesters were on hand to say that art shouldn't be funded with public money. The protesters, including two professional novelists, said they did support art education.

BELLINI
GROWING WITH STYLE & SUBSTANCE

Because your child deserves only the very best surround him with Bellini Quality designer furniture that grows as your child grows.

Choose Bellini. WE FURNISH YOUR SPECIAL MOMENTS

1875 Woodward
Birmingham
(313) 614-0525

2208 S. Main St.
Ann Arbor
(313) 769-BABY

AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING

HIGH EFFICIENCY 10 S.E.E.R.

SUN

AIR CONDITIONING SPECIAL

AS LOW AS **\$1,495**

ASK ABOUT OUR PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

WE SERVICE, SELL AND INSTALL ALL MAJOR BRANDS

- 24 HOUR SERVICE
- 23 VEHICLES
- RADIO DISPATCH

Carroll

36CK018

FINANCING AVAILABLE "0" DOWN/AS LOW AS .30 PER MO.*

FREE ESTIMATES: 421-4555 • 335-4555

GIVE YOUR FUR A NEW FUTURE

Now is the time to make necessary REPAIRS, or REMODELS. If your fur has become uncomfortable over the extended shoulder and deep armholes of today's clothing, let our furriers INCREASE the size of your fur to give you the easy fitting style of a new garment.

Present Ad Fur Savings
SAVE 20% ON ALL LABOR

STORE YOUR FURS
In the finest humidity and temperature controlled vault (34°F), located on our premises.

SAVE on storage with cleaning \$5

CLEAN YOUR FURS
Let our fur specialists clean your furs in our unequalled modern plant located on our premises.

WICK UP CALL
873-8300 or 642-3033

Your Furrier Now And Tomorrow . . .

Dittrich
Since 1858

DETROIT: 873-8300
BLOOMFIELD HILLS: 642-3033