

# NAPNOC

## notes

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### Dodging Nasty Issues With the High Chiefs of Art

Don Adams & Arlene Goldbard 1980

"I feel most fortunate," said Liv Biddle, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, "to be here with the High Chiefs of art in this country." Biddle was alluding to a visit he had paid to a kava ceremony in the South Pacific. The ceremony struck him as an apt metaphor for the National Partnership Meeting he was addressing, held June 23 through 25 at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

The High Chiefs were gathered for a "first and very special convocation -- fifteen months in planning," according to Biddle's statement in the press release we'd received two weeks earlier. It boasted representation of "the nation's arts leadership," including "the top administrative and policy-making officers," artists, "representatives of arts organizations...large and small, older...newer, and national arts service organizations," "foundations, corporations, Arts Endowment staff members and council members," and "key" government officials. In Biddle's words, the meeting would be used to "pause for several days to review the numerous partnerships that are essential to the health of our country's artists and arts institutions and consider together what lies before us in the decade of the 1980's." The meeting was co-sponsored by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) "in cooperation with" the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies (NACAA).

NAPNOC was not invited to participate. We did a little checking around and found that none of the organizations of artists or other groups that represent some aspect of the neighborhood arts movement had been asked to participate either. Needless to say, this piqued our interest: Did the Endowment really think it proper to discuss the "future direction and role for the public sector arts-support network in the country" as if it were entirely a matter for convivial discourse among invited guests? We paid fifty dollars to sit through the meeting as observers, and took our seats in the audience at the opening session.

#### Who Makes Policy?

According to the attendance list distributed on the last day, 33% of those attending were NEA staff and council members and consultants; 32% were similarly placed in state arts agencies and regional organizations; and about 8% were from local arts councils. That left 65 people: Nine of these were from NASAA and NACAA, the meeting's co-sponsors; 17 were from other professional and arts service organizations; 7 from other government agencies and legislative offices; 6 from various consulting firms; 10 from producing arts organizations; 5 from foundations or corporations; 2 from

educational institutions and 1 from organized labor. The remaining eight people weren't identified, but some of them were artists, mostly members of NEA policy and application review panels or grantees of its programs. Since the official list made no distinction between invited participants and observers, we can't tell you how many of these people put their two cents into the meeting and how many sat and watched.

The question of who participated in the meeting -- and who participates in making policy in general -- was raised repeatedly throughout the three days of this meeting on "The Public Sector Arts-Support Network." *Representation* is just one of the significant policy issues the meeting brought up. But here's what was so interesting about the National Partnership Meeting: Neither representation nor any of the other crucial questions raised were explicitly the business of the meeting. Rather, the National Partnership Meeting was a dry and poorly-organized charade concerning the fictional "partnership" of public agencies whose relationships are mostly a marriage of convenience cemented by the dowry of \$275,000 per year which comes to each state as the Basic State Operating Grant. Against this backdrop of counterfeit affection the meeting provided a stage for the enactment of a richly-textured drama in which all the important themes of the moment emerged.

#### The Old Boy Network

During the meeting's three days, we observers were treated to a good look at the Old Boy Network in action and given a chance to see how its members seem to be losing their grip. We heard the ideas that form the foundation of the neighborhood arts movement -- *cultural pluralism, decentralization, public participation* -- ten

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times as often as we heard the Old Boys' talismans of *quality and professional excellence*. And we found out that the new "partners" the Endowment wants to engage will take the old man's money -- but they won't trust him with the truth and they'll laugh behind his back if they get a chance. Here's what happened.

Liv Biddle concluded his introduction to the meeting by saying "Those of you who have worked in the state arts movement are particular heroes to me" and asking the people so described to rise and be applauded. By state arts "movement" Biddle meant the effort to start public arts agencies in each of the states, largely the product of personal enterprise by members of the now-Old Boy Network. People started arts councils in their own homes, taking on the jobs in addition to their work as teachers or orchestra managers. When they get together they reminisce about the pioneering spirit of the old days. From one of the state agency directors on the subject of the regional organizations of state arts agencies (ROs): "I remember the creation of the idea of a region in the arts; it happened on a log in Jackson Hole, Wyoming."

To make sense of the clubby feeling which pervades meetings of the Old Boys, one needs to know a bit more history. Public arts administration is a relatively new phenomenon in the U.S. The National Endowment for the Arts is only 15 years old, and most of the state and municipal arts agencies the Endowment hopes will form the lower tiers of its "partnership" are younger still. This is a field in which most of the key players have until very recently been on a first-name basis. People from California and North Carolina and Texas sat around in Washington gossiping about Nancy and Michael and Ralph and Clark, and everybody who was anybody knew exactly who was being discussed.

Some of the members of the Old Boy Network are out of the picture now in terms of decision-making and authority; they circulate on the fringes of the Network consulting with their friends' agencies, trying on the roles of elder statesman and pundit, often bitter about their loss of status which in most cases resulted from a losing alliance. For example, the end of Nancy Hanks' term as Endowment Chairman meant a decline in status for a number of her loyal courtiers. At the Partnership meeting, one heard much comment from the Old Boys about the new professional trappings (and new jobs) needed by the field of arts administration. From Michael Straight, Endowment Deputy Chairman under Hanks: "We need a serious journal for serious ideas -- under independent auspices, perhaps university auspices." Tony Keller, who wrote one of the background papers for the meeting, proposed the establishment of "regional institutes" under the auspices of the ROs; these institutes would be devoted to experimentation in the arts, and research in arts support systems.

The members of the Old Boy Network are comfortable with each other and most of them share a mistrust of the newcomers and upstarts. In the context of the Partnership meeting, the Endowment and its co-sponsors stayed safely within the confines of the Old Boy Network in choosing speakers, consultants, and others on whom the meeting would rely. For instance:

Partnership Research: No Surprises

The Endowment spent about \$100,000 on pre-

parations for the meeting. The agency covered itself by paying for the five background papers commissioned for the meeting through grants to NASAA and NACAA, thereby obviating the requirements for open competition for research contracts. All the authors except George Gelles have served on NASAA's board. Roy Helms, NASAA's Director, explained: "We wanted people with previous experience, and who we knew could fairly represent and tackle the issues."

From Tony Keller, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, came a paper on "Contemporary European Arts Support Systems." Jim Backas, former Director of the Maryland Arts Council and the American Arts Alliance, produced two papers: One on "The State Arts Council Movement," the other on "The Regional Arts Organization Movement."

Robert A. Mayer, acting Executive Director of the New York State Arts Council, prepared a paper on "The Local Arts Council Movement." And George Gelles, former Director of the NEA's State Film Program and currently a consultant to the Ford Foundation and Executive Director of Audio Independents, wrote "Public Arts Support and the Federal Presence."

The first plenary session continued with short presentations by each of these authors. Participants were to have received their papers in advance, but they rolled off the presses too late and most conferees picked them up at the registration table. Including the extra sections that were too late for the bindery, there were 650 pages for participants to read, presumably sometime between the 9 P.M. adjournment of the evening's program and the 9 A.M. session the next day.

Because NAPNOC is located in Washington, we were able to get 3 of the 6 conference papers in advance and had an idea of their content before the meeting. Most of the papers consisted of program and budgetary summaries of public arts agency activities and sought to identify trends in their development. Uneven in quality, awkward writing made much of the reading difficult. But the persistent reader was rewarded by the gradual unfolding of an apparent consensus.

The Backas, Gelles and Mayer papers discuss the elements of the "public arts-support network." The picture they present is uniformly positive: Steadily growing appropriations, with proportionately larger growth rates at the state and local levels; growing professionalism and expertise in making decisions on "quality" at all levels; and growing cooperation between each agency level -- federal, state and local -- and with the artists and institutions which are the "clients" of each. The authors particularly note the blossoming of trust between the NEA and state arts agencies, but cite ambiguity and "overlap" in relations between NEA and the ROs and Local Arts Agencies (these are defined as government agencies and publicly-designated private arts councils). They conclude that roles and relationships need to be clarified. All the reports end on a peppy, upbeat note as each author tips his hat to the field or phenomenon he has been paid to explore. One is hard-pressed to find any evidence of incompetence -- or even innocent mistakes -- on the parts of those discussed.

Tony Keller's paper is the largest. Keller did much of his research on European "arts support systems" while he traveling abroad on an NEA fellowship in the summer of 1979. Much of

his paper consists of interviews conducted during this fellowship. One senses that Keller would like to see changes in American policy, and the second half of his paper, which discusses various decentralization plans undertaken in France, Great Britain and Germany, offers an interesting if limited discussion of these countries' relevant experience. But like the other researchers, Keller's work is limited by his parochial questions. He appears to believe that the question of the respective roles of public and private arts funders ought to be the principal concern in the development of public policy.

On the subject of tax-deductible contributions to arts organizations, he says "To many Europeans this system is one of the great strengths of the arts in the U.S., and they envy the flexibility and autonomy the method allows its beneficiaries." The Europeans' "envy" was invoked repeatedly by speakers throughout the meeting. For example, Jim Backas: "Our pluralistic support (he means public and private) is the envy of other nations." None of these speakers discussed this issue beyond their declarations of the superiority of this charitable contributions system.

For neighborhood arts programs, this superficial approach can be damaging. Most neighborhood arts organizing is supported by volunteers and by public programs like CETA. Few neighborhood arts groups have received donations from the wealthy individuals who support high culture institutions. Left to the "private arts support sector" so frequently and gratefully acknowledged by these speakers, most neighborhood arts groups would still be struggling to get off the ground. (Look to the next issue of *NAPNOC notes* for an article by attorney Hamish Sandison on tax-deductible contributions, how they work and who benefits from them.)

#### The Great Pyramid: Shades of King Tut

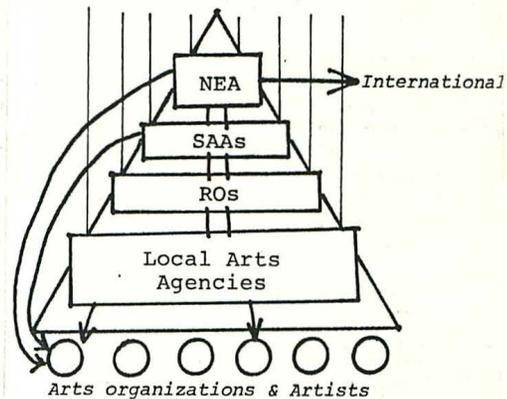
By the time that each of the four authors had presented an oral summary of his work, the real agenda of the meeting had taken shape: A case was being built that there was already a partnership among public arts agencies, and that this partnership only needs to be formalized and extended. With the same artists and arts institutions as constituents, the same concern for "quality" and encouraging private sector support as their goals, the public arts agencies needed only to streamline and coordinate their efforts.

The meeting had begun with Liv Biddle applauding the "partnership" of the states and the federal government. Joan Mondale in her keynote address pointed out that the Artists-in-Schools Program of the NEA "is truly a partnership program," and George Gelles had talked about his own Endowment staff experience saying: "The State Film Program was a partnership program if there ever was one." Gelles spent the first five minutes of his oral presentation joking about the color and weight of the research papers; we later learned that he has been hired to write up the meeting's proceedings. It remained only for Hank Putsch, head of the NEA's Office of Partnership, to put the finishing touches on the official line.

Putsch rose to present his own paper, "Issues and Opportunities Facing the Public-Sector Arts Support Network. (Someone ought to do

a scholarly paper on "Hyphenization at the NEA." He encouraged participants to read his paper first because it was the "shortest and most approachable." It reiterated some points from the other papers and outlined the small group discussion topics that would form the bulk of the remaining two days of the meeting: (1) What should the arts support network be in the year 2000?; (2) What is going on with this network at present?; and (3) What are our goals for the 80's?

After reading his own anecdotes aloud and outlining the group discussion process, Putsch turned to an easel to illustrate for the audience the kind of "dreaming" they might carry on in their discussion groups. In case the point made by all previous speakers had been missed, Putsch's diagram provided us with the most literal manifestation of the pyramid that shaped so much of the meeting's content:



Putsch's final gesture at this introductory session was to turn his diagram upside down with a great flourish, a gesture apparently designed to indicate that when the time was right the NEA would be willing to take its proper place as a kind of foundation for arts support at the local level.

#### "Arts Support" or Cultural Policy?

In inventing its "arts support network" and "arts support policy" locutions -- and in illustrating them with Putsch's pyramid -- the NEA was attempting to reify the notion that its proper role is to design and implement a policy of support for professional arts institutions, basing its judgements on a determination of "quality" made through a process of "peer review." In practice this means that grant funding recommendations are made by NEA-appointed panels of artists and administrators with some experience in the field under consideration.

This circumscribed view exists in contrast with the view that the federal agency ought to develop a national *cultural policy*, taking in equal consideration all aspects of the culture including those entirely outside the realm of the professional arts. The aim of such a policy would not be to support arts institutions (though institutions would almost certainly be supported for their work in helping to achieve the policy's goals). Instead its aim would be to help cultural development proceed in agreed-upon ways. For example, such a cultural policy might take as its principal aim the promotion of free expression and equality among all the cultures which make up the society.

The background papers for the National Partnership Meeting clearly reflect the Endowment's interest in seeing that its official view of an "arts support policy" prevails. Apparently, the NEA feels that the concerns of "special constituencies" ought to remain "special," for there seems to be no place for them in the agency's thinking about "public arts support." The mentions of the needs of neighborhoods, minority people, the aged and the poor in these papers might be counted on one hand. The paper on international systems focuses on countries with greater cultural homogeneity than the U.S. and even then fails to address the cultural implications of tourism, immigration and transient workers -- though the sources it cites are full of discussion of these crucial issues. During the meeting we heard nothing about other countries' policies with respect to the multicultural natures of their societies, nor about any of the many countries -- mostly outside of Europe -- in which multiculturalism is a fact of cultural life and cultural policy.

We went on to the first of our discussion group sessions wondering whether the conference participants would cooperate by hauling bricks to the pyramid the High Chiefs had designed. A rule of the conference kept us observers from speaking during the discussion groups -- that had come as an unwelcome surprise to some who had come cross-country to participate and found themselves silenced as "observers." During the next two days we were able to observe four of the eleven small groups at work, and this is what we saw.

#### Fifteen Months in Planning?!

One of us was assigned to a group with over 30 members; the other's group had half as many. This disparity appeared to reflect nothing more than the size of the rooms rented for the occasion. The larger rooms held more chairs and consequently more participants were assigned to them. Because groups worked with a time limit, there was only enough time to allow each person in the larger groups to make a short statement, with seldom more than a few moments left for discussion. The smaller groups had time to go around the table and to discuss what had been said.

The first working session was scheduled to begin at 9 A.M. on Tuesday. In the larger group, a half-hour or so was occupied with getting settled, separating the participants and observers, clarifying the rules. The participants were asked to "dream on paper" for 15 minutes. The subject of their "dreaming" was to be "public arts support in the year 2000" and they were advised by the group leader to "let creativity flow unbridled," though a moment later she encouraged the dreamers to "anchor" their dreams to specific categories (e.g., "governmental purposes"). The time from 10:45 to 11:30 was thus occupied: Each person read from his or her notes; several participants attempted to comment on the dreams of others, but were told by the leader to reserve their thoughts for later. At 11:30 the leader initiated a discussion about whether the group should have "free discussion" for the balance of the period, or go around the table once again. At 11:40 "free discussion" won out, and during the 10 minutes before adjourning for lunch, six people offered their comments.

The smaller group spent the entire 3 hours allocated to this exercise struggling with frustra-

tion at the meeting, its lack of representation of the public served by public arts agencies, and the questionable wisdom of starting with a discussion of the year 2000 "when we have real, immediate issues to deal with." A state agency director called the meeting "nothing more than a NASAA meeting with invited guests." Another state agency officer wasn't prepared to discuss the future without first questioning the historical perspective which had earlier been outlined by "these four distinguished men of the arts." An artist, one of several invited to offer "the artist's viewpoint," seconded this remark: "The intent is apparently a rah-rah meeting to show we believe in national, state and community levels as they are presented by these four white males."

Though participants offered their "dreams" and "fantasies" from time to time as each group had been instructed, the real substance of the discussion was criticism of present public agency programs, discussion of the problems of their own agencies, and of the irrelevance of "high art" values and "dinosaur institutions" to most of the public. By the end of the morning consensus was reached on the lack of leadership from the NEA and NASAA, the dangers of paternalism and the importance of grassroots participation to the development of long-term public arts support.

#### A Real Pot-boiler

After the morning discussion period, recorders from all 11 discussion groups met for lunch and "boiled down" the reports into 3 reports of a few minutes' length. Many participants were unable to find their own remarks reflected in these reports. From Geoff Platt, Director of the Arts Council of Greater New Orleans: "We feel as if we'd all been invited to a potluck and found all of our different dishes put into one huge pot and boiled." The Partnership staff acceded to this criticism and altered the reporting procedure. Thereafter each group's recorder delivered a report, and each group developed its own report by selecting the few "most important" ideas it discussed.

The second small group discussion period called for participants to engage in the kind of critical discussion of public agencies that had gone on "unofficially" in some groups in the morning. But there was something else to deal with now: A good deal of frustration at the meeting itself.

Participants' reluctance to express their dissatisfaction with the meeting for fear of reprisals offered an insight into the tenuous nature of the NEA's "partnership." One group decided to draw up a list of questions not being addressed by the meeting, and contemplated a clean sheet of butcher paper headed "NASTY ISSUES." But some of the members thought better of it: "Don't let that out of here -- we'll all be labelled as dissidents!" Over the fear-confirming protests of their "scribe," ("We're supposed to hand in all our notes"), and despite the fact that a tape recorder was whirring away in the corner, they destroyed the paper and resumed their discussion, chastened.

Another group spent several minutes of its first session debating the question of whether or not speakers would identify themselves so they could get to know each other as they talked. This time "the tape" was mentioned and anonymity won out. Several of the group leaders and recorders were Endowment staff members;

others sat in on the discussions as participants. One group was led by Anthony Turney, Director of the NEA's Office of State Programs. A state agency Chairman who participated in Turney's group was careful to note at each opportunity that "the Endowment has been good to me."

By the end of the second discussion session a clear split was also developing among the meeting's participants. On the one hand were the Old Boys, the defenders of policies which emphasize "artistic quality" as the primary goals of public arts support. On the other were those who felt that the cultural needs of the states, communities or regions that they serve were not reflected by the NEA's primary emphasis on building appreciation for Western European cultural forms and traditions.

Discussion of these fundamental issues was not explicitly on the agenda, which seemed to be created with the assumption that participants naturally had common goals and needed only to consider procedural questions. Nevertheless, each discussion group and plenary session raised such basic questions.

Michael Straight took the role of the archetypal Old Boy. Straight elaborated the position that the Endowment has failed in its real mission and is consequently suffering the unnecessary pains of "democratization." Said Straight: "If the National Endowment had focused on its real purpose of advocacy, leadership, building awareness of the arts, people would be demanding a high culture today." He believes that "Government has a misconceived role in the arts now; it should create a climate in which the individual can be recognized and rewarded."

Straight embodies a set of ideas and loyalties that bind the members of the Old Boy Network together: An idea of quality as exemplified by the achievements of western classical culture; a kind of cultural imperialism based on educating people "up" to a "superior" culture; a nostalgia for the days when his thinking had more impact and a corresponding feeling of being unappreciated for his current contributions; and finally, a contempt for the new wave of democratic reforms, of "populism."

#### The Old Boys' Chickens Come Home to Roost

In some ways, the Old Boys have strengthened the hand of their own opposition. For years they were rankled by the absence of professional standing for their work. Educational institutions then began to develop programs in arts administration, many of these little more than Master's degree programs in business administration with emphasis on managing arts-related businesses. These schools began turning out graduates to flood the job market for "the growing field of arts administration." The new crop of professionally-trained administrators lacks the high culture values and allegiances of the Old Boys. They come from all parts of the country and all strata of society. They don't look to New York as a kind of ideal cultural model, nor do they measure their own success by the number of world-class ballets' touring companies they can book. They are interested in the cultural development of their own communities, and it appears they are beginning to suspect that what's good for the High Chiefs may not be so good for them.

With this professionalization and the growing concern with cultural development on the

part of people working in their own communities a public arts leadership has been developing in places removed from the influence of the Old Boys, and "heretical" views have emerged that run up against the Old Boys' insistence on high culture values.

These new administrators are dissatisfied with the Endowment's paternalistic role and its enchantment with the values of the old school. Their dissatisfaction was made evident at the National Partnership Meeting in several ways. First, they emphasized the need to expand public participation in planning cultural program and policy. Second, they repeatedly raised the issue of cultural pluralism and questioned the public agencies' reluctance to put pluralism into practice. Third, they pushed for the decentralization of cultural programming and public authority and responsibility.

People were not encouraged to raise these issues by the format of the meeting, the background materials, or the statements of its officials. Nor were they encouraged to define the abstract terms in which their dissatisfaction was expressed. Since the meeting was not designed to arrive at specific conclusions or a consensus, it was easy for those in charge to respond to the criticisms expressed by dissembling, by smiling and nodding and complimenting participants on "the level of dialogue." Each opinion expressed, we were assured, would make it into the conference proceedings, and from there to the National Council and the boards of NASAA and NACAA.

Without any leadership -- even in the simple definition of terms -- it was often difficult to determine just what opinions were being expressed. For example, consider the confusion of the term *pluralism*, which was used with will abandon.

Several of the official speakers used the phrase "our pluralistic system" to mean that in the U.S. the arts are supported by public and private funds from several sources. But in the discussion groups, participants talked about "cultural pluralism." Dick Shea of the National Council for the Traditional Arts "dreamed" that the year 2000 would bring "recognition of all ethnic cultural organizations, their needs and audiences, and their equality with all other art forms, organizations and audiences." Haze Bryant of New York's Richard Allen Cultural Center: "When I registered for this conference I received two hand-outs. One was Tony Keller list of European contacts he'd interviewed for his report; the other was a list of entertainment events conference participants could take in. All European and white. Pluralism shouldn't be just a word to this meeting."

The second and third times all the small groups reported to the conference on their discussions, 7 out of 11 reports listed cultural diversity, pluralism, minority participation and representation as one of the most important considerations in developing a real "partnership." It will be interesting to see whether the confusion of terminology is used in the final reports on conference proceedings to obscure dissenting views.

#### Decentralization or "Partnership?"

*Decentralization* was also endorsed by participants. Rod Punt, head of the Los Angeles Arts Department: "It's time for the prophet to give some authority over to the disciples." Al Head of the State of Louisiana Division of the

Arts: "By the year 2000, decentralization should be complete. To do it we need more time for policy and leadership development, alternative resources, more decision-making at the community level." A.B. Spellman, head of NEA's Expansion Arts Division, delivering one of the "boiled-down" discussion group reports: "Any system adopted should be flexible, dynamic, active, pluralistic, have heavy emphasis on rational, coherent information exchange, minority representation, and representation of all other sectors. It should be non-hierarchical and promote mutual respect throughout." All the reporting groups in every session advocated some form of decentralization of cultural authority and responsibility.

Again, the Old Boys responded to this outpouring of sentiment by dissembling. Keeping the definition of decentralization narrow was another aspect of this strategy: No Endowment representative or other person who spoke from the dais endorsed any broader concept of decentralization than "partnership." But the definition of partnership was made explicit by much talk about extending the Federal-State partnership to the local level. For example, Peter Hero, Chairman of NASAA, in his opening remarks: "Regional organizations and local arts agencies are the missing links in our partnership now."

#### A Call for Leadership

By the time the final plenary session rolled around, participants had become much more disenchanted with the High Chief's attempts to shape the meeting in their own image. 7 out of the eleven final group reports listed more effective leadership at the national level as a priority for the '80's. Some of the people bemoaning the lack of leadership were pretty specific about their complaints. Norma Munn of the Association of American Dance Companies: "This focus on turf and mistrust is the product of centralization and doesn't help us with problems in the dance world. There is no serious, thoughtful, responsive leadership at the federal level." A.B. Spellman, delivering a final group report: "We need more effective leadership on all levels." Robin Tryloff of the Nebraska Arts Council, reporting on her group's final session: "We need creative leadership in the NEA, NASAA, NACAA and ACA."

So what did the National Partnership Meeting mean for the neighborhood arts movement, all things considered? For one thing, it appears that the concern with public policy issues like *cultural pluralism* and *decentralization* expressed by many of the conference participants had a lot to do with the influence of neighborhood arts people -- despite the best efforts of the Endowment to appropriate the whole realm of policy and reduce it to its own internal concern with "arts support." The NEA has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying (in the words of Peter Hero's introduction, "countless times") to develop a formula-funding scheme for local arts agencies that leaves neighborhood arts groups out in the cold. The Partnership meeting was the most recent of these attempts. It was preceded by several studies by various members of the Old Boy Network, and a "task force" process that involved nationwide public hearings.

Fewer than 10% of the people at the Partnership meeting were from local arts agencies; well under 10% of the meeting's participants were non-white; there were almost no young people

present as participants (the average age of participants in the discussion groups we attended was well over forty). And *still*, the Old Boys could not get a consensus to support their idea of "partnership!"

Neighborhood arts people are responsible for raising the issues of cultural pluralism and decentralization and keeping them in the public eye consistently enough to make every state agency director present at the Partnership meeting think before speaking about the people he or she had to face back home. The neighborhood arts people who've planted those thoughts owe themselves a pat on the back. Now it's time to work on the next step: Making sure the Endowment can't hold a policy meeting without including the people their policies affect.

The Partnership meeting also made it clear that the Old Boys are fast being outnumbered, though they are doing all they can to pretend they are still in power. We wonder how many Endowment-sponsored meetings during Nancy Hanks iron-handed administration would have concluded with a loud critique of the federal leadership? Clearly, the High Chiefs are losing their grip.

#### Tighe Says "Lie."

Finally, the National Partnership Meeting offered a startling example of how the personal whimsical style of administration practiced in the Old Boy Network is going to defeat the High Chiefs -- first because they will never gain the trust of the new administrators, and second because they strain even the least-developed notion of accountability for public officials.

Mary Ann Tighe, the NEA's Deputy Chairman for Programs, made several appearances on the dais, though she didn't speak until the closing session when it was her job to introduce Toni Morrison and Gunther Schuller (there to present "An Artist's View"). She did so by offering two anecdotes about artists:

First she told us how Twyla Tharp, overwhelmed by the complexity of the New York State Council's application forms, wrote across her application's cover sheet "I write dances, not applications. Send money. Love, Twyla." "To their everlasting credit" Tighe said, "they gave her the money." (Cautious laughter from the audience.)

Tighe's second story concerned Claudia Weil, the director of the film "Girlfriends." Tighe met Weil at a screening of the film, was delighted to see that it bore the Endowment's insignia and equally delighted at the NEA's good judgement in supporting it. Weil quickly disabused her, though, explaining that she'd received NEA support by describing her project as "a docu-drama on the immigrant experience." "Well," Tighe told the Partnership meeting, "she certainly psyched us out!"

To people who had spent the last three days in serious discussion of the criteria for public policy, Tighe's tales of noblesse oblige were a mockery at their expense.

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#### Other Views of Cultural Policy: A Review of Some Resources

##### Council of Europe Publications

"The culture...of any...section of society exists in its own right, and has its own criteria of excellence. It is not to be assessed

*in relation to some other culture... Cultural development policies must no longer envisage some single, neo-classic prestige pattern; they must accept the existence of a mosaic of cultures composed of a multiplicity of individual quests. Translated into action the doctrine of cultural pluralism means an ever broadening tolerance and mutual esteem between co-existing cultures, and a benevolence towards all on the part of government."*

Towards cultural democracy, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 1976

The Council of Europe started after World War II as a means for various Western European governments to help each other to reconstruct and advance beyond the terrible effects of the war. One of many divisions within the Council is the Conference of Ministers with Responsibility for Cultural Affairs. For their Oslo conference of 1976, they commissioned a number of books and studies on questions of culture and cultural policy. These and later Council of Europe publications offer some of the most interesting discussions of cultural issues we have yet read. When we happened upon them some years ago our whole way of thinking about culture was changed.

One of the most interesting of these books is Cultural policy in towns, a report on the "Fourteen Towns Project." The Council for Cultural Co-operation (CCC), set up by the Conference of Ministers to formulate cultural policy for the Council of Europe, explains the project: "*in the late 1960's...there was widespread dissatisfaction...with the piecemeal nature of local cultural and recreational policies. Ad hoc intervention in response to events was the rule:...a building provided, financial grants to local associations... There was a general desire for more coherent and planned policies, and for information which would help in deciding how to distribute resources of energy and money between various kinds of cultural and recreational activity so as to promote the greatest public satisfaction.*"

Fourteen towns in thirteen different countries (the smallest town was Akureyri in Iceland with a population of 12,000; the largest was Bologna, Italy, with over half a million residents) undertook a project designed to "*assist municipalities in the implementation of systematic cultural policies by promoting pilot experiments in cultural development at the local level.*" Though the extreme diversity of the towns made strict comparison of, say, budgets almost impossible, it was possible to examine previously existing cultural policies and programs, and monitor new policies and programs as they were attempted. The book offers a thorough analysis of municipal cultural policy, and can be an eye-opener for those of us who have worked in communities where cultural policy, if it exists at all, means an annual "arts week" at City Hall.

Towards cultural democracy (from which the quotation which began this article was taken) is a much denser and more scholarly discussion of issues in European cultural development. It includes a chapter which summarizes the thinking of half a dozen people who are thought to have original and respected ideas. As a whole, the book can be seen as a history of the development of the concepts that are today central to the work of the CCC. The discussions of continuing education, television, and sports are particularly interesting because they are

so different from most current American thinking, and because they are assumed to be integral components of cultural policy.

The demystification of culture is a survey of animation projects throughout Europe, also commissioned by the CCC. Animation is from the French animation socio-cultural, which is sometimes translated in English as socio-cultural community development. An animateur (one who works in an animation project) is someone who uses skills in arts and crafts, in community organizing, and in writing and speaking to help people to create and become involved in a community cultural life. Among the many projects this book describes are those in which animateurs work with people to write and distribute a book on their community's history; to produce a film about a hotly controversial road-building project in a neighborhood; to start a theater company which does street processions, shows in bars, theater for local political action groups, children's theater, and whatever else their community needs in the way of live performance; to help the prospective tenants of a housing development design their houses and community facilities; and to help produce a comic newspaper by and for local kids.

The concept of animation provides a particularly useful way of looking at the role of neighborhood artists in the U.S. Another CCC publication, its "Information Bulletin" of December 1975, contains a number of articles on animation which should be of interest to neighborhood arts people.

None of these publications is light reading. Much of this work was originally written in other languages, and some of the translations sound like they were done with a very wordy sledgehammer. The books are full of references which we suppose are meaningful to European readers, but less than illuminating to us. Beyond the question of language, the books tend to be dry.

People who've worked with community arts in Europe tell us that the Council of Europe is considered dry and academic itself, and that the people who work there aren't the ones who actually do things, but the ones who study the Unfortunatly, the doers seldom take the time to write about their work. If you are excited by new ideas concerning cultural issues, we urge you to try and overlook the dryness and read these books for their ideas, which are by no means irrelevant.

In the U.S., Council of Europe publications are available from Manhattan Publishing, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012, telephone (212) 966-1768. Call or write for current prices and availability.

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#### UNESCO Publications

The main source of cultural policy publications is UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which has published a large number of studies and documents concerning the cultural policies of individual nations and cultural issues in gener-

A good starting point in this large body of information is the general survey Cultural Development: Experience and Policies, written in 1972 by Augustin Girard of the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Girard lays out main issues of cultural policy and discusses various

means by which governments set policies and administer programs for cultural support. He discusses some of the social, technological and economic pressures that threaten contemporary cultural life, calling for action on the part of the public.

Girard points out the ways in which society's emphasis on consumption, the dehumanizing nature of our worklives, and the decay of the environment (particularly in cities) has led increasingly to alienation. He says that our bombardment by media has led to passivity and "voyeurism," and that the aim of cultural policy within this setting is to establish a dynamic equilibrium between individual, traditional culture and the emerging "universal culture" of industrialized society.

Girard then discusses various aspects of cultural development work. In his chapter on *Animation* he considers such philosophical issues as democratization of culture versus cultural democracy; he points out that the former, which consists of simply taking the high arts to a broader public, has proven ineffective and that a more democratic form of cultural development needs to be pursued. He then lays out an array of tools of cultural development, including the work of *animateurs* and the roles to be played by various kinds of organizations and facilities.

Subsequent chapters discuss culture and lifelong education, the importance of controlling our physical surroundings to improving the quality of life, various forms of support for artistic creators, sociological methods of analyzing cultural needs and comparing programs, and the role of public authorities. In this last chapter, Girard asserts that decentralization is the important guiding principle of public cultural action and the first step towards cultural democracy. He sees local authorities taking primary responsibility for overall quality of life and asserts that the central authorities' main role is in carrying out communication and training activities and in supporting and promoting research and innovation.

In addition to Girard's book and many other publications on international cultural policy, UNESCO also publishes a quarterly journal called CULTURES which has contained a number of very interesting articles. For example, one issue focused on "The Public Square: A Space for Culture," and discussed many international variations on this aspect of urban life. Another issue concentrated on "Latin America and the Caribbean: Identity and Pluralism" and contained a number of good articles on the problems and prospects for cultural work in that world region. At \$25.00 per year a subscription to CULTURES isn't cheap. Try talking a local library into subscribing -- and stocking up on UNESCO's cultural policy series, too.

The U.S. distributor for UNESCO publications is UNIPUB, 345 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010, telephone (212) 686-4707.

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#### And on the Home Front...

At least one United States government has commissioned a comprehensive cultural policy document: The Comprehensive Cultural Policy for the State Of California was written in 1978 by NAPNOC's present Co-Directors, Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard.

The policy was shelved soon after it was written, as the California Arts Council repudiated the last vestiges of its progressive reputation in return for support by the major cultural institutions, who lobbied for a dramatic increase in the Council's appropriation. The document articulates the principles that should inform public support of cultural development, emphasizing decentralization and cultural diversity.

Interested NAPNOC members may obtain a free copy by contacting the NAPNOC office. Non-members may purchase copies for \$4 each, which includes postage.