

# NAPNOC

## notes

Issue number 1

P.O. Box 3036, Washington, DC 20010

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### NAPNOC notes Number One

This is the first issue of NAPNOC notes. The several hundred copies printed will go to members of NAPNOC's National Organizing Committee. For those of you who aren't already members, here are a few words about the Committee and its role.

NAPNOC is a national membership organization; our members are organizations and individuals working in the neighborhood arts movement. NAPNOC is dedicated to helping neighborhood arts people work in their own communities, and to helping advance the neighborhood arts movement as a whole.

The National Organizing Committee is the principal working committee of NAPNOC's membership. The Committee is a network of people across the country who act as communicators: National Organizing Committee members help NAPNOC to be responsive to the neighborhood arts movement by keeping us informed of current local needs, concerns, and programs; Committee members also help local neighborhood arts people directly by spreading information concerning resources, programs and happenings they need to know about.

We are still building the National Organizing Committee. By the time it's complete, we expect it to include several hundred people from as many different programs and community settings as possible. The National Organizing Committee will make it possible to contact virtually every neighborhood arts group in the country -- the kind of link-up needed to make the movement more effective, especially now, when so many pressures divide us.

NAPNOC notes will function as a regular means of communication for people in the National Organizing Committee. Each month NAPNOC's staff in Washington will compile material gathered from National Organizing Committee members, other neighborhood arts people, policy-makers, resource agencies, and through original research.

We expect that each issue will contain as many questions as it will answers. NAPNOC notes can be used to request information, to make contact with groups interested in collaborating on a project, exchanging programs or circulating performances or exhibits. For example, a Committee member in one part of the country might want to hear about other groups' experience in running a community printshop, or might want to know how others had approached local schools or recreation departments for program support.

NAPNOC's staff will also use NAPNOC notes to request information for our own

programs and publications: As you read on you will learn that we are currently preparing a report on self-sufficiency and neighborhood arts groups, and have asked people to contact us with information on economic development projects.

NAPNOC notes will also function as a kind of early-warning system for neighborhood arts people. Often, community cultural groups aren't included in policy deliberations or program planning which might affect us -- or we only manage to find out about such plans when it's too late. Through NAPNOC notes we can let our fellow neighborhood arts workers know about these opportunities in time to have an impact.

Finally, we hope that NAPNOC notes will help to break down the isolation and mistrust that divide the neighborhood arts movement. Most of us have had the experience of receiving "confidential" information from someone in a public arts agency -- information that was supposed to give us an advantage over other groups, and which we were told to keep to ourselves. We've heard the same "secret" from half a dozen people, each time with the implication of a special advantage to be gained. Neighborhood arts fundraising has become an unnecessarily dirty business because it is so easy to "divide and conquer" with this tactic. Luckily, the antidote is also easy: We have only to share what we know and "confidential" information is a tactic that can't work anymore.

NAPNOC notes is your resource. We urge you to post it on bulletin boards, reprint any portion of it in your own newsletters, and share it freely with other neighborhood arts people. Just remember to mention NAPNOC when you do, and to send us your comments, criticisms and suggestions.

The deadline for the July 1 issue of NAPNOC notes is June 23. If you want something in it, please call or write to us before then.



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Please address all correspondence to NAPNOC, P.O. Box 3036, Washington, DC 20010, or call (202)667-4200. NAPNOC notes is edited by NAPNOC Co-Directors Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard.



## Culture and Commerce

In May, the Policy Council of the Department of Commerce approved a statement explicitly recognizing cultural resources as a viable means of achieving economic development goals. While the statement itself is not presently available for public dissemination, its adoption is the first step in clarifying the role that the Commerce Department can play in supporting cultural development activities that contribute to overall community economic development.

Special Assistant for Cultural Resources Louise Wiener explained that Commerce staff members are now working to formalize this new, general Department policy into more specific policies and guidelines for staff use in U.S. Dept. of Commerce offices all over the country. These guidelines will be completed sometime this summer.

Commerce support, especially through the public works programs of the Economic Development Administration, has helped some cultural groups in the past. But the absence of explicit Department policy on cultural support has left it to Commerce staff to determine the suitability of various activities -- and some have not looked favorably on cultural resource projects. This new policy should give cultural groups a basis for developing stronger arguments for support where local offices have not been responsive in the past.

We'll keep you informed of further developments as they occur.

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### Murals Newsletter: Not to Be Missed

The National Murals Network Newsletter is more than a valuable resource for community muralists -- it also offers an object lesson in community artists' helping each other by sharing ideas and information.

The Network was formed in the spring of 1976, when over 150 muralists attended the first National Murals Conference held in New York City. As a result of this conference the New York members of the Network began publishing the National Murals Newsletter. A second conference was held in Chicago in 1978; the Chicago muralists who sponsored the conference took on the publication of another edition of the Newsletter. Later that year, a group of San Francisco Bay Area muralists jointly edited a much larger issue of the publication. Since then, the Newsletter has come out of San Francisco on a fairly regular semi-annual basis.

Several features make the Newsletter a remarkable phenomenon. It is truly a grassroots vehicle, written by community-based muralists, supported by their own efforts, and responsive to their concerns. It is a low-budget operation: Network members from around the world contribute articles, which are then edited by the San Francisco group. No subscription fee is charged, and much of the labor and materials is donated.

The Spring 1980 issue, which just arrived at NAPNOC, is typical in content.

Several articles report on mural activities in New Jersey, Denver, Saint Paul, New York City, Whitewater (WI), Oregon, Massachusetts, Montana and rural California. There are several short pieces on union-supported murals, one on a successful project in Joliet (IL), another announcing the establishment of a national AFL-CIO fund for cultural activities. Other pieces cover the destruction of murals and legal problems confronted by artists in Chicago and Detroit, and a favorable court ruling in Blue Island (IL). Two reports appear on the Chicano Visual Arts Conference in Austin; there is an essay on the goals of community murals and the economic, political and artistic obstacles to their creation. There are articles on mural work in Thailand, Sweden, England, Scotland, India and France; and technical articles on contracts, copyright, slides and publications round out the Newsletter.

Muralists use the Newsletter to get information about specific interests and problems. The Spring issue contains several requests for information that National Organizing Committee members may be able to provide, notably:

Information about mural programs for children -- descriptions, articles and photos about muralists working with children, in schools and out, including discussions of processes, problems, and particular projects;

Information on mural programs for other special groups -- the Newsletter needs similar articles to those on children's programs, but focusing on other community groups like senior citizens and others who are somehow cut off from much community cultural activity.

In addition, some Chicago muralists have used the Newsletter to propose a decentralized national mural event in late August/early September. Muralists collaborating on the theme "Opposition to War Preparation" will donate time and materials ("no grants, no pay, no censorship") to create murals that awaken public opinion on this issue.

Contributions of articles, information and the like should be sent to: Murals Newsletter, P.O. Box 40 383, San Francisco CA 94140. Deadline for the next issue is September 12, 1980.

Though no subscription fee is charged, the Newsletter needs funding. Donations are being requested (\$5-10 for individuals, \$10-20 for institutions), along with suggestions for funders who might support the Newsletter with small grants.

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### SELF-SUFFICIENCY

It's difficult to think of a concept that is currently more alluring than *self-sufficiency*. As government spending has declined and competition for private funds has heightened, neighborhood arts groups have turned in increasing numbers to plans for making their programs less dependent on grants. *Earned income* and *economic development* have become magical

catch phrases; invoked, they trigger fantasies of "getting off the dole" and "paying your own way," of never again having to frantically second-guess a prospective funder's tastes, of never again having to justify your work to someone who takes his own judgement and power for granted.

NAPNOC is preparing a report on the self-sufficiency phenomenon. Our report will focus on three main areas: (1) the trend toward self-sufficiency, its motives and meanings; (2) self-sufficiency projects -- how neighborhood arts groups have tried to increase their economic self-sufficiency and how these attempts have worked; and (3) resources for self-sufficiency -- a look at existing resources for help with economic development projects, and a discussion of resource needs in the neighborhood arts field.

If you know of an organization that has experience that might be useful to other neighborhood arts groups, if you have a question related to the issue of self-sufficiency, or if you want to express an opinion on some aspect of this subject, please call or write us and share it.

These questions might help to jog your imagination and memory: Do you know of successful economic development projects which might provide models for others to follow? Do you know people who have good ideas on the question of support for community cultural programs, or who have project ideas they'd like to see tested? Do you know of good materials -- reports, articles, other resource materials -- that neighborhood arts people should know about?

What trends have you noticed in support for neighborhood cultural work? What are the issues which arise in considering economic development plans? Do you have any hints concerning how to go about researching economic development possibilities? What kinds of information should our report contain to be most useful to you?

Jot down your ideas and questions (don't worry about how they look -- notes will be fine) or call us. We'll call you back at NAPNOC's expense, or you can drop us a card with your phone number and a note listing the best times to call. Our deadline for this research is July 11. Thank you for your help.

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## NAPNOC Membership Meeting

NAPNOC members have already received a notice of our annual membership meeting, this year scheduled for June 20 in Washington, DC. The same mailing included a revised version of NAPNOC's bylaws, several sections of which have been redrafted to provide for decisions taken by the Executive Committee during this past year.

NAPNOC's long-range plans include an annual meeting that is not only a business meeting for the membership, but also a major neighborhood arts conference. We foresee such a meeting for next year. This year, still-scarce time and money must go into research and services. This spring and summer will have seen the development of the National Organizing Committee, the commencement of NAPNOC notes, our first special report, and a similar beginning in each aspect of NAPNOC's new program activity. This year's membership meeting must be devoted to taking care of the organizational business all of our new work requires.

Please look over the meeting materials you receive and let us know in advance if you will be able to be in Washington for the meeting. If not, be sure to let us know your comments on the proposed bylaw changes as soon as possible so they can be incorporated into a new draft.

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### DON'T BE A STRANGER

NAPNOC notes is one of the ways NAPNOC is trying to keep in touch with the neighborhood arts movement nationwide. We also maintain research files on neighborhood arts activity, produce publications, and help neighborhood arts people fill their needs for technical assistance.

We are trying to compile a comprehensive mailing list to distribute NAPNOC material. While it seems unreasonable to expect to include every neighborhood arts group in the country, we'd like to come as close as possible.

If you know of organizations we ought to be in touch with, please send us their addresses. If you have lists of local neighborhood arts people or know of institutions (libraries, for example) that ought to receive NAPNOC publications, please send them along too. We thank you.

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