

# NAPNOC

## notes

Issue number 13

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June 1981

### SPECIAL REPORT: NAPNOC'S 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NAPNOC's conference and annual meeting, held here in Washington on May 22 and 23, culminated in a rousing call to build cultural democracy and a commitment to seek 600 members and subscribers by next year's meeting.

But before that call to cultural democracy was issued, the small conference crowd participated in two days of talks and discussions on the issues facing the neighborhood arts movement now. The following pages are excerpted from recordings of the conference.

#### CULTURAL RIGHTS

The conference began with a talk by Lupe Saavedra, Vice President of the National Council of La Raza for Special and International Projects. Lupe began and ended his talk with an excerpt from his poetry in Spanish and English.

#### somos

*"...a través de nuestras diferencias y diversidades existe una unidad que nos crea en sloa ente trabajemos en esa unidad, inspirados tor nuestra visión de mañana, para crear un mundo mejor par nuestros... somos "*

#### we are

*"...beyond our differences and diversities there is a unity that makes us one let us work together in that unity, inspired by our vision of tomorrow, to create a better future for ours... we are "*

Lupe asked the assembled to bear in mind the basic beliefs that underpinned his talk: "Number one, I believe that our society is a pluralistic society, and you should keep that in mind as I make my comments.... The second belief is more of a historical one: With the exception of the Native Americans in this country, ours is a nation of immigrants, of people who left their homeland, or whose ancestors left their homeland, for whatever reasons, and they came to this land.... Along with that assumption goes another. Are any of you familiar with the current problem of 'undocumented workers' or 'illegal aliens'? I firmly believe that the first undocumented workers that arrived in this country were the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock. They didn't have visas, dicuments, everything that is re-

(continued on page two--)

### D.C. UPDATE

#### Rumblings on "The Hill"?

Rep. Carl Perkins (D-KY), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said his committee was meeting "with a gun pointed at our heads...to wipe out nearly one-third of the funds which would be spent next year...for the nation's poor, handicapped, elderly and students." House Speaker "Tip" O'Neill (D-MA) called Reagan's tax cut proposal "welfare for the rich."

The Republican-controlled Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee yielded only symbolically to Reagan's plans for changing categorical education programs to block (continued on page --)

#### **A NOTE TO OUR READERS** ← ← ← ←

NAPNOC is thrilled to announce that we have received a grant of \$10,000 to publish NAPNOC notes and carry on other activities that come under the heading of "communications and mutual support." Thanks go from every NAPNOC member to the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

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Beginning with this issue, NAPNOC notes will be published ten times a year. Next will be a combined July-August issue.

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A full report on NAPNOC's fifth annual membership meeting is currently in preparation and will go to members next month. The report will include an up-to-date list of members, with contact information. If you want to be included, join now by completing the blank on the last page of this newsletter, and returning it to NAPNOC with a check.

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NAPNOC welcomes comments, letters and suggestions for articles. Please put NAPNOC on your organization's mailing list. Please address all correspondence to NAPNOC, P.O. Box 3036, Washington, DC 20010, or telephone (202)667-4200. NAPNOC notes is co-edited by Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard.

## SPECIAL REPORT (cont'd from page 1)

quired for someone to get to officially enter the country. That's why I believe that we're a nation of immigrants."

Having shared these fundamental beliefs, Lupe invited everyone to join in sharing their own sense of the meaning of "culture," to begin to get a clearer picture of the real meaning of cultural rights and cultural democracy. Summing up, he pointed out that "...all of us may have different ways of expressing our perception, but basically they all seem to have some thread of commonality."

"Each of the things that each of you expressed is sort of like a thread in the fabric that makes up society-- where we live, where we exist. It's cooking, it's a framework for living, it's beliefs, it's traditions, it's a synthesis of what people bring together as a community, a neighborhood, a nation. It's identification-- it gives us a base for being able to say who we are....It gives meaning to our existence. It removes us from being isolated....Culture, like everything in life, continually changes."

### Rights & Responsibilities

"Which leads us right into the next thing: 'Rights.' What are rights? What do we mean by 'cultural rights?' The right to expression, as someone said? The right to a belief? The right to values? The right not to have values? The right to have something also enshrines the right to reject having something....

"If I had continued practicing my belief that the most beautiful language in the world tends to be Spanish and I continued talking to you for the rest of this twenty minutes, I would have been practicing what I believe to be my 'cultural rights.'...But does the right to something mean the right to impose? Or does it mean the right to have what it is you believe understood by others? Where on that continuum do you place rights? The individual rights versus the rights of a neighborhood? The individual rights of a neighborhood versus the rights of an entire city?...Again, I believe that you can't be absolute.

"Perhaps what we're talking about when we talk about cultural rights is the right for one to have and retain and practice one's own beliefs, one's own culture, while at the same time allowing that same right or respecting the rights of others also to practice it. And I maintain, personally, for myself it is my right to practice something and I also have an obligation, a responsibility to have those around me understand what it is I practice, what it is I believe, what it is that makes me...

Again Lupe recited a poem, a childhood remembrance of silent sacrifices made by his mother. He drew a parallel between the way his own heritage is preserved and communicated through that poem and the way that unique communities share a heritage that must be protected and communicated.

"Which moves us to a different level.... Does government have the right to define culture?...If government has the right to define

culture, then that implies that government has the right also to define what isn't culture. Currently, I believe that the government has taken steps to define culture (I believe NAPNOC calls it 'cultural policy by default'), has taken steps to cut down support of certain institutions. It's taken a long time for them to get to the point where they support community arts, and now they're withdrawing their support -- or they're attempting to do so.

"In a sense, they're attempting to define culture -- what it should be for us -- by doing that. Do they have the right to do that? I would say that most everyone in this room would answer in the negative.

"But do they have the responsibility to protect, to preserve, to insure that legislation, that laws and regulations, that policy isn't established that deters or destroys that which makes our country what it is? That responsibility, I think, is the government's. I don't believe it's their right to define what our heritage should be. They can facilitate the process, they can help, but they can't do it for us."

### The Culture of Democracy

"And that leads us to the next word: Democracy....

"Democracy has been used by different interests: When it suits them, they're 'democratic,' and they use the democratic process. To me, the word 'democracy,' to have any meaning at all, it has to be participatory.

"So what do we mean by 'participatory democracy?' It means the process whereby people would be able to practice, to share, to disseminate, to express, to participate, to have access. Not only to have access, but to have the right to step outside the process if it needs to be -- to change the process, if it doesn't meet the needs that it is established to meet.

"And democracy means people -- people working together, talking to each other, interacting with each other, expressing to each other, people attempting to understand each other, people having input...and that means culture.

"So we're right back where we started: Culture, cultural rights, cultural democracy. The fabric that makes up society being culture. The right of one to choose his own particular kind of thread; the right to participate, the right to involve other people. To me, that is what it means."

Lupe's talk brought into focus one of the themes that dominated the conference: The responsibility to explain and communicate beliefs falls heavily and urgently to advocates of cultural democracy. For the first of many times it was emphasized that we are at the beginning of a long process of education and communication. At this stage, we still need to acquaint most people with the very idea of cultural democracy, and the very words used to describe it.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The conference's second session focused on a particularly immediate concern for

neighborhood arts people -- the quest for alternatives to the nonprofit grants economy. Philip Arnoult, NAPNOC's President and head of the Baltimore Theatre Project, presented his organization's economic development project with an assist from Washington attorney Daniel Nachtigal.

"First, I want to say that about 3 or 4 years ago it became real clear to me -- even while I had CETA programs running and money from NEA Expansion Arts -- that CETA would eventually end.... I was trying to figure out what the alternatives were. God knows as long as I've been sitting around with the people in this room they've been talking about 'economic development,' 'community development.' What does that mean?

"Well, the first impulse was to look beyond the traditional. The Medicis are dead -- I haven't been able to find any. We are only now beginning to find some corporate interest in what we're doing, and unless God did come in and take over the Endowment and got on our side, we probably always would be on the short end of that stick.

"So I knew those things were going down the tubes eventually. I also knew, as I looked around the country at my brothers and sisters -- back then, 3 years ago -- that I was seeing burn-out, I was seeing people who had committed themselves to a vision, bust their pants for a vision, and the money was not coming. And someday, the vision that was born out of love turned into a real, human, personal drag and the vision deteriorated... So the livelihood of the arts has been central to that vision. But to provide a solid economic base, I'd been counting on those things that I thought were real marginal. So we began to look at even the grants we got as contracts, and began to negotiate contracts.

#### Theater as a Meeting-Place

"Now, the center of what I've been interested in for ten years is not necessarily theatrical form, but rather the theater as a meeting-place. It's the meetings that involve artists that I'm most interested in -- between artists and audiences, between artists and students or apprentices, and artists and artists. I see four refractions on those meetings.

"The first is accessibility. We've been free for ten years -- donations, no reservations. But accessibility -- whether that means it's free or it's the stuff you do in the community -- accessibility is the idea of real plurality and diversity of audience. We don't assume that we are the temple and people come to the temple.

"The second is quality. There's nobody working with me who's making a choice to work to create a play about rat eradication or to create a play out of the words of these people in these six neighborhoods who thinks of themselves as second-class artists, who thinks of themselves making second-class art.

"And the other end of that quality is livelihood. I want to do this and provide those artists who are working with the same

kind of choices that Dan has as a lawyer, or a school teacher or whatever.

"Finally, all of that means research. You have to do research -- look at it every time you do it, asking real simple questions: Why are we doing it? Who are we making the theater for? Then how do we make the theater, and where do we make the theater? For most theaters, those questions are answered by assumptions: Why are we making the theater? Because we're a theater. Where are we making the theater? In our building that we busted our asses to build. And who are we making it for? Our audience. But each of those, each time we do something, is looked at really carefully.

"So we began looking for what it is we do using that vision and using the physical resources that can make economic sense... We started with real property.

#### A Plan for Development

"The Theatre Project owns five buildings. We got the City to buy the main building for us five years ago. The City bought this building for \$75,000 and sold it to the non-profit for \$5...it needed about \$100,000 to make it fit for public assembly, so I got a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant to fix it up 4 or 5 years ago. But the City protected itself: First of all, if I sold the building I had to repay all of the money; they had to have the first right of refusal, so the City can control the space if I go out of business. The four adjacent town houses are also being sold to us now for \$5 because of the development plan that we've got.

"Our plan is to use the space as follows: A two-tiered 185-seat restaurant/cabaret theater that's got two places for investment -- investment from a restaurateur and investment from the cabaret operation; a 125-150 seat black box theater; a floor of offices and administration; a rehearsal studio and project offices; a big gallery which serves the theaters; and the main theater which is about 175-200 seats. Then two street-level areas are both going to be commercial areas, maybe another kind of bar-food service area, and a book shop -- books, posters, a gallery.

"What it means is that I'm taking a property of approximately 30,000 square feet and about 40-45% of the total square footage is possible for investment. And this is creating the kind of meeting space I want to create.

"Now, far too often it's been my experience that a theater will tell me that they've got this great deal -- somebody's getting this little space here for \$500 a month and the developer is getting all the income, making all the money and the theater is right where it started. But what we're doing at the Theatre Project is acting as the developer ourselves. We're not the tail wagging the dog -- we are the dog. We will have control of all of this, we're not going to give up control.

#### "Leverage" Your Way to An "Income Stream"

"The name of this game is 'leveraging.' The Theatre Project's audience -- 50% of them are blue- and pink-collar, and 89% in 1978 made under \$20,000 a year and 50% made under \$10,000 -- now, I'm not going to go

out and raise \$2 million from my primary constituency. They don't have the money. But all of a sudden, I have real property and I start 'leveraging' that real property.

"Very little outright grant money is involved in all this. But if I can offer an investor group both a tax write-off and cheap money, it puts us in a position where we're trying to keep the investors away until Daniel comes in and makes sure that I'm being taken care of and that the Theatre Project is not giving any more away than it has to.

"Part of this package involves the sale of all of this property to a syndicate of investors. It's complicated. It's going to be sold probably in the form of a limited partnership with the Theatre Project maybe acting as the general partner and the nonprofit is going to end up with something like \$685,000 of syndication proceeds.

"Every Holiday Inn, every doctor's office that's put together -- nobody builds with cash. They do it with hot-shot samurai lawyers and CPAs who are protecting them. This is really bubbling up -- it's having us take the lead and us play the hardball financial stuff, putting ourselves in the position where the Theatre Project hopes to have out of this in the end: control -- perhaps ownership -- of the building; all of our space for free; and eventually, an income stream over and above the debt service of \$100,000 to \$200,000 before we ever get a contract or a grant, to keep our core people alive."

#### A Risky Path

The initial response to Philip's talk from a roomful of struggling neighborhood arts people was predictable: "Where do I sign up?" But it soon became apparent that the kind of self-sufficiency scheme Philip outlined was both seductive and frightening.

People noted that the real property on which the Theatre Project's plans are based belongs to the Project because of the foresight and generosity of the City of Baltimore. And no one could name another neighborhood arts-related capital project that hadn't been started off with public support -- though a program fortunate enough to own property in its own right could certainly develop a "leveraging" plan like Philip's.

A string of fears were trotted out:

"Gentrification" -- a symphony hall is going up across the street from the Theatre Project. What was formerly a depressed, multi-use neighborhood may turn into a full-fledged theater district, pushing out the remaining small businesses and residents, and turning the Theatre Project's cabaret into a chic "in" spot.

Profit-making mentality -- can the Theatre Project protect its vision against its business partners' interest in making money? If the cabaret fails to make a profit and the restaurateur goes broke, can the Theatre Project stop the syndicate which owns its building from selling out to McDonald's?

The general economic situation -- what if Reaganomics goes belly-up and inflation reaches sky-high? Will the Theatre Project's people have money for the theater or dinner at the cabaret? Will the tail begin wagging the dog?

The consensus was that though these risks are serious, they are no greater than the risks a nonprofit like the Theatre Project runs trying to sustain itself in the grants sweepstakes. Philip said "I know it's risky. I know it's seductive. But if this gets out of control, doesn't make sense, I'll split and go somewhere else and do something else. I'll be real sad, because I think this is a real good chance to push that vision along, but the stakes are real high. It means almost every morning having to continue to ask those basic questions -- which in reality are simple if you've got that clarity of vision."

Other kinds of economic development projects entered the discussion. One participant talked about selling or licensing films and videotapes to cable TV systems; another about leasing the rights to a print or calendar to a publishing company. The discussion moved one participant to ask about the role of the nonprofit organization in the neighborhood arts field now: If our real economic destiny is in the marketplace, what are nonprofits for?

And that brought the discussion back to Philip's "research." If the answer to "who are we doing this for?" is a greeting card company or a cable TV corporation, is it really neighborhood arts anymore?

#### PUBLIC POLICY

The third conference session began with a talk by Arlene Goldbard, co-editor of NAPNOC notes. She pointed out that arts politics are an indicator of general political trends:

"What happens in the realm of arts politics is what happens in the realm of general social politics, but it happens here first. I don't think that's true for everything, but I think it's true for some important things.

"There's been a growing trend in our society, away from the ideas of charity, philanthropy, the social contract, 'good works,' helping each other out -- and toward the idea that business provides a model that is applicable in all social situations.

"In the neighborhood arts movement, for example, I saw a number of groups that began to work on something other than a purely voluntary basis in the late '60s and early '70s when things like anti-poverty program money became available to them...they modeled themselves in their early years on other kinds of institutions -- education, settlement houses, social services -- and they adopted the model of business, gradually, over time. That trend was fostered by the funders.

"It's just reached its apex now, being used as the sole legitimate justification for cultural activity. Everyday at NAPNOC we get another brochure about a conference on 'the economic impact of the arts.' They get two, three, four hundred thousand dollars from someone; they truck out the same twenty

experts from big universities and big arts institutions, big foundations and big corporations; and they hang out together and talk about 'the multiplier effect,' 'the cultural district,' and so on.

"On the individual level, the trend toward modelling neighborhood arts work after business is one of the reasons why everyone has been struck so hard by declines in funding. Their organizations have become much more expensive to run relative to the actual output; it takes so much more money to do management the way the managers want it done.

#### Tenets, Anyone?

"The think I find most alarming, though, is another trend that's taken over in the arts just as the pro-business mentality has become entrenched. It is the growth of an orthodoxy -- a set of received ideas, the conventional wisdom, a set of ideas everybody accepts without questioning, that most people in the field are not prepared to reconsider.

"The most obvious way to prove there's an orthodoxy in arts politics is by the existence of heresy. Orthodoxy and heresy create each other. One can't exist without the other.

"I had the privilege of being in the audience when David Martin's paper proposing a state/local partnership program was presented to the policy and planning subcommittee of the National Council on the Arts (see NAPNOC notes #6), so I got to hear Martin Friedman say that David Martin's paper should be turned over to the KGB--the Soviet secret police -- because it would help them undermine American society.

"There is no dialogue on the basic assumptions of policy. There is no public input in determining what the basic assumptions of policy should be. And there's the general idea that this is a field for experts, where common sense doesn't apply.

"I want to run very quickly through some of the basic tenets of the orthodoxy in arts politics at this point:

"The first one I'll call 'All The Arts.' It's the idea that no matter who you are -- you can be president of AT&T, you can be chairman of an institution whose physical plant cost \$5 million and whose overhead, without producing anything, is \$1 million-- and for the purpose of 'unity' in what's called 'the arts community' you are an underdog. Anyone who doesn't accept this tenet is guilty of 'fragmentation.'

"The next tenet of the orthodoxy is 'our pluralistic system of arts support,' often described as 'the envy of the whole world.' This refers to our system of tax deductible charitable contributions.

"The third tenet is 'the primacy of the private sector.' That's the idea that the proper role of public cultural policy is to follow the lead of private individuals and businesses.

"The fourth tenet is the idea of 'quality,' that apart from any question of taste there exists an objective standard of quality that is self-evident -- and that

beyond this, a judgement of quality made by certified experts is the best basis for public decisions about arts support.

"And the fifth tenet of the orthodoxy is that 'more and bigger is better.'

No Thanks!

"I would like to suggest that the fundamental ideas behind the neighborhood arts movement and behind cultural democracy are in opposition to each tenet of this orthodoxy.

"Besides the obvious part of what's wrong with 'All The Arts,' it's productive to contrast big and small institutional values and see how significant the differences within 'the arts community' really are -- glamorous, expensive facilities versus homey and accessible; a star system (there's a lot of sense to the assertion that the star system and its trappings have run up the cost of opera more than any other factor, regardless of repeated attempts by management to blame it on labor) and professionalization versus breaking down the barriers between professionals and ordinary people; the separation of management and artistic functions versus integration; 'developing' an audience versus serving the community and developing ourselves.

"'All The Arts' is a philosophy that's only employed by the big institutions to quiet down the small. I have yet to see any of the big institutions that are exhorting us to 'unity in the arts' come out in support of any of the groups that have attempted to reform public policy.

"Second, on the question of 'our pluralistic system of private support': According to the Filer Commission report of 1975, only 35% of federal taxpayers filing in 1972 found it advantageous to itemize deductions; I recently heard it was only 10% last year. The vast majority of these itemizers are wealthy people who give to wealthy institutions. Do any of you know of neighborhood arts groups that get most of their support from private patrons?

"Readers of NAPNOC notes will remember an item two issues ago quoted from U.S. News and World Report: The \$50,000 fund for redoing the White House the Reagans gave back to the federal government in a magnanimous gesture actually cost the taxpayers over \$250,000, which is the tax that would have been paid on the \$823,000 they collected in private donations. Our 'pluralistic system' costs the government a tremendous amount of tax revenue, and it only works to benefit the rich.

"The tenet of the orthodoxy that says the private sector should lead and public policy follow has nothing to do with neighborhood arts. If the neighborhood arts movement, which mostly serves low-income people, had to depend on 'private sector initiative,' there would be no neighborhood arts institutions today.

"On the tenet that says there's an objective standard of 'quality' wholly apart from taste, people who were here this morning will remember Lupe Saavedra's message: That our society is made up of many, coexisting cultures, each with its own standards of quality

and taste. The idea that government policy should be based on judgements of 'quality' really means that policy should be based on the taste of those who judge.

"Finally, on the question of 'bigger is better,' the neighborhood arts groups that have followed the path of expansion without cease are the ones in the most tenuous situation in terms of their survival today."

### The Real Issues

"I've taken so much time to lay out the orthodoxy and talk about why I think its basic tenets are wrong because the real point I want to make is that neighborhood arts people -- advocates of cultural democracy -- have failed to recognize the orthodoxy for what it is and challenge it. We've exhausted our energies in trying to get a few cents more out of a system that is not open to the kind of fundamental change it must make to be responsive to our concerns.

"I've been watching the anti-budget cut stuff coming out of the big arts alliances, and I have yet to see one of them mention the defense budget. I haven't seen one piece where, in defending the budgets of the agencies that give them grants, these people have said 'And all the money that used to go to us will go to guns and bombs and we're against that too.'

"Now, I'd like to suggest that that's the real line that's been drawn. We have nothing to gain from attempting to cajole and flatter and trick the Reagan administration into putting a few cents more into the NEA so that a little bit of it filters down to neighborhood arts programs -- nothing that is worth the price we would have to pay in compromising what we stand for by the tacit acceptance of the military budget that it implies.

"Besides surviving -- and that will be with public money and private money and God knows what else -- the job of the neighborhood arts movement and advocates for cultural democracy is now to discredit the cultural policy we have, create discussion about the fundamental issues, destroy the orthodoxy, eliminate the very idea of heresy, create an alternative to the current public policy and be ready with it when the people in power get enough rope to hang themselves, which I predict will not be that long.

### Promote Dialogue

"The most important thing is to create dialogue. Dialogue is the antidote to orthodoxy and heresy. Remember we started with the arts being the canary in the coal mine: The orthodoxy in the arts now is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of society as a whole. The reason the witch hunt of the '50s was so successful is that people were afraid to speak up. Speaking up is the only antidote to orthodoxy and heresy, so talk to your friends, each other, your families. And become 'crackpots.'

"A 'crackpot' constantly writes letters to the editor, goes to public meetings and risks embarrassment, puts 'free speech messages' on radio and TV every time something

happens which helps build acceptance for the orthodoxy and legitimates the persecution of the heretics.

"Make the issue of cultural policy an item on the agenda of all the meetings and programs you do. One of the ways we've seen the business mentality come to dominate the field the last few years is that there are all these meetings with a grants writer, an economic development person, a management person who'll teach you to make PERT charts and flow charts and long-range plans -- and there's no discussion of public policy. There's no discussion of the fundamental issues we've been talking about here all day. Every time you do a workshop or a meeting, make these questions a component. Don't let them not be talked about.

### Building Progressive Alliances

"Try to build alliances and coalitions with other people who are concerned about cultural issues, broadly defined. The right-wingers who make up these anti-'secular humanism' networks you've been hearing about don't have the same jobs or social contacts or the same two ideas. They're quite diverse except for their opposition to 'secular humanism.' But we haven't built those alliances among progressive people in the same way as the right.

"Progressive people have seen their alliances as being with people who share their short-term interests. But I say we share long-term interests with quite a few people who are working for cultural rights as Lupe discussed them and that building alliances should be a key item on our agenda the next few years.

"I believe the Reagan administration -- if they don't kill us all in a horrible war -- is going to play itself out. If that's true, we can do something. We interviewed Hugh Jenkins, you may recall, who was British Labour Arts Minister in the mid-'70s. He said that Mrs. Thatcher's government had basically done what Reagan appears to be doing here -- threaten to cut arts support, see the arts agencies become very, very conservative in response, so that most of the Right's work was done for it by bureaucrats out to save themselves.

"He said that part of the Labour Party's platform is a statement of cultural policy. It started me wondering why we can't do the same thing here. I really wondered why we spend so much time trying to nickel and dime an agency whose orthodoxy is fundamentally opposed to everything we believe, that invokes the charge of heresy at every turn, when we could put all that energy into developing an alternative and trying to see it to all the third party movements, the progressive alliances, the Democratic party. And when another government comes in, instead of changing the budget figures at the agencies we now have, make a radical change and institutionalize a policy of cultural democracy. I think we stand a far better chance of making an impact that way than we do by cultivating bureaucrats at the existing Church of High Art."

The first set of comments that followed this talk concerned means. All weekend people were conscious of the formidable task

that is before advocates of cultural democracy. Several times in the meeting people realized they would need to go home and put serious thought into planning their own alliances and consciousness-raising campaigns.

The second round of comments concerned 'crackpotism.' Some participants objected to this nomenclature -- they felt it detracted from the seriousness and dignity of cultural policy advocates. Others counseled a strong sense of humor: If you risk looking silly advocating unpopular ideas, you have to be prepared to be ridiculed or ostracized.

THE FUTURE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS

Some of the concerns which pervaded this discussion carried over to the next, on the future of the neighborhood arts movement.

People began with the premise that certain things stand in the way of the movement. One of these is a lack of self-definition -- and of a clear, positive identity to others.

A good deal of time was spent articulating the values that characterize neighborhood arts and contrasting them with establishment values. Then the discussion moved on to the other obstacles cultural democracy faces: One was the interests of the establishment which stands to lose favored status as recipient of public funds. Another was the extent to which establishment artistic values are institutionalized thinking.

But other obstacles concerned the movement's own shortcomings: We haven't put forward a unifying vision; we haven't been sufficiently hard on ourselves, critical of our own failures to serve and involve others, to improve our work. Because we haven't been unified and self-conscious as a movement for cultural democracy, competition has stood in the way of cooperation and progress.

Charting a Course

The participants in NAPNOC's annual meeting resolved to issue a call to action, urging advocates of cultural democracy to:

- Encourage and participate in dialogue on cultural issues; start surfacing the idea of cultural democracy in your publications, forums and workshops.

- Draw the connection between neighborhood arts and other social issues, from bud-

get cuts and military spending to the call for a new public cultural policy; build alliances, print notices in your programs, draw on these themes in your work.

- Help to build NAPNOC. If you are not a member, join today. Keep your dues current; make a pledge to find six new members or subscribers by next June; take NAPNOC materials to your meetings and events. Help to coalesce the movement for cultural democracy.

D.C. UPDATE (cont'd from page one)

grants -- they exempted \$4.6 billion worth of programs from the education block grant, leaving only \$585 million to be block-granted.

The President's "honeymoon" with Congress may be ending -- or it may be just a lover's quarrel. Recent press reports have featured statements by members of Congress that they hadn't understood this year's complicated budget process. Some have finally begun drawing the connection between social service cuts and military boosts: Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Mark Hatfield (R-OR) protested that a \$13.2 billion supplemental appropriations bill for the Pentagon while Congress is performing "budgetary surgery without the benefit of anesthesia on the handicapped, the old, the hungry."

But despite this opposition, loyal Republicans are said to be preparing a set of alternative budget resolutions to be introduced if opponents do too much damage to Reagan's plans in committee. So are we seeing effective opposition, or much ado about nothing?

Moses Meets The Gipper, Part Two

The first meeting of the Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities will be held June 15. Besides the 3 co-chairs -- Charlton Heston, U. of Chicago Pres. Hanna Holborn-Gray and ambassador-at-large designate Daniel Terra -- the 32 members include such titans of industry as right-wing brewery millionaire Joseph Coors and John Swearingen, head of Standard Oil. Other familiar faces are former NEA Chair Nancy Hanks, Margo Albert and Franklin Schaffner of the NCA, and opera star Beverly Sills. Heavy on business reps and light on the arts, the Task Force is notable for its absence of neighborhood arts people, working artists, and anyone likely to mention military spending.

Last week the Washington Post interviewed Heston. Of most interest to notes readers

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will be the striking similarity between his views and those of the Heritage Foundation report (see NAPNOC notes #8). Heston: "I said at the time (Expansion Arts) was created that, while a desirable series of programs, it would be more appropriate under HEW. Do you define the arts as recreation? Because a program of street dancing is perceived to be good doesn't necessarily mean it should be funded by the NEA. Because an undertaking in community history is perceived to be a good idea and a useful thing doesn't necessarily mean it should be funded by NEH."

#### Endowment Budgets

The House Education and Labor Committee meeting June 9 and 10 recommended authorizations for the two Endowments 40% higher than Reagan's proposed \$88 and \$85 million appropriations. The newly-authorized Fiscal 1982 levels of \$126.9 million for NEA and \$121 million for NEH must yet go to the full House for approval.

But with these committee authorizations, the House Appropriations Subcommittee can recommend figures which are also well above Reagan's. If the full House approves, the Endowments could end up with 1982 budgets much higher than Stockman's 50% cuts.

Meanwhile, the President has proposed much smaller recisions in the agencies' budgets for the current year than had been rumored -- perhaps another example of the scare tactics the administration favors to defuse opposition. (At one point it was rumored that NEA would stand to lose as much as \$32 million this year and NEH \$26 million. Grants to small groups were frozen and larger grantees were told to expect third-quarter cuts. Panic ensued.)

On June 9, the President asked Congress to rescind \$6.65 million of the NEA budget. According to Adrian King of NEA's press office, each program has been asked to decide how to cut its 6% of the recision, should it pass. Some are eliminating whole programs (King says over \$400,000 in CityArts grants will be gone), while others are shaving a bit across the board.

The President has requested a \$7.4 million recision for NEH in the current year. Barry Wanger of the public affairs office says commitments to all divisions will decrease about 7%, and will be reflected in grants awarded at the August Council meeting.

Congress has 45 working days to act on

these recision proposals. If they don't pass, the surmise is the funds will revert to the programs which lost them. We'll let you know.

\* \* \*

Finally, a social note. On the guest list for the Reagan's June 9 luncheon for Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo were two familiar names. Partaking of king crab, veal and raspberry mousse were Bernard Blas Lopez, head of the New Mexico State Arts Council and member of the National Council on the Arts, and Luis Valdez of Teatro Campesino and "Zoot Suit" fame. According to press reports, no attempts were made to upset the guests' digestion with touchy topics like El Salvador and the military build-up.

Whatever happened to the spirit of Eartha Kitt?

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