

NAPNOC

notes

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CUTTING NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS:

The First Cut Is The Deepest

Official Washington is gearing up for what's being billed as the most extensive cut in federal-level programs ever. President Reagan's February 18 budget speech on national TV will signal the beginning of a Madison Avenue-style campaign to promote a package of deep budget cuts that the administration has so far tried to keep under wraps.

Though none of the details are known, the main theme of interest to neighborhood arts people is crystal-clear: Under the Reagan administration, federal government will do little to advance the cause of cultural democracy.

More concretely, neighborhood arts programs that expect to get federal money under the current regime should try on the "urban enterprise zone" for size, because most of the places neighborhood arts groups have heretofore been able to slip through the cracks -- parks and recreation programs, the arts and humanities agencies, housing and community development programs, employment subsidies--are in for hard times.

If even a significant fraction of the policy decisions behind budget cuts recently recommended by the Office of Management and Budget are implemented, NEA and NEH will lean further in the direction of the big institutions and Western high arts. The Interior Department will concentrate on leasing offshore oil and inland coal. CETA will be reduced to a publicly-funded subsidy program for commercial interests. HUD will pave the way for inner-city speculators. And the Department of Education will leave spending decisions up to hard-pressed local school districts.

Don't get out your handkerchiefs yet, though. Seasoned observers point out that with each new administration comes an array of bold, new initiatives that often do little more than establish a negotiating position. The smart money in Washington takes a wait-and-see attitude.

Here's how this year's budget process works: The Office of Management and Budget headed by David Stockman (the youngest and most "New Right" member of Reagan's cabinet), reviewed transition team reports and other data and recommended \$26 billion in "first-tier" budget cuts to President Reagan. OMB's reduction proposals were leaked to the press; a summary (complete with OMB's assessment of the potential opposition to each cut) appeared in the *Washington Post* of February 8 and brought an immediate outcry from many groups who argue that the cuts are skewed in favor of the well-off at the expense of the poor. (cont'd on page two----)

MAY IS CULTURAL DEMOCRACY MONTH

...and NAPNOC Will Meet in Washington

Last month's NAPNOC notes told you about the right-wing Heritage Foundation and its attack on cultural democracy; glance to the left and you'll find news of the Reagan administration's attempts to drastically alter government's priorities; and no one can predict what comes next.

For neighborhood arts people, the future presents a double challenge: Not only must we struggle for the survival of our community organizations; we must also work for cultural democracy.

The Right has drawn a picture of American culture that centers on the high arts, on the taste of the established institutions and the academies. It proposes to eliminate public support for community-based cultural institutions, for non-Western forms and traditions, for the critical and the experimental.

The Right's proposal is inimical to the movement for cultural democracy, which is based on the principle that every person and every community in this society has the right to culture and self-determination. American society consists of many equal and co-existing cultures. Government has no more right to promote one of them above the others than it has to establish a state religion or a state political party; all must be treated equally.

That is why NAPNOC's Board has chosen to designate May as Cultural Democracy Month and to take as the theme for NAPNOC's 5th Annual Meeting (May 22-23 in Washington, DC) Building Cultural Democracy: Community Development, Cultural Rights and Public Policy in the 80s. (cont'd on page 4----)

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Cutting Cultural Democracy (cont'd)

OMB's proposed cuts have come to be called "Stockman's Black Book."

A few days later it was learned that even deeper cuts would be made by the President prior to his February 18 TV appearance. Apparently, he felt that making all the cuts at once would make for better p.r. than handling them in two "tiers" as originally planned.

On February 18, Reagan will announce about \$45 billion worth of cuts in federal spending -- that is, he will proffer a federal budget \$45 billion less than the \$726.5 billion budget prepared by President Carter before leaving office. Sometime in the next few weeks Reagan is expected to identify yet another \$10 billion in budget reductions. All \$55 billion will be reflected in his March 10 budget submission to Congress -- and while there's lots of speculation, no one knows what Congress will do.

Agencies Put on Notice

OMB has sent notification of the proposed cuts to the agencies which would be affected; the 100 independent federal agencies were given 48 hours to respond to Stockman in writing if "there are better ways of achieving the reductions," according to Reagan's instructions.

In the case of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the Black Book proposed cuts of 50% in the agencies' budget authorities, "premised on the notion that the administration should completely revamp federal policy for arts and humanities support" and that NEA and NEH constitute "a low priority item."

The Post called these "silk-stocking cuts," citing the administration's need to appear to spread cuts among rich and poor alike -- an interesting characterization in light of the usual right-wing critique which says these agencies must be cut because they have become "too populist."

The National Council on the Arts meeting held February 13-15 in Washington (see article in this issue) was to be the occasion for some hard talk about cuts proposed for the agency, but reportedly President Reagan was so impressed by the number and quality of early defenses of the Endowments that followed the OMB leak that he took the Endowments' budgets to Camp David to ponder over the weekend.

It was rumored that the arts and humanities agencies would receive notification of their proposed cuts on February 17, giving them a day to propose "better ways" if they could.

Though NEH's Public Affairs Office acknowledged receiving its notification on the 17th, Chris Davis of NEA's Public Affairs told NAPNOC notes that the agency wouldn't learn of its cuts until the President's TV speech.

For the moment, guesses about where Endowment cuts could fall range the full spectrum between OMB's recommendations and the Carter budget proposals of \$175 million for the NEA and \$169 million for the NEH.

You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet

According to Stockman's Black Book, CETA would sustain an even unkind cut: OMB recommends that public sector CETA be phased out entirely over a two-year period. By October 1981, regular CETA jobs in the public sector (Titles IID and VI) would be eliminated. Cuts in other titles are anticipated.

The Black Book predicts strong opposition to these cuts from state and local governments (noting that "Termination will diminish services in most jurisdictions") from organized labor, and from "minority groups since virtually all PSE participants are disadvantaged and almost half are minorities."

Most people think the new administration can't eliminate job creation programs altogether; speculation in Washington is that with CETA's demise or decimation, Reagan's strategy will be to concentrate on incentives for private business to create jobs -- perhaps others like the proposed multi-city pilot experiment in reducing the minimum wage.

Economic Underdevelopment

OMB's Black Book calls for elimination of the Appalachian Regional Commission (discussed in NAPNOC notes #6) and nine other regional commissions, cutting ARC to \$223 million this year and to nothing the next. There has been strong speculation that the administration might have to back down on this one, since it affects constituents of both Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-TN) and Senate Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.VA). However, "White House sources" have been quoted as saying the President will recommend even stronger current-year cuts than OMB, leaving just enough money this year "to close up shop" -- perhaps to show that "everyone must feel the knife."

Other economic development support would be lost if Stockman's cuts were made in the Economic Development Administration, the division of the Department of Commerce that handles public works programs, business development loans and technical assistance.

Again, sources in the executive branch have indicated that Reagan's proposal for cutting EDA will be even more dramatic than Stockman's: He wants to cut \$445 million from the agency's \$668 million budget -- leaving only a reduced program of aid to businesses adversely affected by competition from imports.

The Black Book proposed elimination of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's \$675 million Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program, and cuts in other community development-oriented programs at HUD. Stockman said that UDAG, which funnels federal dollars through municipal governments to support downtown and industrial development, "creates no new private investment" and so should be abolished.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting would be cut, according to OMB, from around \$170 million now through gradual reductions to "level out at \$100 million in 1985."

Just to put all this into perspective, consider the following: The Black Book also

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recommends cutting the subsidy for school lunches for poor children. If Stockman gets his way they'll spend 9¢ (instead of 19.2) per meal for "basic subsidy" and another 8¢ (instead of 15.9) for "commodity subsidy" -- and eliminate subsidy for snacks altogether. (The Head Start program, however, will be saved. Education Secretary Terrel Bell says it "makes taxpayers out of potential tax eaters."

Let Them Eat Taxes

The Reagan administration sees these proposed cuts as a cohesive "package," instead of a multitude of discrete recommendations -- and therein lies the administration's strategy for marketing this "economic recovery package." All the big guns of the new administration -- Stockman, Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, and President Reagan himself -- will make repeated television appearances before the President's budget proposal reaches Congress.

The national campaign is being coordinated by a volunteer committee headed by Hollywood millionaire Charles Wick (who is frequently mentioned as possible head of the International Communications Agency), and staffed by a right-wing Washington public relations firm. So be prepared for a media blitz with President Reagan, fast earning the nickname of "The Great Communicator," at the helm.

The thrust of this campaign will be solidarity, pulling together to save the country. The administration's advisors sagely predict that any move to trade cuts on a special interest or regional basis will defeat their overall goal of cutting federal programs to a degree unparalleled in U.S. history while raising military spending to new heights.

If the Reagan administration gets its way, military spending will account for approximately \$220 billion of a \$675 billion annual budget -- or 33¢ out of every tax dollar. In fact, all of OMB's proposed cuts -- the whole Black Book of \$26 billion in recommended reductions -- fails to equal the increase of \$32 billion expected in military spending this year.

The Opposition

It's difficult to gauge the strength of opposition to these cuts, though just about everyone but the rich will feel the pinch. The most powerful potential opposition -- mayors, state officials, labor leaders -- have so far been quite moderate in their criticism of the proposals, often invoking "the need to cut."

But most observers think that critics are just waiting for Reagan's proposal to Congress -- despite OMB leaks, few facts about the administration's plans are known, and it's difficult to muster opposition without a clear idea of who will be most affected.

OMB clearly expects opposition. The Black Book acknowledges that "enactment of the complete package (of food stamp cuts) is highly unlikely." On proposed student loan cuts: "middle-class families...would react negatively...Higher education institutions... would also protest strongly." On proposed cuts in disability insurance: "Opponents...

would make emotional appeals about vulnerable people being excluded from benefits, such as the disabled, widows, mothers and dependent children."

Much of this opposition is also waiting for Reagan's other shoe to drop: No one knows what new program proposals will accompany these proposed budget cuts. It's likely that block grants, leaving state and local governments more control over spending federal dollars, will replace many categorical grants programs.

For instance, OMB has proposed combining 57 separate federal elementary and secondary education programs into two block grant programs. Programs like the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA), which have provided some support for arts groups working in the schools, are bound to be affected by this consolidation. Similar consolidations in community service programs and other areas of federal support would also mean that federal programs formerly open to direct applications from non-profit groups will disappear.

Where state and local governments are responsive to the funding claims of nonprofit organizations, this may mean successful new alliances and support relationships; conversely, where the federal government has been more supportive and responsive than state and local governments, nonprofits formerly funded by federal government may be in for trouble.

So far, no legislative coalition has emerged to respond to the administration's priorities in this array of cultural development-related programs. Amid rumors in January of a 50% cut to the Endowments, Rep. Fred Richmond (D-NY) announced the formation of the Congressional Arts Caucus. A spokesman stated that the Caucus' 123 members will meet on February 25 for the first time. Its agenda won't be known until then, but "full funding for the Endowments" and various arts-related tax measures are like to dominate. Similarly, Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) has initiated an "informal organization" called Concerned Senators for the Arts. These groups are not expected to take positions on any of the non-arts federal programs which have provided so much support for neighborhood arts work.

Information, Please!

As old programs are cut and new ones developed, we'll keep you apprised of the likely effects on neighborhood arts groups and their public support -- and we need your help to get the full picture.

Some state and local governments and nonprofit groups will be planning ahead for changes in support and programming. As soon as you know something about the response to cuts in your area, remember to let us know here in Washington.

We can share our view from the capital, but the real meaning of Reagan's policies won't be known until people in communities all over the U.S. feel the local impact of federal cuts and begin to plan their adjustments to the new picture of public policy and support.

Send us newspaper clippings, papers, notes -- in short, anything you think conveys the local impact of new policies. Thanks.

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY MONTH, cont'd

NAPNOC invites neighborhood arts people across the U.S. to participate in a nationwide celebration of cultural democracy. During May, we are asking neighborhood artists and groups to take part in a month-long, decentralized "demonstration," using the skills, tools and resources of our movement. We hope that many will present performances or exhibits under the banner of Cultural Democracy Month, while others will circulate petitions, march on city halls and state legislatures, hold rallies, create murals, stage publicity stunts, paint billboards or take out ads.

It's important now to emphasize that America's cultural heritage includes all of us: Multiculture, equality and freedom of expression are our strengths. We live and work in rural, urban and suburban neighborhoods, come from all ethnic traditions, are men and women, old and young, artists, administrators and community workers. Cultural Democracy Month will give us a chance to let our neighbors -- and our government -- know how we feel.

Think and talk about how you can participate in celebrating Cultural Democracy Month and let us hear from you.

NAPNOC will coordinate a publicity campaign for the month-long event; the fact that many groups and individuals around the country will be participating in their own ways will make the story a natural for publications and broadcasters who haven't been picking up on single-group events. We will be asking other organizations -- local, regional and national -- to lend their names as cosponsors of Cultural Democracy Month; we urge all NAPNOC members and subscribers to endorse the celebration of Cultural Democracy Month as soon as possible. We can supply you with background material for local publicity, share with you the good ideas of participating neighborhood arts groups from other parts of the country and help you plan your own participation. Call or write today.

5th Annual Meeting

Cultural Democracy Month will culminate in NAPNOC's annual meeting: Building Cultural Democracy: Community Development, Cultural Rights and Public Policy in the 80s. The meeting will feature speakers and workshops on the issues of greatest concern to neighborhood arts people in the coming years: Economic development and neighborhood arts--how can community cultural groups approach greater self-sufficiency in a period of public funding cutbacks? How can they work for general community development? What is the current state of public cultural policy in the U.S. and around the world? How might it change? How can we work to protect and extend the cultural rights of all people?

Save May 22-23 and plan to come to Washington to attend NAPNOC's annual meeting, to support Cultural Democracy Month, and to let your representatives in government hear from you. Further details in future issues.

CONCRETE SCULPTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

Liz Leyh is an American community artist of enormous energy, commitment and inventiveness who's spent most of the last dozen years working with Inter-Action, a large, diversified neighborhood arts program based in London, England. For four years, Liz worked as a town artist in one of the experimental "new towns" the British created in an effort to deconcentrate urban populations, to move people to the countryside.

The new towns faced the serious and complex problems that might be expected to beset any effort to create whole cities from scratch; one partial answer to the need to create a cultural life and authentic social structures in these artificial settlements was to engage town artists to live and work in them, and to turn their skills to the uses of community members. Liz Leyh helped groups of neighbors design and build playgrounds, create giant papier-mache vegetable costumes for school pageants, create outdoor sculpture for open spaces, and in the process, use artwork to make a community.

Her specialty is concrete sculpture, and Inter-Action Inprint has recently published a book by Liz entitled Concrete Sculpture in the Community, which describes many collaborative projects -- from a block-long giraffe to an Own and Pussycat "adventure playground" -- which were mounted by groups of children and other community members. There is lots of how-to information on materials and methods, and also a good measure of Liz' inspiring philosophy on the role of the community artist.

The book is available in the U.S. through Jim Ware, 140 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10010, at \$7.50 a copy in paperback. 88 pages; many photos and illustrations.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING SYMPOSIUM

The Center for Responsive Governance has scheduled a symposium titled "The Uneasy Partnership: Government Funding and the Voluntary Sector," to be held March 13 and 14 in Washington, DC.

From CRG's press release: "The symposium will review recent research findings on the scope and effects of government funding and will examine legislative and administrative strategies for improving the government-voluntary sector relationship. Particular attention will be focused on smaller non-profit organizations that have the greatest difficulty in coping with governmental accountability requirements. Attendance at the symposium is open to non-profit organizations, government agencies, foundations, and the research community."

Among participants in the workshop on arts and humanities organizations will be NAPNOC Co-Director Arlene Goldbard and Paul DiMaggio of Yale's Program on Non-Profit Organizations. For further information, contact the Center for Responsive Governance at 2021 L St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20036. Or telephone CRG at (202) 223-2400.

SECRECY AND ELITISM AT THE NCA:
Variations on Two Themes

It appears the advent of the Reagan administration has provoked the National Council on the Arts to new heights of secrecy and elitism.

Our first taste of this star-chamber atmosphere occurred on January 27, when we visited the National Endowment for the Arts with the intention of observing the National Council's Policy and Planning Committee meeting (habitual NAPNOC notes readers will remember that we've covered these meetings before -- see #6 and #7, for instance).

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Planning Division staff told us over the phone that the morning's session was closed, so we waited until the afternoon's open session to attend. As usual, NEA had failed to notify the building security staff of a public meeting, so we were forced to spend the customary half-hour waiting for the guard to reach someone who could verify that a meeting was indeed taking place.

As soon as we got upstairs and took our seats, Don Moore, NEA Deputy Chairman for Policy and Planning, came across the room and asked us to leave.

"What program are you with?" Moore asked. When we replied that we weren't with any program at all, he responded that the meeting was private, for staff and Council only. We averred that we often covered these meetings, and that according to federal codes they were indeed public. Moore responded "Well, we don't really publicize these meetings, so it wouldn't be fair to all the other people if you were the only ones who knew about them."

We suggesting consulting Bob Wade, the NEA's general counsel, at which point Moore drew himself up to his full height and barked "Don't get stiff with me!" Somewhat taken aback, we said if the law dictated that we leave, we would.

Moore left the room, returning later to take his seat at the Council table. During the course of the afternoon other outsiders sat in on the meeting, but none were asked to leave.

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Moore's interest in secrecy and his ignorance of the law paled in comparison to the private club-y atmosphere of the NCA's meeting over Valentine's Day weekend. A few of the highlights:

Just after entering the chic Four Seasons Hotel for the Council meeting on the morning of Friday, February 13, we were presented with startling news. Two items of information buried in the last-minute materials distributed to NCA members were contracts to be drawn from Research Division funds: One for up to \$40,687 for Mrs. Tyler Abell of Washington, DC, covered her services in developing corporate and other private arts support; a contract for up to \$55,657 for Gerrit Cone (also of Washington, DC) covered his services in developing and implementing a plan for support of community arts agencies (CAAs).

If Cone's contract was approved, it would be one more in a long line of unsuccess-

ful and expensive attempts to solve the "CAA problem" at the Endowment -- and rumor had it the contract would pass, since Cone had been a staff member of the new administration's transition team at the NEA, and gossip over the pink-and-silver coffee cups at the Four Seasons had it that Cone's contract was the pet project of higher-ups in the transition team.

(We talked to Cone on Saturday afternoon and asked him about his qualifications for this community arts agencies pilot contract; he replied that his work in the museum, opera and theatre fields had given him a lot of contact with community arts agencies. We noted that people could be expected to be suspicious of his proposed contract since it followed in the footsteps of so many others, and since none of the community arts agency people we'd talked to knew him. He replied that he was prepared for suspicion, bringing to mind a rather blonder, rather younger, clean-faced version of G. Gordon Liddy.)

Friday afternoon, CAAs were once again on the agenda, and Chairman Livingston Biddle proposed to "set a framework for the discussion." He asserted that further discussion would be "spinning wheels" and instead proposed "developing a few pilot ideas" and coming back to the Council with details "later this year." This produced a somewhat stunned silence among the speakers called to the Council table for this agenda item -- the heads of NACAA and NASAA -- and the audience as well.

Norman Champ (an NCA member noted for his willingness to ask embarrassing questions) asked about Cone's contract. Champ noted that the CAA policy originally scheduled for discussion by the Council provided for an Endowment staff liaison with CAAs. He asked whether the proposed contracts with Abell and Cone, which he had come across leafing through his Council book, were meant to fill this liaison role.

Biddle said that Cone's contract was for "development of the pilot endeavors I mentioned," but was "not part of this discussion, Norm...Let me explain this tonight, when we adjourn tonight."

Needless to say, Champ's hushing-up piqued the curiosity of the assembled -- though scant protest was made. Council member Bernie Lopez suggested that at least the CAA people were owed a time frame: If the NCA wouldn't act on their policy statement today, when would it act, and when would the "pilot endeavors" be presented?

Lopez then deftly removed the wind from his own sails by suggesting that August might be a good time to present additional material, a proposition Biddle had no trouble concurring in.

* * *

By Saturday, the "CAA question" had developed into a more heated issue. On Friday night, NACAA and NASAA had sent a message to Policy and Planning Committee Chairman Josh Dickinson, asking him to reopen the question for the common-sense reason that the Endowment would never be able to evaluate the mysterious "pilot endeavors" Cone would ostensibly develop unless it had a policy.

But not until Council members and audience had begun to leave their seats for lunch did Lopez attempt to suggest that the Council should take up the CAA policy statement upon reconvening. Earlier, Biddle had stated that the afternoon's session would be closed to the public, so if Lopez' suggestion were to be accepted, the meeting would have to remain public for a while.

The lunch break was filled with speculation: Would observers be permitted back into the meeting after lunch? Would the Council ignore NACAA and NASAA's pleas to take action on the question of adopting the CAA policy statement?

The Council members returned and the doors were opened to spectators. We filled the rows of dusty pink-and-blond chairs, expecting the meeting to reconvene on the "CAA question" when Biddle announced that a camera crew covering the meeting was there to film some background shots. When the crew left, Biddle announced the meeting was again closed, and the audience filed out, dumbfounded, assuming the CAA policy was dead. But this assumption was premature.

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Apparently, Council members resented Biddle's clumsy handling of the Cone and CAA issues; they felt they were being railroaded and didn't like it. Our information about their reactions is sketchy, but it bodes a developing conflict over the respective roles of Chairman and Council.

On Sunday, Council members dismissed all NEA staff (except Biddle) from the already-closed session, and raised the Cone and Abell contracts, objecting to "more studies." Supposedly, Biddle appealed to the Council on the basis of Cone's connections with administration big shots, and supposedly the NCA was not moved. They tabled consideration of the contracts, and then reopened the meeting to the few remaining spectators.

Once again, Lopez raised the CAA policy, and without objections, the NCA endorsed the policy statement on community arts agencies put forward by NACAA, NASAA and the NEA's Office of Partnership. The statement carries no new programming authority or appropriation of funds, so it remains still to be seen whether the Council or staff will later take action to initiate a CAA support program. If they do, it will adhere to the terms of this policy statement and focus on a "state/local partnership" arrangement of sub-grants to local agencies through the state arts agencies, generally the same arrangement reported in NAPNOC notes #6.

Remember, readers, that the National Council on the Arts is an advisory body to the Chairman of the NEA. Past Chairmen have taken actions over the objections of their Councils, and Biddle may attempt to do likewise in this situation. But clearly the NCA members are chafing at the constraints Biddle has attempted to place on their review and comment, and it will be interesting to see how this conflict plays out in the two Council meetings remaining before Biddle's tenure ends.

* * *

The aspect of the Council meeting with the farthest-reaching implications involved no action at all: The NCA devoted Saturday morning to a carefully-orchestrated "discussion" of what they persist in calling "policy."

The session began with a discussion of the Challenge Grant program, which Biddle and most NCA members agreed was "the jewel in our crown." Challenge administrator Liz Weil was invited to the Council table to talk about the "leverage" power of Challenge Grants; she asserted that for an investment of the NEA's \$92 million over two years, more than 370 arts institutions receiving Challenge grants had gotten about \$500 million from private sources. (This same 5:1 ration was earlier claimed by Biddle for all NEA grants.)

Weil reported that 92% of past Challenge grantees polled said that they could use additional, and larger, Challenge grants. Council member Sandy Boyd said that a key question for the Challenge program now was whether, if the NEA's budget was cut, Challenge funds should be earmarked for second-round grants to previous recipients.

Robert Carter, head of the new administration's transition team for the NEA (who sat at the Council table next to Mary Ann Tighe for most of the meeting) broke in here to say that there "couldn't be a clearer way program-wise" for the NCA to prove that NEA support returns private dollars, and therefore to defend against proposed budget cuts. Some Council members then suggested that a portion of every Endowment program's funds be set aside for Challenge granting, and Don Moore agreed they'd look into it.

Next, NCA member Theodore Bikel delivered a talk on "art forms." He began with a rambling, quasi-historical explication of America's "uneasiness" with the arts, attributing this attitude to the Puritan heritage. From this point he took a rather circuitous route to the statement that "art fields, in terms of government support" are uneasy with "governmental sine qua nons foisted upon them." He concluded with a statement of the need to reach out to potential applicants who fail to approach NEA "out of ignorance, shyness, or an intense feeling of privacy."

Then new member Toni Morrison delivered a passionate and eloquent speech on "individual artists," focusing mainly on the worsening plight of young writers as publishing becomes more and more a matter of the corporate bottom line. The most powerful part of her talk was a critique of the romanticized view of the "struggling, suffering artist" -- that view which cherishes the suffering more than the person, and conversely regards public acceptance with fear and suspicion.

The power of her talk was blunted, though, when her critique of the dominant idea of the artist was forgotten in the NCA's eagerness to endorse her conviction that the "peer review process" the NEA uses to make grants recommendations is a remedy to these problems because it provides an arena in which artists are in control of decision-making about art. The other Council members ignored Morrison's debunking of their cherished notion of "quality" and instead specu-

lated about whether the Endowment could compel private sector funders (never far from the Council members' minds all weekend, with 50% budget cuts looming large) to adopt its "peer review process" in their decisions.

* * *

A most notable and conspicuous feature of the weekend's meeting was the opportunity it afforded observers for a first-hand look at the NCA's collective ignorance on program and policy matters. Morrison's talk was followed, for instance, by much remarking and questioning concerning the circumstances of young writers' lives. Several NCA members were clearly shocked to find the situation so dismal.

Just as these members were afforded their first opportunity to learn some of the exigencies of a writer's life, others were afforded a chance to find out that many performing arts facilities have floors that are bad for dancers, and that sponsors sometimes fail to pay performers.

Perhaps these busy and important Presidential appointees may be forgiven for their ignorance of research and theoretical work in cultural policy, of the experiences of other governments working in this area, even of the histories of the institutions and impulses with which the Endowment concerns itself. But how many years of National Council service is required to know that writers struggle, that the publishing industry has changes, that dancers need a flexible floor?

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NCA member Martin Friedman then delivered his talk on "institutions." He presented a purported history of the development of arts institutions in the U.S. -- a history that began and ended with opera houses and museums.

Like other Council members' presentations on these "policy" themes, Friedman's talk omitted any mention of community-based institutions: There were no settlement houses, meeting houses, churches, granges, unions or community centers in Friedman's history of American institutions, and neither were there any in the final presentation, Sandy Boyd's brief talk on "access to the best." Boyd averred that the NEA couldn't fund everything, so ought to support selectively, based on a judgement of "quality" and the "potential national consequences" of the project or organization in question.

With that, the policy discussion ended well ahead of schedule: Not a word about artists' employment and the incipient decimation of CETA, nor about multicultural, decentralization, equality, or freedom of expression; no mention of neighborhood arts work, of international exchange or legal rights; no mention of the impact of expected cuts in the Departments of Education and the Interior or in HUD and their likely impact on community arts, or of the increase in energy and transportation costs, the decline of "discretionary income," and the impact of changes in tax policy. Note well: The express purpose of Saturday morning's "policy" discussion was to clarify the NCA's priorities for the future -- so read and be warned.

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The National Council on the Arts is bound by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which requires meetings to be open to the public subject to the guidelines issued by the Administrator of GSA. The Act requires written notice and justification for closing any part of a meeting to the public.

In accordance with the Act, Biddle published guidelines for the NEA's compliance in the Federal Register of February 13, 1980. On the grounds of protecting the "trade secrets" of applicants, all meetings or parts of meetings devoted to the review, discussion, evaluation and ranking of grant applications and contract proposals may be closed, though an executive summary of the actions taken must be made available to the public within three business days following the closed meeting. So far as we have been able to ascertain, only a small portion of the NCA's closed sessions this weekend concerned contracts -- and one wonders what "trade secrets" justified the closure in those cases. Yet the meeting was opened and closed as easily as a revolving door, and neither written announcements nor justifications were supplied.

As the National Council and staff attempt to restrict public access and to capriciously invoke the Chairman's privilege to close meetings, the public's right to monitor the activities of this tax-supported agency is damaged. Everyone we've talked to about this problem of growing secrecy at the NEA has the same initial reaction: Laughter, followed by "What do they think the NEA is, anyway -- the Pentagon?"

Surely the agency does more harm to its reputation and welfare by raising such suspicion and ridicule than it fears to do by behaving like a publicly-accountable body. We hope the Council members realize their role is to serve the public, and not to serve as its adversary, before it is too late to undo the damage.

Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard

SERVING HISPANIC AMERICAN ARTS: A Follow-up on the Task Force

Last month's article on the NEA's Hispanic American Arts Task Force left us waiting for the Steering Committee's proposal to establish a national information center to come before the National Council on the Arts. Since then, the Steering Committee met and decided not to submit its proposal to the February Council meeting. Instead, the Committee is convening an early-April meeting in Denver, including most of the groups listed below, to present its plan to Hispanic technical assistance providers. Apparently, the decision on whether and how to proceed will follow from this meeting. One of the key issues raised throughout the Task Force's work has been its relationship to existing service and advocacy groups.

This month, we've taken a look at some of these programs and have prepared the summaries which appear below.

ARIZTLAN - Arizona

Ariztlan is a network of Hispanic and native American Indian artists, educators

and cultural workers throughout the state of Arizona. Its main goal is to encourage communication within this network, and to support the work of artists and cultural groups that reflect the indigenous cultural heritage of the state.

Beginning in March, Ariztlan will publish a bimonthly newsletter. This will supplement the main vehicle for Ariztlan's developing network: Its bimonthly meetings. In keeping with its commitment to seek out and help develop latent creative talent, Ariztlan meetings are held in small towns outside the three main urban areas of Arizona. Local artists are invited to attend the day-long meetings, to share and discuss their own work and then work with resource people who provide assistance in producing and developing more professional work.

Ariztlan is a very low-budget organization, fueled mainly by the imaginative use of resource people who contribute their time. Other free workshop opportunities are often available, both in areas like management, marketing and events coordination, and in more technical aspects of arts production, like printmaking techniques.

For more information, contact Ariztlan's President: Jim Covarrubias, Ariztlan, P.O. Box 276, Tempe, AZ 85281. Phone 602/253-3541.

ASSOCIATION FOR RESOURCES & TECHNICAL SERVICES (ARTS) - Washington, DC

ARTS is a nonprofit service organization for Hispanic artists and arts groups begun in 1978 "to enable the survival of the Hispanic artist as an individual" and "to further and preserve the artistic and cultural integrity within the Hispanic Community."

The main vehicle for ARTS' work is its bi-monthly newsletter, ARTS Reporter, described as a national clearinghouse of Hispanic arts activities. Regular features include grants deadlines and awards listings; news about conferences, workshops and publications; and articles exploring programs and issues related to the Hispanic cultural community.

ARTS Director Luis Cardona sees an expanding role for the Association in helping "create better linkages on the national, state and local levels." Aside from the Reporter, ARTS seeks to support Hispanic cultural work through workshops and conferences and through individualized consultation in a variety of areas such as management and fundraising and public relations.

ARTS Reporter subscriptions are available for individuals (\$12/yr) and organizations (\$15), with reduced rates for seniors and youth.

For further information, contact Luis Cardona, Editor, ARTS, P.O. Box 34272, Washington, DC 20034. Phone 301/299-4567.

ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC ARTS (AHA) - New York

The New York area's large, culturally active Hispanic community has spawned the largest of these service organizations. AHA recently published the 23rd issue of its Hispanic Arts newsletter; it also carries on an ongoing series of workshops and seminars on management and funding, audience development and public relations. AHA plans to spon-

sor the Northeast Conference on Hispanic Arts in March. It also provides individual consultation and offers a variety of central resources like an information center and mailing lists.

AHA is involved in several special programs. In 1979 it began an Audience Development Program designed "to promote and coordinate group attendance to Hispanic arts activities" through contact with community organizations, special public relations activities, and use of Theatre Development Fund (TDF) ticket vouchers. AHA's Funding Research and Development Program provides information about public and private sector support to Hispanic artists and cultural groups. And the annual Hispanic Arts Festival is designed to draw public attention to the wide range of creative work by New York's large Hispanic community.

For more information, contact AHA at 200 East 87th St., New York, NY 10028. Phone: 212/369-7054.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHWESTERN HUMANITIES COUNCILS - Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas

The Association offers technical assistance to Hispanic cultural groups interested in applying for support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and state-level humanities councils, mainly through workshops held in its four-state area. Workshops in the next two months will be held in San Jose and Fresno, CA.)

According to Association staffer Carmen de Novais, the workshops begin with a discussion of the humanities as they are viewed by these funding agencies: Though many Hispanic cultural groups carry on work that could receive public humanities support, most of them know less about the goals of these agencies than about those of public arts agencies. From there, participants learn about procedures to follow in preparing and submitting applications.

Individual consultation is also available in special cases (Carmen especially mentioned interstate projects). The Association has also been involved in compiling a list of Hispanic humanists; this list will help people planning humanities projects to locate qualified academics to participate.

For more information, contact: Association of Southwestern Humanities Councils, 112 North Central Avenue #308, Phoenix, AZ 85004. Phone: 602/258-8413.

CHICANO HUMANITIES AND ARTS COUNCIL (CHAC) - Colorado

CHAC is a consortium based in Denver that serves as an information center and provides technical assistance to groups and individuals in Colorado.

We had not heard from the Council by the time this issue went to press, so we have our information second-hand. A new Executive Director, Claude Gallegos, was recently hired; several issues of a newsletter have been published. Technical assistance is provided in such areas as fund-

ing and publicity.

Though CHAC is apparently in the process of moving, we're told that this address will lead you to further information: Claude Gallegos, Chicano Humanities and Arts Council, 355 South Navajo Street, Denver, CO 80223.

COFRADIA DE ARTES Y ARTESANOS HISPANICO -
New Mexico

Cofradia is a coalition of Hispanic artists concentrated mainly in the northern part of New Mexico, especially around Santa Fe, Taos, Las Vegas and Espanola. According to Vice President Fred Vigil, the Cofradia "thrives on the dedication of its members," relying mainly on direct personal contact to pass on information (about exhibition opportunities, grants and the like) that can help promote the work of Hispanic artists.

Vigil explained that though local members of the Cofradia in each of the four communities where membership is focused frequently meet and work together, they also operate autonomously. In addition to acting as an informal network, the Cofradia and its local member groups from time to time organize special exhibitions to draw attention to Hispanic and native American Indian arts, both traditional and contemporary.

For more information about the Cofradia write to Fred Vigil at 522 Airport Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Phone: 505/471-3059. President Luis Tapia can be reached at 505/471-8509.

CONCILIO DE ARTE POPULAR - California

California's statewide Concilio, first established in 1977, is currently reorganizing: The Concilio wants to focus more on networking among active Raza community centers throughout the state.

According to Board Chairwoman Terry Romo, serving individual artists has been the main priority for the Concilio; though individual artists will continue to play an active part in the Concilio, its program will now concentrate on developing a working alliance of organizations which in turn address the needs of individual artists.

The Concilio has closed its office during its current reorganization, but after the Board finalizes the organization's new plan, it will reopen. A new newsletter "geared toward communicating with all of the cultural arts centers with information that individual artists in their own communities will be able to use" is definitely a priority, according to Romo.

Romo feels that this new phase in the Concilio's history is an important step, given the pressures that Raza groups are facing, and emphasized that the Concilio aims to use its statewide network of established local centers as a strong foundation for mutual help and advocacy.

For more information about the Concilio, contact Terry Romo, Concilio de Arte Popular, P.O. Box 15842, Sacramento, CA 95813.

Phone: 916/454-6812.

MIRA ART CONSORTIUM (MIRA) - Chicago, IL

MIRA is a new service organization for Hispanic artists. Its Director, Jose Gonzalez, has had long experience in Hispanic community cultural programs in the Chicago area (until recently, he was active in MARCH, the Movimiento Artístico Chicano), and started MIRA to fill the need for an organization which could help developing artists and groups.

MIRA plans to put out a regular newsletter (the first issue has already been published). In addition, planning is underway for a workshop series tailored to the needs of Hispanic arts groups in fundraising, management, marketing and other aspects of program operation. Individual consultation accounts for the bulk of MIRA's current service activities. Gonzalez says he is already in touch with Hispanic artists and groups in Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois and sees these regions as part of MIRA's area of service.

For more information contact: Jose Gonzalez, MIRA, 567 West 18th Street, Chicago, IL 60616. Phone: 312/829-1620.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA - Washington, DC

The National Council of La Raza is a broad-spectrum national organization that looks out for Hispanic interests in Washington and provides support for its affiliate network of community-based organizations nationwide. Though communications division staffer Lizanne Fleming said there were no community cultural group affiliates as yet, she cited examples of organizations like San Diego's Chicano Federation that were linked with arts groups in their own communities.

Fleming said the National Council was trying to get more involved in cultural work. A 3-year National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant is supporting Project Resolana, a nationwide effort to identify Hispanic humanists and artists (emphasis on the humanists). Project SOMOS is a 3-year project to produce two films dealing with Hispanics from an historical perspective.

The National Council publishes a free quarterly newsletter focusing mainly on its own programs and activities, as well as a bimonthly magazine called Agenda (\$15/yr).

For further information, contact the National Council of La Raza at 1725 Eye Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20006. Phone: 202/293-4680.

SAN ANTONIO CONSORTIUM FOR HISPANIC ARTS
(SACHA) - San Antonio, TX

SACHA is a consortium of cultural organizations established in the spring of 1980. In addition to serving as a management "umbrella" for its member groups, the Consortium provides technical assistance to others in the Hispanic cultural community in the San Antonio metropolitan area.

Beginning this month SACHA is offering a series of technical assistance workshops on topics ranging from the formation of a

nonprofit organization, management, and fundraising to such programming concerns as audience development, economic development and public relations. Workshops will occur twice each month through July.

In addition, the Consortium's program of service includes the production of a newsletter, P.A.N. Dulce. P.A.N. stands for Performance Artist Nucleus, the SACHA member which produces the newsletter. The first issue has appeared already; annual subscriptions are \$5.

SACHA is also able to offer a limited amount of individualized help to non-member groups, though it notes that its staff time and resources are limited. SACHA received a substantial grant from the City of San Antonio last summer, allocated mainly to member groups' programs.

SACHA is working with a loose coalition of Hispanic cultural groups in other Texas cities to plan a meeting to discuss the need for mutual support among Hispanic groups statewide; no statewide organization presently exists in Texas.

For more information contact: Rick Reyna or Hector Garcia, SACHA, Landmark Building #407, San Antonio, TX 78205.
Phone: 512/271-3151.

TEJANO ARTISTS - Houston, TX

Tejano Artists is a visual arts organization in Houston that seeks to "promote and produce comprehensive, professional exhibitions pertaining to the Chicano-Hispano aesthetic." We hadn't heard from Tejano Artists before going to press, but we've seen the second issue of their newsletter, produced this past September/October.

This issue included ten short items on grants programs, exhibition news, and other visual arts-related items -- on two sides of a single page. You can write them at 7815 West Bank, Houston, TX 77064.

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