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LABORFEST becomes a hot property as the fist poster goes into extra printing and the Grand Avenue mall turns into People's Parade workshop (below) drawing young artists, musicians and community groups to prepare surprises for the big Labor Day.



Quite a parade inside Laborfest parade

The All-City People's Parade throughout the summer will show off portions of its "Metamorphosis" theatrical floats, masks, skits and community comments on issues of similar import as the concerns of organized labor.

But it is saving its biggest presence and push to be a comprehensive unit in the Laborfest parade Monday, Sept. 5.

Hundreds of artists, youth and families from throughout Milwaukee have been getting ready for just this Labor Day event, and much of the work is taking place in a 35,000 square

foot space in the former Linen & Things shop in the Grand Avenue mall. There volunteers transform cardboard, bits of found fabric, paper bags and plastic into giant puppets, masks and floats for the parade and pageant. The home base for these creations and performance training has been changed from a forgotten deserted cavern into a lively warren of organized chaos as dozens of individual pieces take shape.

This is a unique process of public art that organized labor is happy to be a part of, and free workshops, building and training continue through Sept. 2

(Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 9 p.m.; Fridays, noon to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 161 W. Wisconsin Ave.) Individuals and groups are also needed to march, dance, wear masks and handle floats.

For details, contact Milwaukee Public Theatre at 414-347-1685. It and Milwaukee Mask and Puppet Theatre are spearheading the third annual parade project, partially funded by the Milwaukee Arts Board, the Wisconsin Arts Board and National Endowment for the Arts, Milwaukee County CAMPAC, United Performing

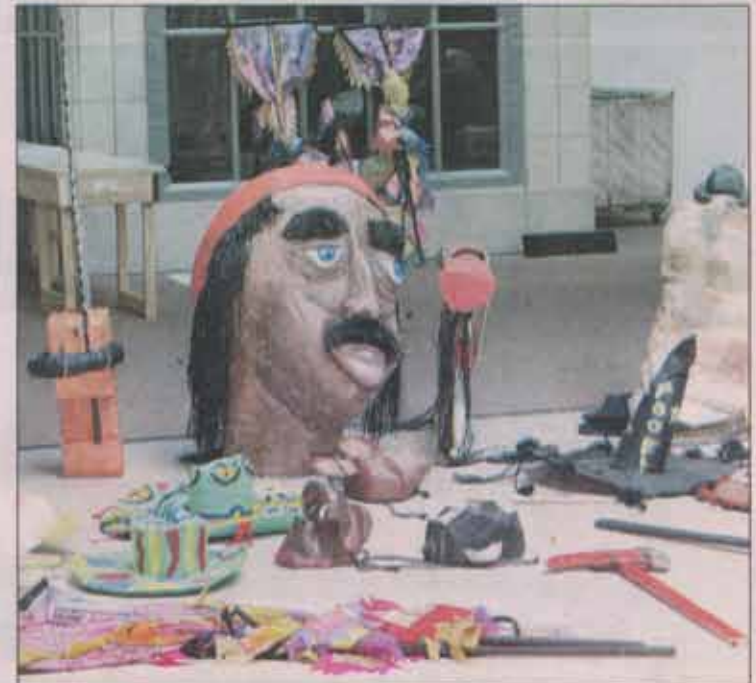
Arts Fund,

And also the Greater Milwaukee Foundation/Abert Fund and Mary Nohl Fund, Helen Bader Foundation, Max Fund, Gardner Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Realtors Youth Foundation, Merrill Lynch, Ritz Holman LLP, Mt. Mary College, Greater Milwaukee Committee, La Lune Collection, WE Energies, MPS Partnership for the Arts, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Shops at Grand Avenue, ACLU of Wisconsin, Elizabeth Brinn Foundation, Koessler Family Foundation, MPS Arts

Internships, Omaha Community Foundation, Jewish Community Foundation, and many other individuals and community organizations.

Barbara Leigh is both co-founder and artistic/producing director for the Milwaukee Public Theater and Max Samson is artistic director of the puppet/mask theater.

Podcasts, videos, photos and details of the Free Make-A-Parade Workshops (expanded through Sept. 2) and the volunteer needs required during Laborfest on September 5 are available at www.milwaukeepublictheatre.org



Barbara Leigh (left), the tireless creative leader of the Milwaukee Public Theatre, leaves her wheelchair to help prepare the People's Parade contingent of the Laborfest Labor Day parade (above, and story at left). Above right, her hands-on co-conspirator from the Milwaukee Mask and Puppet Theatre, Max Samson, demonstrates how to create animal figures of wire, paste and paper. Hundreds of volunteers have poured through the Grand Avenue doors at 161 W. Wisconsin Ave, taking over a vast space for workshops, training and building near the food court. What has been missing is union volunteers – at least before Aug. 9 when they were tirelessly engaged in electioneering. Now they have a chance to show their creative side.