DIGGERS NEW GAME

The Frame

If the fuzz read this story they may know what was happening. It all depends on one's frame of reference.

All last weekend the Diggers passed out 1,500 leaflets in the Haight-Ashbury and 500 of them on Telly, announcing the "Full Moon Public Celebration of Halloween" on Monday night at the street intersection that gives that hip district its name.

For several weeks now the Diggers have been feeding all hungry comers on their impromptu picnic ground in the Panhandle. The backdrop for their daily sharing of the Bread of the Spirit and Fruit of the Soul has been a 25-foot high yellow wooden frame, dubbed "The Frame of Reference," through which participants would pass as part of the general festivity and communality of things.

It was this imposing object that 20 of the Diggers carried up the hill from the park at about 5:30 Monday and placed on the southwest corner of the intersection soon to be blessed by the announced celebration.

Two large puppets appeared, each about 8 feet high and operated by two men. One puppet bore an interesting resemblance to Robert Scheer and the other to Congressman Cohelan. There followed an ad lib puppet play called, "Any Fool on the Street," dealing with the "Frame of Reference," like which side was which, which "inside," which "outside," and so on.

The Diggers passed out about 75 smaller Frames on Reference, made of yellow-painted lath about

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6 inches square that hung from a neck strap, through which the wearer could look at the various happenings of the scene as they happened, putting them in his own frame of reference.

Next came the game of "Intersection," where everyone tried to make as many polygons as they could by crossing the intersection in different directions. Some people got off passing busses and left their cars to view the game and join in, while others looked through different people's Frames of Reference at the unfolding scene.

By 6:00 there were about 600 people distributed around the intersections, lots of Berkeleyans among them. There were kids with jack-o'-lanterns, Halloween costumes and trick-or-treat bags. A lot of people walked in and out of the big Frame of Reference and all around it.

Suddenly five police cars and a paddy wagon sirened their way into the intersection, blocking it completely, and the fuzz started re-directing traffic. One hippy looked at the massed police vehicles and remarked, 'It kinda creates a road-block, doesn't it?"

Maybe it was a Halloween hex or a ghostie-goblin spell, but at that point the police started talking to the puppets and the puppets answered them! The fuzz told the puppets that they were creating a public nuisance by walking in and out of the Frame of Reference, and that if they continued they would be arrested.

Cop: "We warn you that if you don't remove yourselves from the area you'll be arrested for blocking a public thoroughfare."

Puppet: "Who is the public?"

Cop: "I couldn't care less; I'll take you in. Now get a move on."

Puppet: "I declare myself public -- I am a public. The streets are public -- the streets are free."

The puppets then walked on, whereupon the cops grabbed them, and the puppeteers under them and arrested them. They threw the puppets and five of the Diggers in the paddy wagon. One Digger reported that there were two signs in the wagon saying, "VOTE FOR REAGAN!"

About 200 people outside the wagon started booing, then chanted, "FRAME -- UP, FRAME -- UP!" The Diggers inside responded with "PUB -- LIC, PUB -- LIC!" Some of the chanters on the outside looked through their frame mandalas and switched to "CHECK YOUR FRAMES OF REFERENCE!"

Another man was arrested for objecting to the first arrests, saying, "These are our streets."

The crowd of about 600 was ordered to move on, but everyone started the "Intersection" game again, and a Digger set up a portable phonograph and played records and people started dancing. After 20 minutes or so, the fuzz drifted off.

The arrested Diggers were later released on their own recognizance. BARB has learned that the ACLU or attorney Ruth Jacobs is to handle the case, which has been continued to Nov. 9 at 10 p.m.

While in their jail cells the Diggers sang "Avanti Popuii" (an Italian Communist rallying song) and "Marat, We're Poor" from "Marat/Sade," ending with "We Want Revolution Now!"

Despite all of the above events, the Diggers distributed food to about 55 people on schedule Monday. (on the weekends they feed up to 200). Last Thursday and Friday they brought food across the Bay to the freedom schools during the boycott in Oakland. Friday they brought their bounty here for the Oakland high school students that were on campus. The word is that Mark Comfort digs the Diggers.

If anyone wants to delve the Diggers and pick up on their style, they can find out how it's done any afternoon at 4:00 at the Panhandle (near Masonic) of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

This week the Diggers are renovating a garage in the Haight, where they will open a 24-hour Frame of Reference exchange, which will provide at no charge all kinds of necessities of life to those who need them. The only expense they forsee is the gas for the transportation of goods.

Another project underway is the developing of sewing circles and baby-sitting circles.

At this time the Diggers are trying to contact the Minutemen and challenge them to a flag-football game in the Panhandle.

The Diggers always let people know what they are doing by distributing leaflets announcing their plans in poetry and prose, so watch for the Digger Papers.

