

EDITORIAL

There is something about moving, because it not only means changing environments physically, it also means changing environments psychologically and spiritually. I am now firmly esconced in a new abode, a new office, and a much smaller library. Necessity is the mother of invention, indeed, and now that I have fewer books and papers to deal with, it makes the load neater, more organized, and accessible. Chaos still reigns at times, when I have to remember where I put something, but for the most part, my life is more organized. No longer warehousing documentation of contemporary art for the past 25 years, I now have the responsibility for an Umbrella Archive, a Mail Art Archive, and an Artists' Book Archive. It still is vast, but my rhythms have changed, as has my focus. There is much work to be done this summer, but publications will be produced on desktop publishing, and exhibitions are being organized, but the focus is on creature comforts (for the first time in 12 years) and growing vegetables and flowers. This is a first for me, so welcome to the new millennium! I also have a **new fax number: (818)794-5445**. The phone remains the same. So fax away, and let the paper roll!

My heart is full as I write this letter to you all. First of all, the artist's book community has lost alot of talented people in the last year, and all I seem to be doing is writing obituaries in my head which hardly can communicate to anyone else. My dear friend and colleague, Steven Cortright, talented teacher for 26 years at UC Santa Barbara,, outstanding photographer and printmaker, a bookmaker extraordinaire who recycled books in an extraordinary way, and the catalyst for my traveling show of Cross~~to~~Currents: Books from the edge of the Pacific exhibition, as well as my position as Lecturer at the University of California, College of Creative Studies, Santa Barbara died in January of liver cancer. He was a friend, a colleague, a great but unsung bookmaker except to those of us who knew him as friend and colleague. Humble, modest, understated, Steven will be remembered by all of us each day, because of his inspiration. A double page from his bookwork, East~~to~~West, will be the cover of the catalog, which I am producing for the exhibition, thanks to some grants which Steven persisted in applying for until we succeeded. Steven really believed in cross-fertilization of cultures, media and people, and the exhibition has been dedicated to his memory. It will be traveling to California State University, Hayward and then go on to New Zealand and Australia in 1992-93.

My friend, Aart van Barneveld, in Amsterdam, who was there with Ulises CarriAn when they founded Other Books & So, who convinced the people at the rubber stamp shop in Amsterdam to open up Stempelplaats, a phenomenal gallery and sales room of artists' rubberstamps, and who then went on to found Time-Based Arts, which distributed video and audiotapes throughout Europe, died of AIDS recently.

Another friend of mine, an artist, has died after a long bout with cancer. Still another artist friend is enduring heavy chemotherapy to counteract a cancer. Friends are not saying anything right now, but other friends of mine are dying too

in the artist's book world. A plague is upon us, ladies and gentlemen, and it hurts so very much. A very dear man died last night in his sleep--a man who was important in the art world, who used his money to enjoy collecting fine things, who made sure those items were preserved well, who enjoyed being surrounded by beauty--and I am crying for us all, because so many talented, creative people are dying, and there seems to be nothing we can do. I am almost afraid to pick up the phone these days to hear bad news. Yet we are told we have "won" the war and parades and rejoicing, American flags and yellow ribbons are displayed even as we speak, yet countless wars in the U.S. are not even being addressed--the homeless keep multiplying, the sick seem not to get any help at all, since clinics are closing, and now we hear in California that hundreds, perhaps even thousands of part-time academic and non-academic staff are being fired from the California State University system. Libraries are closing, or cutting back hours. New York State's Art budget has been cut drastically. If this is not a crisis, then what is? If this is paradise, what must hell be like? The best parties in the 80s and 90s are funerals--at least, that is where you get larger art crowds than openings. In Los Angeles, it's the only way to see people--at openings or at memorial services. If you do not think it has inserted itself into works of art and bookworks, then think again. There are more books that have agendas--political and social--than ever before. These are trying times and those courageous artists that are making books have something to say and they are saying it! I am proud of them, proud of their courage and stamina and fortitude. And their craftsmanship is very high. So we must consider that hard times create an extra dose of creative fire that produces some of the best works of art in book form that I have experienced in a very long time. Perhaps I think of the 1970s when the feminist movement put forth issues that were entertained in bookworks, booklets and performances. We have returned to issues, but this time aesthetic considerations make the books far more serious works of art. We don't have the right just to do "beautiful" books. These are books with meaning, so perhaps in these trying times, we have something to show for the pain and the suffering--better books, more profound books, more reflective books.

Many of you have not renewed for 1991. It would be wonderful if you would send in your subscription money for 1991 as soon as you get this issue. A rubber stamped message is near your address label to indicate that this is the last issue you will receive. My printer has gone way up, the paper has gone up, and of course, postage has gone up and I did not go up in rates this year. But if any of you want to donate a little extra for extra postage, etc., it would help a great deal. I will indeed be increasing subscription rates for 1992 to cover postage and printing increases, and all I ask now is that you renew your subscriptions without any other communication from me so that I can save on another mailing. There are almost 120 of you who have not renewed. Please help me continue to publish. Without you, there is no reason to continue! You know who you are--and I am only trying to remind you. Money is tight--but I have not increased my rates this year. Keep this going, and you are the only ones who can do this!