

EGF leads in arts education

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7th Row Center

By Lee Barnum

"Over, under, round-a-bout," and several East Grand Forks students are learning the rudiments of choreography or movement to music — rather a difficult project in a classroom crowded with desks, tables, chairs, hanging plants and other accoutrements necessary in a teaching environment. This is a problem only if you allow your imagination to be trapped by four walls.

To Patrick Scully the classroom became a stage and the desks set pieces. To music the children learned to move in unison, concentrate on the action and present a program of choreographed pictures.

Pat is a unique individual; he is tall with a sandy-colored crop of bushy hair and a handlebar moustache; he is unique in his

approach to children — he likes them. Children know when they're being put down and they react in kind. Pat had control of his class; he commanded their attention but he also listened to their comments; he treated them as equals.

The group consisted of several students from the Valley Elementary School in East Grand Forks and Patrick Scully is an artist in residence for two weeks.

Pat is sponsored jointly by the Community Education Program and the Council for Arts and Crafts. Steve Kerr, from the Community Education Program, is an added plus for the City of East Grand Forks. Steve knows the value of athletics in a city program but he also sees the need for an expanded program which includes the arts as well as sports. His programs reach all ages and this one with Mr. Scully is geared primarily to 4th, 5th and 6th graders.

Mr. Scully has a diversified background in the field of dance. He has studied at the University of Minnesota and the Free University of Berlin. His home base is in Minneapolis and there he is involved in productions of his own as well as working with other independents. His attitude toward dance is simple — "let the nature of performance be a natural one," in other words "be yourself and let your students be themselves."

He dislikes dance routines in which the main thing is technique, and this is why he enjoys working with non-dancers. "At first," Pat stated, "the kids thought I was going to teach them a jazz routine in 15 minutes, which is, of course, impossible. What I teach them

is movement of bodies."

The children certainly responded to Pat's technique. They entered the classroom in rows and moved under, over and around the desks. Everything wasn't perfect but then this was only their third rehearsal. The final outcome of these rehearsals is a program for the parents set for tonight (Jan. 20) at Valley School.

Pat has based one of his routines on multiple flying airplanes, and one on a possible substitute teacher and the class' reaction to the newcomer. In an even tone he would call "rest 1-2-3- front 1-2-3- and diagonal 1-2-3-4-5." Every once in a while we also got a "don't get squirrely on me, it's Friday; you've had a long day and I've had a long day," or "you're going to give me a heart attack before I'm thirty," and "I want this movement to be crisp as to mushy."

The children rehearsed and rehearsed, sometimes adding suggestions of their own.

The class was predominantly female but there was a smattering of males; one, Wayne Jensen stated, "Mr. Scully, he's O.K., I think it's neat, acting and stuff."

Well the "stuff" seems to be working and the children are also learning that there can be beauty in movement, even in a classroom.

My congratulations to Pat Scully, Steve Kerr, and the Arts and Crafts Council for utilizing a program that adds to the overall growth of children.

And remember that Old Sudanese saying: "Man who walks through life a half-step behind might be able to at least see the roses."

Love Ya!