

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY™

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A YEAR TO REMEMBER

For neighborhood arts people -- but not only for neighborhood arts people -- 1981 has been a year and a half.

Ronald Reagan took office only a year ago with the promise to "turn the economy around" by a combination of bite-the-bullet spending cuts and reductions in federal taxes. Reagan expected the Fiscal Year 1982 budget to be signed, sealed and delivered by the Fourth of July; but as this article is being written during the last week in December, the current year budget isn't done yet (see "D.C. Update," this issue).

Reagan promised to reduce federal spending, but he's increased it. "Spending cuts" turned out to be spending shifts, with funds from social programs of all kinds going to the military. Many thousands of children are being pushed off eligibility rolls for school lunch programs so the B-1 bomber and MX missile programs can forge ahead at full speed.

The biggest blow against neighborhood arts support was the elimination of public service jobs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). CETA, by providing salaries for neighborhood artists, had swelled the budgets of many groups... temporarily. CETA has been seen as a boon to neighborhood arts: where groups could struggle to obtain only \$10,000 or \$15,000 grants from foundations and art agencies, some neighborhood arts programs had close to a million dollars in CETA support for their large, labor-intensive programs.

Looking back it's easy to say that it was imprudent for groups to rely on so much support from a temporary source like CETA; but CETA was there and there wasn't much else. Now, the critical list of groups unable to bounce back from the sudden loss of half or two-thirds of their staff members -- through CETA or unforeseen cuts in other federal grants -- is growing.

Since the federal budget isn't finished yet, it's hard to say exactly how neighborhood arts funding will look in 1982; but the general outlines are clear. As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities

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NEW NAME & NUMBER

At its last meeting NAPNOC's board decided to change the name of this newsletter from NAPNOC notes to Cultural Democracy. The suggestion (accompanied by the offer to register the new name) came from member Hamish Sandison, who confessed "I myself feel a bit of a fool asking people if they read NAPNOC notes..." So in the interests of keeping a straight face, from now on you'll be reading Cultural Democracy.

NAPNOC has a new telephone number; our mailing address remains the same. Call 301/323-5006.

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Cultural Democracy is co-edited by Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard.

have been cut relatively little this year. NEA lost almost 10% as compared to last year. But that doesn't translate into a simple 10% cut for grantees; the various NEA programs and the National Council on the Arts have studied their own priorities and the proclivities of the Reagan administration, and things are going to change. Expansion Arts, the NEA program that gives most support to neighborhood arts groups, will give about half as many grants as it did last year, in essence consolidating its list of "clients" who can depend on ongoing support. Other grant programs too see their roles as saving the "core" grantees. Overall, there seems no doubt that Endowment funding will be harder to come by for groups outside of this "core."

Similarly, there's not much short-term hope for neighborhood arts money through other federal agencies. And the much-vaunted private sector hasn't stepped up its neighborhood arts support -- nor, with the Economic Recovery Tax Act's disincentives to charitable giving, is it likely to.

In short, hope for neighborhood arts support has shifted to the local and regional levels. There, neighborhood arts groups may be able to obtain funding from arts agencies (the overall state arts agency appropriations for FY 82 are up 12.2% to \$123.7 million); from state governments as they distribute block grant funds; from local businesses or philanthropies; from their own communities; and from income they earn at home or from sales or tours elsewhere.

If the future of neighborhood arts lies in remembering our roots in local and regional concerns, in community life, well, the futures of politics and the movements for social justice will be reached by this same path. Nineteen eighty-one has reminded many neighborhood artists that the artist is a citizen with all the attendant rights and responsibilities, and this year has seen the renewal of an activist spirit within the movement. At events like The Gathering and the American Writers Congress members of our movement have shared their work and inspiration, examined and improved their skills, participated in dialogue on the issues which confront us today, and taken stands where our commitment to cultural has impelled us to do so.

Next year holds out little possibility for most neighborhood arts groups expanding, "institutionalizing," growing fatter. Instead, people are going to have to be flexible, to draw on their reservoirs of optimism -- and draw, too, on the vision that brought them to this work in the first place.

Nineteen eighty-two will be an important, exciting year for the neighborhood arts movement. It will tell us whether the movement for cultural democracy is able to work with the movements for economic and political democracy and build a strong, lasting base for democratic community life. Nineteen eighty-two will tell us whether neighborhood arts groups are succeeding -- against the monumental odds of the giant consumer culture industries and the es-

tablishment cultural institutions -- in making art work, rooted in place, an integral part of community life. Nineteen eighty-two will clarify our purpose and strengthen our resolve.

Who knows? By the time nineteen eighty-three comes around, the movement just might look better than it's looked in years.

Happy New Year.

Don Adams
Arlene Goldberg

Launching PAD: ART & POLITICS

"We want to become a channel through which artists can take responsibility for their own and other lives. We are convinced that it is possible to overcome the conflict between 'my own work' and outreach, between collective work and 'getting back to my studio'..."

"We have to criticize and accept criticism. We have to stop putting down everybody who's not making the same kind of political art we are -- which is a classic product of artworld competition...we have to develop new forms of distribution economy as well as art, open up the old forms and, most important, support each other in our efforts to understand the process of doing so."

These inspiring words are from a statement by Lucy Lippard and Jerry Kearns that appeared in the February 1981 issue of the newsletter published by Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD) in New York City. Publishing this occasional newsletter, UPFRONT, is only one of PAD's activities. Here is PAD's statement of purpose:

"PAD is a left-to-socialist artists' resource and networking organization coming out of and into New York City. Our goal is to provide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making. One way we are trying to do this is by building a collection of documentation of international socially concerned art. The PAD Archive defines social concern in the broadest sense: any work that deals with issues ranging from sexism and racism to ecological damage and any other forms of human oppression. The PAD Archive documents artwork from movement posters to the most individual of statements."

"PAD is also involved with the production, distribution and impact of progressive art in the culture at large. We sponsor public events, actions and exhibitions. These are all means of facilitating relationships between (1) artists (in, or peripherally in, or not at all in the art world); (2) the local communities in which we live and work; (3) left culture; and (4) the broader political struggles."

"We hope eventually to build an international grass-roots network of artist/activists who will support with their talents and their political energies the liberation
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PAD (cont'd from previous page---)

and self-determination of all disenfranchised peoples."

PAD began holding meetings early in 1980, and has gradually evolved a program of political art documentation, distribution, and actions since then.

Documentation

Beyond publishing UPFRONT (subscriptions cost \$2 for 4 issues), PAD maintains an archive of political art. If you would like work included in the archive send slides, posters, photos, publications or other multiples (no originals, please) in a 9 1/2" by 12" manila file folder labelled with your name or the subject of your work.

The three issues of UPFRONT that have been published so far have carried information on PAD and its members' work, coverage of conferences, reviews of political art exhibits and a variety of announcements.

From a neighborhood arts perspective reading UPFRONT is especially interesting because it shows us how some avant-garde artists, many of whom have been part of an art world completely foreign to neighborhood arts, have come to an understanding of their work that has a lot in common with the ideas that give shape to the neighborhood arts movement.

PAD artists want a community connection for their work and they recognize it is unobtainable within the bounds of the art world; they want their work to be useful and relevant to the movements for peace and social justice. As Lippard and Kearns' essay puts it, "While we want to move beyond the isolation and alienation of the art world, it is important to us to remain artists, to maintain contact with our roots as image makers, to recognize the social importance of making art. We'd like to encourage the fearless use of objects, and encourage and support disenfranchised people in making their own uncolonized art. We reject the way the art market has denied art's social function and defuses it by setting up false dichotomies between abstraction and figuration, 'political and formalist,' high and low culture. Perhaps the most insidious idea we have to combat is that you have to give up art to be involved in the world, or give up the world in order to be an artist (the alternative being that impotent neutral ground currently offered artists by the dominant culture)."

It's also interesting to read that PAD artists want to build alliances with other kinds of progressive groups -- something that's certainly a big concern in neighborhood arts circles right now -- but where neighborhood artists may have encountered opposition from organizers who can't make the connection, PAD artists have found themselves blocked sometimes by the lack of a common vocabulary or frame of reference. This is from Vanalyne Green's coverage of the New American Movement's Tenth Annual Convention in Milwaukee: "Reading and re-reading my copies of Social Text, Praxis, and Telos were not helpful in communicating to people unfamiliar with an academic dis-

course about art and popular culture..."

The ancient artworld rifts that split neighborhood artists from gallery artists and avant-garde artists take their toll on all sides: neighborhood artists have tended to shy away from formal experimentation in their work, and the others have, as the Lippard/Kearns statement puts it, "given up the world" in theirs. PAD is a worthwhile attempt to heal this rift; we hope neighborhood artists will read UPFRONT and help to build cooperation among socially conscious artists who work in all art forms and contexts.

Action and Distribution

PAD's biggest action so far has been "Death and Taxes," a series of events which took place between April 1st and 18th of this year. PAD called on artists to protest the use of taxes for military spending and cutbacks in social services by creating public art works concerned with tax protest.

Twenty artists installed works in Manhattan and Brooklyn, in public buildings and private, in vacant lots, on streets and in the subway. For instance, Tim Rollins projected 20' x 30' slide images from his bedroom window on the 167th Regiment armory in New York; two successive slides read "Remember..." and "51% of our taxes goes to military spending." Herb Perr and Irving Wexler created a poster showing Reagan's face on a dollar bill juxtaposed with images of tanks. Micki McGee wrote this caption in UPFRONT's report on "Death and Taxes," accompanying a picture of federal income tax forms altered by the addition of images of rockets and soldiers and text concerning military spending: "One thousand altered 1040 and 1040A forms informing taxpayers that over 50% of their tax dollar goes to military/defense spending were intermixed with unaltered tax forms and left at eight banks and savings and loan offices in downtown Manhattan from April 5 - 15, 1981, for taxpayers to inadvertently carry home."

PAD members created artwork for "No More Witchhunts -- A National Day of Resistance" on June 19, an action aimed at "creating awareness about the activities of the House Subcommittee Hearings on Security and Terrorism." One of PAD's contributions was the "Open Surveillance Room," erected at the perimeter of a street festival. The room was lined with blow-ups of ordinary objects (telephones, for example) that hid surveillance equipment.

A PAD contingent joined the March on the Pentagon May 3 carrying double-sided placard which depicted colorful symbols of basic human needs on one side and black-and-white images of weapons slashed through with red on the other.

Now PAD is working on a two-day event -- panels, discussions, performances and so on -- on February 26 and 27 in New York City. Groups that want to set up tables to distribute information are invited to get in touch. Tickets in advance from PAD are \$20, which includes meals. For more information on the February 26 Movement call 212/925-0325. To get in touch with PAD write Box 2064, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

PUBLIC ARTWORK EDUCATING ARCHITECTS

"Art, Architecture and the Urban Neighborhood" was the title of a day-long conference held in Chicago on October 23. The conference and its accompanying exhibition were planned and coordinated by Aimee Horton of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC, where the meeting was held) and Jose Gonzales of MIRA (M) Raza Arts Consortium).

This was the first meeting in the United States -- at least so far as we know -- to aim to introduce architects and planners to the mural movement and to the idea that artists, architects and community members might work together, from the outset, to create livable, workable communities.

To many of the architects and planners present, the conference was clearly an introduction to new ideas; we had to keep reminding ourselves of this fact, since much of the material presented seemed tame or even wrong-headed to us. For instance, the conference opened with a panel discussion among arts and architecture critics who seemed more interested in criticizing Chicago's streetlights than in grappling with the problem of making artistic and architectural decisions into a community concern and responsibility.

Trickle-Down Design

Paul Gapp, critic for the Chicago Tribune, said the problem was one of "reconciliation between 'downtown' and 'out there,'" and that the reconciliation had to begin downtown with architects agreeing to collaborate with artists from the outset of a project, instead of treating artwork as an embellishment to be applied after construction is complete. Gapp said "it happens downtown first; there must be big models before it can trickle down to the neighborhoods."

Perry Duis, a history professor at UICC who moderated the panel, chalked the deterioration of the city up to the 1889 annexation of outlying areas into Chicago's city limits. Duis' tongue was halfway in cheek, but his remark typified the kind of magic thinking that makes it so difficult to enlist the cooperation of institutions and professionals in the effort to bring neighborhood cultural concerns to urban planning. If the neighborhoods annexed in 1889 still lay outside Chicago's city limits would their abandonment matter less?

If the critics' panel was notable for tired ideas, the balance of the workshops and discussions that made up the conference were livelier and more interesting, featuring architects, organizers, public artists and planners. A half-dozen workshops focused on topics like creative re-use of neighborhood buildings, neighborhood planning, public policy, and funding.

"Art vs. Jobs"

An interesting thread ran through all the workshop sessions we attended: the idea of "art versus jobs." Neighborhood organizers said "if it's a choice between art

and jobs in my community, the decision will be jobs," and roomful of conference participants responded with doleful headshakes.

It was shocking to see how easy it was to accept this red herring as if it were a real choice neighborhood people must make, when in fact both art and jobs budgets have been cut to make way for increased military spending. NAPNOC members can help to raise the level of common sense by reminding people of the real choices -- art, jobs, health, education and community life on one side of the equation; missiles and bombs on the other.

From the tenor of the discussions at this conference, we would say that the work of those who want to build strong community participation in neighborhood planning and the creation of facilities comprises a few tasks. Public artists need to develop working relationships with architects, planners, and neighborhood organizations. Part of the role of public artists in this effort is to inspire -- to share dreams and ideas that help others to understand what's possible in this realm, and how far behind the possible our accomplishments actually lag. Finally, public artists need to enlist these potential allies in changing public policy and funding priorities, so that humane and democratic considerations will take precedence over the expediency and profit-hunger that usually determine how our cities are planned and constructed.

New Models

With these ends in mind, the most important aspects of "Art, Architecture and the Urban Neighborhood" for us were two presentations by public artists. First, John Pitman-Weber of the Chicago Mural Group (and a NAPNOC Board member) made a slide presentation on some alternatives to the "percent-for-art" model of commissioning public artwork. This dominant model focuses on a specific project and product -- often, as John put it, "as a cheap way of dealing with a building's problems."

John talked about the British "town artists," especially David Harding, who pioneered in this work, becoming town artist for Glenrothes, Scotland. Harding has worked for many years to help the community give its streets and buildings a stamp of identification by creating bridges, walkways, play areas, sculptures and other permanent, integral elements that incorporate and enhance community identity. (Write for a copy of NAPNOC notes #5 for an article by John dealing with this subject.)

Herve Bechy of Paris is a writer and lecturer on public art and the administrator of a public art workshop -- the Atelier Art Public -- in that city. He has been a student of the mural movement, especially in the U.S., since the mid-'seventies, and had been invited by John Pitman-Weber to attend the conference and make a presentation on public art in France. (An interview with Bechy appears elsewhere in this issue.) Bechy's presentation focused on two main developments: artists' work in new towns; and art work done for municipal art programs in older cities. (continued on next page---)

PUBLIC ARTWORK (cont'd from previous page)

Home Is Where The Art Is

According to Bechy there are nine new towns under construction in France, all near big cities; the aim is to gradually create communities of between 200,000 and 400,000 residents, communities complete with recreation, education, sport, cultural and welfare facilities. As in Britain and other western European countries, these newly-created towns have been the sites of quite a bit of public artwork, as authorities have put money into activities that might help people in the new towns to develop common facilities, cultural activities, community centers -- all the aspects of local culture that develop naturally in traditional, unplanned communities.

Bechy sees great potential for art in these new towns but bemoans the fact that it has been largely unfulfilled: "I think public art could have been a means for the inhabitants (who moved in after the towns were conceived and built) to take possession of their towns through the artists actively collaborating with them...The problem of their identification with the town remains to be solved."

As Bechy sees it, the power of architects on new town projects has been an obstacle to this kind of artist/community collaboration. In existing communities it is possible for community artists to work with organizations, networks, neighborhood groups that also already exist -- and in existing towns, because they are filled with structures designed by many different architects from any periods, disputes over turf with architects are not likely to arise. But new towns are likely to be seen (at least by the architect) as some architect's masterpiece. Public artwork is considered embellishment, and the architect wants to exert control to make sure this creation is not undermined or overshadowed by its "decoration."

Bechy noted that few French architects have experimented with collaborative or participatory planning techniques. But he also reminded us that, at this point, equally few French artists are committed to community collaboration. So even where the new town administrators attempt to encourage public participation in planning of public artwork, the old attitudes of architects and artists may stand in the way.

In existing towns, says Bechy, "public art depends on the cultural and planning policy of the municipality." He cited an important example: Grenoble in the south-east of France.

The Social Demand for Art

Grenoble's entry into the public art field began with a sculpture symposium in 1967 that resulted in sculptural works being placed in open spaces throughout the town. It continued with a series of special commissions to accompany the building campaign which marked the winter Olympics of 1968; and Grenoble went on to experiment by inviting politically-oriented artists to work there.

Bechy described a mural commissioned for the walls of a shopping center depicting "the shipwreck of society"; a series of posters on occupational health and safety, placed near factories; and a mural depicting the history of labor struggles in Grenoble, which is a big union town.

According to Bechy, "the town of Grenoble is one of the few in France which has really considered public commissions not only as a way of giving work to artists, but also and primarily as a response to social demand." He adds that "the fact of Grenoble's socialist administration permits us to think that the present government of France (under the newly-elected Socialist Francois Mitterrand) may encourage this socially responsive dimension of arts policy."

This last remark intrigued us. Would Mitterrand's election mean a substantial change in France's cultural policy, a change making it easier for groups like Bechy's Atelier Art Public to survive and function?

John Pitman-Weber arranged for us to meet with Herve Bechy and interview him. The interview follows.

Don Adams
Arlene Goldbard

FRANCE:

PUBLIC ART & THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Herve Bechy is, as you read above, a member of the Atelier Art Public, a group of public artists in Paris. It was on a tour of the United States in the mid-'70s that Herve first became interested in mural painting; he is just completing another tour, visiting with public artists in Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

We met Herve at the "Art, Architecture and the Urban Neighborhood" conference described above, then interviewed him at the home of his Chicago host, John Pitman-Weber of the Chicago Mural Group.

We began by asking Herve to speculate about the likely effects on public artwork of Mitterrand's new socialist government in France.

"In general, we don't know exactly what will change -- it's just what we suppose, what we hope. The government has just had a few months now, but enough to show some aspects of policy change. In general, I think there will be more power for local government, more power for cities and local organizations inside the cities -- more democracy, in public art too.

"Up until now there has been only one possibility for artists to work in public space and that has been the one percent law -- one percent of the funds the national government spends on public construction are to be used to commission works of art. Also some municipalities in France have municipal arts programs -- like Vitry-sur-Seine and Grenoble -- and they have had their own one percent for arts. Mitterrand said just a few weeks ago that this law will be in practice in all national government heavy construction -- not just educational

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FRANCE (cont'd from previous page---)

and military buildings as it has been applied in the past.

"Remember, the character of policy is very different in every city in France and some are very progressive; for example, the only municipal arts programs in France are in Socialist or Communist cities. There are also 'maisons de la culture' -- local cultural centers -- which are financed in large part by the national government."

The New Cultural Ministry

"During the former administration it was hard to get money for the maisons de la culture, but Mitterrand wants to give much more money to support this kind of institution. But it seems they will be much more oriented to theater of action than to visual arts programs, firstly because the new French cultural minister, Jack Lang, comes from progressive theater. He is known for creating the World Theater Festival in Nancy, which is very progressive. But also maybe the theater is more popular in France than visual art."

Jack Lang visited Washington this summer on a whirlwind tour of North American cultural institutions. According to the Washington Post, "Mitterrand intends to build a 'huge cultural complex,' says Lang, 'housing an opera hall, orchestra hall, a hall equipped for contemporary music, a large museum of science and technology... I wanted to see some of the best things, so we went to Toronto and here (Washington).'"

The news that Mitterrand's cultural policy features the construction of yet another centralized arts complex will not seem encouraging to neighborhood arts people, but Lang is also quoted as saying the Mitterrand government will attempt to double the budget for culture. (It now stands at 3 billion francs, or about \$545 million dollars.) This would result in a per capita expenditure nearly twenty times the U.S. cultural expenditure. Says Lang, "we want culture to become a core of life, not a plaything."

Organizing Public Artists

We asked Herve about what it will take to interest the new government in increased public visual arts programs at the community level.

"We are trying to organize artists and other people to be involved in public visual art in France, but it is difficult because during the last ten years government gave commissions to the very well-known artists without consulting the people who had to live with the art. Now we have to create a demand, a social demand, for art, and so far, very few artists are going this way in France. During the last government, a few, young artists tried to do something in the towns and neighborhoods, but government didn't support their action at all. We (At the Atelier Art Public) have some projects in the 14th district in Paris supported by local organizations, but the government wouldn't give any money.

"Right now we want to push this social

artistic approach in neighborhoods in France. It seems necessary to do something very quickly because we have observed that the cultural ministry wants to support more theaters than visual arts. There are active public artists now all over France, but they are very isolated and we have just begun to put them together. Our goal is to show various examples of public art which is supported by people, and through this demonstration to ask government to support this sort of initiative.

"You see, most of these initiatives are artists' initiatives -- supported by local organizations, but artists' initiatives nonetheless. The problem is the government thinking that public art is just a means to give jobs to artists; but for us it is not just that, it is to make people involved in the arts, through participation, through social expression.

"Different strategies and tactics are called for in every case, but we will certainly try to participate in conferences, take advantage of opportunities to talk about public art. We want to appear as an alternative -- not just as individual artists expressing their own feelings, but rather trying to speak for a whole social tendency. We have an opening, an opportunity with this government and we have to explain it, to push it."

Fighting Elitist Tendencies

Bechy explained that this effort is complicated by expedient politics: "During the former government many artists joined political organizations like the Socialist and Communist parties just to constitute a pressure group inside. Now they are much more powerful and dangerous because they want to exploit the new government, just to get jobs for themselves. They are very conservative otherwise.

"For example, the program of Vitry-sur-Seine, it was the first municipal art program in France, created during the '60s. At that time the idea was very progressive, the idea was to show art to as many people as possible. But the role of the inhabitants was always outside the creative process -- never consult, just inform."

Herve cautioned against over-generalizing, but noted that Vitry, a city with a Communist administration, had failed to move beyond this elitist "access to the best" idea, and that its cultural administration was very conservative and bureaucratic. But he pointed out that some of the Socialist cities were more enlightened, "for example, Grenoble, where the municipality and the cultural institutions believe in bringing the artists back to the people."

Herve sees the task of French neighborhood artists now as fighting these elitist and bureaucratic tendencies in cultural policy. We asked Herve who the public artists' allies in this fight will be.

"I think support can come mostly from individuals. There are inside the government now and at the head of cultural institutions some people very aware about this kind of involving the community in the arts. (continued on next page---)

FRANCE (cont'd from previous page---)

"For example, we are having an exhibition in France very soon, in Caen, about mural painting in the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, Italy, Portugal and some other places. This exhibition is organized by people who are thinking of the same idea about public art that we are."

We asked whether theater people and other kinds of artists would also be allies. "In France, the theaters are more oriented to the people, more popular than the visual arts in this way. Most of the visual artists working today on public spaces with a commitment to people's participation come from theater groups, because they have experimented inside the collective process with people's participation. But we didn't have the same evolution in visual arts, perhaps because we have a strong elitist tradition in France, perhaps because posters and graphics have always been more popular than painting, because we have a strong tradition of graphic art with social and political consciousness, but not painting."

Atelier Art Public

We asked Herve to describe the work of the Atelier Art Public: "Our organization was founded in 1977 in the 14th district of Paris. This community was fighting against 'urban renewal' and there were many active, local organizations, so it was fortunate for us to be working there -- because of this we got the support we needed to act; it was easy to organize because people were already organized."

"Our idea was to create public art in this area with the participation of the local inhabitants. We did a mural which expressed the social situation created by urban renewal and its evictions. We put a can in front of the site during the painting and got enough donations for the equipment and materials."

"Although most people in the community liked the project very much, we had a problem with some artists in this area. They wanted a competition, which is a very deeply-ingrained idea -- 'oh yes, we'll have a competition and get the best' -- whereas we wanted the project to be executed by a team. We didn't want just to exchange ideas with other artists but with the people in the street. Eventually, this is why we succeeded, because we were not shut off from others but would see the people in the community where they work and where they live. They knew and trusted us. But we had to fight strongest against the artists who didn't want to join the team, who disagreed with this way of working and said 'oh, you just want to keep the project for yourselves.'"

"Right now we are working on a very large project, one that will take a year at least to do. It's a small park that also provides the only access to a day care center; according to park service regulations, parks must be closed at 4 P.M. during the winter, and they are just to be used for sitting and walking, not sports or other activities. But this park must be open 'til 7 during the winter so parents can

get in and out to pick up their children. Since it was impossible to close the park, kids come to play football and local inhabitants began to complain because the place was too noisy."

"So there has been much controversy and several ideas have been put forward: one is to close the park and give it to the day care center administration, so it becomes private; another is to negotiate with the administration and close earlier to conform with park regulations; and the third proposal -- ours -- is to accept that kids need a place to play football and the day care center needs access and other inhabitants need a park."

"So we try to organize different kinds of users of this park to be aware of each other's problems. In May of 1980 we went into the park and painted a small building there; though the police came and said we didn't have authorization, we didn't stop -- it's still there."

"After that, maybe because of the election (the mayor of Paris, who is very right-wing, was running against Mitterrand then), the municipality agreed to discuss the project with the Atelier and agreed to our plan. We had a meeting with the Paris administrations and the different groups of users of the park, and just now we have gotten funds from the national government to help involve the public in planning the park. The city put up about 300,000 francs (approximately \$50,000), which is too little. For example, there is a light in the middle of the space that will cost 50,000 francs (about \$10,000) to move. About 50,000 francs will support the Atelier in working with local people. For us it's a beginning; we are 'certified.'"

This sounded so much like the economic situation of neighborhood artists in the U.S. that we asked Herve how the members of the Atelier make a living:

"Every artist in the workshop supports himself: two sculptors are teaching, one member works part-time in a youth organization, another is an air traffic controller, I lecture at the university and art schools part-time."

Herve concluded the interview by summing up his commitment to the public art movement:

"I am very interested in mural painting, but now much more interested in open space. Most people in France live in high-rise apartments; if things are this way, we need a collective life. The idea is to create a place for people's creativity, to create a space for social meeting and social creativity."

Contact Herve Bechy at the Atelier Art Public, 61 Rue Pernety, 75014 Paris, France.

Arlene Goldbard
Don Adams

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENTS:

THE U.S. & WORLD CULTURAL POLICY

Next summer in Mexico City, the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will sponsor a World Conference on Cultural Policies.

This is a big event in the development of cultural policies worldwide: reverberations from the first World Conference, held in 1970, are still being felt in all the participating countries. Augustin Girard's book, Cultural development: experience and policies (in the U.S., probably the most widely-read of the publications on issues in international cultural policy) was prepared after the 1970 conference and draws significantly on the discussions and actions of participants. (If you're interested in reading about the conference, Girard's book can be ordered from UNIPUB, PO Box 433, New York, NY 10016 for \$6.00.)

The Mexico City conference is beginning to excite speculation. Some people wonder whether it will kick off a "new world cultural order" struggle not unlike the recent controversy over a "new world information order" which has gotten some press coverage over the past couple of years. Let's take a quick look at that issue.

World Information Order Controversy

Third World countries have used UNESCO as a forum to protest the Western press monopoly on news coverage of their countries, complaining that from reading U.S. news one can only see Third World countries as unstable, primitive, inferior, and that the big four Western news agencies (Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters and Agence France-Presse) account for approximately 90% of the foreign news transmitted worldwide.

In pressing for a "new world information order," Frank Campbell, the Information Minister of Guyana, described the situation as he sees it to the New York Times:

"About a quarter of all news (in major U.S. dailies from the third world was about violence, disasters and negative things, whereas the equivalent figure for the developed countries was under 10%. So the majority of people in the world are doing things which are unknown to the U.S. reader. Britain, which has one-sixth the population of Africa, accounts for nearly 60% of American overseas correspondence. The forty-four countries of Africa have 4% at most. Now your editors say if they were to write about events in a little country like Guyana which are not disasters or violence, people will not read their papers. So commercialism is the basis of international journalism.

"We want a situation in which your journalists would come to our countries, understand our reality and not simply say that if we don't run our affairs as you run yours, then we are backward or a dictatorship."

In the same article in the Times, Leonard Marks, former director of the U.S. Information Agency, expressed the other side of the debate. Marks said that if a new world information order means "government or UNESCO control over the media, reporters' access, their freedom to cover what they want to cover and censorship of their stories, then I am opposed..."

Some advocates of the "new world information order" have proposed measures such as an international code of journalistic ethics and licensing journalists. Opponents see in these proposals the opportunity for the Soviet Union and its satellites, for instance, to take further measures to exclude Western journalists, censor news and so on. Complicating the controversy is the fact that the non-aligned Third World nations and the Soviet bloc have made common cause in support of the new order, though their reasons for doing so are quite different.

So where Frank Campbell and others like him see the new proposals as a way to insure the fairer and fuller flow of information between the Third World and other nations, the official U.S. position is that the proposals represent a Soviet move to limit freedom of the press.

The Cultural Policy Controversy

The dimensions of the world controversies over cultural policies are similar. In developing countries there is an increasingly strong push to regain and nourish traditional cultural forms and influences and to limit the cultural domination of western products.

As Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of UNESCO, put it in his opening remarks for a 1979 symposium held in Dakar, Senegal: "The only pertinent question facing us today is not one of choosing between an outdated past and imitation of the foreign but of making original selections between cultural values which it is vital to safeguard and develop -- because they contain the deep-lying secrets of our collective dynamism -- and the elements which it is henceforth necessary to abandon -- because they put a brake on our faculty for critical reflection and innovation. In the same way we must sort out the progressive elements offered by industrial societies, so as only to use those which are adapted to the society of our choice which we are capable of taking over and developing gradually for ourselves and by ourselves.

"From this point of view, every African is called upon to contribute to working out the future by participating in the necessary selection and reconsidering the heritage of yesterday by the light of today's challenges."

In the United States, this same struggle is played out between advocates of our present cultural policy, which recognizes and subsidizes establishment cultural institutions and forms above all others, and the advocates of a policy of cultural democracy, which would recognize all citizens' right and responsibility to contribute to the development of culture, and public policy's role in creating a context in which this

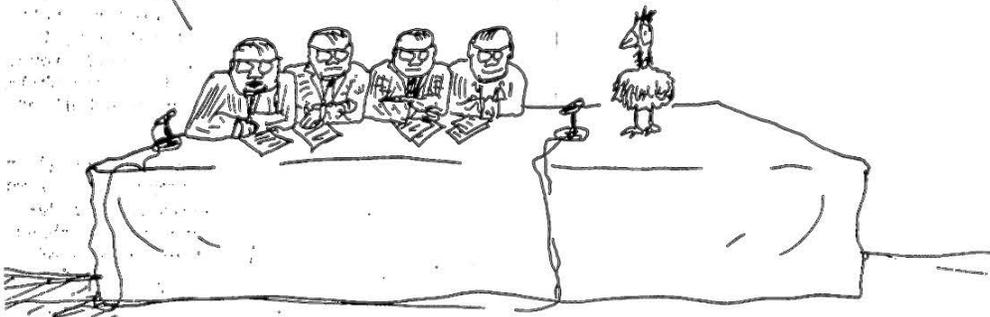
responsibility can be fulfilled. (These contrasting concepts were discussed in some detail in NAPNOC notes #12, "Freedom and Diversity.")

Taking Care of Business

On December 8 and 9 we attended a symposium sponsored by the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO to discuss the United States' contribution to the upcoming Mexico City meeting: the symposium was called "Cultural Development and Cultural Policies in an Interdependent World."

Had the contrasting views on cultural policy been simply and forthrightly presented at the symposium it could have been a uniquely interesting and important meet-

Sensitive to the great cultural diversity in our nation, aware of the richness and vitality these wicrd-ah-divergent cultures bring to us - and being all for diversity and ethnicity and so on ... we've invited a member of a minority to address this conderece ... so, now at the dable.... etc.



David O'Fallon

ing. As it was, the meeting comprised a series of presentations by individuals, most of them representing the "private sector," most of them either avoiding the real issues in favor of homilies about international cooperation and the transcendent value of the arts, or presenting bald-faced pleas on behalf of their business interests and associations -- or both.

They gave participants the impression that the main issue in U.S. cultural policy -- and the focus of U.S. participation in the Mexico City conference -- should be protecting business interests abroad and maintaining the dominant role of private philanthropies in determining cultural policy.

The symposium began on quite a different note with an address by John E. Fobes, the outgoing Chair of the U.S. National Commission on UNESCO (a body of 100 private citizens appointed by the Secretary of State to advise the government on matters related to UNESCO). Fobes drew heavily on quotations from Rene Maheu, the former Director-General of UNESCO, and Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, the current Director-General, to articulate a broad definition of cultural development -- though he was careful to note that he was not advocating formal cultural policy.

Fobes' introductory speech revealed the similarities between the debate on cultural policy and that on the proposed "new world information order." The official U.S. position is that we have no cultural policy, but rather a kind of marketplace of cultural impulses and ideas. This is exactly parallel to the "new information order" debate, in which the official U.S. position is that no formal policy exists or is needed -- that the marketplace of information will regulate itself within the U.S. and around the world.

Sham Pluralism

Following Fobes' remarks came the first of the three panel presentations that made

up the conference. Focusing on "The Private Sector in International Cultural Cooperation," moderator Rose Hayden (Director of the National Council on Foreign Language & International Studies) set the tone by talking about the United States' "authentic pluralism and decentralization." Hayden said, "We don't issue fiats here -- the sources of our cultural policy are multiple."

To demonstrate this multiplicity, Hayden introduced the remaining panelists: Gideon Chagy of the Business Committee for the Arts; Landrum Bolling, former head of the Council on Foundations; John Richardson, an ex-Assistant Secretary of State, now head of the Youth for Understanding foreign exchange program; Russell Marks, president of the Americas Society; and Robert Payton, president of the Exxon Education Foundation.

These five white, well-to-do, middle-aged men of position typified the composition of all the panels. Invocations of the idea of diversity were everywhere, but there was little diversity to be seen.

Chagy talked about the new corporate philosophy -- and the new acceptance of it -- recalling suspicions when the Business Committee was just starting that "the only motive for corporate giving would be public

relations." He chalked this up to the vision of business held by "artists and intellectuals, who have no fondness for the bourgeoisie. Unfortunately, businessmen don't write novels about their own experience."

Chagy then offered his own version of the history of business support for the arts in the U.S. and made a prediction about the future: "If the recession deepens, business will be more selective, more attentive to reservoirs of genuine talent." Chagy said that more money might go to schools and conservatories, and less to small groups "that don't play a key role in the development of trends" in the arts.

Most of Landrum Bolling's talk focused on the history of foundation giving to arts groups. He explained that most foundations are family institutions, reflecting the associations and preferences of their original donors -- often long after these donors have died. And most foundations, family-based or not, are local or regional in scope. But in support of cultural projects, said Bolling, "foundations give primarily to local and personal connections," and that this had had such good effects as "giving opera a foothold in Hoosier-land." Bolling went on to note that "there is still shockingly little private international funding" and to suggest several ways this record might be improved.

"Leverage" and "Linkage"

John Richardson, the next speaker, offered a history of voluntary organizations in the life of our country, and in particular talked about the importance of groups like his own that promote international exchange. He called on the government to finance a series of research projects design to produce "a typology of voluntary organizations." And Richardson, like Bolling before him, concluded his remarks with the admonition that the private sector can't do it alone -- that government support is needed.

The next speaker was Russell Marks of the Americas Society, an organization that promotes U.S. business interests in Latin America. Marks spent most of his time describing his own organization and its work -- "dealing with leverage and linkage" -- and didn't have much to add to the previous speakers.

The final speaker was Robert Payton, President of the Exxon Education Foundation. He spoke at length on the subject of corporate philanthropy (beginning once again with a history), continuing into a full-fledged elaboration of corporate philosophy. Mr. Payton said that Exxon perceives its corporate responsibility as 3-tiered: First, Exxon's responsibility to be an "effective, efficient economic organization"; second, its responsibility to "be a good citizen" in terms of compliance with environmental or employment policies, for example; and third, its "philanthropic giving."

For the future, he predicted "an extension of corporate responsibility into the area of ideas and values, as expressed in the humanities and social sciences. Corporations have come to see that ideas have consequences."

Payton predicted that "the American corporate philosophy expressed in social responsibility will become increasingly widespread -- the Europeans and Japanese are looking at the unique and effective American experience."

Avoiding the Issues

These five men, like most other panelists throughout the symposium, circumvented the pressure to focus their remarks on the international exchange aspects of cultural policy. Though they talked about the private sector and its role, they avoided the stickier questions of policy *within our own national boundaries*. There was no discussion whatever of a variety of fundamental policy issues that touch on the private sector's role: How does the United States' unique policy of tax-deductible charitable contributions affect cultural development? Are establishment institutions given an unfair advantage because so much of the decision-making responsibility with respect to cultural support is thus given to the rich? How much government revenue is lost because of the provisions governing tax-deductibility? And how much would non-profit organizations gain if income were fully taxed, and a proportionate amount redistributed to cultural groups? How does policy provide for cultural groups that aren't the recipients of private philanthropy -- for example, most neighborhood arts groups?

There was no discussion of these questions at the December 8-9 symposium. If we went through the other panels in such detail, you would probably give up finishing the article, so we'll just offer some of the highlights:

Jospeh Belfort starred in the panel on "The International Impact of America's Cultural Industries." Mr. Belfort is Vice President of the Motion Picture Export Association, the trade association that promotes the distribution of American films abroad.

Belfort entitled his talk "A View from the Industry," and that's certainly what it was: beginning with the assertion that Hollywood pictures succeed because they're "just good entertainment," he ran down a litany of taxes, import duties, exhibition quotas, restrictions on collection of foreign earnings, censorship and other "discouragements and impediments to revenues from abroad" encountered by the U.S. film industry.

In answer to the charge that countries that want to develop their own cultural industries might be smart to control the flood of American product temporarily -- Australia being a prime example of a country developing a successful film industry, partially financed by the taxes collected from imported films -- Belfort said, "Sometimes the charge is made that the United States are cultural imperialists. It's theoretically possible to impose films on exhibitors, but there's no way to force the patrons into the theater."

Herbert Shore of the University of Southern California and the Council on Tech-

nology, the Arts & Cultural Transformation was the moderator of this panel, and so was unable to make a full presentation. Too bad, because his remarks were interesting. Shore noted that the cultural industries -- film, TV, radio, publishing, tourism and so on -- are always discussed at UNESCO meetings, with the consciousness that their impact is two-sided: On the one hand, communications media are seen as providing the best opportunity for cultural development; and on the other hand, they are also seen as the greatest single threat to traditional cultures. Shore posed a question by quoting from a paper prepared for the conference by Denis Goulet of Notre Dame: "Do all human communities enjoy the right to preserve their own cultural identity?"

The final session on "Assessing Cultural Policies" was notable for a presentation by W. McNeil Lowry (formerly Vice President for the Arts & Humanities at the Ford Foundation) on an ambitious subject: "The Evolution of Cultural Policy in the United States." Lowry's talk was a compendium of the old-boy orthodoxy on cultural policy. He too offered a history of private philanthropy, praising our policy of rewarding "excellence," saying "even a private patron acting alone can elevate this to cultural policy, one work at a time."

Your Three Minutes Are Up

At the conclusion of this meeting, we were permitted to take the stage for a few minutes to mention NAPNOC and the movement for cultural democracy. We earned the distinction of being cut off twice by the moderator in the space of 4 or 5 minutes at the podium. Richard Lanier (of the Asian Cultural Council and the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund) thanked us, saying "This is a taste of what will happen in Mexico City (where a "new world information order"-type debate may arise)."

We felt unduly burdened with the responsibility of representing all U.S. voices with a more progressive view than the JDR 3 Fund; but as it turned out, the last few moments of the meeting (along with some interesting conversation at lunch) turned out to be the most productive. We met several people who shared some of our perspective, and we'll be keeping in touch with them through the Mexico City conference.

As much as possible, we'd like to make information on the neighborhood arts movement and its ideas about cultural policy available to people involved with UNESCO and the World Conference on Cultural Policies.

NAPNOC member David O'Fallon (who also attended the symposium and drew the cartoon that accompanies this article) has suggested that NAPNOC function as a collection and dissemination point for papers on various aspects of cultural policy. *If you're interested in working on a paper, drop us a line about what you have in mind and we'll get back to you.*

Don Adams/Arlene Goldbard

D.C. UPDATE: TRACKING THE BUDGET

With all economic indicators worsening, November and December have seen continual drama surrounding the Fiscal Year 1982 budget -- with both Congress and the White House playing active parts, but little significant change in the budget itself.

Central to disputes within and between Reagan administration and Congress are steadily-increasing estimates of budget deficits, resulting from 3 main factors: the \$750 billion tax cut approved last summer (which will mean a substantial loss in federal revenues); the huge increases in military spending proposed by Reagan, and so far virtually unopposed in Congress; and the costs of dealing with an economy marked by worsening recession. (The Department of Commerce projects a decline in the Gross National Product in the last quarter of 1981 equal to an annual rate of 5.4%.) Estimates of the budget deficit in 1984 -- the year President Reagan had pledged to balance the federal budget -- now amount to something like \$215 billion.

Reagan's supporters on Capitol Hill are growing nervous, fearing the anger of their own constituents in next year's Congressional elections once the real impact of the Reagan policies is felt, and unwilling to raise taxes. The widely-covered Atlantic Monthly confessions of a wavering and uncertain David Stockman have damaged the credibility of Reagan's administration and its Congressional supporters, though to little concrete effect so far.

By the time Congress adjourned for the holidays, only 10 of the 13 appropriations bills that encompass all federal programs had been passed and sent to the White House for Reagan's signature. Remaining departments of the federal government are operating under a continuing resolution that expires in March, 1982. With Congressional recess continuing until January 25, the budget for Fiscal Year 1982 (which began on October 1) will remain in its incomplete state as attention shifts to the 1983 budget the White House must present within 15 days after Congress reconvenes. Additional 1982 cuts will be handled then as "current year rescissions and deferrals" (see NAPNOC notes #10 for a discussion of the federal budget process).

The Endowments' Budgets

On December 23, Reagan finally signed the Interior Department appropriations bill for the current fiscal year, thus ending a protracted period of suspense for Arts & Humanities Endowment budget-watchers. The final product: \$143.04 million for the NEA, and \$130.56 million for the NEH.

The Interior bill spent a great deal of time on hold prior to its final passage, as House, Senate and executive branch carried on a continuing debate over the size and significance of the growing 1982 budget deficit (swollen to over \$100 million this year by OMB's latest estimates). A conference committee of the House and Senate

met November 4 to agree upon a budget that set the NEA figure at \$149 million and NEH at \$136 million. (At his Senate confirmation hearing 2 days later, NEA Chair-designate Hodsoil confessed a "negative view" of the increases made in the Endowments' budgets by Congress, but allowed that if the appropriations were passed at a higher level, he would "go with that appropriation.")

Eventually approved by both House and Senate, this conference-approved version of the Interior bill was vetoed by the President on November 23. He charged that it needed at least \$2.5 billion more in cuts in order to satisfy him.

After the Thanksgiving recess, Congressional leaders worked out a new agreement with a White House less concerned about meeting the additional 1982 budget-cutting goal Reagan trumpeted in his September 24 TV speech. On December 10, the Senate approved the final budget figures reported on the previous page, a 4% cut from the earlier conference-approved (then vetoed) version. The House followed suit, on the condition that the President actually sign the bill.

It is now said that there will be no recisions from the Endowments' approved 1982 budgets when the 1983 budget is presented in January. It was earlier rumored that the Administration would be asking for \$94-97 million for each Endowment for FY 1983; now, the figure is presumed to be somewhat higher, around \$100 million each.

CETA? No, I'll Take A BLT

Dropping further initiatives on 1982 budget cuts for the time being, Reagan held a round of meetings with Cabinet members and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) representatives in mid-December to work out budget figures for FY 1983. Though only sketchy information about the budgets has been made public, in addition to further cuts the Reagan administration is working out significant revisions in federal programs, notably in CETA.

Secretary of Labor Donovan (under investigation by the FBI for charges that his construction company bribed union officials) has outlined a business-labor training program (BLT) to replace CETA -- the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program -- in FY 1983. Funds for this program (currently, \$1.8 billion is being proposed) would be allocated through the states, rather than through the 475 local and state governments that now distribute CETA funds (\$2.2 billion in 1982). The new program would be run in each state by a business-oriented "consortium of private sector employers and organized labor" set up by each governor, and would aim to train targeted groups for jobs in private companies. The BLT will be accompanied by a \$400 million Job Corps program and \$200 million for jobs and training programs for migrants, American Indians and the elderly.

Donovan's original FY 83 request to OMB was \$3.433 billion. He has since dropped: \$321 million for the work incentive program; \$112 million to train workers in industries

affected by foreign imports; and \$200 million to wind up CETA.

The final figure agreed upon in Donovan's White House meeting for DOL is \$2.4 billion, a significant gain from the \$1.6 billion OMB's Stockman originally proposed, but a billion less than DOL's first request and over \$5 billion less than the federal government spent on public employment programs in FY 1981.

The budgets of the other departments of the federal government apparently have gone through similar changes in these preliminary discussions. OMB has proposed radically-deep cuts for most non-military programs, eliminating virtually all federal aid to cities and states by 1984. Cabinet members, who practiced quiet obedience throughout the 1982 budget process, have come back with arguments in favor of some of their programs. And as with DOL Reagan has usually settled on some intermediate point between Cabinet requests and OMB proposals -- though these figures are hardly "intermediate" viewed in comparison to their pre-Reagan levels. In this way Reagan is able to appear "generous" in contrast to OMB's "hard line" approach, while in reality he is declaiming social programs.

Block Grants

A great deal of controversy has surfaced in the past two months between the administration and state and local government officials over Reagan's "New Federalism" and its relation to the new block grant programs that are part of this year's budget.

By early December, when administration officials were discussing the termination of all aid programs to cities and states by 1984, state governments were much-involved in attempting to implement new block grant programs with little guidance or time for planning.

On December 16 a group of five major organizations representing state and local government interests -- the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Governors' Association, the National League of Cities, the National Conference of State Legislators, and the National Association of Counties -- sent a joint statement to the President urging him to reconsider cuts in aid to cities and states, to look to federal entitlement programs (the "safety net") and the military for future savings, and to convene a "domestic summit" in January to discuss changing responsibilities of federal, state and local governments.

Meanwhile, wheels are turning to implement the new block grant programs. Two of the nine programs must be taken over by the states this fiscal year -- social services (mainly Title XX programs) and low income energy assistance. States may pick up five of the other block programs at quarterly intervals up to October 1, 1982, by simply notifying the federal government 30 days in advance; included among these are community development (the Department of Housing and Urban Development's community development block grant program for small cities), com- (continued on next page---)

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Block Grants (cont'd from preceding page)

munity Services (the former Community Services Administration grants for community action agencies), and three health block grants. (Unlike the other block programs, state takeover of the community development program is voluntary, even beyond 1982.) The education block, which merges 24 elementary and secondary categorical grant programs, will be taken over by the states next July, as these programs are funded one year in advance and won't begin until the 1982-83 school year. The Primary Care health block grant won't go into effect until next October 1, with planning grants (the only such planning provision for state takeover of block grants) for states in the meantime.

Regulations for new block grant programs have been slow in coming, with Health and Human Services regulations appearing in the Federal Register on the October 1 deadline by which states were theoretically to have taken over administrative responsibilities. Few specific requirements are outlined in the regulations published to date, and many questions of accountability and procedure remain to be resolved. Regional workshops for state officials involved with the block programs have emphasized the administration's "hands-off" policy. At the Denver workshop, one Presidential aide said "we are committed to more block grants."

In the absence of any federal effort to monitor the impact of block grant programs on local groups and communities, an Ad Hoc Coalition on Block Grants has been formed. In the past several months and is currently planning a national project to support statewide coalitions to monitor and organize around block grant issues. Groups interested in becoming involved with these organizing efforts can get more information by getting in touch with the Coalition directly: Ad Hoc Coalition on Block Grants, c/o Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20007, 202/338-6310.

New NEH Chair

On December 21 President Reagan utilized a special privilege to appoint William Bennett to the Chairmanship of the National Endowment for the Humanities prior to Congressional confirmation. Bennett's was a "recess appointment," which allows the appointee to serve with full authority as Chairman through the conclusion of his confirmation hearings, which will take place some time after Congress reconvenes at the end of January.

Bennett was sworn in in a special ceremony by the administrative officer of the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Bennett, 38, has been at the Center for five years in all, half of that time as director. Before that he worked at Boston University, both as an associate dean and an instructor.

Bennett was the candidate favored by "new right" or "neoconservative" intellectuals. He is on the board of directors of the Committee for the Free World, the 1980's version of the

old Congress for Cultural Freedom, a group that helped the witch hunters of the McCarthy era single out the suspect artists and writers from those with "approved" cold-war politics. He is also on the board of directors of the Institute for Educational Affairs (IEA), a clearinghouse for funding for new right education projects; for example, Bennett's National Humanities Center received a small grant from IEA to mount a conference on "Moral Education." Writing on this topic, Bennett characterized "moral relativism" in education as "one of the most serious ethical problems of our time."

Bennett also worked on the Heritage Foundation's arts and humanities policy recommendations which readers will remember called for the abolition of most NEH programs that supported minority people and community-based groups (see NAPNOC notes #8). The report also called for downplaying public programs, media programs and efforts to make humanities programs relevant to public policy, and for reversing "such undesirable current trends as declaring all NEH meetings public and releasing panelists' names before review sessions."

Bennett is also the co-author of Counting By Race: Equality in American Thought from the Founding Fathers to Bakke, an attack on the idea and practice of affirmative action. Though Bennett is a registered Democrat, he told The Washington Post he voted for Reagan: "I supported the President enthusiastically."

Insiders are reluctant to speculate about Bennett's impact on the NEH. On the one hand, he's an academic "old boy," well-connected with the eastern neoconservative establishment. He's likely to want to undo ex-Chairman Duffey's efforts to move some NEH funding out of the academy and into the community (before Duffey, NEH was often characterized as a supplemental income program for academics), and this will probably mean taking the Heritage Foundation recommendations to heart.

On the other hand, NEH insiders are glad Bennett was appointed instead of Melvin Bradford, given the choice between the two. You will recall that Bradford is the University of Dallas professor whose critical views of Abraham Lincoln and outspokenness about his far-right plans for the NEH earned him quite a bit of press -- and some say, lost him the nomination.

Whether or not he qualifies as the lesser of two evils, Bennett's appointment certainly isn't going to make Endowment funding easier to obtain for groups that are progressive, community-based, controversial or experimental. In its efforts to secure Senate support for the confirmation of Bennett, the White House reportedly agreed to allow Sen. John East (R-NC) to review and approve future appointments to the National Council on the Humanities, the presidentially-appointed board that advises the NEH chair. (For more details on Bennett's background, see John Friedman's excellent article in the Nation magazine of December 19.)

Don Adams
Arlene Goldbard

Getting To Know You

Speaking of the Endowments, National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Frank Hodsoil was sworn in at the start of the National Council on the Arts' (the NEA's advisory board appointed by the President) meeting held November 13 through 15 at the posh Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown. Hodsoil's statement on the occasion of his swearing-in featured a remark which excited National Council members: "We must exercise greater care to see that our stamp of approval recognizes excellence or potential excellence."

The Council members were concerned that Hodsoil's remark might be interpreted to mean that the Endowment's "stamp of approval" was worth as much to the recipient as grant funds might be; apparently, they feared that Hodsoil, who has staunchly supported the administration's call for budget cuts, could gloss over the loss of funds by saying it was the Endowment's "stamp of approval" that really mattered to grantees, and not the money.

The entire portion of the NCA meeting we attended could be read as a string of presentations to Chairman Hodsoil on behalf of various interests and points of view. Council member Willard (Sandy) Boyd of the Field Museum in Chicago made a lengthy plea for NEA's looking into the special problems of financing arts institutions. He contrasting the dilemma of a university which must secure a certain number of tuitions and a museum which must obtain a much larger number of memberships or admission fees. Boyd was among several NCA members to propose that the Endowment undertake to help grantees find private funds.

This led Council members Rosalind Wiener Wyman and Norman Champ into an exchange on the unlikelihood of private money being available to replace public funds, "human nature," according to Wyman, "being what it is." Council member Martin Friedman said they were "on the horns of a terrible dilemma" and should set up an "agency within the agency, a sort of SWAT team, a clearinghouse to stimulate private support."

Chairman Hodsoil managed to deflect this groundswell by reminding the NCA members that a "revitalized" Federal Council (see "Moses Meets The Gipper," this issue) was to look into these same questions, and to move the discussion around the leadership, whereupon NCA member William Eels exhorted the President (in absentia) to use his "bully pulpit" to "get out the word."

Next on the agenda was Endowment matching grant requirements, with Hodsoil wondering why Endowment policy shouldn't require the largest matches possible -- 6:1 if the grantee could manage it. Endowment staffer Eva Jacob, who presented this agenda item, asked "when philanthropic money is tight, are we helping or hindering arts organizations by requiring a bigger match?" This prompted a long discussion about whether next year's guidelines as drafted contained a strong enough incentive (as opposed to a requirement) to greater

matches, and finally led to an agreement on the following language: "The Council urges staff to continue to work with panels in each program to examine ratio of match and encourage greater matching requirements and emphasis on cash match where appropriate." And so on into the afternoon.

The National Council's public session ended at about 3:15 on the 14th, when the Council went into closed session for the balance of the meeting. At several times during the previous hours Council members or the Chairman had cut discussion on an item short, saying "we'll discuss that tomorrow" (in closed session). The NCA under Hodsoil seems to be using the closed session as cavalierly as ever, and with as little concern for the ill feeling generated by the NCA's preference for treating its meetings as though they were a private club's-- albeit with an audience of observers for part of the time -- instead of a public charge.

Expansion Arts' New Look

A notable feature of the NCA meeting was the review of the Expansion Arts Program's grant guidelines for the coming year, and a slideshow/presentation by some Expansion Arts grantees. From a neighborhood arts perspective, the presentation was most notable for the message the Expansion Arts staffers and panelists apparently wanted to transmit to the National Council and its new Chairman.

The individuals invited to help make the presentation were older themselves, and from older and more established groups, than is typical of the neighborhood arts field. Two of them -- Gilberto Zaldivar of the Repertorio Espanol in New York and Mako Iwamatsu of the East West Players in Los Angeles -- told of receiving Expansion Arts support for the full ten years the program has been in existence. Both companies have been the recipients of "Obie" awards. The feeling of the entire presentation was that Expansion Arts was a program of support for minority arts groups regardless of their size, age or constituency -- and that further, Expansion Arts' support was intended to aid groups in their efforts to "professionalize." The message couldn't have been clearer.

But why was it delivered? The obvious possibility is that Expansion Arts, like other NEA programs, has responded to new conservative pressure by accepting the post-Reagan criteria for evaluating its work. In this case, Reaganism would reject justifications for Expansion Arts programs based on their social and cultural impact; so the Expansion Arts people built a case on the grounds that "our communities are culturally rich but institutionally poor," in the words of director A.B. Spellman.

Expansion Arts' prime criterion for awarding grants will be "institutionalization," with larger "developmental" grants to fewer grantees (for instance, the number of grantees has been reduced from 719 in FY 81 to 405 this year). Expansion Arts will also be trying to interest private funders in its grantees by including them on panels, work-

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Expansion Arts' New Look

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ing with the Foundation Center to publish data on private funding, and convening a meeting of the directors of its City Arts programs and members of "foundations that have demonstrated interest in this area."

At the same time, though, the Expansion Arts presentation skirted the Endowment's continuing weakness in the area of support for groups in minority communities, poor communities and rural communities. When last it released figures, the Endowment's record on minority support was terrible: if you withdrew Expansion Arts and Folk Arts from the running it was practically non-existent. Have these figures improved? Will they improve next year? Not if Expansion Arts is presented as the end of the road for institutions that might qualify for funding in other NEA programs, were the built-in bias of those programs not an impediment. By signalling that Expansion Arts was content with this role, the program also signalled to the National Council and Chairman Hodsoil that the Endowment is off the hook, that this is a time to consolidate your losses, to pull back and settle for what you've got.

We have been hearing about the Endowment's commitment to "institutionalization" for some time now; ex-Chairman Biddle used to take the metaphor even further and talk about Expansion Arts grantees "graduating" to the "discipline programs" in Dance, Visual Arts, Theater and so on. So where are these groups that have "institutionalized"? Why have theater companies received Expansion Arts support for ten years running without "graduating" into support from the Theater Program and making way for smaller, younger organizations?

Obviously, people inside government feel the pressure to settle for less, to "play by the rules," to "be realistic." Let's hope Expansion Arts' "realism" isn't catching. We would hate to see people stop pressing the Endowment to improve its abysmal record of support for cultural democracy.

Arlene Goldbard
Don Adams

There Goes The Neighborhood

November's meeting of the Neighborhood Coalition (an alliance of national organizations concerned with some aspect of neighborhood policy, to which NAPNOC belongs) featured a talk by Dr. Roger Ahlbrandt, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Urban and Community Affairs.

Ahlbrandt is a former academic (he came to HUD from the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work and its Center for Social and Urban Research), so some of the Neighborhood Coalition members knew him before his HUD appointment, and apparently hoped he might be an ally on the inside.

We didn't find much reason for hope in Dr. Ahlbrandt's remarks, but we did find a crystal-clear illustration of Reaganism in its essence, and we'd like to share it with you.

Ahlbrandt described the administration's approach to urban policy as "hands-off, non-interventionist, premised on economic policy and the devolution of responsibility to the states." He said the administration wanted no direct federal-local funding relationship, and no direct intervention by the federal government in neighborhoods. The only exceptions, as Ahlbrandt described them, were a few demonstration projects designed to "test service delivery by neighborhood organizations"; for instance, to test whether private neighborhood groups could collect garbage or manage public housing more efficiently and cheaply than government. Beyond these demonstrations, Ahlbrandt's office at HUD will focus on putting out printed materials that highlight the value and utility of neighborhood organizations by providing case studies.

According to Ahlbrandt, "the predilections of the people at the top are sort of anti-neighborhood; they see neighborhoods as confrontational." So Ahlbrandt's advice amounted to not making waves -- demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with the administration, to play by the rules the administration has set down.

Most telling, though, was an exchange between Ahlbrandt and Coalition members involved in low-cost housing, concerning "displacement," the phenomenon whereby poorer residents are pushed out of an area by "gentrification" or by the destruction of old housing to make way for new construction. Earlier in the week, Samuel Pierce, the Secretary of HUD, had said that the marketplace will take care of displacement problems -- implying that poor people pushed out of their old neighborhoods will just have to find somewhere else to live. A Coalition member cited Pierce's statement. Ahlbrandt's response was that displacement is "not a national problem. You've got to aggregate it, then you'll see it's not a big effect. Our posture is that it's a local problem."

HUD's position on displacement exemplifies the administration's totally economic thinking. So far as Reaganism is concerned, all aspects of public policy can be reduced to a set of numbers and a simple equation -- a cost-benefit analysis is the only method of making public policy decisions (except decisions on military spending of course; when it comes to guns and bombs, cost-benefit analysis be damned).

Ahlbrandt is saying that the biggest displacement problem exists in some of the larger cities and that if you take the number of people displaced in Detroit and Boston and New York and spread them over the entire U.S., you'll find displacement only affects a small percentage...Abracadabra!.. It's not a national problem!

This is like saying an atom bomb dropped on Omaha isn't a national problem -- after all, if you aggregate the effect you hardly notice it.

D.C. UPDATE (cont'd from previous page---)

Forcing Another Task:
The Private Sector

In December the Neighborhood Coalition's featured speaker was Cicero Wilson, Assistant Director of the Neighborhood Revitalization Project, at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). AEI is a right-leaning think tank which specializes in pro-big-business projects. Nearly 20 AEI staffers have taken significant positions with the Reagan administration, in a way making AEI the administration's unofficial research and development wing.

Wilson was at the Neighborhood Coalition to talk about the President's new Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives, which AEI is supplying with background reports, recommendations and information at the President's request.

The Task Force's 44 members were named on December 3. Unlike the Task Force on the Arts and Humanities (see "Moses Meets the Gipper," this issue), whose charge was both specific and temporary, the Private Sector Task Force may serve indefinitely (depending on the President's wishes) and is given a rather broad charge, including the following five points:

"1. To identify existing examples of successful or promising private initiatives and public/private partnerships and to give these models national recognition in order to promote their broader use.

"2. To encourage increased and more effective use of the human and financial contribution resources of religious groups, businesses, unions, foundations and philanthropic organizations, including more creative use of leadership, management expertise, training and volunteer work.

"3. To encourage the formation and continuation of community partnerships -- private sector organizations working with local government -- to identify and prioritize community needs and then marshal the appropriate human and financial resources.

"4. To identify government obstacles to private initiatives and make recommendations for their removal, and to formulate new incentives to inspire and incite the private sector to undertake new initiatives.

"5. To contribute to the development of public policy in areas of concern to the Task Force."

The Task Force's membership includes big businesspeople (for instance, Kenneth N. Dayton of Dayton-Hudson Corporation, Arthur Levitt, Jr., Chairman of the American Stock Exchange, and Thomas H. Wyman, the President of CBS). Big philanthropies are also represented, for instance by United Way President William Aramony, and Richard W. Lyman, the President of the Rockefeller Foundation. This Task Force has its share of right-wing ideologues, too, including William Baroody, Jr., President of AEI, and Michael Joyce of the John M. Olin Foundation who will be remembered for his authorship of the Heritage Foundation arts and humanities report (see NAPNOC notes #8).

In addition, there are representatives of national organizations (the director of the Boys Club of America, for instance) of religious groups (Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, for example), educational institutions, and local and state government.

One member of the Arts and Humanities Task Force has been appointed to serve on the Private Sector Initiatives Task Force; he's Franklin D. Murphy, Chairman of the Times-Mirror Corporation in Los Angeles. Murphy will be remembered by the followers of the arts and humanities Task Force for chastising Beverly Sills for injecting "ideology" into the proceedings when she noted that the Task Force's tax break recommendations could give the impression that the Task Force was only concerned with the rich. There are no arts people on the Task Force, nor any community activists, and only token minority representation, as with the Task Force on the Arts and Humanities.

Cicero Wilson was quite enthusiastic about the Task Force's potential, saying it was one of the few initiatives of the Reagan administration "that has the possibility of generating dollars from industry" and "the potential to direct federal resources in a positive way."

Wilson said the Task Force has been divided into several major sections: 1) a section on local economic development headed by William C. Norris, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Control Data Corporation; 2) a section on impediments to self-help (zoning, building codes, federal regulations) headed by James W. Rouse, Chairman of The Rouse Company of developers; and 3) a section on model programs (public/private partnerships and the like) headed by William J. Baroody, Jr. of AEI.

In addition, the Task Force will address these and other areas of concern laid out in an AEI report to the President, to be delivered in June, 1982, which also takes up topics like child development, criminal justice, foundations and taxes.

Wilson said the Task Force will "spread the gospel" with corporations, and also function as a kind of watchdog for federal programs' impact on "private sector initiative." He didn't see much emphasis being placed on volunteerism, but instead thought the Task Force would focus on "barriers, incentives, and models." Neither Wilson nor the documents announcing the creation of the Task Force made any mention of culture.

The Executive Order creating the Task Force calls for staff support, facilities and other resources to be provided through the Department of Commerce. The Task Force is still setting up; we expect it will hold hearings and issue reports from time to time, and we'll let you know about them as information becomes available.

Arlene Goldberg
Don Adams

Moses Meets The Gipper:

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

As predicted in NAPNOC notes #14 (see "Moses Meets the Gipper: Part III"), the Presidential Task Force on the Arts & Humanities has delivered itself of recommendations that fail even to mention the problems and concerns of the neighborhood arts movement.

Nowhere in the Task Force's 40-page Report to the President is there mention of neighborhood arts; of the special difficulties encountered in fundraising by organizations that serve poor or rural communities; of CETA or the problem of unemployment among artists; or of ensuring freedom of expression for controversial work -- to cite just a few obvious examples.

If the Report contains no surprises, it certainly affirms the basic tenets of the arts world orthodoxy. To quote from the Task Force's summary of its Report to the President, here are its recommendations:

- "--that the current structure of the Endowments be maintained;
- "--that coordination and cooperation among federal, state and local cultural agencies be strengthened;
- "--that adjustments in the tax code be made to stimulate private philanthropy;
- "--that the Federal Council on the Arts & Humanities be revitalized to support implementation of our recommendations and to further our initial inquiry;
- "--that the Federal Council take advantage of what we understand is your willingness to lead new efforts to increase support for the arts and humanities. You have already begun to provide this leadership by welcoming artists and scholars to the White House."

Slim Pickings

The Task Force report is slim; margins are wide, and acknowledgements and member biographies take up a lot of space. None of the recommendations is given more than a few paragraphs of explanation, and even these explanations are long on generalities and short on specifics.

Reading the report, one has the sense that the Task Force members saw their charge as a kind of high-level brainstorming and

saw no need to go beyond bright ideas to actual research and investigation of the alternatives. Attending the Task Force meetings prior to the Report's publication did nothing to disabuse us of this feeling.

For instance, the Task Force report features a "Resolution" on Presidential Leadership" which suggests that the President could issue special awards for "exemplary supporters of America's arts and humanities," could invite them "to the White House, with the attendant publicity," and could call "special convocations...to examine or honor America's cultural heritage."

Certainly this resolution helps to launder Reagan's image as an arts supporter: The Report predictably refrains from mentioning that the same Ronald Reagan whose "continuing leadership on behalf of the arts and humanities" it welcomes has steadfastly proposed a 50% reduction in arts and humanities funding.

But it also lends credibility to the idea that arts and humanities support -- like other aspects of economic policy -- are just a matter of adopting the right attitude. This bit of Reagan theology must explain why the Task Force convinced itself that, if only the President could be persuaded to keep on inviting them to the White House, private donors would give more money to arts and humanities projects.

Let the Federal Council Do It

The Task Force has passed, if not the whole buck, then well over half of it to the Federal Council on the Arts & Humanities. Though the Carter administration at one time had big plans for the Federal Council, it hasn't done much besides indemnifying big art exhibits -- like "The Treasures of Tutankhamen" -- that are loaned to museums in the United States.

If the Task Force recommendations are accepted, the Federal Council will be reconstituted to include an unspecified number of private citizens, one of whom would be appointed chair. This reconstituted Council would look into federal arts and humanities policy, increasing public support, compiling data on arts and humanities funding, and evaluating federal arts and humanities expenditures, as well as the work of state and local agencies.

The Task Force recommends that the Federal Council "be funded separately and ade-

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quately" to meet these responsibilities, but offers no guidance as to how it should carry out its tasks, except to recommend that the Council consider two specific topics:

First, the Task Force wants the Federal Council to direct the Endowments and state agencies, "with participation by local arts agencies," to "work out a new Federal/State relationship that will take into account the complex nature of the current relationship and the need for more effective use of Federal funds." That's just about as specific as the recommendation gets.

Second the Task Force wants the Council to "seek to establish a nationwide program of Presidential Fellows in the Arts and Humanities" recognizing that "even the best student may need support during training or when embarking on a professional career." These fellowship awards would be "based on a nationwide selection process" and "Fellows should be supported for at least two years."

Goals to Newcastle

The section on Taxation occupies the greater part of the Report, and here the Task Force treads lightly on Reaganomic policy, declaring itself "cognizant...of the possible adverse, unintended, and unanticipated consequences, for cultural support, of the Economic Recovery Tax Act." How about "adverse, unintended, unanticipated, and unforeseen"?

The Report notes that reductions in the tax rates may reduce charitable giving, mentioning that while a top-bracket taxpayer (70% under the old law) would previously have borne and after-tax "cost" amounting to 30% of each charitable contribution, under the new tax law the after-tax "cost" amounts to 50% of each contribution.

In other words, under the old tax law the taxpayer purchased \$70 worth of tax deductions at a cost of \$30; under the new law, the taxpayer will purchase a \$50 deduction at a cost of \$50 -- hardly an economic incentive to make contributions.

To put it in crass terms, whereas economic incentive might have accounted for 70% of a taxpayer's previous motivation for making charitable gifts, with good will, public relations and other motives accounting for the other 30%, the new tax law counts as much on non-economic incentives as on tax breaks to motivate contributions.

Leaving aside speculation on human nature and the motives for charity, most researchers have put the expected decline in charitable contributions as a result of this and other changes in federal tax law at somewhere around \$6 billion per year. We know the Task Force was familiar with this research because we heard it discussed at one of the Washington meetings. Nevertheless, the Task Force straddled the fence, invoking a bit of Reagan theology that holds out hope for a future which cannot be predicted: "The Task Force believes that, if past practice is a guide, the overall impact of the general income tax rate reductions may materially diminish private contributions to arts and humanities institutions. Past evidence would seem to support the proposition that donors give more on the basis of the marginal cost of giving than on the basis of additional income available. On the other hand, the past may not accurately predict future giving, and the reduction in tax rates may change giving patterns due to increased disposable personal income."

Almost all of the Task Force's tax recommendations are designed to benefit wealthy patrons. The Task Force Report says that "individual giving to the humanities and the arts is derived principally from higher bracket taxpayers" and adds that "corporations tend to devote proportionately more of their philanthropic activity to the arts and the humanities than do individuals," so concludes that tax credits for wealthy individuals and corporations are called for and proposes a variety of such provisions.

Since neighborhood arts groups receive very little support from wealthy individuals and not much more from publicity-conscious corporations, these tax proposals would do little to increase neighborhood arts support. But most establishment arts groups have greeted this report with sighs of relief, so afraid were they that the Task Force would recommend substantial change in the National Endowments' structures and functions.

See for yourself: Report To The President, from the Presidential Task Force on the Arts and the Humanities, dated October, 1981, is available for \$3 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20404.
D.A. & A.G.

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