

ABLE

ABLE (The Arts and Business Learning Experiences, Incorporated) is a non-profit, tax exempt California Corporation formed to train and employ central city youths—particularly those who are members of disadvantaged minorities—in Still Photography, Motion Picture Photography, and Television.

ABLE's principal source of financial support is foundation grants, supplemented by substantial gifts and contracts for production. ABLE's trainees are selected through vocational counselling centers and department of employment on the basis of ability, interest, and financial need.

ABLE's approach is to provide paid on-the-job training opportunity for its students by contracting with business, government, and education to provide students with the much needed audio-visual materials which they require. ABLE's students, or associates, work side by side with the professional staff members in completing these production assignments. ABLE's staff and resident creative writers, directors and producers include some of the most experienced people.

The ultimate objective of ABLE is to provide poor, disadvantaged, and minority youths an access route into meaningful employment in the production end of the media arts, an employment market from which they have been systematically barred. The first and most obvious benefit of this approach is to provide a new source of income for capable youths from poor and minority ghettos, and thus to expand available economic opportunities as part of the continuing national effort to enable minorities to come fully into the mainstream of American life. The second value of the ABLE approach is to provide a vehicle for the self-expression of the Black and Brown communities, and hence reduce the sense of ethnic alienation which continues to plague the country. Expanded economic opportunities for the disadvantaged, but a valuable source of constructive inter-cultural communication and hence a chance to make important contributions in the reduction of national strife.

ABLE is, at its management level, basically a Black enterprise. Its Board of Directors is interracial. The Board seeks to marshal support from all quarters in the wider San Francisco community, but explicitly recognizes that the organization's central objective requires that its staff, driving force and overall program direction derive from the minority community.



Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice: the struggle for production, the class struggle, and the scientific experiment.

— Chairman Mao Tse-Tung

Video Chinatown

Video Chinatown is a coalition of progressive filmmakers, video artists, community people in the Asian communities within San Francisco. Since the middle of July, 1972, we have been doing a closed-circuit half-inch community television show and giving a video workshop in our basement in the heart of Chinatown. Our shows are in Chinese, free of charge, and are always prepared with guidance from local people living in the community. To date we have scrounged together a network of multiple monitors performing in a place with a viewing capacity of approximately 200 people. We have been packing them in every showing; it warms the heart: and that's what Video Chinatown is: something from the heart. The variety of programs we offer to Chinatown has been and will be:

Educational – Chinese and English Lesson Series, China Cultural and Historical Studies, video coverage of community related meetings and events, Chinatown community news and international information.

Social, Legal, and Health – Community Forum and Discussion, Living in Chinatown Series, information on legal aids and housing issues, review of medical processes and availability, documentation on various organizations and social services.

Cultural and Entertainment – Production of Chinese drama, concerts, celebrations, homemovies, documentary study of Chinese philosophy and practices, dubbing UHF shows into Chinese, exchange of tapes from outside the immediate community.

At the same time, we are putting together a library of professional quality tapes exploring the Asian experiences in the United States. Thorough treatments of the history, the culture, the people, the problems; the joys, will be made available to facilities outside of Chinatown. We believe our struggle is your struggle, and your struggles are our struggles.

Address: contact Danny Chung Yen Kwan at Video Chinatown, 850 Kearny Street, San Francisco, 94108, (415) 421.1341.



Dan Kwan with Video Chinatown.

HOMESKIN

by Peter Berg

HOMESKIN set out in a van a few years ago to visit land-based groups in North America and video tape "letters of introduction" to carry along from one group to the next. We were looking for planetarians, Earth-rooted people who saw the planet as a whole without reference to political or cultural boundaries. We wanted to make the video tool available to them for whatever purpose they might imagine, and we hoped the messages they made would deepen common consciousness between groups.

Superculture media mainly links the consciousness of cities to other cities. Traditionally NYC pumps out broadcasting and publishing, LA spews film. Some other cities answer back with chunks of TV, a few books, a radio blast, and a magazine or two; but the distribution patterns of media are something like those maps of airline routes between no more than thirty major cities. Radial lines with service in both directions and very few stops in between.

People outside of cities are subjected to information and images, including that about themselves, after it has been first processed by city media consciousness.

A circuit of video mail carried across the continent could produce the most direct connection between people living on the land, even it were much slower than broadcast media, simply because it was made by the people themselves.

HOMESKIN barely touched the whole web in its circuit west to east and back again. There are potential stops in hundreds of places we never got to and the number of new settlers, co-operative villages, and communeers is growing. It seems natural that there should be an increasing number of Video Pony Express Riders filling in the continental web. For anyone about to hit those long dirt roads and climb mountains in low-low gear, we offer the following as a context for riding the new land-circuit.

Be willing to join in with the continual work of the place you're visiting. Country scenes are often over-exposed to city recuperatees who are simply dead weight until they recover. Making an announcement of your goodwill is probably not enough to cover the extra energy that will go to cover your stay.

Try to bring as much non-tape information about groups or whatever you show as possible. Addresses, directions, sharable tools and skills, wild herbs that are available, crop and seed information, etc.

Encourage people to make their own tape by letting them use the equipment or tape things they would like to record. Some of our best stuff was made by people who had just learned to use a VTR. You can always edit some of the tiresome stuff later ("Is the microphone on now?" . . . "Does the red light mean we're shooting?") It's an obvious fact that people will be more comfortable having someone they already know on the other end of the camera at least part of the time you're helping to record their letter.

We propose a Planetarian Video Mail Service to provide information about potential routes and circuit-riders.

Please write: HOMESKIN, P.O. Box 31251, San Francisco, California 94131

Note: Space limitation prohibits the publication of this piece in its entirety — write HOMESKIN for copies of the complete paper. — Editor