

Section 4 Chicago Tribune, Thursday, May 3, 1973 W



Sharing lunch with some friendly pigeons
Mary and Annelise McDonnell share their lunch with these ever-hungry Chicago pigeons in Grant Park between Randolph and Monroe Streets.

Theater project hailed

Kuumba workshop—outlet for blacks

By James Jackson
RONALD LEWIS, Jr. is an honor student and freshman at the Northwestern University School of Speech, Theater Department. He also is a member of Kuumba Workshop, the only consistent theater workshop where an aspiring black artist can test his mettle in Chicago.

The Kuumba Workshop was formed in 1961 in an effort to define the role of black performing artists. It is grounded in the communal concept of sharing the joys and sorrows, the strengths and weaknesses, and the successes and deprivations which blacks encounter daily, according to

Mrs. Val Ward, founder and director of the workshop. "Kuumba means creativity in Swahili," Mrs. Gray said, "that's what we are all about. This Kuumba we are producing creativity at the social, economic, and political levels through black artists."

"IT IS THE black artist's duty to obtain what he can, where he can about his profession and then return to his community to share it with other blacks," she explained. Lewis, a graduate of Harlan High School, said, "In university drama schools and professional drama schools, a black performer can learn the mechanics of acting and acquire the techniques and experience which he might not otherwise get, but he does not learn about black art. Black art is black life and this is what can be learned at Kuumba."

Mrs. Gray maintains that "theater in the dramatic we sense of the word is not a valid medium for the black actor, neither is western literature nor is artistic creativity as defined by the white world."

SINCE BLACK ART is black life, black artists have a permanent responsibility to truthfully and honestly interpret black life, she said. This means going back to the roots, back to the community. Kuumba also serves as an ad hoc committee on movies, books, and theater productions which it feels do not realistically portray black life.

It has issued position papers on two movies recently released, which deal with the glorification of the black drug pusher and pimp, condemning them as racist.

THESE MOVIES were made

expressly for the black community and in no way gave an adequate portrayal of black life and are a direct insult to black artists," Mrs. Gray said. However, William Jones, a black social worker, said, "Kuumba tells blacks not to see these films but what valid alternative do they offer?" "I tell black youth to see the films and form their own opinions. There are such obvious faults in the movies that I think it is an insult to black youth by their elders to think that they won't be able to see them in the right perspective."

Kuumba has been described by some as a radical group because of its intense political involvement. Mrs. Gray denies this, describing politics as "the power base and our people (blacks) must have an understanding of the power base in order to progress."

Pride hurt, Gary bars drug sign

SIGNS OF THE times recently led to some confusion and ruffled feathers in Gary. A number of residents, including Gary Mayor Richard G. Hatcher, recently requested and obtained the removal of a billboard advertisement warning of the dangers of drug abuse.

The billboard, located in the center of town, proclaimed, "POINT OF NO RETURN... WHEN YOU TAKE DRUGS, THEY TAKE YOU!"

SITUATED next to the sign is another welcoming visitors to "GARY, A CITY ON THE MOVE."

It was the proximity of the signs which led residents to complain that the drug abuse sign, the larger of the two, was a slur on the city because, taken together, the signs read, "WELCOME TO GARY... POINT OF NO RETURN."

The drug abuse sign was intended as a public service message, according to John Cichula, president of State Outdoor Sign Co., the billboard's sponsor. "I THOUGHT it was a pertinent message not only to Gary residents but to anyone passing thru with relatives or friends who might become involved in drugs," he said.

Cichula scoffed at the idea of the sign's being a slur. "I am very disappointed that some persons saw it in a negative sense and failed to realize its true message," he said.

The sign that warned of drugs has been painted over and Gary remains a city on the move and the war against drugs goes on.

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Lawyers open site to help poor

A LEGAL referral service to assist poor people and members of minority groups who believe they have been abused by the police has opened at 81 W. Jackson Blvd.

The service, which is operated by the Chicago Council of Lawyers, will provide attorneys at reduced fees, according to Richard Stearns, executive director of the council. The service is funded by grants from the Winobald Foundation and the Fund for Justice.

The service will operate from 2 to 6 p. m. on weekdays. If an investigation shows a complaint is valid, the person will be referred to one of 100 participating attorneys. The referral attorneys will charge the complainant a rate based on his ability to pay.

Groundbreaking set for hospital

Ground breaking ceremonies for the Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove will be held at 2:30 p. m. Sunday. The hospital is being built on Highland Avenue, a mile south of the East-West Tollway. It will be owned and operated by the Evangelical Hospital Association, which also owns Christ Community Hospital and Evangelical School of Nursing, both in Oak Lawn.



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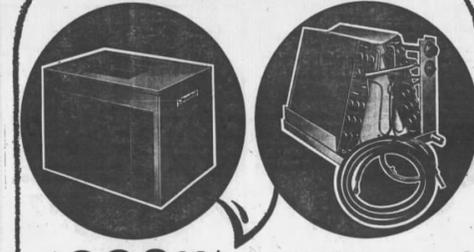
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