ACT ONE

Interpreted by Jana Noyes

Master of Ceremonies Mike Goodnow

O' Laundromat

Written by Susanne Douthit

Directed by Kato McNickle

Wanna Marilyn Neale Coulda Elizabeth Lathrop Shooda Ann Keating

Metaphysical Jeopardy

Written by Steven Marks

Directed by Kato McNickle

Jack Michael Mann
Ernestine Becca Atkins
Gwendolen Catherine Harding
Dr. Carla Beverly Gaska
Scoreboard Dennis Leveille
Stagehand/Knight Roger McGuinness

Guilt

Written by Ronna Sue Keil, Kato McNickle

& SJ Williams

Directed by Ronna Sue Keil

The Judge SJ Williams
The Patient Elizabeth Lathrop
The Brother Howard Beatman
The Sister Judith Essex
The Mom Linda Jabren
The Dad Richard LaBoue
The Chorus Entire Cast Ensemble

Intermission - 15 Minutes
Refreshments are available in the lobby.

ACT TWO

Dysfunction Junction

Written by Kato McNickle, Ronna Sue Keil &

SJ Williams

Directed by Kato McNickle

Theme Sung by Richard LaBoue

Hen-House Hanna Elizabeth Lathrop

Nettie Joye Ford
Sylver Dolores Lewis
Cooter Richard LaBoue
The Stranger Ralph Piscitelli
The Narrator Michael Mann
Washtub Chris Millis

Washtub Chris Millis
Left Boot Ann Keating
Right Boot Dennis Leveille

Driven

Written by Ronna Sue Keil, SJ Williams

& Kato McNickle

Directed &

Performed by Ronna Sue Keil

The Psychotic Cereal Eaters

Written by Kato McNickle, Howard Beatman,

Cathy Bearce, Valerie Ford

& Ronna Sue Keil

Directed by Ronna Sue Keil

Gladys Marilyn Neale
Fred Howard Beatman

Lil' Missy Valerie Ford

The Thorazine Shuffle

Written by Ronna Sue Keil

Directed & Choreographed by Becca Atkins

Shufflin' Ensemble Howard Beatman, Beverly Gaska,

Roger McGuinness, Becca Atkins Erin Kudelchuk & Ronna Sue Keil

Production Crew

Production Manager SJ Williams

Stage Manager Deborah Cluff

Assistant Stage Manager Melanie Meredith

Stage Crew Marshall Robishaw, Cathy Bearce, David Bieri,

Valerie Ford, Linda Jabren, Jennifer Slattery

& Corrin Lineweber

Load-In Crew Ralph Piscitelli, Marcia DeForest, David Bieri,

Brian Ragsdale, Linda Jabren, Sheila Barbone, Sarah Garofalo, Lora Taber, Catherine Harding, Mike Mann, Rick Grucza, Marshall Robishaw, Dennis Leveille, Ronna Sue Keil, Deborah Cluff,

SJ Williams & Kato McNickle

Lighting Design Ronna Sue Keil

Lighting Lora Taber

Sound Louis Hubbard

Music Wendy Barrett, Andrea Vang & SJ Williams

Scenery/Props & Costumes Joye Ford, Marilyn Neale, Dawn Lamb-DeVeau,

Kato McNickle, Ronna Sue Keil, Dolores Lewis

& SJ Williams

Make-Up Jennifer Slattery

House Managers Stacey Lion Lee, Tom Lee, Sharon Killinski

& Heidi Boehm

House Crew & Concessions Stephanie McCann, Jenine Airey, Andrew Lee,

Adam Lee, Julie Nicolau & Pamela Morse

Advance Ticket Sales Carla J. Merrill

Photography Ronna Sue Keil

Program & Poster Graphics Kato McNickle, Ronna Sue Keil & SJ Williams

Ad Sales SJ Williams, Ronna Sue Keil, Becca Atkins,

Elizabeth Lathrop, Catherine Harding,

Deborah Cluff & Kato McNickle

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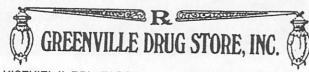
<u>Becca Atkins</u> is a special treasure that we are thrilled to have in our presence! She has a degree in dance, a ton of performance experience, a gentle personality and her own Macintosh Computer (we love Macintosh Computers)! We are proud to announce that Becca has joined the staff of Artreach as the Assistant Director of the SECOND STEP PLAYERS.

Wendy Barrett is terribly generous and tender hearted, not to mention she is a fantastically talented country guitar player. She has played with country bands in this area for nearly eleven years and now plays with our own SJ Williams in that rockin' country duo, Blue Blazes. Wendy's talents were in glorious evidence during the Coffeehouse in May. Tonight you can hear her guitar in all the theme and intro music.

<u>Cathy Bearce</u> has worked backstage, onstage, under the stage and above the stage. She was the General in last year's goofy one-act, "The Hand of God"; a Grey Person in our drama, "Recognizable Faces"; and yes, your memory serves correctly, she was Pooh in most of our many versions of Winnie-the-Pooh.

Howard Beatman has been with the troupe since day one. He is one of the most devoted, consistent and prolific members boasting credits in acting, directing, writing, dancing, sound technology, board membership and... button sales. He has been working as a consultant to the CT Department of Mental Health and will take on the fulltime job of Administrative Assistant at Artreach in the fall. And yes, we must not forget, he was featured in a photograph on page 26 of the May issue of LIFE magazine.

Deborah Cluff ranks right up there as one of the hardest working volunteers we have ever had. We love having her around. The hours she has logged are staggering...and no, she was not staggering while logging those hours! She has lugged our equipment all over New England with us and one time she jumped in at the last minute as a dancer in the "Thorazine Shuffle". But the best, most unforgettable Deb Cluff moments found her dressed in pink tights and a little striped shirt and floppy, furry ears portraying the neurotic, endearing and enduring "Piglet". Tonight, she takes over the daunting job of Stage Manager.



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Olde Mystic Village Mystic, CT 06355 (203) 536-6185 Judith Essex knows more about the private lives of American celebrities than most reporters for People Magazine! It's unbelievable how well she knows these people. She knows Whoopie Goldberg's BIRTHDAY! I mean really! On a less sensational note, you will be pleasantly surprised to see Judith perform tonight. It's clear that she attracts to celebrities because she has some definite star qualities of her own.

Joye Ford is one of the strongest supporters this or any agency has ever had. Yes, she does get to do some fun, wild comedy with us, but she also sells tickets, sews costumes, preaches our praises to EVERYONE she meets and devotes an entire wall of her house to the most complete collection of SECOND STEP PLAYERS memorabilia in existence today! She is a talented, committed and sweet woman.

<u>Valerie Ford</u> first performed with us when we were working with Dan Potter and the Mystic Paper Beasts. Dan had this big horse costume that Howard Beatman and (who was it, Ralph Piscitelli?) had to wear on their backs. Atop the whole shebang was a young and courageous Valerie Ford dressed in a tutu and leotard while holding the reigns and waving at the crowd. She has been with us steadily ever since, mastering with great aplomb the art of acting.

Beverly Gaska is an absolute treat to behold. I am not ashamed to admit that we believe that Bev has the best comic timing of anyone to ever work with the PLAYERS. Almost eight years ago she was one of the founding members of the troupe. She took a hiatus for a couple of years and boom, this year she jumped back in both performing tonight and singing in the coffeehouse!

Mike Goodnow is a new discovery of the troupe's and he is a jewel. He is our only current Head Banger (that's slang for some one who likes really loud, fast, thrashing music) and we are pleased to finally have one to add to our collection of extraordinary people. Mike is only biding his time as one of the Masters of Ceremonies tonight. What he really wants to do with the troupe is put on some black and white face make-up, skin tight leopard pants and thrash around onstage while lip-syncing to an Ozzie Ozborn record. We'll be able to accommodate him.... just not till we do the next coffeehouse in April. You don't want to miss it!

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What an amazing year we have had! Our current U.S. Department of Education Seed Grant will end in October and we have spent a great deal of time this year lobbying the Connecticut Department of Mental Health to take over funding for the SECOND STEP PLAYERS. We have learned a ton about the workings of state government, the confusing nature of politics and the fickle ways of business, but by the end of the process the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health sure enough did agree to support a professional comedy troupe comprised of ex-psychiatric patients! We are pleased and proud to work with easily the most progressive state system that we have encountered in our travels.

On Monday June 7th, a week after we got word that the State will fund the SECOND STEP PLAYERS, we got word from the Federal Department of Education that we have received three years of funding for a completely new program. It is the second demonstration project that we have been awarded by the Department of Education and we are fantasmagorically flattered. It is officially called "Special Projects and Demonstrations for Providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Individuals with Severe Handicaps.

We call it WORK HARD/PLAY HARD and it is a "Community based consumer-driven recreational training program for adults with psychiatric disabilities who work a minimum of 15 hours a week." We will hire a Director, two Driver/Coaches, a part-time Bookkeeper and an Administrative Assistant.

You know, lots of companies have employee recreation programs. They know that an employee who has a vivid recreational life has more job satisfaction and longevity. Unfortunately, most expsychiatric patients are not going to be given a job at a company with a gym or a softball league or free tickets to ball games. So we will attempt to prove in a scientific manner (I know it's hard to imagine us doing anything in a scientific manner!) that it is worth it for our society to invest in recreation to aid these courageous heros who are fighting against some massive odds to get off public assistance.

We are fabulously excited to be expanding into general recreation. We think it will be fun. That <u>is</u>, after all, the point.



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Catherine Harding has been gracing our stage for a few years now. She is our in-house "Bird Woman" (I'll let her explain that), our resident "New Age-nic" and our favorite vegetarian. She is also becoming quite a consummate performer, working in everything from "Metaphysical Jeopardy" to portraying a Knight in a "Medieval Tale" we performed at the Annual Medieval Feast hosted by the Norwich Unitarian Church.

The House Managers and Crew is that group of officious people you met when you first entered the theatre tonight. The managers keep all the intricacies of tickets sales and collection, concessions, house cleanliness and order and button and t-shirt sales working smoothly and it's no small task. Thanks to Sharon Kitlinski, Heidi Boehm, Stacey Lion Lee and Tom Lee for handling this year's management tasks. By the way, the managers also get to boss around the members of their crew who are Stephanie McCann, Jenine Airey, Andrew Lee, Adam Lee, Julie Nicolay and Pamela Morse. Thanks to these generous people who were willing to be bossed around and yes, sometimes even abused (we've got it documented!) by their friends and family members.

<u>Louis Hubbard</u> came to our stage through a circuitous route. He started out as a Disc Jockey Trainee with SJ Williams on WCNI. As she trained him to be a disc jockey, she realized what a wiz he is with sound equipment and technology. She bribed him to join the troupe by letting him take over her radio show for a couple of weeks and WHAM, he was our new sound man. He really is a wiz... just listen.

<u>Linda Jabren</u> has spent the last two seasons working backstage with the PLAYERS, but we have always known that her heart belonged in the spotlight. We have arranged for her to have a teeny tiny bit of that glorious light tonight. She's very, very funny and we're hoping that next year she'll ask for a bigger piece.

Ann Keating met Kato McNickle in an acting class at Mohegan College years ago when Mohegan College was still Mohegan College. We got into a casting bind rather late in the rehearsal process and Ann jumped in to save our skins. She is a consummate professional and we hope we can find a way to keep her coming back.

Ronna Sue Keil is the founder of the Second Step Players and Executive Director of Artreach. She wears many hats within the



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Fine Woolen Yarn spun in the New England Tradition troupe; in fact, she can do and has done just about anything that needs to be done in connection with any of our productions. But what is most wonderful about her is her seemingly inexhaustible supply of creative vision. She has ideas like you wouldn't believe, at a rate that would alarm even the most committed workaholic. She has as many ideas stored away for Artreach's future as Prince has songs for future albums; as Trump has money; as a bureaucracy has sly, evasive tricks up its sleeves........ She wears us out, but keeps us working and we wouldn't have it any other way.

Erin Kudelchuk is another new discovery this year. She joined up to work behind the scenes but it didn't take long before we lured her out into the spotlight. She's flexible, agreeable, talented and she shows up on time! What more could we ask? We just hope she continues with us after the O'Neill.

<u>Richard Laboue</u> is such a talented guy. We first met him earlier in the year when he sang at the Coffeehouse. He did a very popular and very DEEP version of "King of the Road". His voice sounds just like Roger Miller's. Really. But, don't take my word for it. Listen for that golden larynx during the opening of Dysfunction Junction.

Elizabeth Lathrop holds a fulltime job at Burlington Coat Factory and has to jiggle, juggle and exhaust her schedule to get to rehearsals and performances. We would like to take a moment and offer a round of applause for this and all the employers Elizabeth has had over the five years of her membership, because this troupe and this agency would not be the same without her. You may remember Elizabeth as the lead character in the children's tale "Why the Partridge Drums" and of course, as that unforgettable little ROO in "Winnie the Pooh".

<u>Dennis Leveille</u> has gone from "stage hand" to "stage ham" in his few short years with us. Last year he made his debut as a "Thug" in our one act play, "The Hand of God" and this year he returns as a living score board in "Metaphysical Jeopardy" and delivers an hysterical portrayal of a boot polishing bumpkin in "Dysfunction Junction".

<u>Dolores Lewis</u> is a founding member of the troupe. She has been with us lo' these many years and it was not until this July that she ever let us see her tap dance. What a high stepper! Dolores is a corner stone of the ensemble, holding a seat on the Ar-

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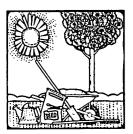
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WHILE TESTIFYING IN COSTUME before the legislative committee. The costume and theatrics served to illuminate his pleas for continued funding for programs that serve our fellow ex-psychiatric patients. As luck would have it, there was a photographer for the Hartford Courant present to snap a stunning shot of the "be-Pillared" Howard amidst the legislative desks.

Lee Ann Soowal, a Healthwise reporter for Channel 3 in Hartford did a long and thorough segment on the troupe. She filmed a performance at Connecticut College and really did a thoughtful and entertaining piece.

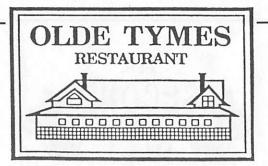
Early in May Howard was diligently doing his job at the New London Public Library when he received a phone call from a friend. "Howard, did you know your picture is in LIFE Magazine?" To which Howard smartly replied, "Dad, is that you? This is one of your jokes, isn't it?" The caller finally convinced him to go and look for himself and sure enough, right there on page 26 of the May issue the Second Step Players received their first national press. The beautiful color photo from the Hartford Courant was submitted to the magazine and the rest is history.

The last major goal that we hope we have begun to achieve this year is creating a way that we can begin many satellite troupes in other states. We have always believed that arranging for ex-psychiatric patients to see us and hear our message is only the first step. Because of the limitations of time and distance, only a very few people can taste the thrill of being onstage in a show like you will see tonight.

We have written yet another grant to the Federal Department of Education to create the "National Mental Health Performers Network." We will designate eight new or fledgling troupes in the eight Northeast states and spend the three years of the grant period teaching, coaxing, supporting and building them into troupes modeled after the SECOND STEP PLAYERS model. We will write grants for them while we teach them to write grants. We will write scripts for them while we teach them to write scripts. And all of this will happen while the two and one half full-time staff persons drive lots and lots of miles and stay in lots of cheap hotels.

As I say, we have only written and not yet received this grant, but we have reason to believe that we have an excellent advantage in this competition. So, please just take a second to close your eyes and imagine the difference we could make if we could operate on this kind of level.

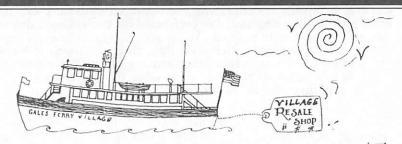
As always, we thank you for being the base from which we fly; the community to which we return; the people, places and organizations that give us the courage to try and to grow.



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treach Board of Directors (actually, it's only a folding chair) and touring with us from Maine to Omaha.

Load-In Crew is a strenuous job, but one that is fun and exciting. On Saturday the fourth of September, we met in Norwich to load car, vans and rickshaws with all the props, curtains, furniture, scenery and electrical equipment. We hauled it all here to the barn and unloaded and assembled the set you see tonight. We hung thirty lighting instruments and ran tons of video cable to support two cameras and two monitors backstage and one monitor in the light booth. We hung all the curtains and set and nailed the flats. We moved the platforms, set the seats and swept and cleaned the whole building! So, you can see that anyone who agreed to join us on this exhausting day qualifies as a SECOND STEP PLAYERS hero! Some of the folks to join that team were: Ralph Piscitelli, David Bieri, Marcia DeForest, Dennis LeVeille, Roger McGuinness, Linda Jabren, Lora Taber, Sheila Barbone, Sara Garofalo, Catherine Harding, Michael Mann, Rick Grucza, Brian Ragsdale, Marshall Robishaw and probably a bunch of other people who we had not guilt-tripped into joining at the time of this printing.

<u>Michael Mann</u> has been with us for a few years now and he gets better and better. Of course, he does seem to be typecast into the role of some rather obnoxious characters, but we want you to know that they are not AT ALL a reflection of his personality. Michael is best described as playful. He has a light countenance about him that puts everyone at ease. We're glad he's with us.

Roger McGuinness is not nearly as tough as he seems. Actually, he's a teddy bear in grizzly bear's clothing. He has been touring with us for a few years and he is one of the most committed people (no pun intended) we have the pleasure to work with. He's funny, musical and can sure dance (check him out in the "Thorazine Shuffle"), but his most important feature is the fact that he ROLLERBLADES (I love rollerbladers)!

<u>Kato McNickle</u> is a true Renaissance Woman. She plays folk guitar, writes beautiful folk music, sings like songbird, is a caricature artist, graphic designer of t-shirts and posters for many area non-profit events, script writer, director, actress, AND collector of little plastic action hero figurines...AND we are lucky enough to have her on our staff. Perfect.



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The Second Step Players is a professional performing troupe comprised of performers and production personnel who have experienced or been labeled with mental illnesses. The troupe was founded in November of 1985 with its premier performance at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre in Waterford, Connecticut. "Psychos -R- Us" marks our eight year anniversary at the beautiful and prestigious O'Neill.

The 1992/93 season has been packed to the brim. We achieved two longstanding dreams by mounting our first national tour and receiving our first national press coverage. In March we packed seven people, luggage, props, sound equipment and lots of buttons into a cargo van and a conversion camper van and ventured forth to spread our word beyond New England. We performed for two colleges, one rehab. center and a state hospital. We drove 3,200 miles in eight days, all the way out to Omaha, Nebraska, through Pennsylvania to Maryland and back to Pennsylvania before arriving home. We stayed in a ton a cheap hotels (except for the night when the University of Pittsburgh put us up in the downtown Holiday Inn).

This tour was also the first time that we conducted a real fundraising campaign. Some of you may remember receiving an invitation to support our tour in the mail. We are proud to report what we already knew. We are blessed with a strong group of public supporters who understand the importance of our message and the power of the unique way we package it. Thank you, thank you to everyone who donated.

Let's see, in the publicity category there was a fair amount of excitement this year. February 10th found a few members of the troupe gracing the halls of the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building during the appropriations hearings. It was touch and go for awhile when Ronna had to talk the capital guards into letting her enter the building with the big cardboard "Pillar of the Community" headdress. It is basically a hat that Howard Beatman wears on his head to make him look like there is a pillar growing out of his head. Once the guards cautiously agreed, Howard gave a rousing performance



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Melanie Meredith has been a devoted audience member for the last four or five years and this year, finally, we have gotten her out of the bleachers and into our theatrical fold. She begins her career as the Assistant Stage Manager, an uncomfortable job (you have to wear those darn headsets). Don't tell Melanie I said so, but I personally have plans to see her acting onstage with us. Maybe the role of a wicked schoolteacher or maybe something in an Elvis costume... Can't you see it?

Carla J. Merrill has taken care of advance ticket sales for many years now. She has also been a cornerstone of the troupe and agency. For months she worked as a volunteer office assistant and continued to work excellently for us when we had enough money to hire her part-time. And listen, we never would have let her go if it wasn't for the fact that she gave birth to gorgeous little Victoria this Spring. Even with motherhood as her main occupation these days, Carla remains an invaluable member of the troupe.

Chris Milles started performing first with the FREE AT LAST PLAYERS, a mental health theatre in Middletown that was started with inspiration from the SECOND STEP PLAYERS. When she moved down to our area, we worked and worked to get her onto our stage and we're glad we did. She has the brightest smile, loudest laugh and strongest handshake of anyone in the troupe.

Marilyn Neale has toured with us for the past four or five years and she just keeps getting better and better! Unfortunately, she seems to have become typecast in the role of MOM. Yes, year after year, show after show, Marilyn seems to get the role of MOM and this year is no different. It's not really our fault though. The lady just plays a darn good MOM. You check her out tonight and tell me if I wrong...if I'm lying, I'm dying!

Jana Noyes has truly brought this troupe into the 21st century by waking us up to the necessity and beauty of having our material interpreted for the hearing impaired. She is gorgeous to watch, entertaining and, if we can get better at advertising to the deaf community, she will open our message up to a whole new part of our society. So sit back and enjoy the show and let your eyes wander away from the action to watch Jana weave her magic and speak to you on levels you didn't realize existed.

Ralph Piscitelli brings to the troupe what small dignity it can

boast. He is the Treasurer of the Board of Directors and an extremely versatile performer. Tonight you will see him doing a little acting, but during his time with us he has sung with the band, played guitar with the band, acted as Master of Ceremonies and worn a great big grey furry jumpsuit with a buttoned on tail as the ever so undignified... EEYORE.

Marshall Robishaw is our Knight in Shining Armor. What would we ever do without him? He knows where everything goes. He knows how to put everything together. If you lose something, he knows where you lost it. If you want something, he knows where to get it. He will gladly rise at six a.m. and return home at two a.m. in order to tour with us. He is the perfect PLAYER, everyone agrees. We just couldn't be happier to know him and if asked, he'd say he just couldn't be happier with us. Perfect...

Lora Taber is always so good at calming our nerves. She is basically in charge of the electricity pulsing through the theatre tonight. No, I don't mean the artistic electricity in the air, I mean the lights! She is a trained electrician and an experienced theatrical lighting designer and she works for us! Aren't we lucky?!

SI Williams plays bass for an area country band known as Blue Blazes. She conducts a wild three hour radio show every Friday morning on WCNI Radio and is the brains and brawn and inspiration behind so much of what you will see tonight that I cannot even begin to list it. Suffice it to say that without her, the troupe, the agency and the dream would not exist.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Artreach, Inc. believes that creativity in all its forms is a profoundly empowering and consequently healing endeavor. We support and empower performers, artists, musicians and writers who have experienced psychiatric, physical and developmental disabilities. As a results-oriented organization, Artreach's goals are to:

- ** Empower people who have experienced disabilities to create a culture of their own using role models that come from their own ranks; to celebrate their strengths and encourage them in their struggles by creating art forms that speak to their experiences and values;
- ** Educate the general public and future generations, through the use of cultural activities, about the value of people regardless of how they are labeled or disabled;
- ** Produce and tour high-quality published work, artistic exhibitions, musical recordings and performances, and theatrical events, primarily using artistic and production personnel who have experienced disabilities;
- ** Provide high-quality training to artists and production personnel who have experienced disabilities;
- ** And provide training to other professionals in the technology involved in the production of artistic events using artistic and production personnel who have experienced disabilities.

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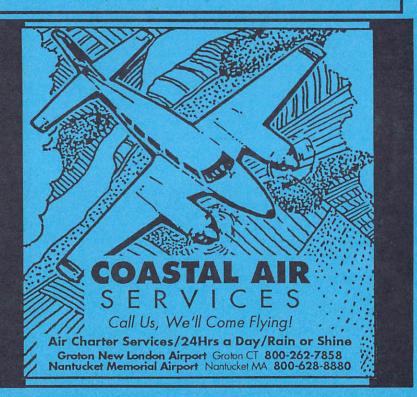
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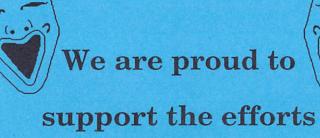


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