

students take photographs at school events, collect poetry or other writings from students, and design and produce this chronicle of the year's events. Each student receives a copy at the end of the year, and on that day a few minutes are set aside at the beginning of each lesson so that students can autograph each other's yearbooks. This is especially important for seniors, who will graduate from the school; after a year or two, most will never see their classmates again.

Probably most Americans who have played a musical instrument, been in a play, or sung in a choir started in elementary or junior high school. Those

of some ability may take private, after-school lessons, and the very exceptional, who live in the largest cities such as New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, may attend a specialized high school for the arts.



A performing arts class in a school

An American snapshot



Creativity, craziness, and a lot of courage are required for persons who enter the 40-mile Kinetic Sculpture Race in California.

Imagine building a wild, crazy sculpture. Then imagine making it float. Then imagine racing it in a three-day-long race in California. That's what dozens of people do every year starting on Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) in the Arcata to Ferndale World Championship Kinetic Sculpture Race.

The race course covers about 40 miles of small-town streets, back roads, sand dunes, beach, and even part of the shoreline ocean. All the race vehicles, made out of

spare parts and sculptures by the racer, must move powered by 'people power' (not engines), and, among other rules, must have a toy (usually a teddy bear) on board.

The first race was held in 1968 and was the brain-child of local artist Hobart Brown. He wanted to start a community-wide event that promoted fun, required creative thinking, and focused attention on the local arts community. Brown describes the race as "Adults having fun so kids will want to grow older." The fact that many people enter the race year after year (even if their vehicle falls apart when the race starts) shows that this hobby has a lot of appeal for crazy, creative Americans. Kinetic sculpture races and festivals to draw attention to the arts and creativity are held annually in California as well as in Washington state, Oregon, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. Races have also been held in Poland and Australia.