

Community, Kids, Celebrations, & Resistance at the A.C.R.C.

Huevo Bonobo

2003

It's Friday night, and a hundred sweaty freaks are dancing their asses off to the sounds of a Cyndi Lauper cover band. Courtney is standing on a stool by the front collecting money, but no one's ever turned away for lack of funds around here. The cash she collects will go to benefit the local women & transgendered health collective. Paintings from the last art opening are still hanging on the walls, and out front dozens of beautiful, grungy people are smoking cigarettes and networking like mad.

Welcome to another night at the Asheville Community Resource Center.

The ACRC collective formed in the spring of 2000 as a coalition of local social justice organizations and individual activists. It's now harbored within a large space in the heart of downtown Asheville, North Carolina. Asheville has long been a hotbed of alternative and progressive thought (even our last mayor was a former anti-nuke activist), and over the last decade the scene here has only become more vital and more engaged. Aging hippies bump elbows in the downtown parks with peace punks and street performers, as well as preachers threatening hellfire for everyone around them (we are, after all, the hometown of the aging Billy Graham).

The ACRC harbors a diverse and exhilarating range of groups and activities. The nationally-known weekly radical newspaper *Asheville Global Report* publishes from an office in the back, next door to Asheville Prison Books, which distributes reading material for free to prisoners all over the country.

Another office holds the Women's/Transgendered Health Project, a DIY health collective which holds periodic unclinics.

At the hub of these offices is the ACRC's Reading Room, the daily center of activity, where dozens of people of all ages and mindsets gather to network, debate, check email, and read the sprawling collection of books, zines, and glossies. Next door is the Re-Cyclery Bike Collective, which empowers people to build and maintain their own bikes.

All these permanent workshops and offices are dwarfed by the main room of the building: a huge, echoing hall that serves as a combination art gallery, performance space, and home for the many groups and workshops which come and go at intervals. There's a kid-care collective running around some mornings, and the Free School holds classes out here in everything from self-defense to software for activists to urban foraging.

And the shows—ah, the shows! Just in the last month or so the ACRC has hosted (a small sampling) the Crime-thInc. Barnstorming Tour, the Autonomadic Bookmobile, Nommy Lamm ("Badass Fatass Jew Dyke Amputee"), small touring puppet shows and plays, and innumerable benefits.

In short, the ACRC has succeeded wildly in becoming a stable, successful hub of progressive and radical activity, art, and playful, spontaneous interaction and networking between a diverse range of people identifying with different scenes and subcultures, some who previously viewed each other with suspicion or judgment. In addition, the collective has managed to build positive relationships with the broader surrounding community, presenting itself as a safe haven for street kids and a hub of volunteerism.

Coming through Asheville? The ACRC is at 63 Lexington Avenue (just look for the giant mural on the door) and can be reached at 828-252-8999.

fifth Estate

Huevo Bonobo
Community, Kids, Celebrations, & Resistance at the A.C.R.C.
2003

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/362-fall-2003/community-kids-celebrations-resistance-at-the-a-c>
Fifth Estate #362, Fall, 2003

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net