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Last Words from the Operations Manager

Letters, we get letters



Well, not a lot of them. And some are in electronic form. But we do pay attention. In our business, as in all other aspects of life, ignorance is never bliss. And mistakes need to be corrected. So, when we heard from Nancy Lohr, who was Ellen Nelson's right-hand person back in the day, we sat up. The subject is *Rally* history, particularly how long the *Rally* has been in existence. We thought we had solved that issue years ago, but, like a bad penny, it keeps turning up. Once more, then, into the historical breach.

Here's some of the text of Nancy's email:

Good morning, Bill. It's Nancy Lohr here. Thanks for great job on the recent Newsletter, as always! Just wanted to make note that the # of years for the rally remains incorrect. The Rallies began the summer of 1991. Proof would be the plaque on the front of the building showing BP's donation of the building in 1990 and the clearing out of the building that began that summer. We were still operating out of Memorial Hall in September of 1990 when I started working for ArtSpace, so it's not possible that the Rallies started prior to 1991. The Rallies were the brainstorm of Ellen and Mike Huffman, and the first Rally, which yielded less than 100 people, was held in the alley between the buildings. . . . When you now say this is the 29th season, the historical inaccuracy becomes even greater, especially since ArtSpace wasn't even located at 65/67 Town Square at that time. Since I was a big part of the initiation, implementation, and growth of the event, maybe it's only important to me that historical facts remain accurate. . . .

Well, no, Nancy, it's important to us, too. And, although we're not going to reprint the recent *Newsletter* in which we misrepresented the *Rally* history, we will abide by Nancy's memory going forward. That will look like a mistake, too, when the 29th annual *Rally* occurs again, some

years hence, but that will simply tease future historians, keep them busy.

Like all history, ours at ArtSpace is an ongoing conversation, dependent in equal parts on the written/paper and electronic record and on the memories of those who lived through it. It's subject to ongoing revision. In the run-up to our 50th anniversary celebration in 2005, former Director Pat Schively did heroic work in resurrecting early historical information. And Mary Ann Hauenstein, our current unofficial historian, has been doing a first-rate job at maintaining and organizing the archives, so that, when we need information in the written form, it can be easily accessed.

The other part, though, makes for one of the items on our to-do list: to preserve the living memories of the people who were there when it all went down, preferably in a series of oral interviews. And we need to do it sooner rather than later.

Best.
Bill Sullivan