PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Clips

JOSEPH SOBRAN

Hillary's gloves off for NEA

Never mind Henny Youngman's wife. Take the first lady — please. Writing in the New York Times, Hillary Rodham Clinton declaims on the urgency of saving the National Endowment for the Arts with her familiar didactic drone:

"This is an ominous time for those of us who care deeply about the arts in America. A misguided, misinformed effort to eliminate public support for the arts not only threatens irrevocable damage to our cultural institutions but also to our sense of ourselves and what we stand for as a people."

"Those of us who care deeply about the arts" — what a priggish self-description. As if you must be indifferent to Titian if you don't want Washington bankrolling "the arts." And what an "ominous time" it must be, when millions visit museums, attend theaters and concerts, and buy classical recordings. In our time, artists from Picasso to Pavarotti have been celebrities. Few of them starve.

But opposition to "public support" (translation: tax funding) for "the arts" (all of them?) "threatens," mind you, even "our sense of ourselves and what we stand for as a people." About which Mrs. Clinton evidently fancies herself an oracle.

"I find it ironic," she continues, "that those who talk the loudest about America's loss of civility, character and values (particularly those arising from Western civilization) are often the first to recommend obliterating the agencies responsible for promoting and arts programs (sic) that make Sophocles, Shakespeare, Mozart and O'Keefe available to our children."

Come again? I gather that the "irony" here is that some people affect to favor civilized values while opposing state funding for the arts. How very philistine of them.

Well, I personally find it ironic that anyone could put Georgia O'Keefe on the cultural short list with Sophocles, Shakespeare and Mozart; all three of whom, by the way, were "available to our children" long before the federal government took up their cause. As a teen-ager, I used to buy Sophocles and Shakespeare in paperback for 35 cents and remaindered Mozart records for a dollar. I admittedly missed out on Georgia O'Keefe, who looks like the affirmative action entry in Mrs. Clinton's canon.

The first lady goes on to say that "they" (those people who don't "care deeply about the arts") "fail to appreciate what every generation of Americans has intuitively known — that the artistic imagination is critical to our civilization and our democracy." So why didn't every generation of Americans favor federal arts subsidies?

We're not supposed to ask. We're supposed to be hypnotized by this second-hand grandiloquence. Appreciate. Intuitively. Artistic imagination. Critical. Fancy stuff.

"The power of the arts is not simply to provide pleasant esthetics but to help move us forward as a democracy." What does the clumsy phrase "provide pleasant esthetics" mean? How does art "help move us forward as a democracy"? A moment later, Mrs. Clinton calls arts subsidies, yes, "an investment" in "the cultural traditions in which democracy has flourished for 218 years."

The whole piece reads like the runner-up in a high-school essay contest, earnestly invoking "culture" and "democracy" as often as possible in order to supply a properly uplifting tone. Imagine: Sophocles, good for democracy. And Petrarch? Purcell? Wagner? Ibsen? All artists. All good for democracy.

"To generalize is to be an idiot," William Blake generalized. Be that as it may, to generalize about "the arts," without distinction, is certainly to risk idiocy. I know a lot about Shakespeare. I know a little about Haydn. I know nothing about "the arts." Neither does Mrs. Clinton, but she doesn't realize it. She exemplifies the adage that those who are unaware of their ignorance will only be misled by their knowledge.

There are many arts, with many angles of interest. Nearly everything engaging about them is beyond the ken of government. Ask a Dostoyevsky scholar if Dostoyevsky is good for democracy, and you'll get a blank look.

If art is justified by its political effects, as Mrs. Clinton would have it, then politics will become the measure, and finally the censor, of art. Joseph Stalin, after all, doubled as his country's chief art critic. He too cared deeply about the arts.

Joseph Sobran is a nationally syndicated columnist.

RONALD UTT

Time to put GSA up for sale?

Politicians have been "reforming" the General Services Administration for more than 15 years, yet waste and inefficiency still plague the government's central housekeeping agency. It's time to try something radically new, like privatization.

Breaking GSA up into its major functional parts, then selling them to private companies working with groups of the agency's former employees would clean up the current mess. How big a mess it is can be seen in the fact GSA charges government agencies $2.21 for the same dozen BIC pens a private-sector firm sells for 89 cents!

The need to fix GSA — often the focus since 1978 of wide-ranging probes by government investigators and media exposes of fraud and abuse — is so obvious that even the National Performance Review led by Vice President Al Gore said big changes are needed in the agency.

Doing something about GSA is important because its 18,500 employees manage more than 268 million square feet of space in 8,000 federally owned or leased office buildings and warehouses.

GSA's basic problem since it was created in 1949 has been its legalized monopoly on providing support services to government offices and office workers. This monopoly is why GSA's $200 million annual operating budget is deceptive. Acting as a middleman for other federal agencies, GSA actually controls about $50 billion worth of building leases and purchases, building services, office supplies, telecommunications and computer equipment.

Mr. Gore's performance review said ending GSA's monopoly would make the agency more efficient because it would then have to compete for business from federal agencies just like a private-sector company. If GSA became 25 percent more efficient than it is now, the annual budget savings would be about $12.5 billion.

But why stop there when GSA's own experience proves how much more could be saved by privatization? According to the General Accounting Office, between 1982 and 1992 GSA reviewed 731 commercial activities carried out by its Public Building Service for contracting out to the private sector.

Ultimately, 73 percent of the activities reviewed were privatized. On average, the low contractor bids received by GSA were 39 percent lower than the government's own cost for doing the same activities. For custodial services, the low contractor's bid was 50 percent less than the government's cost estimate.

Similarly significant savings will result from privatizing other parts of GSA. Last year, several private firms reviewed the potential savings from renegotiating federal building leases. They concluded the government could save as much as 25 percent on rent each year through such competition.

So great and so certain are these potential savings that private-sector firms have proposed taking over GSA's property-management functions at no direct cost to the government, paying themselves only from the savings they achieve for taxpayers.

It is important that GSA's employees share in the fruits of privatization as the various parts of the agency are taken over by private-sector companies. The Federal Employee Direct Corporate Ownership Opportunity Plan (FED CO-OP), developed by the Office of Personnel Management during the Reagan administration, provides a model.

FED CO-OP sets up an "Employee Stock Ownership Plan" jointly owned by a contractor with employees working on a particular activity being contracted out to the private sector. Employees would thus be able to participate in the profits of the firms that win contracts to take over GSA's commercial activities. The program also provides guaranteed employment for a limited time and high-quality outplacement services for employees who leave the new firm within the first year after privatization.

Fortunately, GSA should be the easiest federal agency to privatize because its many services are available from the private sector, whose many successful firms provide a blueprint for how a privatized GSA could not merely survive, but thrive in a competitive environment.

Ronald D. Utt, former associate director of the Office of Management and Budget and Reagan administration "privatization czar," is a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

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AmeriCorps: A program that works

By Blanche L. Lincoln and Scotty Baesler

The Washington Times Op-Ed page has provided a lively forum for debate about AmeriCorps. We only wish that AmeriCorps' opponents were somehow required to tell the truth. Attacks on AmeriCorps that have appeared on these pages unfortunately have no basis in fact.

The truth is: AmeriCorps works, and returns $1.60 to $2.60 in direct benefits for every federal dollar invested.

As conservative Democrats, we applaud the efforts of our nation's leaders to join together to balance the budget and downsize government while finding new ways to solve the many problems we face. With partisan calculations set aside for the moment, AmeriCorps should be funded for a second year. It's a good investment for many reasons.

First, the federal government has a role to play in helping communities meet challenges in cost-effective ways. The one crucial test that must be met is: Every tax dollar spent must be a wise investment. We should get out more than we put in. We should allow local communities to identify and prioritize their problems and to develop the most appropriate solutions to them. Like any smart business operation, we must set goals, evaluate outcomes, duplicate successes and eliminate failures.

AmeriCorps national service does these things. It is a model for the redefined role of the federal government in this age of downsizing. Many support AmeriCorps because it promotes values of community, educational opportunity and responsibility. We also think AmeriCorps is a wise investment for another reason: AmeriCorps is smart government.

AmeriCorps is a partnership among the public, private and philanthropic sectors. AmeriCorps helps the nation's nonprofits pick up the slack as the federal government retreats from social programs of the 1970s and '80s. The nonprofits have already said that they cannot assume this responsibility alone. As the June 19 Business Week points out, hundreds of the nation's companies — from IBM to local mom-and-pop shops — invest as AmeriCorps partners to stretch federal dollars and to provide expertise and oversight. Corporate leaders are telling Congress to keep the partnership alive. They like how layers of competition have replaced layers of bureaucracy. Programs compete for AmeriCorps members (300,000 people have expressed an interest in serving), programs compete for resources from the states, and states compete to ensure that only the best programs are selected.

Neither a liberal nor a conservative idea

That's why federal overhead is so low. AmeriCorps is a model of new federalism that lets local communities identify their problems and the best solutions to them. It provides federal support without bureaucracy or mandates. And finally, all programs are subject to continuous oversight and evaluation to eliminate programs that do not meet tough goals and duplicate those that do.

Most importantly, the taxpayer gets an impressive return on investment. Four prominent economists, in a study commissioned by the IBM, Irvine and Dana foundations, conclude that every federal dollar invested in the three AmeriCorps programs studied returned direct, tangible, measurable benefits ranging from $1.60 to $2.60, not including benefits that can't be easily measured (such as the value of enhanced citizenship or of people working together across lines of income and race, etc.).

And those benefits are real. Aguirre International, an independent research firm headed by President Ford's former commissioner of education, recently completed a survey of 8 percent of AmeriCorps sites selected at random out of the total 1,100 sites hosting 20,000 AmeriCorps members this first year. Over the first five months, among hundreds of other accomplishments, this small number of AmeriCorps members taught 1,430 students and tutored 7,638; fed over 50,000 hungry people; started 258 neighborhood safety programs and patrolled 250 vacant buildings to prevent violence and drug dealing; counseled 470 victims of sexual and domestic violence; repaired homes of 296 elderly persons; renovated 238 housing units and 99 rural homes; inspected and repaired 87 small dams; fought two major forest fires; helped 350 landowners recover from floods; planted over 200,000 trees; and taught CPR to 1,144 of their fellow citizens.

National service is neither a liberal nor a conservative idea. It is uniquely American and deserves to be judged on its ability to get things done. The results coming from this first class of AmeriCorps members are impressive. Those who join AmeriCorps take on the responsibility of trying to meet the challenges facing our communities. They are overwhelmingly from hard-working, middle-income families who are counting on AmeriCorps to help them pay for college, and they do not deserve to twist in the political winds. Our leaders have challenged us to cast aside political calculations and consider how we can work together to make America stronger. We are counting on our Appropriations colleagues to meet the test by funding AmeriCorps for a second year. It is worth every penny.

Blanche L. Lincoln of Arkansas and Scotty Baesler of Kentucky are Democratic members of the House of Representatives.

grandchildren," said Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., a recent convert to the idea of a balanced-budget amendment. ``That's wrong, it's immoral."

But some of the opponents, while arguing it is important to reverse the growth of the debt, insist that as long as the economy grows faster than the debt, it is not harmful to borrow.

As for the morality of incurring public debt, they argue that steep cutbacks in social programs which would be the chief target of budget-cutters would be devastating for vulnerable Americans of all ages.

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Other critics contend it is wrong to adopt such a fundamental change in fiscal policy without first explaining to people the serious implications of doing so.

``The amendment is a giant rip-off of the American people," said Common Cause President Fred Wertheimer, ``since its passage depends on keeping the American people in the dark as to what the actual consequences would be of adopting it."

The federal government, critics maintain, got into the business of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, education and job training, welfare and food stamps, veterans' benefits and unemployment compensation precisely because the states and private enterprise could not afford such programs.

So far, Republican sponsors of the amendment have declined to reveal exactly which programs they would cut or eliminate. As House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, remarked, ``knees would buckle" in Congress if a detailed blueprint were disclosed before the vote on the amendment.

Sabo said deep cuts in education, environmental, social services and farm programs would be unavoidable particularly in light of the GOP's pledge to cut taxes, increase military spending and put Social Security off limits.

(EDITORS: STORY CAN TRIM HERE)

Citing a tentative plan of Senate Republicans, Sabo said $1.36 trillion in spending cuts would be necessary to balance the budget by 2002.

``A change of this magnitude will involve every facet of the federal government," he said. ``The numbers indicate a Medicare cut alone of at least $220 billion to $250 billion in the next five years."

With conservatives in control of the House and at least 65 to 70 Democrats prepared to vote for some form of the amendment, passage is virtually certain.

(EDITORS: NEXT 5 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

The quarrel this week will center on whether to adopt a version that calls for a three-fifths majority to raise taxes or an alternative that would require only a simple majority of the entire 435-member House and the 100-member Senate.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., is backing the ``supermajority" option, contending it is the better way of assuring that members resort to tax hikes only after failing to cut spending enough to balance the budget.

But Reps. Charles Stenholm, D-Texas, and Dan Schaefer, R-Colo., believe Congress should have enough flexibility to raise taxes if necessary to achieve a balance. A three-fifths majority, they say, could make it extremely difficult to respond swiftly and effectively to economic emergencies.

In addition, Stenholm said, ``I don't think there are sufficient votes to pass an amendment with the supermajority provision."

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., has already sent word that the Senate cannot muster the votes to pass the three-fifths majority proviso. But Dole believes a balanced-budget amendment without that provision can squeak through the Senate.

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It takes a two-thirds majority of Congress 290 votes in the House and 67 in the Senate to propose constitutional amendments to the state legislatures for ratification. Three-fourths of the states 38 of the 50 are required for ratification. Under the pending proposals, the states would have up to seven years to decide whether to ratify.

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Charlton Heston argues for arts endowments, 2 ex-chiefs oppose them

By Stephan Salisbury
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON It was a peculiar hearing, if not downright strange.

Two longtime chiefs of the National Endowment for the Humanities Tuesday urged members of a House appropriations subcommittee to obliterate both the NEH and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In another odd twist, staunch conservative Charlton Heston, fan of Ronald Reagan and many conservative causes, threw his considerable weight behind both endowments, testifying that their elimination would cripple American culture.

``Do not sweep away the immense good that's being done at very small cost by these endowments," the actor told congressmen. ``Art is the bread of the human soul."

With the new Republican-dominated Congress less than a month old, the skirmishing over federal involvement in the arts is clearly heating up. Republican leaders in the House have made clear that continued federal cultural funding is a very iffy proposition. But arts advocates have been working hard to drum up support for their case. Tuesday's hearing provided a view of how this key battle is shaping up.

Rep. Ralph Regula, R-Ohio, subcommittee chairman, wanted this opportunity to provide a visible platform for opponents of the NEA and NEH. Toward that end, Lynne V. Cheney, who ran the NEH from 1986 to 1992, and William J. Bennett, who preceded her as the head of the agency, were scheduled to testify, according to congressional staffers. Arts advocates in Ohio, getting wind of the hearing, contacted a deep-pocketed friend of Regula's. The friend, said House staff members, convinced the congressman that another view of the matter was necessary.

``We felt we should present both sides," said a Regula aide.

Enter Heston, 70, gray-suited, hair still sandy, voice very deep. As always, when Hollywood comes to Washington, congressmen were a little bit star-struck.

And Heston has been down this road before.

In the early 1980s, President Reagan appointed him co-chairman of a task force that reviewed the need for federal arts funding. Reagan, at the time, believed Heston would conclude that the NEA was a needless expense.

It didn't happen. Instead, the man who portrayed Moses, Michelangelo and Vincent Van Gogh in the movies became a powerful voice for continued government support for the arts. He continued in that role Tuesday.

``Both endowments have made mistakes, sometime grievous mistakes," Heston testified. ``It is crucial to prevent such blunders in the future. ... It does not follow that the endowments should be de-funded. I join with many conservatives in supporting their continued funding."

Heston told the congressmen that when he returned from military duty following World War II, ``theater existed in about 40 square blocks of real estate in New York." That is no longer the case, he noted. ``The regional theater is one of the spectacular successes of the NEA," he argued.

complying with a proposed constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget by the year 2002.

Preparing for that challenge, Kasich is taking his show on the road over the next few weeks for town meetings on how to cut spending, with hearings scheduled for Prescott, Ariz., Columbia, S.C., Manville, N.J., and Billings, Mont. The first was held in Columbus, Ohio, on Jan. 21.

The youngest of the House committee chairmen, Kasich wants to hear firsthand from Americans about what budget cuts they'd like to see; don't show up to defend favorite programs, Kasich says. It's an unusual, if not unprecedented, way to start the federal budget process.

``The issue is you're not guaranteed success. ... I don't know what's going to happen here. People feel that nobody cares what they think. We want to listen to what they think," said Kasich.

The hearings aren't Kasich's first new approach to budget-making. Earlier this month, with the opening bars of ``Wooly Bully" blaring in the background, he sanctioned a five-minute Nerf gun fight among committee staff members and lobbyists to open a brainstorming session on budget cutting.

Kasich graduated from Ohio State University in 1974 and in 1978 was elected to the state senate, defeating a Democrat with wide name recognition but with faulty political radar that missed his young challenger.

Four years later, Kasich did it again, beating Rep. Bob Shamansky, D-Ohio, for a seat in Congress. Kasich was the only Republican in the country to beat a Democratic incumbent that year.

(EDITORS: NEXT 5 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

He worked hard in Washington but was not an overnight wonder.

``I think he kind of treated people differently. He didn't go out of his way to be hard-edged. ... He's a solid, hard-working person. I think his manner hides that. He comes over as sort of a puppy, superenthusiastic, wide-eyed," said political scientist Barbara Sinclair of the University of California at Riverside. Sinclair observed Kasich when she was in Washington in 1987-88 researching a book on congressional leadership.

The puppy actually had been snarling for awhile, at least inside. Kasich, who comes from McKees Rock, outside Pittsburgh, was raised in a Democratic family. His dad was a mail carrier.

But at Ohio State, Kasich chafed at the bureaucracy and long lines.

``That's when I became conservative," he said.

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In Washington, he didn't like the budget alternatives he was asked to vote on. So in 1989 he started preparing his own budgets. In 1993, he teamed with Rep. Timothy J. Penny, D-Minn., to draft an amendment that outlined $90 billion in spending cuts. It missed passing by just six votes, but ``Penny-Kasich" became part of the capital's budget-cutting jargon.

His partnership with Penny wasn't surprising. Earlier, he had teamed with Rep. Ron Dellums, D-Calif., one of the House's most liberal members, to limit production of B-2 bombers. While their overall philosophies differ, Kasich and Dellums are good friends.

(EDITORS: NEXT 3 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

These days Kasich walks a tightrope between Washington star and back-home hero. In 1993, he hosted a Washington dinner grilled salmon with a guest list that included first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

``I cannot wait to go home every weekend to the promised land," said Kasich, denying the onset of Potomac Fever.

Occasionally, Kasich's brashness overtakes his good-natured exuberance. Washington twittered for a day or two in 1991 at news reports that Kasich had tried, but failed, to join the Grateful Dead rock band on stage at RFK Stadium here.

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When the Budget Committee held its first hearing Jan. 6, the good-natured but hard-working Kasich was clearly in charge.

``We're not going to pull any fast ones on you," he told committee Democrats. ``At least what we define as fast ones."

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House expected to pass balanced-budget amendment this week

By David Hess
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON The House this week will take up, and probably pass, a measure that could transform radically the role of the federal government in the everyday lives of Americans.

It is a constitutional amendment that would require the president and Congress to balance the budget by 2002.

Depending on whom you believe, it could restore financial integrity to the government and free billions of dollars for productive private investment, or it is a fiscal gimmick that could gut important programs and further undercut people's faith in their elected officials.

Respectable economists abound in both camps, and it's hard to decide who is right.

The quality of the debate over the amendment so far has done little to build much confidence in the predictions of either side.

Conservative champions of the amendment seem driven more by a zeal to shrink the federal government's oversight of private business than by a deep concern for the rising national debt and its impact on future generations.

Liberal opponents seem worried less about the mammoth debt now estimated at $4.8 trillion and rising than about fears that the amendment will be used to dismantle hard-won social, economic and regulatory structures that shield people from the worst ravages of poverty, ill health and environmental pollution.

``Federal spending is out of control," said Rep. Toby Roth, R-Wis., an ardent supporter of the amendment. ``The federal debt now amounts to $19,120 for every man, woman and child."

The debt, he told the Joint Economic Committee, ``draws away scarce resources on debt-service payments and is a drag on the economy. It crowds out capital and inflates interest rates, artificially increasing the cost of borrowing for business purposes. It stifles venture capital and investment for the future."

But Rep. Martin Olav Sabo of Minnesota, the senior Democrat on the Budget Committee, said the Constitution ``did not create our budget problems and changing it will not solve them."

Not only would the amendment probably be unenforceable, he said, but even if it were, it would transfer unprecedented power to the president and perhaps even to grossly unqualified federal courts to resolve budgetary impasses.

Worse, according to Sabo and a number of economists, it would prevent the government from using spending and tax policy to smooth out swings in the business cycle. That could turn recessions into depressions.

(EDITORS: NEXT 4 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

For still others, a balanced budget is mainly a moral issue.

``We've been borrowing to spend money on ourselves today and passing the debt on to our children and

seven years. He wants to go back to college, make money, get into politics.

Standing outside his barracks room after dropping off his belongings, he paused to talk about the last four months.

He was proud of the job. ``My guys put out 100 percent. All the time. We did everything we were asked. We didn't always agree with it ... (but) that's what we did.

He worried, though, that Haiti needed more than soldiers.

``Unless they get some government in there that can take charge and instill some sort of public work ..." he said. ``They don't have people employed to do things that normally need to be done in a country. There's nobody fixing the streets. There's not enough public servant-type jobs."

Still, he believed the battalion had done its best. Now it was time to relax. Brain said he wanted to do a lot of that. ``I've got this big itinerary of everything I want to do: Go to the gym. Do this. And every 10 lines it says, `relax,'" he said.

(EDITORS: STORY CAN TRIM HERE)

Actually, it was time to get started. The smell of pizza and egg rolls already was filtering through the barracks. Brain had his girlfriend and his dog waiting in his jeep. He ought to get going.

``Have a good evening," he said, as he hurried down the hallway that echoed with the shouts of other men just back. Outside, families and friends waited, and a white sign at battalion headquarters proclaimed of its regulars: ``Mission Accomplished."

After 18 weeks of arduous duty, 1st battalion, 22d Infantry, 10th Mountain Division was home, by God.

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Politics Today; RELEASE: 1/25/95

MINIMUM WAGE POLITICS

By Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover

WASHINGTON -- At the most obvious level, President Clinton's decision to press for an increase in the minimum wage is an empty gesture. The chances of winning approval from this Congress are slim and none.

But, empty or not, this is precisely the kind of gesture Clinton needs to make as part of the process of identifying the differences between, on the one hand, himself and the Democratic Party and, on the other, the new conservative Republican majority.

It is also just the kind of gesture this president needs to make to reinforce his own bona fides with constituencies that still make up the heart of his party -- labor, blacks and liberals -- but have been nourishing significant doubts about him.

The minimum wage issue has always been an important one symbolically, as well as practically, for organized labor. That was the reason Clinton endorsed an increase during his campaign two years ago when many union leaders were uneasy about supporting a Southern governor from a state not notoriously friendly to unionism.

But the president never advanced legislation to carry it out in the first two years of his term during which Democrats controlled both houses of Congress and there was a reasonable chance for approval. The minimum wage has been pegged at $4.25 an hour for the last four years without any escalator for inflation.

The argument against such increases is that many employers, particularly in small businesses, will be unable to create new entry-level jobs because they cannot afford to pay, for example, $5 an hour rather than the current $4.25 to unskilled workers. But several studies of the impact of previous increases have found the evidence murky and contradictory.

Supporters of a higher wage argue that the most common result is that those who pay minimum wage -- fast-food outlets, for instance --simply pass on the higher wage costs in setting their prices, just as other employers do to compensate for increased payroll costs. They also contend that it is legitimate to put more of the burden on employers and consumers for increasing Americans' living standards rather than relying on direct use of public money through welfare. Some studies suggest that a rise in the minimum wage does encourage welfare recipients to enter the work force, although those data are also sometimes contradictory.

But this controversy is far more political than substantive. The Republicans already are pointing to Clinton's call for an increase as evidence that he is an old-fashioned liberal playing up to the unions they define as ``special interests."

Clinton has valid reasons to take that chance, however. It makes sense for him politically to juxtapose himself against the Republicans as a champion of the most disadvantaged people in American society when the argument is over a minimum wage that doesn't even lift workers to the poverty level.

Although Clinton has been criticized by some of the leading ``New Democrats" -- chairman David McCurdy of the Democratic Leadership Council, for example -- for being too liberal during his first two years in office, there are many party strategists who believe the first imperative for him now is to remind Democrats about the issues on which they differ so clearly from the Republicans.

In fact, the president has a strong record in creating jobs for workers with low or limited skills; if anything, a disproportionate number of the 5 million new jobs created during his stewardship fall into that category. And Clinton also can claim whatever praise is deserved for the Earned Income Tax Credit in the 1993 tax law that is now paying benefits to 15 million working people.

The White House also can boast about other measures aimed at improving the position of working-class voters, the most obvious being the family leave bill allowing workers unpaid leave without risk to their jobs in cases of family emergencies.

But Clinton doesn't get as much credit as might be expected, perhaps because the White House salesmen are ineffectual or more likely because voters are focused on other facets of the president's personality and performance. The perception that Clinton is too political and lacking firm convictions is, the opinion polls suggest, more damaging than the notion he is another Hubert Humphrey liberal.

Bill Clinton isn't going to change that simply by supporting an increase in the minimum wage, but it is still a gesture worth making as a reminder of the differences between Democrats and Republicans.

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Such success should not be taken at face value, testified former NEH leader Bennett. Bennett stated flatly that both the NEA and NEH are sinkholes of ``massive corruption" and should be eradicated.

``I found (running the NEH) that there was very little at the endowment that you could keep from being corrupted," he said, in testimony that preceded Heston's. ``There was very little that you could keep from being politicized," he said, calling current American culture ``pretty cruddy, really."

Cheney noted that the NEH had done ``some good things." But she moved quickly to what she called the ``bad things," notably funding of, in her view, a number of politically biased projects.

``The humanities, like the arts, have become highly politicized," she said. ``It is time to cut funding for cultural elites."

Returning soldier says they did their best for Haiti, but it needs more

By Michael E. Ruane
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

FORT DRUM, N.Y., As the joyous crowd surged from the bleachers toward the soldiers on the gym floor, Gina Buttery stood frozen in the front row, clutching the baby to her chest, biting her lip and searching with anguished eyes for her husband.

Spc. Harry Buttery, of the Army's 10th Mountain Division, had been away in Haiti when the baby was born Nov. 28. But now he was back. His battalion had swooped home from Port-au-Prince out of a rainy winter sky last Friday. And he was about to see his firstborn, 7-week-old son for the first time.

For Buttery, for about 390 other members of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, and for their family and friends, the four months of soldiering and separation in Operation Uphold Democracy was about to end. For them, Haiti was over.

But for several anxious moments that night, Gina could not find her husband amid the pandemonium in the gym where this base holds its welcoming ceremonies. Her eyes filled as reunions occurred all around. Clad in a denim skirt and white blouse, her hair braided and her nails polished red, she waited and watched for the young man from Unity, Maine, who had been her high school sweetheart.

Finally, she bolted from her spot, rushed through the crowd and, child in hand, embraced a lean soldier in weathered fatigues and Kevlar helmet, a canteen at his waist. Then into the folds of his camouflage shirt sleeves she gently laid his son.

Harry Buttery was home.

For him and others of the 1st Battalion as for soldiers of almost any era returning en masse from long hard duty was something to remember.

The ``one-two-two," which has also served in Somalia, was among the first wave of American soldiers sent to Haiti Sept. 19.

They endured weeks of heat, dirt, fatigue, several small fire fights, two suicides and several cases of what appeared to be dengue fever. Among the first in, they are among the final elements of the 10th Mountain Division, which once comprised the bulk of the American forces, to be sent home.

The U.S. force, which peaked at just under 21,000 when Haitian dictator Raoul Cedras was driven from power last fall, has now dropped to about 7,200. And that number is expected to drop to about 3,000 when the United Nations takes over in March, the Pentagon said Monday.

Last week, Defense Secretary William J. Perry formally declared Haiti ``safe and secure" and ready for the U.N. And while some men of the 1st Battalion expressed reservations about Haiti's future, their commanding general, David C. Meade, told them on Friday that the work they had done had been superb.

(EDITORS: NEXT 15 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

``You're wonderful soldiers," he said. ``Welcome home."

The beginning of the end of the battalion's odyssey came at 2:28 p.m. when its men began stepping off a chartered jumbo jet at Griffiss Air Force Base, about 70 miles southeast of here.

Laden with gear and an occasional souvenir, they filed down an airline staircase onto a rain-soaked runway whipped by a cold wind and surrounded by bleak winter scenery. Some whooped with joy, or jumped to the tarmac from the bottom stair step to emphasize their arrival. ``It smelled like you were alive again," one soldier said later.

After forming up, they boarded 10 buses for the trip to the base just outside Watertown, N.Y., which is about 60 miles north of Syracuse.

As they motored through the rural, snow-patched countryside cheering the first McDonald's that came into view they were awaited by an excited throng of about 800 friends and relatives packed into the gymnasium bleachers with flags, balloons, bouquets and babies.

With Gina Buttery waited Karey Mead, 22, Heather Davey, 23, and Kristen Arbogast, 21, anticipating the arrival of their boyfriends; and Denise Lowry, 30, and her four children, awaiting the appearance of her husband; and many others longing for spouses, fathers or beaus.

Finally, at 5:40 p.m., as the band struck up the ``Rocky" theme, the soldiers entered. To shouts from the crowd, they marched in single file, forming a large oblong 40 men long and 10 rows deep.

After roaring their battalion motto ``Regulars, by God!" they were presented to the general, prayed over, praised and then, to screams from the crowd, released to their families.

Jubilation followed as the camouflaged oblong merged with the delirious admirers on the bright blue tarp covering the gymnasium floor.

In the middle of it all stood Harry and Gina, both 22, seemingly oblivious to the excitement around them. Harry looked slightly stunned as he gazed down at his son, Dustin.

He knew he had a baby boy; Gina said he kept calling from Haiti while she was in labor, asking: ``What did we have? What did we have?" Finally, she was able to tell him, ``We have a son."

She said he exulted: ``I have a son!" Now, as he held the crying infant, he could only say: ``beautiful, beautiful ... I love him very much."

Further scenes of joy were everywhere. People flung themselves into each other's arms. Wives were kissed. Kids were hoisted. In one corner of the gym, Sgt. Kevin Carter, 25, of Beckley, W.Va., sat with his 3-year-old son, Jake, on one knee and his 6-year-old son, Kevin 2nd, on the other.

All the while the band played, flags waved and balloons popped.

Shortly, the soldiers were summoned to pack up their gear and return to their barracks. And, there, some took time for reflection.

(END OPTIONAL TRIM)

For Sgt. Jeffrey Brain, 28, a squad leader from San Francisco who one chaotic day on patrol in Port-au-Prince had ministered to a small boy with a fractured leg, Haiti could be his last Army deployment.

Brain said he was leaving the service March 26 after

The Washington Times
★ THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1995

Parents' rights backed on Hill

Bill targets 'overintrusive' government in family affairs

By Cheryl Wetzstein
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Recognizing the importance of parents, members of Congress yesterday introduced legislation to clarify that parents have the right to make educational, health and other essential decisions in the lives of their children.

"It is parents who hold the keys to the welfare of our next generation," said Sen. Charles E. Grassley, who introduced the Parents Rights and Responsibilities Act in the Senate.

Being a parent "is truly an awesome responsibility.... It deserves praise, it deserves respect and it deserves legal recognition," the Iowa Republican said.

Rep. Steve Largent, Oklahoma Republican, offered the House bill, which was co-sponsored by more than 60 members, including five Democrats and many GOP freshmen.

Backers of the bill say it is designed to give parents legal standing to resist "overintrusive" government intervention in their lives. Sources of interference, according to court cases and anecdotal experiences, were social service agencies and the public education system.

Yesterday a spokesman for the National Education Association called the parents' rights bill "mischievous."

"We're all for parental involvement in education," said Dale Lestina, a lobbyist for the teachers union. But the bill could allow "extremist groups to say 'You've got to do X, Y or Z, or we'll haul you into court.' "

Janet Bass of the American Federation of Teachers agreed that parental involvement is "absolutely encouraged" and that "a law is not necessary to give parents the right to participate in their children's education."

"The last thing we need is to take a positive, cooperative situation between parents and school officials and teachers and convert it into a legal tussle," she said.

Other criticisms had been raised about the bill inadvertently protecting unfit parents.

"We would not want to see anything that would erect barriers" to prevent trained professionals from assisting families or protecting children, said a spokeswoman for the Child Welfare League of America.

Another supporter, Childhelp USA, warned that without the bill's "explicit language" that denies protection for abusive parents, "we believe many parents could hide their abusive and neglectful behavior behind this act."

At a news conference yesterday, Mr. Grassley outlined how the bill would clarify parents' rights:

"First, parents would have to demonstrate that the action in question was within their fundamental rights to direct the upbringing of their children," he said. "Next, parents must show to the government that it's interfered with that right.

"If the parents can prove these two things, then the government must show that the interference was essential to accomplish a compelling government interest and that the means to do that were the least restrictive way to accomplish that goal," said Mr. Grassley.

NEA chief defends grants under fire

By Rod Dreher
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Jane Alexander, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, has sent a letter to members of Congress defending the agency's support of Highways, a California performance art center now featuring a sexually explicit homosexual and lesbian summer festival.

According to the letter, the agency's support for the center is based on respecting diversity and local values.

The American Family Association and other groups have contacted legislators in recent weeks to complain about the NEA's support for the center, which received two grants totaling $15,000 this year.

In her June 26 letter, Miss Alexander said Highways, which is in the Los Angeles area, serves a diverse urban population. Highways, as well as the Children's Theater Board in North Carolina and all the other community arts programs NEA funds across the country, are "simply a reflection of the community they are attempting to serve with our help."

Among the productions scheduled for the center's "Ecco Lesbo/Ecco Homo" summer festival are "Dyke Night," billed as "our series of hot nights with hot dykes"; "Boys 'R' Us," described as "our continuing series of hot summer nights with hot fags"; and a night of readings from Los Angeles "perv pornographers."

House GOP proposes Cabinet science seat

By Doug Abrahms
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

House Republicans yesterday proposed placing the research money from several civilian agencies, including NASA and the Energy Department, into a newly created Science Department that would have Cabinet-level status.

Rep. Robert Walker, chairman of the Science Committee, discussed plans to transfer about $22 billion worth of civilian research and development funding from other government agencies into a newly created Department of Science.

The move would save at least $2.1 billion over five years by eliminating duplicate programs, said Mr. Walker, Pennsylvania Republican, at a hearing before the Science Committee yesterday.

Adding a new Cabinet position is an unusual tack for Republicans, since much of the focus in Congress now is on cutting government budgets. But supporters say a Science Department could absorb agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from the Commerce Department, which House Republicans have proposed killing.

The Clinton administration adamantly opposes instituting a Department of Science.

"We are not against change," said John Gibbons, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, in an April speech. "But we are against change for change's sake — or for the sake of as-yet-undocumented savings in federal resources."

Research projects should not be funded by one group, which could dominate the overall scientific direction of research, Mr. Gibbons said. He pointed out that the National Science and Technology Council was created in 1993 to coordinate science research among various agencies.

The idea to create a Science Department dates back more than a century, and dozens of proposals have been made to consolidate the scientific research arms of various agencies since World War II. Almost every federal entity spends money on research.

"Some argue that this [creating a Science Department] is just a recurring theme," Mr. Walker said. "I think it's more like a recurring realization of the importance science plays as a driver of economic growth."

Mr. Walker has not yet introduced legislation to create the agency, but plans under discussion would combine the R&D budgets of most civilian agencies including NASA, the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. Projects ranging from the Hubble Telescope to topographic maps and scrubbers that clean up smokestack emissions would be consolidated into this Department of Science.

The departments of Defense and Health and Human Services — which account for about two-thirds of the nation's $70 billion R&D budget — would not fall under the new Science Department

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★ THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1995

Walsh hints Hill may act if city drags feet

By Lisa Nevans
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Congress may step in if the District doesn't start taking some radical steps toward privatizing, congressional leaders warned during a hearing yesterday.

Rep. James T. Walsh, New York Republican, told City Administrator Michael Rogers to take on the motto "Ready, fire, aim" — shoot first and then zero in on targets that seem to work. Otherwise, the chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District said he will add privatization language to the city's fiscal 1996 budget when Congress takes it up this summer and fall.

"There's a sense of urgency here that I don't hear," Mr. Walsh said. "This committee is going to act."

Mr. Rogers said he is awaiting the recommendations of task forces on privatization — which he chairs — and procurement reform due by September before recommending any steps. Changes would begin in fiscal 1997, which begins Oct. 1, 1996.


Michael Rogers


Rep. James T. Walsh

Plans that are thrown together too quickly lead to chaos and court suits that block reforms, not long-term change that saves taxpayers' money, Mr. Rogers said, adding that he worked on privatization for more than a decade in both the public and private sectors.

"The mayor is faced with contempt of court because the system we have is not working — we can't even buy a computer in child welfare. I'm not going to come in here and promise to privatize the world when we can't do basic [steps]," he said.

The District is effectively blocked from privatizing services by a 1993 D.C. law that requires the city to give all affected employees six months notice before privatizing and requires the contractor to offer jobs to all affected employees at the same wages and benefits they are receiving from the city, Mr. Rogers and the General Accounting Office (GAO) testified.

The law also requires the city to prove it will save at least 10 percent in order to privatize a service — something even the federal government has found difficult to document, said L. Nye Stevens, GAO director of federal management and work force issues.

GAO auditors have repeatedly testified about the city's poor financial management system that makes it harder for the city to gauge such costs, he said.

There's no need to wait for a task force to tell the city what to do, subcommittee Republicans and Democrats said.

"If there's real desire here, repeal the law now," said Rep. Julian C. Dixon, California Democrat and ranking minority member. "The best way to do nothing is to study it. If there's no desire to privatize, let's stand up and say it."

While "ready, fire, aim" can work well in the private sector, the public sector has regulations and employee unions to deal with, as well as politics, Mr. Rogers said.

"You may have wanted us to come here today and say 'We're privatizing X, Y and Z,' " Mr. Rogers said. "We are not at that point. We are taking a hard look at how to reform this government. We may not be doing it at the pace you'd like, but we are doing it."

Mr. Walsh would not say what he might propose this year, but indicated he is interested in privatizing the Corrections Department, D.C. General Hospital, the sewage treatment plant at Blue Plains and post-secondary education, such as the D.C. Law School and possibly the University of the District of Columbia.

Ethics — Style and Substance

There were heartening signs last week that the Republican leaders are beginning to understand the public's yearning for a cleaner Congress. The Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, had already shut down his tax-exempt Better America Foundation after reports about its spending to help his Presidential bid. Now he has decided to return leftover contributions and to disclose all the foundation's donors. Speaker Newt Gingrich, meanwhile, said he will pay his own way on his summer book tour to avoid exceeding House limits on the amount of free travel a member may accept.

We applaud these gestures and their healthy symbolism. What is needed now is substance to go with the symbolism. That means prompt action to clean up campaign financing and to outlaw the free meals, vacations and other gifts that lawmakers get from lobbyists. These matters now hang precariously in both chambers.

Two weeks ago, Speaker Newt Gingrich shook hands with President Clinton in New Hampshire on creating a commission to address political reform. Mr. Clinton has proposed an eight-member panel drawn from outside the ranks of present or former members of Congress or party officials. He would give the commission a deadline of Feb. 1 to issue recommendations, which would then have to be accepted by the President and either accepted or rejected by Congress without alterations. Meanwhile, he correctly urges Mr. Gingrich and Mr. Dole to approve the gift ban and lobbyist disclosure system that nearly passed with impressive bipartisan support in the last Congress.

Mr. Gingrich, offended that Mr. Clinton went public with his plan, has dismissed the initiative as a "political gimmick." This is one of several cases in which Mr. Gingrich is falling short. He continues to benefit from Republican resistance to retaining an independent counsel to help resolve pending complaints against the Speaker. Both he and Mr. Dole are ignoring the brazenness with which the new G.O.P. majority is shaking down special interests for money in exchange for favors on health, safety and environmental legislation.

Americans did not throw out the Democratic hacks only to have the Republicans pioneer more aggressive versions of the capital's money game. Republicans can gain politically by supporting formation of the Clinton-Gingrich commission and by passing a tough gift ban before the August break.

Let's Keep the Arts Endowment but Give It a Drastic Overhaul

To the Editor:

In "Arts for Our Sake" (Op-Ed, June 21), Hillary Rodham Clinton offers a heartfelt sermon about the importance of arts in American life, and their need for public and private support. I agree.

But I do not believe that continuing the National Endowment for the Arts as currently organized fills that need efficiently.

This 30-year-old agency spends more than half its budget on administration, questionable studies and allied lobbyists. Its grants are heavily skewed toward such European arts as opera and classical music, for example, while dribbling out pittances to America's greatest gift to world music — jazz.

The N.E.A.'s worst problem is that it is beholden to the 535 discriminating arts connoisseurs in Congress. Obtaining its reauthorization every two or three years, and its annual appropriation (currently a pitiful $167 million), is like driving a fragile sled through a pack of ravening Siberian wolves. No wonder the endowment's chairwoman, Jane Alexander, boasts that her agency funds programs in every Congressional district!

There are better ways to fund the arts than this wasteful, discriminatory and ineffectual system. One would be to empower new audiences, not "experts" and Congress, to decide what and whom to fund.

Federal money should go for locating and supporting new arts venues, such as school auditoriums, public buildings and shopping centers. Another would be to distribute vouchers for arts admission at schools and colleges, senior centers and community organizations. Arts institutions would be reimbursed for the vouchers they redeem. Such a system would indeed provide more than "pleasant esthetics," as Mrs. Clinton urges, but also, as she adds, "help move us forward as a democracy." ALICE GOLDFARB MARQUIS

La Jolla, Calif., June 21, 1995

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include writer's name, address and telephone number. We regret that we cannot acknowledge unpublished letters. Those selected may be shortened for space reasons. Fax letters to (212) 556-3622 or send to Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 229 West 43d Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

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And Before the N.E.A.?

To the Editor:

From the monolith of flimsy arguments in Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Arts for Our Sake" (Op-Ed, June 21), one misguided notion protrudes: Public support for the arts "is an investment in the values we claim to honor and in the cultural traditions in which democracy has flourished for 218 years."

The nation flourished for 189 years without the National Endowment for the Arts. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Edison, George Washington Carver, the Wright brothers and even Norman Rockwell helped make our country great despite the vacuum of Federal arts funding.

Meanwhile, our crime rate and other problems were fractions of present levels and our economy soared.

A principal greatness and value of the United States is its freedom for individuals to do what they please — a goal undermined by forcing people to pay for art on which they would not otherwise spend their money. BRUCE ELLIS FEIN

Chicago, June 22, 1995

AIDS Babies Deserve Help, Now

Hundreds of babies infected with the AIDS virus will continue to go undetected and untreated every year unless Congress or New York State deal with this vexing public health problem. The State Legislature, immobilized by a fierce clash between those who want mandatory testing of all newborns and those who prefer a voluntary approach, has been unable to agree on a solution. Congress, knocked off course when the same fierce clash stopped a Federal survey of infected babies, has yet to take action.

Both bodies have a responsibility to get on with the job. It is simply irresponsible to let newborn babies go untreated while arguing over the mechanics of how to help them.

•

The need for a vigorous response is clear. Women are becoming infected with the AIDS virus in rising numbers, and about 7,000 of them give birth each year. Many pass the virus on to their babies, either in the womb or during birth. Some 1,000 to 2,000 babies are infected this way each year, with New York State alone accounting for roughly a quarter of the total. Some of the infected babies are detected through voluntary blood tests on the mothers or their newborns. The rest go undetected and untreated until they become sick, when it is too late to offer them the best shot at a longer life.

Medical science knows quite well how to alleviate this damage. The best solution by far is to identify and treat the expectant mother before her child is born. One of the few bright spots in the battle against AIDS was the discovery last year that treating a pregnant woman with the drug AZT can greatly reduce the chances that she will pass the AIDS virus on to her child, saving most of the babies from infection.

Unfortunately, large numbers of women never come near a clinic for prenatal care and many of those who do come in for such care never get tested for the AIDS virus. So a fallback solution is to identify all infected newborns as early as possible, through blood tests, so that they can be closely monitored and treated. Doctors have no way to cure these infected babies, but they can ward off many of the infections that typically kill them, thus prolonging and improving the quality of their lives.

Although the medical solutions are in hand, they are not in fact being broadly applied. In New York State, for example, clinics try, with widely disparate vigor and success, to get women to agree to be tested during pregnancy or at birth and to allow their babies to be tested. But surveys suggest most of the infected babies are missed. A more vigorous effort is clearly needed.

Unfortunately, the State Legislature may be headed for another stalemate. The Senate has passed a bill to require mandatory testing of all newborns and mount a more aggressive voluntary testing program aimed at pregnant women. The new voluntary approach would make it harder and less likely for women to decline testing. But the Assembly has taken no action yet and has only four days before adjournment. Its leaders have traditionally opposed mandatory testing but seem inclined to accept a more vigorous voluntary effort for both pregnant women and newborns.

Either approach would be better than the status quo. This page has long endorsed mandatory tests for newborns on the ground that the health of the baby is more important than any privacy risk to the mother. But there is virtually no political appetite for imposing mandatory tests on pregnant women, so a strong voluntary approach is the only feasible alternative.

The best solution would be a national policy insuring that all infected babies are identified for monitoring and treatment. Representative Gary Ackerman, Democrat of New York, and Representative Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma, will unveil an amendment this week that would require states, as a condition for receiving certain Federal AIDS funds, to test all newborns whose risk of infection has not been determined through voluntary testing of the expectant mother. That approach would provide a needed incentive for the states to identify and help these neglected babies.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1995

Russia's Rancorous Politics

The unruly state of Russian politics was captured aptly the other day on a television talk show when Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the nationalist leader, tossed a glass of orange juice in the face of a reformist governor after he suggested Mr. Zhirinovsky had syphilis. Then there was the member of the Russian Parliament who turned up in the Duma chamber toting a toy gun to protest Government bargaining with Chechen fighters as a loss of Russian honor. His fellow lawmakers agreed, approving a nonbinding motion of no confidence in the Government of President Boris Yeltsin.

Russian politics, never short of intrigue or combat, has rarely been crazier or crankier. If the potential consequences for Russia and the rest of the world were not so serious, the fractious behavior might merely make for entertaining theater. Unhappily, it reflects powerful centrifugal forces that continue to tear at Russia's efforts to create a democracy. There is likely to be more turbulence ahead, not only within Russia but in Russia's relations with the United States and other countries.

No one ever suggested Russia would make an easy transition from tyranny to democracy. In some areas, progress has been considerable. Sixty percent of Russian economic output is generated by privately owned business. A middle class is slowly developing. Free speech and a free press are taking hold. Barriers to foreign investment are diminishing, and travel restrictions for foreigners and Russians have been lifted. Fair and free elections have been conducted, and a new round of parliamentary and presidential balloting is scheduled later this year and in 1996.

But the unstable political climate, while a healthy sign of freedom, threatens to overwhelm the still-tender democratic system. The development of democracy and a market economy requires a sustained period of political stability. So far neither President Yeltsin nor the Parliament has shown the steady leadership to provide it.

There is a need for responsible behavior in Moscow. Instead of undermining each other, Mr. Yeltsin and the Parliament should be working together to create an effective government, a stable ruble and a civil society where public safety is assured without sacrificing civil liberties. Instead of skirmishing over the war in Chechnya, they should be cooperating to end a misadventure that has cost thousands of Chechen and Russian lives. The political imbroglio produced by the no-confidence vote must be cleared so the President and Parliament can concentrate on the country's real problems.

Washington can encourage greater stability by behaving more responsibly itself on relations with Russia. Vice President Al Gore is headed to Moscow this week with four Cabinet members and an agenda packed with important business, including Moscow's pending sale of nuclear reactors to Iran that could help Teheran develop nuclear weapons.

He should be traveling with the support of Congress, not under the weight of a variety of Republican proposals that would undercut American efforts to support democratic institutions and the dismantling of Russian nuclear arms. If Speaker Newt Gingrich is serious about his commitment to work with the Administration on Russia, he will quietly bury these destructive measures.

Democracy building is hard work. It requires the dedication of political leaders joined in common cause, working with the support of their countrymen. When change was first stirring in the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev said the immature political culture of his country could not manage the competing interests of a democratic society. Nearly a decade later, little seems to have changed.

Journal

FRANK RICH

The Unkindest Cut

High up on any list of ain't-broke, don't-fix-'em institutions is America's huge web of universities. As Vartan Gregorian, the president of Brown, puts it: "As many as three-quarters of the best universities in the world are located in the United States. What sector of our economy or society can make a similar claim?"

But Dr. Gregorian — in a powerful, post-election speech to the National Press Club in Washington last fall and in a phone conversation last week — now feels he must campaign for the American university's survival, and fast. Why? The Republican budget plans sailing through the 104th Congress would end a 50-year government-university partnership that has made our country's higher education the best.

For all the talk about funding cutbacks in student loans, surprisingly little attention has been paid to how the G.O.P. budget will damage the educational institutions themselves. Now reality is setting in. As Harvey Fineberg, the dean of Harvard's School of Public Health, said in an interview last week: "We thought the case was so self-evident we didn't think the cutbacks were actually going to happen. Now that the proposals have come forward, people are just dumbstruck."

The G.O.P. assault on higher education began not as a budget-balancing strategy but as an ideological campaign in this winter's Congressional hearings on the National Endowment for the Humanities. Arguing that the N.E.H. should be abolished, representatives of right-wing think tanks led by William Bennett and Lynne Cheney condemned universities en masse as subversive hotbeds of political correctness.

Are there indeed the radical feminists and multiculturalists that Mr. Bennett decries on campus? Of course. Do some of them get N.E.H. grants? Yes — and why not, given that they're Americans too? But the Bennett-Cheney characterization of academia was an indiscriminate smear, as was their description of the N.E.H. The endowment's typical (and largest) grants go not for Marxist deconstructions of "I Love Lucy" but to underwrite Euripides translations (University of Virginia), or edit the papers of Andrew Johnson (University of Tennessee), or assist an archeological dig (University of Wyoming).

Just the same, the Bennett-Cheney strategy did the deed; under the House budget proposal, the N.E.H. will be killed.

With respect for our universities so low in the new Congress, it was inevitable that no one would think twice about axing the Federal contribution to academic science research as well. One example: The proposed cuts at the National Institutes of Health alone will radically alter the nation's medical schools, given that roughly 16 percent of their income derives from Federal research grants, mainly from the N.I.H.

In practical terms, Dr. Fineberg explains, this is "like eating the seed corn." Fewer grants will slow scientific breakthroughs in disease prevention and cure, which from the Salk vaccine to recent advances in breast cancer have mostly happened at American universities. With less research come fewer opportunities to nurture new researchers. "We will destroy the future by turning a generation of would-be scientists away," Dr. Fineberg says.

> The G.O.P. aims at universities.

Ask G.O.P. leaders how universities will replace Federal funding, and the mantra-like answer is "privatization." But lately industry has paid for only 7 percent of academic scientific research and development, compared with the Federal Government's 57 percent. "Anyone who dreams these cuts will be replaced though private philanthropy or industry is fooling himself," says Dr. Fineberg. The research that might unlock the genetic origins of a disease, after all, does not immediately produce a product industry can sell.

Just as bleak are prospects for privatization in the humanities. Richard Ekman of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has calculated that the N.E.H., tiny as it is, gives three times as much to the humanities as all the private foundations in America *combined* — which makes it "highly unlikely" that those foundations can even begin to replace the endowment's support of university scholarship. If it's dumb and dumber this country wants, it couldn't find a more foolproof scenario than the one now being drafted on Capitol Hill. □

Foreign Affairs

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Japan, a Frog and a Pail

WASHINGTON

After the U.S. imposed trade sanctions on Japan last week, I found myself thinking back to that old science class experiment where the teacher puts a frog in a pail of water on the stove and gradually turns up the heat. The frog, which is very good at adapting, adjusts to each new level of heat. Eventually, though, the frog boils to death, because it is so good at adapting it never thinks to jump out of the pail.

The Japanese have become so good at adapting to trade threats and the ever-rising value of the yen that instead of doing what a normal country would do — jump out of the pail by opening its economy — the Japanese simply keep the foreigners out and adapt to the consequences. They just tighten their belts another notch, sacrifice some profits and move their factories to lower-cost labor markets around Asia.

But with the U.S. having just slapped a 100 percent tariff on Japanese luxury cars and, more importantly, with the yen having soared in value by 20 percent this past year, making everything Japan sells here 20 percent more expensive, what will Japan do now? Jump, adapt or finally boil into stagnation?

My guess is that Japan will try to adapt again, and not open its markets. The Japanese Government is too weak to take the tough steps to deregulate its economy, and its instinct for adapting to foreign pressures is too deeply ingrained. That's why President Clinton was right to raise the stakes to a boil. The President's only option is to create so much pain for Japanese manufacturers — and so much pleasure for Japanese consumers, by weakening the dollar and making U.S. goods temptingly cheap to buy — that instead of trying to adapt, they will finally work to remove Japan's trade barriers.

I hope Mr. Clinton has the stomach to keep the heat on, because here's how I think Japan will initially respond: Japanese businesses will use the strong yen to buy, at bargain-basement prices, more and more factories in cheap labor markets around Asia. This will lower their production costs and nullify the effects of the higher yen on their exports. Sure, Japanese companies may have to eat some losses this quarter. But Japan, unlike America, doesn't worry about quarterly profits. It worries about quarter-century profits, and in a quarter century, with the yen having such buying power, Japan will own every other factory from southern China to Burma. So the U.S. can bar all Japan's exports, and Japan will just slip them in through these other markets.

True, this will mean fewer jobs in Japan, and a hollowing out of its economy, and that in itself will force Japan to import more from abroad. But the Japanese aren't just going to sit back and live off their investments in Asia. If history is any guide, they will also adapt by finding more efficient ways to produce in the industries they do keep at home. With the strong yen forcing them to streamline in order to stay competitive, Japanese companies will move even faster into the knowledge-intensive, high-wage, high-skilled economy of tomorrow that the U.S. still dreams of.

> The U.S. brings trade to a boil.

No, no, say the classical economists. This time Japan won't be able to adapt. This time they jump or boil. Oh? That's what they said when oil prices quadrupled in the 1970's, but Japan adapted. That's what they said when the yen rose by 50 percent in the 1980's, but Japan adapted. Only a fool would bet against them trying to adapt again, while opening their markets as little as possible.

Unless one thing happens: Japanese consumers decide they are tired of tightening their belts, living in houses the size of a walk-in closet and being the world's richest country and poorest people. That would be nice, but history also teaches that there is a deep cultural tradition in Japan, shared even by many Japanese consumers, that consumer welfare must always give way to the national welfare, and the national welfare is to win the 100-year trade war, not the battle of 1995.

But hey, if you think this time Japan can't adapt and will open instead, then buy Ford Motor stock; they make a hot little right-hand-drive Mustang for the Japan market. If you think Japan can adapt, without opening much, then buy the yen. That's the bet. The structure of U.S.-Japan competition in the 21st century is riding on the outcome. □

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 1995

Journal

FRANK RICH

Garth Neuts Newt

Barbra Streisand spoke out for the National Endowment for the Arts at Harvard. Madonna and R.E.M. have hit the radio with public-service ads extolling the N.E.A. But it was Garth Brooks, Kenny G and Michael Bolton — pop stars ranging from middle-of-the-road to Muzak — who stared down the Republican majority in the 104th Congress last week. And it was Congress that blinked.

The three musicians lobbied the Hill for the Arts Endowment on Tuesday. On Thursday the House voted 260 to 168 to defeat an amendment tripling the cut in the 1995 N.E.A. budget — with 75 Republicans, Newtish freshmen among them, in the majority.

"It's not in the bag by a long shot,"

The N.E.A.'s surprise hit parade.

rightly cautions Christopher Reeve, the most persistent show-biz lobbyist for the endowment this year. The agency could yet be killed outright. But Mr. Reeve is not alone in feeling nascent optimism after last week. For the first time in the culture war of '95, the anti-N.E.A. forces were thrown on the defensive.

Newt Gingrich, who has called the endowment "art patronage for an elite group" and has refused to meet with its chairwoman, Jane Alexander, could not resist sitting down with Mr. Brooks, the multimillionaire country-western icon who is, of course, no elitist. One witness to the meeting described the Speaker as eagerly expressing affection for his hometown Atlanta Ballet and High Museum, both N.E.A. grantees; subsequently, he waffled to the press about the agency's fate.

Kenny G, meanwhile, politely chastised Steve Gunderson, the Wisconsin Republican floating an N.E.A. privatization scheme, for refusing to "go to the mat" for the arts. "I told him his proposal was wimpy," Mr. G explained on the phone later, "though I didn't use the word wimpy."

None of these encounters happened by chance. The pro-N.E.A. troops have found a general: Michael Greene, C.E.O. of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. A Georgian who overlapped with Mr. Gingrich at West Georgia College, Mr. Greene first took command at the Grammy Awards on March 1, when, in defiance of CBS dictums, he gave an endowment-advocacy speech with an 800 number (651-1575).

Calls and telegrams have flooded Congress ever since. When Mr. Greene brought his pop threesome to Washington on Tuesday, he did so in sync with a mass lobbying day organized by the American Council for the Arts, an association of the nation's high-culture institutions. The powerhouse kickoff speaker was a conservative Republican — Winton Blount, the Alabama industrialist and arts philanthropist who partially privatized the Postal Service when in the Nixon Cabinet but who dismissed rhetoric about privatizing the N.E.A. as demagoguery.

Mr. Greene cast his star lobbyists as shrewdly as the Arts Council chose Mr. Blount. "Neither Garth nor I am particularly liberal," Mr. Greene explained in an interview, adding that he decided to avoid Hollywood's "stereotypical personalities" in picking the cadre that stormed the Hill. Should he just happen to help orchestrate an N.E.A. pitch at the Oscars, don't expect the spokesperson to be Susan Sarandon.

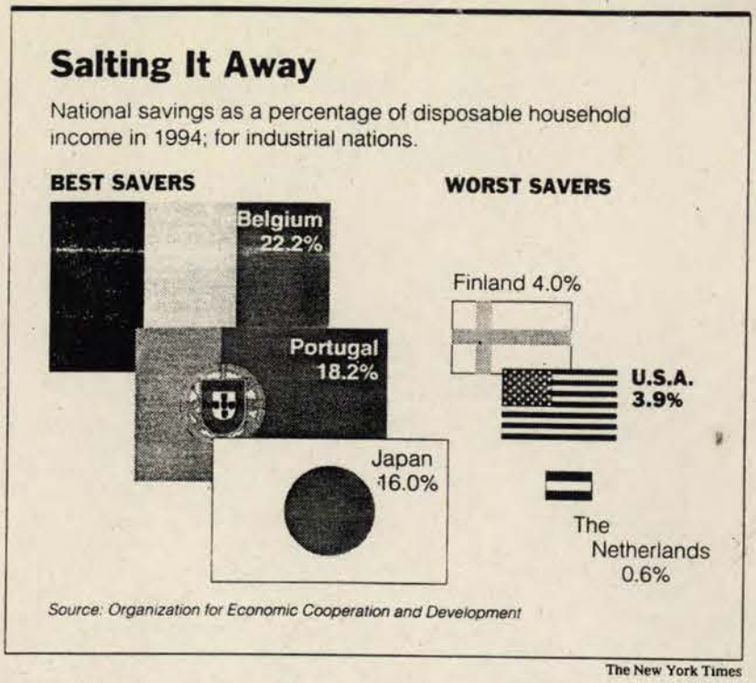
Yet Mr. Greene doesn't pull punches about his enemy in this war. Noting that the endowment's annual $167 million is too small to contribute to serious budget balancing, he adds: "This isn't about Mapplethorpe or Serrano, either. It's about the political agenda of the religious right. Their minions are spending millions and millions of dollars trying to smudge the political reputation of people who don't think like they think ... or believe what they believe. That is McCarthyism, and that is frightening." As Exhibit A, he cited a newly circulating fund-raising letter from the Christian Action Network, promising to hold Mr. Gingrich's and his Congress's "feet to the fire" to eliminate "this hateful, blasphemous and pro-homosexual Federal agency."

But the political lesson of last week is that moderates are finally mobilizing to hold the Republicans' feet to the fire on this issue, too, just as they are starting to do on other religious-right crusades like abortion and school prayer. It will take a grotesque brand of McCarthyism indeed for the G.O.P.'s extremists to portray Federal arts funding as an assault on mainstream American values when the likes of Garth Brooks is loudly singing the N.E.A.'s praises from the middle of the road. □

VIEWPOINT

CHARLES E. SCHUMER

Challenging Democrats To Change Stand on Tax Cuts



The New York Times

FOR too long, often in the name of laudable intentions and virtuous principles, the Democratic Party has failed to emphasize fiscal policies that foster long-term investment and economic growth. Instead, our party has often argued dogmatically that cuts in the capital gains tax, for example, benefit only the wealthy, who can afford to play the stock markets. This approach ignores the singular economic fact that only by increasing and tapping the savings of the broad majority of Americans — middle-income working families — can we hope to finance a genuinely productive and globally competitive economy.

Households earning between $25,000 and $105,000 account for fully two-thirds of total family income in America. This is where the money is, so it must also be the primary source of our nation's seed capital. Yet it seems a great struggle for the middle class to save for the long term. We need to provide comprehensible incentives that convince average Americans that capital gains can work for them, too. I have a proposal — the Middle-Class Savings and Capital Gains Act of 1995 — that cuts the capital gains tax in a way that benefits everyone, especially the typical working household.

The air in Washington nowadays is thick with tax-cut and tax-reform proposals of all kinds. Since the American economy — which has produced more than 5.5 million jobs in the last two years — is growing at a healthy rate with moderate price pressures, however, we should be careful about advocating tax cuts whose primary effect might be to increase final demand and risk inflationary overstimulation.

Representative Charles E. Schumer, Democrat of Brooklyn and Queens, is a senior member of the House Banking and Financial Services Committee.

Such measures might make us feel good now, but they would do little to resolve a persistent and very serious problem that threatens America's future prosperity: our pitifully low savings rate. United States households are estimated to have saved a paltry 3.9 percent of disposable income in 1994, down from 4.6 percent in 1993 and second to last among 20 O.E.C.D. countries reporting these figures. We desperately need to increase the stock of domestic savings necessary to reduce the cost of capital and finance investment in long-term productive and intellectual assets that improve efficiency, cultivate technological advance and fuel economic growth without inflation.

The consumption side of the equation is equally unsettling: United States consumer debt now has risen to an all-time high of 91 percent of personal income. Ten years ago, it stood at 65 percent.

Under my proposal, which I plan to introduce next week, each adult taxpayer would be entitled to a lifetime capital gains exemption, or "account," beginning at $100,000 in 1995 and indexed for inflation every year thereafter. Each individual would be able to realize net capital gains up to this amount completely tax-free at any time during one's life, in whole or in increments. (This would be in addition to the one-time $125,000 exemption for the sale of a home by those over 55; other gains from the sale of primary residences would not be included in the new capital gains account.)

Capping the exemption at $100,000 per adult provides ample opportunity for most middle-income families to enjoy the benefits of a capital gains tax cut without the nation enduring the potentially devastating budgetary effects of the unlimited cut proposed by the Republicans. Because the G.O.P. proposal has no cap, it is more expensive, costing $53.9 billion over five years, compared with $35.6 billion for a middle-class capital gains tax cut.

TO see the practical effect of the middle-class cut, consider a young couple, both 30 years old, who begin saving for their retirement this year. If together they manage to put $400 a month into an equity portfolio that appreciates modestly at 8 percent a year, they will have stocks worth $543,759 at the age of 60, for a capital gain of just under $400,000. The lifetime exemptions of $100,000 each, if left untouched, would have risen to $419,514 (at an average annual increase of 2.5 percent in the Consumer Price Index). Therefore, their entire gain of $400,000 would be tax-free, providing a very significant contribution to the couple's retirement nest egg.

Not every working family will be able to save this much, of course, but it is not a wholly unrealistic target for many. Even at $200 a month, A couple earning a combined income of $50,000 would be saving appreciably more of their pay than the current national average.

Middle-class Americans must be convinced that they can — in fact, must — play a central role in financing the nation's industry, and that they can reap substantial rewards by doing so. If we give working Americans a mechanism to save for their future, they'll find a way. ■

N.Y. Post 1/11/95

Fund the arts — if they stand the test of time

ON THE RIGHT



WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

THE debate rages on the question of whether to continue federal funding for the arts.

This morning's argument suggests an element of desperation. It is that the primary argument for continued funding is economic, not artistic. If the curtain doesn't rise, then the taxis don't get summoned, the restaurants don't get patronized, the ticket salesmen are laid off. If you're going to say that kind of thing, you may just as well quote the founder of such thinking, who was J.M. Keynes, with the observation that if it's absolutely necessary to maintain high employment, you should go out and build pyramids.

The argument made over the weekend by Newt Gingrich, that the arts program is a sandbox for the affluent cultural elite, doesn't quite home in, for two reasons. One is that art consumers are by no means all affluent. Certainly this is not the case in Italy, where many poor people give opera second place only after spaghetti; or Soviet Russia, where indigent victims of socialism would line up at the library after midnight to have access to a new book of poetry.

And then also it is at least an open question, surely, whether education improves the sensibilities. If the Founding Fathers were correct that only a virtuous society could hope to remain free, then didn't they make a case for literacy? And if one favors reading and writing and arithmetic, isn't it a matter of concern what one reads?

But [illegible] Dick Armey [illegible] the National Endowment for the Arts offends the Constitution of the United States." That is a provocative statement, and prima facie would appear to be correct. There is the matter of form and the matter of content. And the question whether the government has any business getting into the act, and the question whether in doing so it has always behaved well.

There has been public resistance to some of the uses to which the National Endowment for the Arts has given money.

On the one hand, the dissident taxpayer asks why he should be levied to subsidize ventures in which he finds no artistic merit and occasionally even condemns as inimical to the values to which he adheres. Supporters of existing practice argue that in the nature of things art is experimental and that what many today appear scandalous or lacking in merit, 50 years from now may be acclaimed as a masterpiece.

It isn't possible to reconcile the two positions thus stated. But it is possible to acknowledge that support for what is unquestionably a part of our cultural patrimony is pretty well universal.

Adam Smith counseled that free societies are obliged to contribute state funds only for the maintenance of justice, for the common defense and for the preservation of national monuments. These monuments — Armey might be brought around on this point — shouldn't be thought of as consisting exclusively of marble palaces memorializing dead presidents and generals.

The monuments of our society include music, drama and art.

Accordingly, critics and dissenters could meet on a field of compromise: The National Endowment for the Arts should be given a fresh mandate to continue to make grants — but only to qualified symphony orchestras, ballet and opera companies, and museums — to help pay the cost of bringing to the public acknowledged classics in art created 50 or more years ago.

That test of longevity does not demean artistic work created yesterday, but acknowledges that the passage of time has also the critical effect of seasoned validation. The very word "patrimony" suggests the passage to the present generation of gifts devised by the preceding generation.

As a practical matter, we're talking about a very small percentage of the money spent on art. Sixty percent of the gross is provided by consumers — Americans of all classes who buy tickets.

It is a ticklish question when to feel the confidence to override populist culture. The Rolling Stones do not need a subsidy, and it is they who attract the legions.

But if it is necessary to give life to the string quartet specializing in Baroque music, is there a proper role for government in the enterprise? What "government" here means is a vehicle of taking from non-quartet sponsors for the benefit of quartet enthusiasts, but also, surely, as a token of a willingness, as Whittaker Chambers once put it, of preserving the tokens of hope and truth.

The monuments of our society include music, drama and art.

Cultural Groups Mobilize To Take On the New Congress

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Alarmed by growing attacks on Federal support for the arts, cultural groups around the country are mobilizing to press their case directly to the avowedly hostile House Republican leadership. Their message: The arts don't cost; they earn.

The effort to sell the arts as not just balm for the soul but as a boon to local economies drew representatives of some 50 national arts and humanities groups to a meeting last week in Washington, where they formed a new "cultural advocacy" coalition. Another group set up a 900 telephone number to raise money for messages to Senators and Representatives. The chairman of the President's Council on Arts and the Humanities, John Brademas, said yesterday that he would make his own appeal later this week.

Around the nation, arts councils and museums and opera and dance companies have begun surveying their benefactors and trustees for well-connected business people, Republican or otherwise, who might have the ear of influential legislators.

Newt Gingrich, the new House Speaker, has made no secret of his antipathy to the long-standing system of Federal grants to arts organizations and artists. He and Congressional allies have vowed to pare if not end the subsidies doled out by the National Endowment for the Arts, which is to distribute $167.4 million this year, down from a high in 1979 of what today would be more than $300 million. Other Government financing programs for humanities and museums are also under critical scrutiny.

There are additional uncertainties in New York State, where the new Republican Governor, George E. Pataki, has yet to put his own stamp on the State Council on the Arts, either formally reappointing the long-serving chairwoman, Kitty Carlisle Hart, or naming a successor.

"Everybody's nervous," said Robert T. Buck, director of the Brooklyn Museum, which has received more than $2 million from Washington over the last two years for special programs and exhibits. Though the grant is only a small part of the museum's $17.5 million annual operating budget, it is considered vital. "We are counting on these monies," Mr. Buck said. "We are planning our projects with their support."

In an effort at solidarity, representatives of the American Association of Museum Directors and about 50 other arts, civic and labor organizations from the United Conference of Mayors to Opera America and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. met last week at the offices of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies to plan strategy.

"We're sharing what our Congressional friends are thinking, and figuring out collective ways of communicating," said Bob Lynch, president

> The arts say they receive little and generate billions in tax revenues.

of the assembly and a former college instructor in poetry and writing.

He said the coalition would portray the arts as a $37 billion industry employing 1.3 million people, or 1.5 percent of the work force, and generating tax revenues of $3.4 billion. Although nonprofit arts groups are routinely misperceived as subsisting primarily on charity, he said, they actually generate 60 percent of their budgets with cash sales: tickets, T-shirts and the like. Most of the rest is raised privately. Even those groups that are subsidized by the National Endowment for the Arts average grants valued at less than 2 percent of their budgets.

"Those are conservative Republican principles," said Mr. Lynch, whose 3,800-member assembly is coordinating but not directing the coalition.

Another umbrella lobbying group, the Arts Alliance, last week set up a fund-raising toll number — (900) 370-9000 — with a message soliciting money for a campaign to sway Congress with the same economic argument.

"If the curtain doesn't go up, restaurants and taxis suffer and printers don't get paid," said the alliance's executive director, Judy Golub.

Similarly, the American Council for the Arts, another lobbying group, has been calling news organizations with figures on the economic impact of the arts.

Leading figures in arts philanthropy and education are also lending support to the effort. Though Mr. Brademas heads the President's arts committee — a citizens and Government advisory panel to stimulate private and public support of the arts — he said he had also been working on his own to organize "friends of the arts" in support of the two national endowments (arts and humanities) and the Institute of Museum Services, which helps defray operating expenses. Mr. Brademas, who has served as a Representative from Indiana and as president of New York University, said he would speak out on the issue in a program on Thursday at the National Gallery of Art.

For his part, Mr. Gingrich has said that while he supports free exercise of the arts, he does not believe that they should be taxpayer subsidized. In fact, he says, artists would be freer without Federal involvement.

Even managers, benefactors and trustees of large arts institutions that receive proportionately small Federal grants deplored cutbacks or a cutoff, saying the contributions stimulate other giving.

"The N.E.A. validates the arts in America; it's the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval," said Ardis Krainik, general director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, which is getting some $600,000 from the Government this year toward its $30 million operating budget. She recalled that a large cut in arts funds was also sought when President Reagan took office, but that Republican allies on the boards of arts groups proved persuasive in rolling back the effort.

Martin E. Segal, chairman of the New York International Festival of the Arts and former chairman of Lincoln Center, said arts groups were best advised to make their case for Federal funds through influentia members of their boards rather than by scattershot lobbying of Congress, and he indicated that such efforts were already under way.

The president of Lincoln Center, Nathan Leventhal, said that although the Federal contribution

> A 900 number has been set up for fund-raising to get the message out.

made up a bare 1 percent of the performing arts complex's $340 million budget (which is roughly double the arts endowment's entire budget), it helped. Besides, he said, the endowment's contribution amounts to 66 cents a year for every American. "We spend more on military bands than on the arts in this country."

Like a number of others, Mr. Leventhal attributed the anti-financing backlash to recent controversial artworks that offended religious and conservative sensibilities.

Beverly Sills, the chairwoman of Lincoln Center, said: "I can't believe that out of thousands and thousands of grants they would latch on to two or three they found objectionable, whoever 'they' are."

"What happened after the $750 toilet seats?" she said in reference to military overcharges. "Did we attempt to shut down the Pentagon?"

To one major recipient of Federal arts and humanities grants, WNET/Channel 13 in New York, one of the nation's largest public broadcasting stations, the threatened cutback or cutoff was particularly ominous.

Although the station gets about a fourth of its $100 million budget directly or indirectly from Washington, by its nature it cannot fight for funds, said its president, William Baker.

"Our strength is our weakness," he said. "We're very apolitical. We're not left or right and we feel uncomfortable at lobbying for anything, including ourselves."

The station could not be self-sustaining, Mr. Baker said, because its programs were "not economically viable." Fully half the schedule consists of children's programming, he said, and 9,000 schools a day used WNET programs in their curriculum. Public broadcasting has been threatened before, he said, but never so directly.

For all the concern among arts groups about Republican leaders in Washington, there was praise for Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, who has maintained city arts financing even in the face of severe budget problems. Ellen V. Futter, director of the Museum of Natural History, said that Republicans in New York City had been "extremely sensitive and highly sympathetic to the arts."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1995

PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Exploring New Soapboxes for Political Animals

By PETER H. LEWIS

THE personal computer has become the modern equivalent of the soap box, reference library, bully pulpit and town hall, allowing anyone with access to a modem and a phone line to participate in politics to a degree never before possible on such a scale. The convening of the 104th Congress last week appears to have accelerated the phenomenon of electronic democracy, which has been spreading along with the personal computer.

Electronic democracy is far from perfectly democratic, given the high relative cost of computer equipment, phone service and information fees. Recent demographic surveys of the Internet reveal an electronic citizenry that is predominantly white, male, educated and well to do. But there are countless resources available to those who want to make the effort to keep tabs on the new Congress, a new Governor or a new City Council. Computer-based communications allow individuals and grassroots activist groups to be almost as politically connected as lobbyists and political action committees.

The resources include local computer bulletin boards; electronic discussion groups; mailing lists; live on-line forums and chat lines, and electronic publishing centers known as gopher, F.T.P. and Web sites.

Each of the major commercial online information services maintains an extensive political data base and forums where one can study and debate the issues of the day. Because they confer the ability to send and receive electronic mail, these electronic services hold the promise of putting constituents in more immediate touch with government.

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It is still unclear how many members of the 104th Congress are connected to an E-mail system. Only a few dozen of the members of Congress have their own electronic mail addresses.



Stuart Goldenberg

The computer wires have been hissing lately with discussions of what Newt Gingrich calls his "nutty idea," proposed last week, of a possible "tax credit for the poorest Americans to buy a laptop." In a country where tens of millions of adults are functionally illiterate, Mr. Gingrich's notion that everyone must become computer literate seems eerily disconnected. Likewise, the Clinton Administration's goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000 seems overly ambitious when many schools cannot afford books or phone lines.

Then again, perhaps this analysis is evidence of what Mr. Gingrich last week called "a pervasive cynicism in the culture of Washington."

"What this is going to do," Mr. Gingrich said, referring to a new system for distributing Government information over the Internet, "is get information beyond the cynicism of the elite."

His remarks came at the opening of a new Library of Congress database called Thomas (http://thomas.loc.gov), named after Thomas Jefferson, who believed that an informed citizenry was the cornerstone of true democracy.

Thomas, currently available only to Internet users who have access to the services known as the World Wide Web, will eventually hold the texts of every piece of legislation introduced in Congress and the official text of every speech made on the floor.

Anyone who has not tried to read the arcane language of Congressional bills may be in for a shock, or perhaps an enlightenment as to why Congress often seems so gridlocked.

It is also unclear how many people will avail themselves of such resources. Just because television is ubiquitous does not mean that C-SPAN is going to knock "The Simpsons" off the charts, after all.

Again, perhaps that was cynical.

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The commercial services make it easy to find political fodder, allowing users to type GO CONGRESS (in the case of Compuserve) to catch up on the new issues, or to use JUMP GOVERNMENT on Prodigy. America Online even offers its readers a handy guide for following political debates, with explanations of such argumentation fallacies as "the straw man," "ad hominems," the "false cause," "amphibole" and "circular reasoning."

As with many topics, the Internet provides by far the greatest wealth of resources and avenues for discourse.

Usenet, a shared network of thousands of separate bulletin boards that can be reached through the Internet or any of the major commercial services, has hundreds of smoky rooms for debating the issues.

For example, discussion groups include alt.politics.clinton, talk.politics.medicine, alt.politics.datahighway, soc.rights.human, alt.politics.libertarian, alt.current.events, alt.politics.usa.newt-gingrich, and alt.bob-dole.flame.flame.flame.

The World Wide Web, often described as a subset of the Internet, is actually a set of tools that permit the publishing of multimedia electronic documents. Not everyone on the Internet has the ability to use the Web, as it is known, although Prodigy and other major services are beginning to offer easier access. Prodigy said yesterday that it would offer World Wide Web access to users of its Windows software, beginning next week.

The most technically sophisticated World Wide Web systems, like the one operated by the Internet Multicasting Service of Washington (http://town.hall.board), can broadcast live audio from the House and Senate floors. A cynic might suggest that this broadcast demonstrates a principle previously unknown to the laws of physics: the ability of hot air to travel over computer wires.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

To Earn Subsidies, Must Art Be Useful? Must It Be Sweet?

By PAUL GOLDBERGER

"All art is quite useless," wrote Oscar Wilde, but of course he never encountered the National Endowment for the Arts, which is predicated on the premise that the arts are the most useful thing in the world. They solve social problems, they keep people happy, they make communities shine with enthusiasm and, best of all, they inject a shot of money into sagging economies. The arts establishment in the United States operates on a nearly messianic certainty that the arts are not merely good, but good for you.

Is it really so? Surely the economic impact of the arts is real. The explosion of interest in culture in the United States over the last generation has turned the arts into a potent industry. Study after study shows the multiplier effect of arts dollars, sowing prosperity all through the economy. The Metropolitan Museum is now the most popular tourist attraction in New York, where big exhibitions fill not only its own coffers but also those of hotels and restaurants. People clamor to get seats for major events at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. The arts are for everyone, and everyone seems to be for the arts.

Except, of course, on Capitol Hill, where the new Republican majority, building on years of discomfort among conservatives about Federal support of the arts, seems increasingly hostile to keeping the National Endowment in business. The endowment's entire appropriation is only $167 million, but no $167 million anywhere in the entire Federal budget is debated with such intensity. To the endowment's opponents, this comparatively tiny sum of money is a vast boondoggle, a pork barrel for the cultural elite. To the endowment's supporters, it is anything but a gift to the elite; it is money that spreads the pleasures of art around and assures that the experience of culture will be accessible to all.

The situation is rife with paradoxes, not the least of which is the way in which the arts establishment has tried to save its skin by portraying art as sweet and lovable, leaving to the endowment's opponents a much more realistic view of art as challenging and difficult. Both sides claim to represent the democratic ideal, which is why $167 million, which is a mere fly speck in the Federal budget, is given such overwhelming symbolic importance by both sides. The endowment's minuscule budget, less than half of what it costs to keep Lincoln Center going for a year, less than a quarter of what the city of Berlin spends on arts subsidies annually for a population that is less than 2 percent of that of the whole United States, is often portrayed as the crucible for the future of the arts in this country.

End the endowment and we will stop the free ride for unpopular artists and get back to the good kind of art that pays for itself, goes the conservative argument. We end the endowment at our peril, retorts the other side; without it, the arts will be finished and we will become a nation of philistines.

The likelihood is that the sky will neither fall nor rise if the endowment's modest appropriation disappears. Art will go on, as it always has. But if the endowment is sharply cut or eliminated altogether, the nation will be sending an important signal about its attitude toward cul-

A debate in which both sides are entangled in a web of paradoxes.

ture, which is that it expects it to play by the rules most other things do, and pay for itself.

It sounds, on the surface, as if it couldn't be more fair. Why shouldn't culture do what other things do, and take care of itself? The only problem is that it doesn't work, as history proves. Culture has never been able to support itself. There is a reason that the popes and the Medicis hired Michelangelo, that royalty paid Mozart to write concertos, that the histories of creativity and of patronage are intimately intertwined. The marketplace has never been a testing ground for artistic validity; history shows few correlations between what is popular enough to pay for itself and what is good enough to last.

Subsidizing art runs against the

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grain of American independence, the tradition of self-reliance that seems so often to tie into populism. But that very populist instinct often contradicts what art strives to do, which is not to coddle but to challenge. Great art is rarely created with popularity in mind, and when it manages to achieve tremendous appeal, it is often nothing more than a miraculous accident.

Surely the saddest aspect of this moment is the way in which the arts establishment, to fight the political opposition it faces, has been forced to retreat into a position of defending the popularity of art and denying its challenge. Jane Alexander, the earnest and determined chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts, has labored mightily to convince Congress and the voters that the endowment is spreading sweetness and light throughout the country, that art is bringing happiness to all who are touched by endowment grants.

But the Republicans are not so quick to buy this, and maybe they are right. They know the arts at their most vital are something other than sugar-coated candy. The arts often undermine, they often seek to be subversive to established orders, and the opposition to the endowment wants to protect the country from this evil, or at least make sure that government funds play no part in propagating it. Picasso may be easy to swallow now, but he wasn't in 1910. Why should our tax dollars support the next crazy radical to come down the pike?

The ultimate paradox is that now, at a time when public interest in the arts is greater than ever, the arts establishment has come to promote what is fundamentally an anti-intellectual view of culture, while the right-wing opposition operates from a more sophisticated view. The opponents of the endowment who complain loudly about the homoerotic photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe or the urine-drenched crucifix of Andres Serrano, hostile though they may be to any esthetic messages in these works, are actually more accepting of the notion that art consists of ideas and not merely pretty pictures, that it is more than entertainment and that it often seeks to challenge society's standards.

The arts establishment, engaged in the act of trying to protect the economic interests of cultural organizations and institutions that depend on masses of people attending, has increasingly been blurring the line between art and entertainment. These supporters of the arts endowment increasingly see culture in terms of what is consumed, not in terms of what is created. How else to protect their turf? Yet in doing so, they abandon to the other side the very view of art that they should be holding most dear, a recognition of art as creativity and challenge.

Today, as advocates attempt to save the endowment by portraying art as democratic, accessible and unthreatening, it is left to their opponents to see it in terms of creativity, and to admit the tremendous, terrifying power that art at its most intense can possess.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1995

How To Ruin NATO

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1995

By Fred C. Iklé

WASHINGTON

Challenge any historian to name an alliance more successful than NATO. There is none. Yet in every decade since the 1950's, throngs of foreign-policy experts have asserted that NATO faced some new crisis. Now comes the crisis of the 90's — the fragility of democracy in Eastern Europe and Russia, and the loss of a common enemy — and therefore, it is said, NATO must admit Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and other nations of the former Warsaw Pact. This remedy may seem all the more urgent as Russian forces keep inflicting wanton destruction on Chechnya.

Americans who question the wisdom of this eastward expansion fear that it might cause Russia to refurbish its military and expand westward. But this is only half the problem. Far from solving an alleged crisis, expanding NATO now would fatally weaken it. The Atlantic alliance must not become a chain letter — some Ponzi scheme that escapes bankruptcy only by signing up new members.

And NATO should not troll behind the European Union trying to hook the same fish. The bureaucrats of the European Union plan to catch Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia, as well as bigger fish in Eastern Europe. Not to be outdone, the Clinton Administration promoted the Partnership for Peace, an ill-defined assembly that includes just about every non-Asian country in the Northern Hemisphere. So does the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is .... Now, who remembers what that organization is all about?

But people do remember what NATO is about. On both sides of the Atlantic, people know that NATO is about peace with freedom, victory over Communism, borders defended without fighting a single battle. Should the Atlantic alliance someday again face the threat of external aggression, this achievement would give fortitude and cohesion to all the member nations as they gather their military strength.

If the United States now pressured its reluctant European allies to consent to some scheme of eastward expansion, it would jeopardize the bonds that link America to Europe. Inviting new members into a consensus-based alliance is always risky. It is foolhardy if the new members have not worked together in a collective endeavor to overcome a common danger. Of NATO's 16 members, most were allied or closely associated in World War II. The Axis powers Germany and Italy were welded into the Atlantic community through the Allied occupation and the Marshall Plan, and Spain agreed to close military cooperation with the U.S. three decades before being admitted to NATO. Greece and Turkey received an enormous amount of U.S. aid for five years before joining NATO. For the East European nations today, such an infusion of money is out of the question.

Admitting former Warsaw Pact countries would weaken NATO in other ways. It might let in a Trojan horse. If one fears an emerging military threat from Russia — as many who favor NATO's expansion do — one must also expect that a revived K.G.B. would find collaborators among its former colleagues in Eastern Europe. Far-fetched? Last year Marian Zacharski — who had been imprisoned in the U.S. as a Warsaw Pact spy in the 1980's — was named head of the Polish intelligence service. (He was later removed because of criticism at home and abroad.) And just two weeks ago, Poland's Prime Minister nominated Longin Pastusiak, formerly a Communist ideologue and foe of NATO, as the next Defense Minister.

> Expansion would turn a false crisis into a real one.

Advocates invariably assert that an expanded NATO would fill a vacuum in Eastern Europe. But if, say, Slovakia is a vacuum, why not Slovenia; if Slovenia, why not Macedonia, Moldova or Belarus? By expanding eastward, NATO would merely shove the vacuum ahead of itself.

Another rationale is that democracy in former Warsaw Pact nations must be nourished and consolidated by NATO's embrace. In fact, NATO membership neither guarantees nor requires democracy. Greece had been a member of the alliance for 15 years when a 1967 coup led to seven years of military rule. Yet it remained a member the entire time the colonels were in power.

The advocates of expansion want Western Europe to support it as a moderate step, and Russians not to fight it as a hostile plan. To this end, the advocates are willing to strip NATO of its military essence by ruling out deployment of allied forces on the territory of the new member states. The alleged political vacuum between Germany's eastern border and Russia's western border would thus be filled by a real military vacuum.

The alliance would split into two parts. The western realm would retain (initially, at least) a common defense anchored in the deployment of U.S. forces integrated with European forces. The new eastern realm, by contrast, would be forced to forgo this bedrock of Atlantic security.

Although Congress has so far supported the continued stationing of U.S. forces in Germany, it would not take long for most Americans to conclude that what is good enough for the impoverished and exposed new eastern wing of NATO is good enough for rich Western Europe. The American troops would come home. This would be welcomed by those who want the North Atlantic Treaty to be no more of a deterrent to aggression than the U.N. Charter. □

Fred C. Iklé, a scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was Under Secretary of Defense in the Reagan Administration.

paying anyway. That's because many Section 8 apartment buildings are federally-insured and HUD would have to pay off the mortgage.

``Everybody's concerned about cutting the federal budget and everybody wants to get a balanced budget by the year 2000 and everybody wants to reduce the deficit. That's fine and good. But some agencies are more amenable to those kind of cuts. Housing ain't," said Stephen Kohashi, a Senate housing expert.

HUD's looming budget crisis could spell disaster for ``low-income families, for the federal treasury, for state housing financing agencies and for cities," Kohashi warned. ``We're not talking ripple effect we're talking about an explosion. If you don't approach this in a careful, measured way, it's going to make a hell of a mess."

The Section 8 program is just a small part of the fiscal crisis at HUD. By 1998, HUD would have to cut services by $94 billion to meet caps Congress has already placed on domestic spending, Nancy Gordon, assistant director for Health and Human Resources at the Congressional Budget Office, told Bond's panel.

If the new Republican leadership also intends to balance the budget and increase defense spending, HUD could face even deeper cuts, Gordon said. She offered senators a variety of options for cutting costs, none of them pleasant. They include:

Increasing the share tenants pay in rent from 30 percent of their income to 35 percent, a move that would save about $8 billion over the next five years.

Freezing the number of households getting rent assistance at its current level, which would save between $6 billion and $7 billion over five years.

Cutting the total number of households by attrition as families leave subsidized housing, with indeterminate savings.

Limiting the time a family could receive rent assistance, as some Republicans leaders have proposed to do with welfare.

One ``difficulty" with the last option, Gordon said, ``is that some and perhaps many of the affected tenants would be unable to make satisfactory arrangements ... Elderly and disabled tenants, in particular, would probably have little ability to adjust or respond, even if the changes were phased in over several years."

About 35 percent of households receiving housing aid are elderly. Another 10 percent are disabled. Of the rest, about half receive welfare; the other half are among the working poor.

HUD's clients have a median income of less than $8,000 a year. Without rental aid, ``many of these households would be at serious risk of becoming homeless," Assistant HUD Secretary Michael Stegman told the panel.

To avoid deep cuts in services, HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros has proposed streamlining the confusing web of programs the agency currently manages, eventually collapsing more than 200 programs into three large funds one for rent vouchers, one for community development and one to promote homeownership.

The resulting savings from cutting administrative overhead combined with a new emphasis on assisting working families who presumably would need smaller subsidies plus expected budget cuts for most federal agencies would save $50 billion over the next five years, Cisneros has said.

But that's no where near the $94 billion Gordon said HUD would need to cut by 1998.

HUD has also refused to release details of the plan, saying they must wait until President Bill Clinton unveils his proposed budget next month. So far, Bond and government financial experts are skeptical about HUD's prediction of $50 billion in savings.

``My guess is you are still far short of closing the gap," Bond told Stegman on Thursday. ``We'll be looking forward to seeing how you resolve these problems."

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Editors: The following material could be used to produce a graphic to accompany this story:

Contracts for all 1.8 million apartments funded under HUD's Section
8 housing program are ending at once, causing annual contract-renewal costs to skyrocket. Unless Congress comes up with the money, millions of families could find themselves in the streets.

Year.....Cost of contracts ... Units affected
Current budget ... $3.3 billion 140,000
FY 1996 ..... $9.5 billion 394,000
FY 1997 ..... $10.9 billion 442,000
FY 1998 ..... $15.9 billion 620,000
FY 1999 ..... $17.3 billion 669,000
FY 2000 ..... $19.7 billion 734,000

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Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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Arts groups working against conservatives with upper hand to keep NEA funding

By Brigid Schulte
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON To its critics, the National Endowment for the Arts is an outrageous federal agency that supports sexually explicit photos, militantly distasteful artwork and chocolate-covered performance artists.

Now, with the new conservative Republicans in power threatening to make good on their promise to outraged constituents to abolish the NEA, the arts community is fighting back with a very different image: Cheryl Theisz.

Theisz, a middle-school teacher in Spearfish, S.D., gets about $1,500 from the NEA every year to help her 5th- and 6th-grade students put on two full-scale operas. Students write, direct, sing, build sets, arrange seating and even do the electrical wiring as one of the 20 schools nationwide in New York's Education at the Met program for children.

``Without the NEA, we couldn't do this. It's a shame." said Theisz, a transplanted New Yorker. ``There wasn't anything before this. All there is in our area is sports. Sports is fine, but we need to be able to offer our children more than that."

In the past, arts groups argued before Congress for artistic freedom. Now, facing a battle for survival, they are using the NEA's own figures to show that the bulk of federal money goes to ``bread and butter" art regional ballets in the Pacific Northwest, small-town children's theaters in the Midwest, folk art projects in Louisiana, and a new chamber music program in rural Georgia, Iowa and California.

And arts groups have finally gotten the hang of lobbying Washington-style: they are starting early and hitting the key lawmakers where it hurts the most in their own communities.

``We're trying to find where the NEA money goes in all of the lawmakers' districts and get the information to them," said Bob Lynch, of the National Association of Local Arts Agencies. ``We're trying to show that this agency is not some distant agency in Washington, but in everyone's back yard."

Rep. Bob Livingston, R-La., the new chairman of the Appropriations Committee, for instance, has been getting mail from the likes of the Louisiana Wild Fowl Carvers Association, the Southern Repertory Theater, and Quincy Jones, the famed musician who owns a radio station in

Livingston's district.

More than 60 arts groups have formed the Cultural Advocacy Group. They have set up 1-800 and 1-900 numbers that will automatically send telegrams to art supporters' representatives in Congress. They are calling for letters and postcards on the backs of symphony programs, mailings of ballet performance schedules and in cyberspace on the Internet.

Chicago actors, musicians and artists have met with freshman Rep. Michael Patrick Flanagan, a conservative Republican. Connecticut artists met recently with Rep. Nancy Johnson, a moderate Republican and past NEA supporter, to ask her to stand up to conservatives like Speaker Newt Gingrich something many moderates are reluctant to do.

``She did not put me in a state of despair," said Edgar Rosenblum from the Longworth Theater, in New Haven. ``But she was not overly optimistic."

The reason is that just as the arts groups have been active, so, too, have those who oppose the NEA. The Christian Action Network sent out thousands of home lobbying kits during the last election, replete with copies of NEA-funded art that the group considers degenerate, obscene and offensive to American and Christian values.

NEA critics do not dispute that much of its $167.4 million budget goes to mainstream art projects throughout the country. Conservative Republican Rep. Robert Dornan of California, an ardent NEA opponent, admitted last year that ``well over 99 percent of the endowment goes to worthy causes."

Still, they argue that the bad outweighs the good.

``Milk is good, but if you lace it with strychnine, it becomes a hazard," said Marshall Wittmann, director of the Christian Coalition's Washington office. ``But the real question is whether this is a proper government function."

Like those in the arts community, conservative Christian groups are also changing their lobbying tactics. Although controversial art will still fuel much of their side of the debate, they are zeroing in on an argument that touches a nerve for nearly all conservatives: that the government has no role funding the arts, especially when the mood of the country favors budget slashing.

(EDITORS: NEXT 2 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

These groups, too, have been meeting with lawmakers on key committees, pushing them to eliminate the NEA and other cultural agencies. The new Republican leaders of these committees in the House have already voted several times to abolish the NEA. On the Senate, the sentiment is less strident: Many favor cutting funding and reorganizing the NEA rather than outright eliminating it.

``The NEA has emerged as the bellwether issue on the Republican resolve to cut the budget," said Pat Trueman, with the conservative American Families Association. ``The opposition to the NEA is just picking up steam. ... By March, when members are going to be on the line, you're going to see this side of it overwhelm Congress."

(END OPTIONAL TRIM)

With so much at stake, both sides are struggling valiantly to win the hearts and minds of the 73 Republican freshman lawmakers, a key voting bloc. So far, the conservatives are winning.

Both sides say most freshmen are taking their cues from their philosophical leader: Newt Gingrich. And in Gingrich's view, ``there is no place in the Constitution that says the taxpayers must subsidize the weirdest thing you can imagine."

(EDITORS: NEXT 3 GRAFS OPTIONAL TRIM)

Judith Golub, a lobbyist in Washington for the American Arts Alliance, said most freshmen know only about the controversial arts grants.

``When I go in and hand them the information about what the NEA does in their district, they gasp," Golub said.

Still, many conservative freshmen, bent on balancing the budget and cutting federal spending, say that the knowledge only makes their vote more difficult. It doesn't change their minds.

(END OPTIONAL TRIM)

Rep. Jim Bunn, R-Ore., sits on the House appropriations subcommittee responsible for NEA funding. Already, the portly former reserve sheriff's deputy and state senator has been inundated with a foot-high stack of mail and visits from arts supporters in his district.

Don't forget when the San Francisco Symphony played in the sleepy coastal town of Newport, the Oregon Bach Festival, the local museums, his constituents plead. They all get NEA funding.

At the same time, Christian groups have come to the self-described conservative Christian's office with a portfolio of shocking pictures. But it is money, not morality, that sways Bunn.

``I'm not an art critic. I'm not judging whether something is good or bad I only had one art class in college," Bunn said. ``But I think we have a major deficit crisis. It's not likely that I'm going to vote for funding for the NEA. ... Now, I know if I vote against funding, it's something that affects the people in my district."

In the end, if the grassroots lobbying doesn't work for the arts community, they're prepared to take out their big guns: the wealthy Republicans who not only are arts patrons but are politically well-connected.

Sally Pillsbury, 70, an avid arts patron in Minneapolis, is also active in national Republican politics. She plans to fight tooth and nail for continued NEA funding, as a symbol that culture is important in America. And she plans to change some minds.

``A lot of people who serve in Congress are workaholics; they don't have a chance to see what's going on in the art world," Pillsbury said. ``I'm a person who's been very politically active. People count on me a lot. If I don't know a lawmaker, I know enough people who serve in Congress so I can be introduced to them. I have hope."

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NEA head lays out case for continued federal funding of the arts

By Stephan Salisbury
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON Actress Jane Alexander, head of the National Endowment for the Arts, Thursday seized the opportunity to defend her agency for the first time before members of the new Congress.

And in her solo testimony before a Senate Labor and Human Resources subcommittee, she used every theatrical device at her command to answer critics of the agency and to lay out the case for continued federal funding for the arts.

``Today the question before you is whether the agency should continue to exist," Alexander told the senators. ``To twist Mark Antony's words, I come not to bury the endowment but to praise it."

Alexander's appearance before the Senate the third set of public hearings here this week to address government cultural expenditures underscored the importance agency supporters and critics ascribe to this session of Congress. Thursday's hearing was the first to explore the key issue of endowment reauthorization, the periodic legislative review all federal agencies must undergo.

In 1990, the last time the NEA and the National

only witness before a clearly sympathetic panel.

``The Arts Endowment isn't a subsidy for the elite," Alexander told the committee members. ``It's for the folks I've met from Tacoma to Canton to Council Bluffs ordinary people trying to make a better life people who understand that the arts improve their schools, renew the spirit of their communities, and that the Endowment speaks to the soul of who we are as individuals and as a nation."

Alexander received a much warmer welcome from the Republican-controlled Senate committee than she's expected to get later in the House, where Speaker Newt Gingrich and allies have vowed to kill the NEA, along with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Institute for Museum Services.

Committee Chairman Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., said early on that she favors keeping the NEA. But she said the agency will have to justify its practices and that ``all options are on the table," including possible elimination, privitizing it, and restricting the agency to issuing bloc grants to states.

Also favoring the NEA's continuation was Sen. Jim Jeffords, R-Vt.,
a moderate who chairs the subcommittee overseeing the agency's operations. His unit will hold two hearings next month to give critics full opportunity to voice their complaints.

Created in 1965, the NEA has come under attack in recent years for partially underwriting the exhibition of homoerotic and sacreligious artworks, among others.

Reminded of this by Senators Dan Coats, R-Ind., Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, and Spencer Abraham, R-Mich., Alexander said these grants were made under her Republican predecessor's tenure and amounted to much less than one percent of the more than 100,000 non-controversial arts grants the NEA has made to date.

Alexander said her budget is less than what the Congress spent last year on 88 military bands ($178 million) adding she's in favor of military bands and that the NEA generates tax revenues through arts-related employment, tourism and other sources of revenue.

Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., later noted the her budget is less than half the cost of one of the 80 new C-17 transport planes the government wants to buy.

``The Endowment, in fact, more than pays for itself," she said. ``We operate like venture capital for the arts ... For every federal dollar we award, we leverage an average of $11 in other public and private monies ... Over one million Americans make their living as artists or in arts-related activities."

Former NEA Chairman Livingston Biddle, who served during the Carter administration and attended Thursday's hearing, said he expects the Senate will vote to reauthorize the NEA but called its survival chances in the House ``iffy."

Former NEH officials and supporters now tell Congress it is no longer needed

By Nathaniel Sheppard Jr.
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON As secretaries of education during the last decade, William Bennett and Lamar Alexander made impassioned pleas to Congress for millions of dollars in increased funding for their agencies.

Thursday, the Republican stalking horses were back on Capitol Hill, but this time to argue coldly that one of their former agencies did not deserve a dime of federal support and instead should be dismantled.

Two days earlier, Bennett and Lynne Cheney, both former directors of the National Endowment for the Humanities, told members of Congress there was no longer a need for the agency Cheney described as recently as 1993 as a ``constructive presence in the intellectual life of the nation."

The dramatic turnabout by Bennett and Alexander, now co-directors of the conservative advocacy group Empower America, and Cheney, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington think tank, is part of an initiative by the Republican majority elected to Congress in November to cut government spending by slashing federal programs especially those opposed by conservatives and to decentralize federal power.

Bennett, who was secretary of education from 1985-1988, and Alexander, who held that post from 1991-1993, issued a joint statement saying the Department of Education ``illustrates what has gone awry in Washington over the past several decades."

``The federal government has become meddlesome, intrusive and bullying," said Alexander, who is running for president in 1996. He said local teachers and parents know best what is needed to reform the education system.

Asked why he had sung a different tune in the past, Bennett replied: ``When I was secretary of education I was but a captain of a ship; I did not run the Navy. Now we run the Navy," he said referring to the new Republican congressional majority.

In 1985, during confirmation hearings to make him captain of the ship, Bennett testified: ``I will fight for Department of Education programs. You can count on me being as vigorous an advocate as I can be on behalf of American education."

Alexander said that while he was governor of Tennessee in 1981, he told then-President Reagan the department should be abolished. But in 1993, boasting of the Bush administration's support for federal involvement in education, Alexander said: ``President Bush's 1993 budget request for the Department of Education is $32.3 billion, 10 percent more than 1992. The president's budget priority is education. His education priority is radically transforming America's schools."

From 1986 to 1993, Cheney pleaded to Congress for millions of dollars for the National Endowment for the Humanities, arguing the agency was an important vehicle for spreading knowledge of the nation's culture.

As NEH chairman during the recession of 1992, Cheney testified before Congress that the Bush administration's request for $187 million for the agency was justified because it reaffirmed ``the administration's conviction that even during this time of fiscal constraints, added support for the humanities is an effective way for the federal government to help advance the educational and cultural health of the nation."

But during her testimony Tuesday, Cheney said: ``In this time when we are looking at general cutbacks in funding to many groups, including to welfare mothers and farmers, it is time to cut funding for cultural elites."

In 1983, Bennett told members of Congress that the NEH should be considered a great source of national pride. Tuesday, he recanted. ``I hope that the 104th Congress abolishes the endowments because I believe that the federal government should not be in the business of subsidizing the humanities and the arts."

Rep. Sidney Yates, D-Ill., former chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and a strong voice for public support of the arts and humanities, said he was shocked by Cheney's and Bennett's new position.

``I must say that I am very disappointed by the 180-degree flip-flop in the views of Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Cheney from the time, only a few years ago, when they were ardent champions of the NEH," he said.

Amending constituion to require balanced budgets would throw budget to courts

By Jan Crawford Greenburg
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON Although the idea of a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget has been examined and debated for nearly 60 years, at least one big question remains unanswered: What happens if the amendment takes effect and Congress still fails to balance the nation's budget?

It's a scenario that could ``constitute enormous and highly problematic changes in the current allocation of power among the branches of government," David Strauss, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, testified at a recent Senate Judiciary Committee meeting.

That's because, legal experts predict, federal judges likely will get involved in the budgeting process, just as they have done, for instance, with the budgets of school districts under desegregation orders.

Even Rep. Henry Hyde, the Illinois Republican who heads the House Judiciary Committee and supports the amendment, acknowledges court involvement is likely.

``That's not a happy prospect," Hyde says.

The amendment stirs opposition even among some of the country's most conservative thinkers, who are angered by increased judicial activism and find horrifying the idea of courts ordering tax increases or spending cuts.

``The results of such an amendment would be hundreds, if not thousands, of lawsuits around the country," former Judge Robert Bork once wrote. ``By the time the Supreme Court straightened the whole matter out, the budget in question would be at least four years out of date and lawsuits involving the next three fiscal years would be climbing toward the Supreme Court."

Others say the amendment also would give the president more power over budgets, which would run afoul of the Separation of Powers doctrine.

The amendment, which House Republicans made the first plank of their ``Contract with America," enjoys grass-roots support in the states although that support may be weakening as state officials begin to fear they will be forced to make up the difference if the federal government slashes spending to balance the budget.

Thirty-eight states must ratify the measure after it is passed by Congress for it to become the 28th Amendment to U.S. Constitution.

On Thursday night, the U.S. House approved the amendment 300-132, more than the two-thirds majority needed to send the measure to the Senate.

Most states already have enacted laws or amended their own constitutions to require legislatures to balance the state budgets.

The experience of the states has convinced many analysts that a federal balanced-budget amendment would be a hollow requirement that would mire federal courts or the president in the budgeting process and tarnish public confidence in the Constitution.

``States don't balance their budgets," said Louis Fisher, a senior specialist with the Congressional Research Service. ``There are almost an unlimited amount of techniques to avoid the strict balanced budget."

States, Fisher said, are particularly fond of keeping two budgets: an operating one for running the government and a capital one for things like education, sewer systems and highways. They will balance the operating budget, but not the capital one.

They also have created special districts or authorities that can borrow, Fisher noted. For example, states can get around the limitations by issuing non-guaranteed bonds, which they don't count under the debt limits.

``If states actually balanced their budgets, we would never hear about state and local bonds, nor would states face perennial worries about bond ratings," Fisher wrote in a recent comprehensive study of their experiences.

Fisher said Congress likely would try to employ the same kind of ``definitional games" as states do to make it appear as if it had balanced the budget when, in fact, it merely shuffled debts around. The pressure on Congress to circumvent the amendment would be even greater than on the states, particularly in economic downturns when cutting spending actually could exacerbate a recession.

Supporters of the federal amendment say courts would defer to Congress and not get involved, either because the parties lacked authority to bring a suit or because the issue was political, not judicial.

But the states' experience suggests otherwise: Congress certainly would face legal challenges if it imposed the creative schemes. The same would happen, legal observers say, if it flat-out failed to balance the budget and was unable to come up with the votes needed to override.

``In a word, all of the complex and sensitive political issues that have produced the budget deficit and led to the demand for a balanced-budget amendment will not disappear," Strauss said. ``They will simply be transferred to the courts."

In his study, Fisher discusses numerous state court decisions that involved balanced-budget problems. As a Louisiana court said: ``The determination of whether the Legislature has acted within, rather than outside, its constitutional authority must rest with the judicial branch of government."

And that result, said Thomas Mann of the Brooking Institution, is wrong.

``Courts are being brought into a process that is definitely not judicial," he said. ``It wasn't designed to be."

If that weren't enough to set opponents on edge, they also point to the very real possibility of increased presidential power over budgets.

The president, as Strauss noted, might conclude that his oath of office requires him make sure the budget is balanced. He therefore could shuffle the spending just as some governors have done in states with such amendments, Fisher said.

And those efforts likely would produce court challenges, as well.

Strauss raises one more possibility: that the balanaced-budget amendment would be completely unenforceable. This would happen if Congress, in its final bill, added language that limited the power of the courts or the president to oversee the amendment.

``The danger is that such a measure will undermine public respect for the Constitution as a whole," he said, ``and will erode the important principle that our Constitution is enforceable, in the courts, as a matter of law."

NEA chairman asks Congress to save her embattled agency

By Michael Kilian Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON Arguing it costs each American only ``the price of two postage stamps" a year, yet generates federal tax revenues of $3.4 billion, National Arts Endowment Chairman Jane Alexander pleaded with the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee Thursday for the life of her embattled agency.

It was Alexander's first appearance before the new Congress on behalf of her $167 million-a-year federal arts funding unit, which will die at the end of the fiscal year unless reauthorized through act of Congress. She was the

Embassy Row

By James Morrison

Upbeat ambassador

Forget the numerous trade squabbles between the United States and Canada.

The disputes over lumber, steel and Sports Illustrated are only minor distractions to the remarkable commerce between the two countries, which is expected to reach $1 billion a day this year, says Canadian Ambassador Raymond Chretien.

In a year-end interview at the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Chretien said the United States and Canada have developed the "most comprehensive relationship" of any two countries in the world.

"I think it is very healthy," he said.

But, Mr. Chretien added, Canada is still sensitive to criticism that it is too closely tied to the United States, especially in international affairs.

The ruling Liberal government in Ottawa is determined to change that perception.

"It doesn't mean the relationship is not good," Mr. Chretien said.

"It's an excellent relationship, but it is not automatically acquiescent.

"I think Canadians like this approach generally. They like us to fight for our interests, to stand for our values, to say and do it as a mature, strong country and not as an annex to the United States."

Meanwhile, the two countries continue to try to solve their trade disagreements, with each side occassionally invoking the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The State Department recently said Washington is "examining all our rights, including retaliation rights under NAFTA," as Ottawa threatens to impose higher taxes on the Canadian edition of Sports Illustrated to protect Canadian-owned publications.

Washington's complaints over Canadian subsidies for its lumber industry are expected to resume this year, but a U.S.-Canada trade panel recently agreed that certain American steel exports were not threatening the domestic Canadian industry.

Counting on Clinton

The Czech ambassador is counting on President Clinton to "show the same leadership" in 1995 that he displayed toward Eastern Europe last year.

Ambassador Michael Zantovsky praised Mr. Clinton for three trips to the region, which, he said, demonstrated a "continuing American commitment" to the young democracies of the former Soviet bloc.

Mr. Clinton visited Prague last January, Warsaw in July and Budapest last month.

His concern for Eastern Europe "is immensely valuable to us and, I believe, beneficial" for the United States, Mr. Zantovsky said in a New Year's message in the Czech Embassy newsletter.

He expressed his country's appreciation for Mr. Clinton's Partnership for Peace program as a first step to full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"We have every reason to believe that the United States should show the same leadership in the coming year that is likely to be crucial for the future of the alliance and its expansion," he said.

Mr. Zantovsky also touted the economic and political progress in the Czech Republic.

"In 1994, our economy recorded growth for the first time since 1989," he said. "Inflation is down. Unemployment is down. . . Trade is up . . . and the budget is balanced."

The local elections in the fall "proved continuing political stability," he said.

Shuffle diplomacy

For those keeping track of French diplomats, the ambassador to Algeria is being moved to Greece and a veteran ambassador with three tours of duty will replace him.

The Compass news service tells us this diplomatic shuffle reflects the displeasure of the new conservative government with Bernard Kessedjian, the ambassador to Algeria and a lieutenant to former Socialist Foreign Minister Ronald Dumas.

Mr. Kessedjian, who has been in Algiers for 2½ years, will be appointed ambassador to Greece.

The new envoy to Algeria will be Michel Leveque, a former ambassador to Morocco, Libya and Brazil, the news service said.

The conservative French government had been trying for more than a year to replace Mr. Kessedjian with a political ally of conservative leader Edouard Balladur's.

But the move was blocked by Socialist President Francois Mitterrand until Mr. Kessedjian was given another ambassadorial appointment.

• *If you have a tip, suggestion or question, call Embassy Row at 202/636-3297.*

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

NEA funding test for Republicans

The resolve of the new Republican majority in Congress to cut federal spending will be tested by the way it treats the National Endowment for the Arts. It's a prime example of special-interest boondoggles, waste and corruption, and spending taxpayers' money on projects that are offensive to the majority of the American people.

If the NEA's next appropriation is earmarked for deletion, you can bet that the people with tremendous access to the media will go into action. People for the American way will cry "censorship." Fliers will be inserted into the programs handed to all playgoers and concertgoers telling them that Jesse Helms is "censoring" their entertainment, and that theater and music will disappear from America at the hands of Republican "barbarians."

Federal funding to the arts was a creation of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and, like most other LBJ spending projects, it has done more harm than good.

Meanwhile, NEA Chairman Jane Alexander can be expected to follow the example of the man who appointed her and put on a Clintonesque act that makes her sound like a born-again conservative. The Clinton administration learned a hard lesson from the November elections, and is now trying to schmooze the voters with one step backward and a dose of conservative rhetoric.

Republicans will be fools if they believe this act. Miss Alexander assured senators during her confirmation that the NEA under her chairmanship would be more in tune with the American public when funding the arts. Words are cheap; her latest series of grants include the following pseudo-artists whose resumes should have disqualified them from receiving any grants of taxpayer funds.

•Tim Miller, who used previous NEA grants to disrobe and sexually stimulate himself on stage (and among the audience) during his so-called "performance art" presentation entitled "My Queer Body."

•Holly Hughes, whose previous awards of taxpayer funds were devoted to her writing and performing in such sewer "performances" as the "Well of Horniness."

•Kitchen Theater, which had previously used taxpayers' money to pay Annie Sprinkle to invite the audience to examine the inside of her genitalia with a flashlight.

•Frameline, which has used taxpayer funds to organize and run the pornographic offerings of the annual Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in San Francisco.

•Marlon Riggs, who used taxpayer funds from both the NEA and Public Broadcasting to produce the pornographic, profanity-filled and pro-homosexual documentary entitled "Tongues Untied," which even many PBS stations refused to air because of its content.

•Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where Karen Finley first came to national attention, and where Ron Athey sliced designs into the flesh of another man's back, soaked up the blood with paper towels, and then tossed the blood-soaked towels over the heads of his audience. (News reports speculated that the blood might have been HIV positive.)

•Franklin Furnace Archive in New York, where Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller and numerous others have been given yet another taxpayer-subsidized venue to shock the public with their so-called performance art, details of which are too disgusting to recite in this column.

•Highways Inc. in Santa Monica, Calif., another taxpayer-subsidized venue, where Tim Miller develops his homosexual "shock" material and serves on the board of directors.

•Centro Cultural de la Raza, which was responsible for using NEA grants to give away tax dollars to illegal immigrants on the U.S.-Mexican border last year.

Federal funding to the arts was a creation of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and, like most other LBJ spending projects, it has done more harm than good. The original do-good purpose of the NEA was to extend enjoyment of the arts to large numbers of Americans through subsidies to such cultural places and events as museums and concerts.

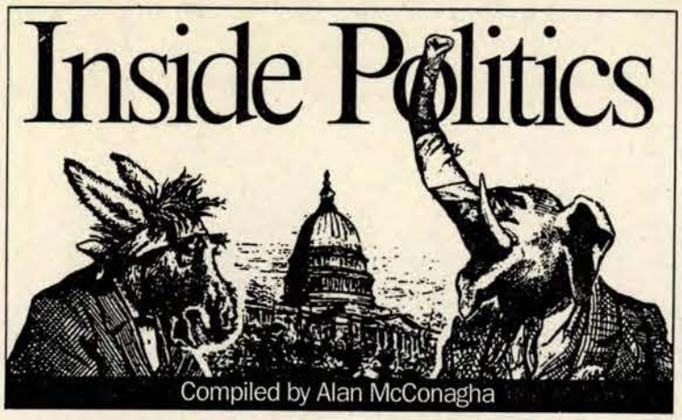
When the NEA got into the business of making taxpayer grants to would-be "artists" who could not sell their wares in the marketplace and who refused to tell what they were going to do with the money until after they received it, the agency became hopelessly corrupt. Art became the "art" of the con artists, as they used the system called "peer review panels" to play the game of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."

It's impossible to reform the incestuous relationship of those who vote for and receive NEA grants. But the grant recipients are not going to go quietly; they are actors, and they know how to play the victim and put on a good sob act.

The only way to stop NEA outrages is for Congress to delete NEA funding from the Department of the Interior appropriation. The American voters should hold members of Congress personally and collectively responsible for everything the NEA does with taxpayer funds.

Phyllis Schlafly is a nationally syndicated columnist.

Inside Politics



Compiled by Alan McConagha

Kindest cuts

Despite reports to the contrary, Speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich said in a C-SPAN interview last night that he has no wish to abolish the House historian's office; he just wants new people in it.

Raymond Smock, a University of Maryland faculty member appointed to the historian's post in 1983, has publicly protested his termination and that of four other staff members. Their employment ended yesterday.

Mr. Gingrich told C-SPAN's Brian Lamb that he believes the process of self-government is not well taught and he hopes the historian will be "proactively educational" in a nonpartisan way.

He thinks Americans need to better understand "this process of an organized conflict which is at the heart of a free society. . . . We fight our civil wars in the ballot box . . . on the floor of the House. . . .

"It's legitimate for us to have conflicts. It's not wrong; it's not hostile."

As for public TV, Mr. Gingrich promised to personally contribute $2,000 a year the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, as long as it's privately funded.

"Big Bird makes money. Barney makes money. These are profit-making centers; they would survive fine," he said.

The long goodbye

The New York Times' Catherine S. Manegold found Democratic staffers still packing on Capitol Hill in a transition that, for them at least, has involved grim lunches, tearful partings and gallows humor.

Leon Lowery said, "Not only have you lost your personal job, but people are telling you that the whole ideology you represent has been rejected by America. Personally, professionally, emotionally — any level you take — it's pretty tough."

Ms. Manegold adds that Mr. Lowery's associate "Shelley Fidler just grimaced. 'Leon has been reading the Bible,' she said. 'Lamentations.' "

A guy like me

President Clinton in Newsweek: "I find it amazing that anybody could question whether I have core beliefs.

"Who is the last president, while sitting in office, who took on the National Rifle Association?

"Who is the last person who took on the array of health-care interests, who could spend $200 million or $300 million to perform reverse plastic surgery on the president and the first lady?

"I tell you who it was: Harry Truman.

"Harry Truman was just like me, in the sense he was a middle-class guy who cared about middle-class people.

"Except he got down to about 27 percent in the polls."

Weld to go national

Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts says he will devote much of his time this year to national Republican politics but is coy about whether he will seek the presidential nomination.

He told the Boston Globe in a year-end interview that he plans to write a book with incoming Speaker Newt Gingrich that will outline a GOP agenda for 1996, a move that will raise Mr. Weld's national profile.

Mr. Weld said two other Republican governors — Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and John Engler of Michigan — will also write the book, which could serve as a blueprint for the GOP's 1996 presidential campaign.

Asked about his plans relating to the presidency, the Massachusetts governor told the Globe, "I am not thinking in that direction. I am thinking of all the fun I am going to have with Gingrich."

Newt and the media

In a cameo profile on Newt Gingrich's press secretary, Tony Blankley, the New Yorker notes that when the incoming speaker talks of Washington's media establishment, "he lights up with a combative contempt so plain and so strong that you wonder, watching him, if he might actually one day poke a reporter in the eye."

The 'generic' problem

Columnist George Will on "This Week with David Brinkley": "You know, there's an old axiom — 'You only get one chance to make a first impression.' You only get so long to appear presidential. And if Clinton has a generic problem that encompasses all the others, it is that people just don't think of him as worthy, somehow, of the office. And this is just more of the acid rain of diminution that's taking him down."

Alas, Glickman

The Philadelphia Inquirer editorially observed that former Rep. Dan Glickman is a responsible choice for secretary of agriculture: "Alas, he's hardly a bold one. His basic role on the 1990 farm bill, for example, was to defend the status quo. His record on agricultural issues shows little inclination to move the government to a less-expensive, less-intrusive role — which is what's needed now."

Today's colloquy

Frank Sesno on CNN's "Late Edition": "[On] February 23rd, you're going to have an event at which you declare your presidential ambitions. Safe to assume that the word is yes?"

Sen. Phil Gramm, Texas Republican: "I think it's safe to assume the word is yes."

Orphanage support

Stellar social scientist James Q. Wilson, who acknowledges he doesn't know what to do about welfare, says in the Wall Street Journal there may be some value in "the boarding school, sometimes mistakenly called an orphanage, for the children of mothers who cannot cope. . . .

"Though I confess I am attracted to the idea of creating wholly new environments in which to raise the next generation of at-risk children, I must also confess that I do not know whether it will work.

"The programs we know to be successful . . . are experimental efforts led by dedicated men and women. . . . And even these successes predated the arrival of crack on the streets of our big cities."

Author, author

William Safire in the New York Times on Newt Gingrich: "Is it right for an elected official, drawing a salary from the public for his full-time talents, to capitalize on the celebrity and controversy gained through his office by writing books — or for that matter, by giving speeches, endorsing products or earning outside income in any way? . . . Outside earning, drawn from memoirs of public service, or made possible by the celebrity gained by a time in office, *should await the end of that service.*"

More is less

Most political analysts assume the Democratic contingent in the new Congress is more liberal because centrist members of the party were swept away in the Republican landslide.

Not so, the Los Angeles Times reports. Americans for Democratic Action's average rating for Democrats (based on key votes) in the last Congress was 75 percent in the first session and 70 percent in the second.

The average score for the 197 returning members is 68 percent.

History helps

Rep. Martin Frost, new head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, on Fox "Morning News": "You have to remember, we're only 14 seats down. We have the largest minority that either party has had in a very long time.

"So, we don't have too many seats to recapture to be back in the majority status. And the Republicans have only controlled the House twice during the last 50 years — in 1946 and in 1952. And in each of those instances, they only controlled it for two years.

"So, I think this is going to be a very interesting two years. And I wouldn't make any assumptions about long-term Republican control of the House of Representatives."

Guns rebound

USA Today's Haya El Nasser: "The gun lobby couldn't have wished for a more bountiful Christmas: some of its biggest political foes booted out of office, its staunchest supporters firmly in charge. . . . After suffering back-to-back blows from two sets of gun-control measures, gun advocates seem to be sitting pretty again."

THE WASHINGTON POST
THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1995

Bargaining Room for Cultural Agencies

Senate Panel Delivers A Far Kinder Cut

By Jacqueline Trescott
Washington Post Staff Writer

The National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, targeted for deep budget cuts—and then extinction—by the House, won a victory in the Senate yesterday.

A key Senate committee voted to keep the NEA and NEH going for at least five years, while trimming their budgets by 5 percent per year. By comparison, the House voted earlier this week to cut the budgets of both agencies by 40 percent next year, and plans to kill the NEA in 1998 and the NEH in 1999.

The wide gap between the House and Senate versions means the fate of the culture agencies will be decided by a House-Senate conference committee in the fall.

It's a measure of the rough sledding ahead for both agencies that its officials were happy with a bill that would cut them by 25 percent over five years. And even that small happiness was quickly dampened yester-

See ENDOWMENTS, C4, Col. 1

ENDOWMENTS, From C1

day when Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.), chairman of a key appropriations subcomittee, called the proposed 5 percent cuts next year "totally unrealistic." Gorton predicted that after spending targets are announced by Senate budget cutters, probably next week, the cuts for the endowments would probably end up much closer to the 40 percent envisioned by the House.

Gorton said, however, that "I wouldn't make any reductions at all in those cultural institutions for which we have the sole responsibility—the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution and a number of others."

Yesterday's action came in the Senate's Labor and Human Resources Committee, which is responsible in the Senate for recommending how long—if at all—the agencies will continue to exist. The committee's counterpart in the House passed a bill that would phase out both agencies within three years. The Senate bill, drafted by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), the committee chairman, and Sen. James Jeffords (R-Vt.), would authorize them for another five years, at least.

Under the committee's bill, the NEA would receive $153.9 million for fiscal 1996, compared with $167.4 million now, and the power to make grants to individual artists would be sharply curtailed. Only literary fellows would be eligible for direct grants—in the past, the NEA has caught a lot of heat over grants to artists whose work was offensive to some viewers.

The NEH, the country's largest sponsor of humanities activities, would receive $160.1 million next year, down from $172 million.

The committee blocked an attempt by Sens. John Ashcroft (R-Mo.) and Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) to cut the endowments by 50 percent over the next five years. Jeffords sided with the committee Democrats against the deeper cuts and the proposal died on a tie vote. An amendment by Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) that would have turned the endowments into private trust funds after five years was also defeated, but the committee approved a plan offered by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) to study the feasibility of plans to fund the endowments without annual appropriations from the federal budget.

"I think this revised legislation makes some meaningful reforms," said Kassebaum, who had originally planned to back cuts of just 2 percent per year until she recently heard about a grant to a California performing arts group that sponsors some sexually explicit performances on gay themes. During yesterday's meeting, she called for a thorough oversight hearing once a year.

THE WASHINGTON POST
THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1995

Pressure on NLRB Turns Into a Doubled Budget Cut

By Dan Morgan
Washington Post Staff Writer

When Rep. Jay Dickey (R-Ark.) and two other GOP members of a House Appropriations subcommittee took up the cause of a Richmond-based trucking company involved in a labor-management dispute before the National Labor Relations Board, they did what congressmen often do in such circumstances.

They wrote letters to the NLRB on behalf of the company, Overnite Transportation Co. The communications strongly suggested that the agency should be more evenhanded in its handling of Teamsters Union complaints of unfair labor practices.

But after the NLRB went ahead anyway and voted, 3 to 2, to seek an injunction forcing Overnite to halt unfair practices, Dickey took it one step further. At a July 11 session of the subcommittee attended by a lobbyist for the trucking company, he introduced an amendment to double the $26 million cut in the NLRB's 1996 budget and shift the savings to the Head Start program.

"I'd rather give the money to children than to lawyers," said Dickey, whose amendment passed 8 to 6, with the votes of the two other letter writers, Reps. Dan Miller (R-Fla.) and Henry Bonilla (R-Tex.). Another Dickey initiative requires four out of five NLRB members to approve injunctions against employers.

It was an example of the unusual, hardball tactics being employed by House Republicans, especially newer ones, in bringing to heel federal agencies they believe are not giving business a fair break.

Dickey said the NLRB, with more than 600 lawyers, is too large and produces unnecessary litigation costly to taxpayers and business. But Dickey acknowledged the NLRB's insistence on issuing an injunction in the Overnite case played a role. "They seemed to be acting as if there wasn't another side," he said.

That approach has raised eyebrows on the Appropriations Committee, where some veteran members question the propriety of using the power of the purse against agencies in such a direct way. "To my way of thinking, you don't cut judicial bodies because they make decisions you don't like," said Rep. John Edward Porter (R-Ill.), chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that funds the NLRB and the sole Republican voting against the Dickey amendment.

Today the full House Appropriations Committee takes up the bill containing the slashed appropriation for the NLRB. Under the Dickey amendment, the agency would receive $123 million in 1996, a 30 percent cut from this year that officials say would be "devastating." Officials warned that many of the 52 regional and local offices would have to be closed.

The 60-year-old NLRB is a quasi-judicial agency charged with preventing unfair labor practices by employers and unions, and safeguarding employee rights to organize unions. While the majority of complaints before it are filed against employers, about 15 percent are against unions.

"We are a country committed to the rule of law," Porter said yesterday. "When you get to a cut of 30 percent, you're simply going to create a huge backlog."

Dickey, a second-term congressmen who owns two Taco Bell franchises and other small businesses in his home town of Pine Bluff, Ark., attracted attention earlier this year when he pushed through another appropriations amendment cutting funds for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. He announced that he had personal experience with OSHA, which fined his family-owned sign company for ventilation violations last year.

Unlike that situation, Dickey said, he has never had any dealings with the NLRB resulting from his businesses.

At a subcommittee hearing in February he lambasted NLRB officials for asking for more money. Subsequently, he said, he received a call from a Little Rock-based official of Union Pacific, Overnite's parent company, asking him to meet with Overnite officials.

Overnite, the nation's largest non-union trucking company with 14,000 employees, has been attempting since December to stave off an effort by the Teamsters to represent workers at a number of terminals. But since late 1994, the Teamsters have filed 40 complaints covering hundreds of alleged unfair practices by Overnite.

The complaints led NLRB attorneys to consider seeking a so-called 10j injunction against Overnite, a procedure that often involves an employer's taking formal steps to curtail unfair practices.

Representing Overnite before the NLRB are two former board members, John R. Raudabaugh and Clifford R. Oviatt Jr. Meanwhile, the company and Union Pacific's lobbyists sought help from Virginia's House members and GOP leaders.

On May 22, Bonilla wrote the NLRB that its actions against Overnite appeared "unjust." Miller, in a letter sent the same day in support of Overnite, noted that "all parts of the federal government are being reviewed for ways to cut spending."

But on June 12, the NLRB voted to seek the injunction. Although Overnite had agreed to hold a nationwide election, the NLRB still wanted firm guarantees it would be held under fair conditions, government sources said.

Eight days later, Dickey wrote NLRB Chairman William B. Gould IV that he was "stunned." He called the 10j process "an outrage," and said the American public "demands that their tax dollars be spent in a more economical fashion."

Journal

FRANK RICH

Will the N.E.A. Be D.O.A.?

The G.O.P. takes aim at the arts.

At the Kennedy Center Honors in Washington last weekend, the playwright Wendy Wasserstein was struck by the sight of Alan Simpson, the conservative Republican Senator from Wyoming, joining the enthusiastic standing ovation for Pete Seeger, the old-left folk singer who was one of the night's honorees.

It just goes to show that culture can transcend politics. And that Washington's ideological spectrum has shifted so far right since Nov. 8 that Mr. Simpson, who was deposed from his own party's leadership last week for the pure Gingrichite Trent Lott, may now count as a moderate. Could Mr. Simpson possibly be recruited as a leader in the coming battle to save the National Endowment for the Arts?

At this moment the arts need all the unlikely friends they can get. Though even a complete elimination of the N.E.A.'s minuscule budget ($167 million) would do nothing to offset the $200 billion in tax relief promised by the "Contract With America" over the next five years, the agency is a major target for Draconian new cuts because of its disproportionate symbolic value to the far right. Bashing the N.E.A., like boosting school prayer, is a high-profile, low-cost way for the Gingrich G.O.P. to distract the faithful while avoiding the hard choices about cutting multibillion-dollar entitlements that might really downsize the budget.

Already Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, rabid cultural watchdog of the religious right, is combing through N.E.A. grants, searching for some new gay recipient whose art can be demonized by Jesse Helms. More genteel right-wingers also play the game. Writing in The Washington Post, Charles Krauthammer put abolishing the N.E.A. high on the agenda for the new Congress's first 100 days, as a means of eliminating "welfare check writers for the intellectual classes."

This is a misinformation campaign. Intellectually elite cultural institutions, from the Metropolitan Opera in New York to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, receive less than 1 percent of their yearly budgets from the N.E.A.; they'd hardly feel a cut. The tiny direct grants to individual artists — some of whom must be and inevitably will be as controversial in our day as Walt Whitman was in his — total only 4 percent of the N.E.A. pie.

The biggest victims of a maimed N.E.A., far from being scatological performance artists or the cultural elite, will instead be smaller arts organizations — including, say, the Atlanta Opera and Center for Puppetry Arts, both of which use Endowment funds and perform in Newt Gingrich's own district.

An ax could fall after New Year's. Although the "Contract With America" is imprecise about N.E.A. cuts, the Speaker-to-be has called for "privatizing" the agency — which is code for defunding it. Other Republicans, invoking the current policy panacea, say the N.E.A.'s function should be turned over to the states — which defeats the whole point.

The value of a Federal arts agency is to set a national standard for excellence, however imperfect, that can be exploited by arts groups in their private fund-raising. As an Oscar sells tickets, so the imprimatur of an N.E.A. grant brings in contributions — so much so that each dollar given by the agency last year was matched by $11 in local giving.

Thriving museums or theaters, meanwhile, generate still more money for their communities — sending audiences into a restaurant down the street, or bringing tourists into hotels, or attracting corporations whose employees don't want to spend every night at home channel-surfing. Yet the economic arguments for the N.E.A. — like sociological arguments about the value of arts in schools or prisons — are secondary to the real issue: What, if anything, does culture mean to the soul of this country?

If the right really deplores the trashy values of Hollywood — and what it calls the counterculture — you'd think it might increase, rather than reduce, N.E.A. seed money to promote a higher culture. But given last week's revelation that Mr. Gingrich is writing a novel featuring a "pouting sex kitten," no American who loves the arts should sit around hoping for a miraculous change of heart. □

Mr. Gingrich's Leaner House

The Speaker-designate, Newt Gingrich, must be given his due. Much of the House crystal that he has broken in his bullish passage to the leadership needed breaking.

His basic reforms make sense. He has reduced the number of committees. He is on the right track, provided he really backs off from his self-serving plan to abolish the Ethics Committee. Similarly, the plans to limit chairmen to three terms and to end joint committee jurisdiction over important bills make sense.

These changes must still be approved by the full House. The Democrats will be smart to vote with him to show that they heard the voters' condemnation of their sluggish old leaders.

Mr. Gingrich's provocative decision to eliminate financing for 28 House caucuses is also winning nods from students of Congressional influence-peddling. Notwithstanding the criticism — no doubt partly legitimate — that he is interested in weakening potential opposition from the black and women's caucuses, this is a refreshing move.

Nothing will stop the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues or any of the other caucuses that will lose space and funding from continuing to meet and share information. Mr. Gingrich's decision faces up to a reality conveniently ignored by the Democrats when they were in power. Some of the caucuses, like the ones set up by the New York and Pennsylvania delegations to push their interests, simply have no rationale for existing at public expense.

The Senate has no comparable organizations, and for good reason. As critics point out, the groups are manipulated by outside lobbyists, use public money with little or no accountability, underwrite wasteful trips and reinforce petty divisions.

There is one problem left behind from the removal of caucus funding. Many caucuses have close ties to companion nonprofit "foundations" or "institutes" that accept unlimited, undisclosed contributions from special interests and will now be even more eager to pass along benefits to the caucus members. Mr. Gingrich and his reformers need to tackle the admittedly difficult task of regulating this sophisticated system of buying influence.

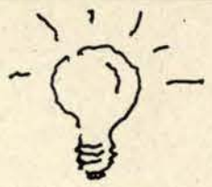
But he has made a good start and deserves his moment of crowing for "doing after the election exactly what we said we were going to do before the election."

Correction

An editorial on Sunday incorrectly identified the committee that Senator Alfonse D'Amato will head. It is the Banking Committee.

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My Thurber Carnival



By Stuart E. Hample

James Thurber was born 100 years ago today, and thank God he came our way, for without him we would not have Mitty, would not have known what happened the night the bed fell or whether sex was necessary. Nor would we have encountered the dogs, predatory women and cowed men he drew, unintimidated by the fact that in the land of anatomy he was without a map.

I personally would have missed (a) possibly meeting him and (b) actually meeting him.

Possibly meeting him: I was a Thurber devotee and brash young advertising writer in Buffalo in 1952 when I conceived a plan to engage the Great Man to illustrate ads as a way of getting to meet him. I phoned Thurber, who agreed to illustrate a General Electric light bulb campaign if the client approved his fee.

Armed with Thurber's O.K., I implored G.E.'s advertising manager to ratify the deal, which he agreed to do if Thurber would lower his price. I called Thurber and said, "General Electric thinks you're a little high."

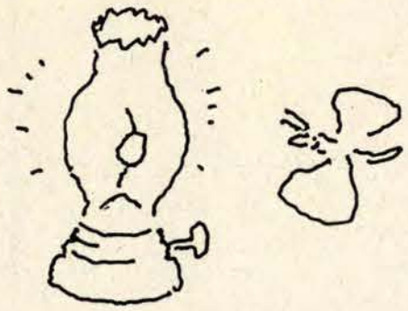
Thurber replied, "Tell General Electric I think *he's* a little high."

Actually meeting him: Two years later, I was promoted to the agency's New York headquarters, and, a little high myself, I phoned one of my few Manhattan acquaintances, a violinist, in quest of companionship. His wife, Vera, said he was off concertizing, but she was on her way to a birthday party and invited me along.

Just as Vera was introducing me to the honored guest, the harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler, the hostess abruptly swept her and Adler away, leaving me alone among a room of my betters, virtually all with famous faces. I looked about for a haven, saw an empty place on a couch and sat beside a tall, tweedy man with pepper-and-salt mustache, rowdy white hair and thick glasses, who was nursing a glass of Scotch.

In a few moments, I realized it was Thurber. I was enthralled but jumpy. If I spoke to him, would I be struck by a barb gone wild? Thurber's turning bellicose under the influence was documented. But when would I have this chance again?

Stuart E. Hample is a writer and cartoonist.



R. O. Blechman based this drawing on one James Thurber did for his fable "The Moth and the Star."

I told Thurber I liked his work, and he introduced me to his wife, Helen, an attractive lantern-jawed woman, who watched over him in a motherly way. Emboldened by this small opening, I chatted him up. Thurber looked directly at me when he spoke, so despite his magnifying lenses, I was unaware that he was blind.

An evening with the great man (he didn't bite).

He was unpretentious and anecdotal. My favorite was his tale of an American woman in Paris who told him that she had been reading translations of his stories and thought they were funnier in French, to which he replied, "They tend to lose something in the original."

I praised his cartoons, and he graciously drew one for me. Able to see only light — he lost his left eye in a childhood accident, the other through progressive deterioration — Thurber fingered the edges of a small pad his wife provided to get a sense of his playing field, and sketched a dog's head. Helen Thurber added the eye and nose.

Eventually, Adler went to the piano and played a respectable Bach — a surprise, for I knew of him only as a harmonica man.

During this, Thurber suddenly stood up. "Stop the music!" he cried.

"Jamie, sit down," his wife whispered sternly.

"No," he replied, somehow finding his way to the piano, with the tumbler of Scotch. "I love music!" he shouted. "I always wanted to be a musician!" Then, swaying slightly, he raised his glass and lamented that he was nothing but a humorist.

Nothing but? To his readers, that is more than enough. □

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1994

Corrections

A front-page summary entry yesterday about closings of Agriculture Department field offices misstated the number of offices affected. It is 1,274 offices; 3,700 is the total number operating.

•

An article on Monday about the White House travel office referred incorrectly to the business interests of Harry Thomason, a Hollywood producer and friend of the Clintons. According to a 1993 report by the White House about its travel office, Mr. Thomason owned one-third of an aviation consulting business that represented air charter companies and was interested in determining how such companies could bid on White House travel business. He was not owner of an air charter company seeking to do business directly with the White House.

•

Because of an editing error, an obituary on Nov. 19 about Amelia Dietrich Lewis, a former lawyer, misstated her role in a 1967 Supreme Court case that established that juveniles have essentially the same Constitutional safeguards in criminal proceedings as adults. Mrs. Lewis was co-counsel; Prof. Norman Dorsen of New York University Law School presented oral arguments on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union.

•

A picture caption yesterday about the funeral of a slain New York City police officer, Raymond R. Cannon Jr., misattributed a quotation in some editions. It was Police Commissioner William J. Bratton, not Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, who called Officer Cannon a "hero of the city."

•

Picture captions yesterday about the anniversary of the killings on the Long Island Rail Road reversed the identities of the two men shown in some copies, and misspelled the surname of the one at the left. At the left, in glasses, was Carl Petersen (not Peterson); Kevin Zaleskie was at the right.

•

A picture caption on Sunday about the controversy surrounding a shelter for homeless men in Chester, N.Y., misidentified the man shown walking from the Chester Mall to Camp La Guardia. He was William Houston, not Lamar Evans.

27

The Future of the Arts Endowment

THE FIGHT over whether to cut or eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts is littered with debris from previous struggles, but the basic question is simple as a Senate committee opens hearings on reauthorization today. Should government have a role in funding the arts at all, and if so, should it do it in this particular way? The first answer depends on the second. If the NEA were doing nothing but funneling money to the willfully offensive and self-indulgent or providing the kind of playground-for-the-elites so often charged, it would not matter (especially in desperate budget times) that other governing entities down through history have been patrons of the arts or that, as the NEA's defenders keep telling us, the city of Berlin's cultural budget and the military marching band budget are bigger than the U.S. arts and humanities endowments put together.

But the arts endowment mission is more complicated than that. A substantial chunk of its funding does go to supporting individual artists—the most questionable part of its expenditures, in our view. But the initial legislation stated a broader purpose of extending the reach of the arts *beyond* elites to encourage the creation of new, locally and regionally based theater, dance, opera and museums and to stimulate local financial support for them. The endowment has had its most quantifiable successes in this realm, illustrated by the frequently cited increase in the number of symphonies, folk dancing troupes, theater groups and state and local arts agencies since 1965.

What would happen without an endowment? It's unlikely, given the state of arts financing, that most such groups would be "liberated" from dependence on the federal teat, as some critics of the NEA claim, and would simply get support from elsewhere. (Corporate arts funding, like state and local arts funding, has been falling.) The better-established and better-heeled institutions might do all right, and so, ironically, might the fashionably provocative avant-gardes, but at the expense of more mainstream activities with broader appeal.

The endowment's tilt toward such activities—school programs, community art centers, regional arts—should be even greater than it now is. It could increase further the 35 percent of its budget that goes directly to state and local arts agencies; it could require—as has happened informally—that groups getting yearly operating money prove their viability by going off the dole every so often. There is ample precedent for such a shift and, in fact, this has been the gradual trajectory throughout the endowment's 30-year history. In its early years, despite the stated mission, much more of the then much smaller budget was focused on big national cultural institutions. But in increments over the years—notably, during the Nixon administration, when the endowment budget jumped from about $8 million to $82 million—it moved toward nourishing what has become a tremendously healthy nonprofit arts sector. Supporters have offered calculations of the economic impact of that sector's growth—1.3 million jobs created, $10 in federal tax revenue generated per government dollar invested, $11 leveraged per dollar in corporate support for culture and so on. Yes, these are the figures of endowment supporters, but there is surely something to the argument that the many arts centers built and markets enlarged have paid something back to the economy, not just to the arts.

If, as seems inevitable and indeed right, cultural funding is called on to take its proportionate share of across-the-board cuts, that mission should be uppermost in what is preserved. Under Jane Alexander, the endowment has taken some steps this way, pushing significantly to expand endowment activities in arts education in tandem with the Education Department; not coincidentally, she has also infuriated many artists by streamlining or eliminating many of the individual artist programs. This has the side effect of dampening much of the clamor over individual offenses and over the legitimate question of what taxpayers should be expected to fund. But the real argument over whether there should be a National Endowment for the Arts is not about offensiveness but about whether this kind of leavening function has enough countervailing cultural and economic value, for the price, to be worth it.

The system by which the NEA awards grants through peer panels was intended to avoid "official" art by turning the vetting process over to independent experts, as is done with science grants. Some of the panels have made some monumentally stupid mistakes, and endowment chairs have sometimes failed to rein them in. Cronyism is a built-in hazard of this kind of system. More outsiders on the panels would go far toward cutting the self-indulgence and insularity.

But the business of giving grants to individual artists to create new work—novelists, painters, choreographers, the unlamented "performance artists"—is finally less of a core function for government than the mission of promoting shared appreciation of the shared culture. The endowment has been doing that, quietly, through even its worst times. It could do it more, and should have the chance.

A Vote on the Budget Amendment

THE HOUSE is scheduled to vote today on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. There are two principal versions, one or the other of which is thought likely to pass. Whichever it is will be a monument to hypocrisy.

The right way to balance the budget is simply to do it. Pass the necessary spending cuts and tax increases; that's all that's required. This would do neither. Rather, it would simply require three-fifths votes of both houses to pass unbalanced budgets. It would not enshrine a balanced budget in the Constitution but minority rule. Forty percent plus one of either house could hold the rest of the government at bay. The price of passing a budget would go up, not down; more members would have to be brought round. The likelihood is that Congress would find ways to cheat, declare that spending of a certain kind isn't really part of the budget, for example. Who would say otherwise, the courts? Would they be the ones to judge among conflicting spending estimates? How would the amendment be enforced? Nobody knows.

Nor will the supporters confront the question, what would happen if it were enforced? Which spending would be cut, and what would be the consequences of cutting it? The ostensible purpose of reducing the deficit is to increase national savings and the funds available for private investment. Would the private investment always be more valuable than the public investment in education or roads or the other spending that would have to be forgone? Supporters say yes. A lot of them want not just to reduce the deficit but to reduce the influence of the federal government in national life, and see this as a way to do it. But nobody's really thought a lot about that, either.

Maybe if the amendment passes the House, the Senate will have the wisdom to sidetrack it. If that doesn't happen, maybe the states will have the wit. Among much else, the amendment is likely to add to their burdens by reducing the quarter-trillion dollars a year they get in federal aid. Would the transfer of that burden leave the country better off? That isn't clear, either.

This is a vote for show, and for a symbol.

THE WASHINGTON POST THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1995

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JULY 18, 1995

Debate on the Arts Budget Turns to Talk of the 'Lurid'

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

CAPITOL SKETCHBOOK

WASHINGTON, July 17 — "I have here a brochure," said the Congressman, his eye on wringing still more money from the Federal arts and humanities subsidies proposed for the next Federal budget by the Republican House majority.

"It just goes on and on with things that are just too lurid to talk about, even on a Monday night," said the Representative, Cliff Stearns of Florida. He nevertheless kept talking, lingering on the offerings at Highways, a California performance arts center, that included a comedienne's monologue entitled "Sex with Newt Gingrich's Mother," and an art show, "Ecco Lesbo, Ecco Homo."

Quickly, within the severe time restraints levied on the debate, defenders of the arts were up and angrily asking where in the opposition's denunciations were all the symphonies, all the museums, the many dance centers, childrens' arts programs and other wholesome beneficiaries of Federal arts aid?

"He has pointed to one grant by the National Endowment for the Arts out of 4,000," complained Representative Sidney Yates, an Illinois Democrat, who knew he was in for a long and losing night of defending the humanities and arts against a minimum cut of 40 percent, the first step toward extinction sought by Mr. Stearns and others.

"Like the swallow that returns annually to Capistrano, the gentleman from Florida has returned to his annual attack on the N.E.A.," Mr. Yates declared, facing the reality that this time those supporting cuts for the arts had majority power.

But Mr. Stearns held to his single-item critique. "This is sexually explicit homosexual art material," he said. "Hot summer nights with hot fags," he continued, reading the brochure. "This has the N.E.A.'s seal of approval."

In a mood of deep frustration, defenders of the arts and humanities tended more in their remarks to Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, rather than Thalia, muse of comedy.

"What's at stake is the soul of America," insisted Representative Jerrold Nadler, Democrat of New York. "To argue that we must sell our soul to pay our bills is irresponsible." But the clock kept running on him and the rest in the minority of arts budget defenders.

In any idle moment, criticism of avant-garde and aberrant deeds perpetrated in the name of art is an easy target for denunciation and lampooning in Capitol debate. With the Presidential election cycle already under way and conservative Republican majorities controlling both houses, this year the target floats big as a barrage balloon above the debating chambers as legislators look for easy, popular ways to cut the Federal deficit.

The arts and humanities fight was over $145 million in cuts, less than 10 percent of the overall reduction proposed on the Department of Interior. Other issues drew cries of pain and shame, and a few were incrementally repaired, including $50 million in education aid cut from the Department of the Interior's help to American Indians. But the arts and humanities fight was a particular rallying cry for Democrats sensing the change in political philosophy under way in the appropriations debate.

"Don't kill it tonight —it is vital to this country," pleaded Pat Williams of Montana, a Democrat on the losing side. He responded to Mr. Stearns' contention that the aid was a waste because it could not be justified on the same level as military defense against invasion: "It defends us against invasion by misunderstanding, against the invasion of ignorance."

While the Democratic opposition knew going into the chamber that they were on the losing side, some could not contain their anger.

"Mr. Stearns, your children don't have to count on a public school education," declared Representative Louise McIntosh Slaughter, New York Democrat, in a reference to the fact that Representative Stearns is a millionaire. "It's not your children who are going to be hurt.""

Ignoring the gaveled demands that she was exceeding her one minute of apportioned time, Ms. Slaughter narrowed her gaze at Mr. Stearns as he held the Highways brochure. "I'm talking about children who create, they do not destroy," she said. "If you ever said to the Pentagon, 'You make a mistake and we won't give you any more money, I'd like to be there,' " Ms. Slaughter shouted as the arts debate moved on toward its certain end.

NEW YORK STATE

Republicans Battle Party on Arts Funds

Role of Culture Is Emphasized

By MELINDA HENNEBERGER

WASHINGTON, June 7 — A majority of New York's Republican delegation to Congress is breaking with its party for the first time to support Federal funds for a favorite conservative target, the National Endowment for the Arts.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich has called the agency "arts patronage for an elite group," and Dick Armey of Texas, the House majority leader, describes it as "an affront to the American taxpayer." Elimination of the N.E.A. is high on the national Republican Party's agenda. In fact, the endowment is threatened with extinction under a House bill and major restructuring in the Senate.

But whether the New Yorkers are protecting homegrown pork, as some N.E.A. critics suggest, or rising above partisan politics to protect the culture they say is synonymous with New York, most of the state's Republican lawmakers are joining Democrats to support continued financing for the endowment.

The National Endowment for the Arts gave New York artists and institutions $30 million last year — almost 20 percent of its entire $167 million budget and more than twice the amount any other state received. That money in turn attracted substantial funds from private foundations and corporations that look to the national endowment for guidance — about $11 for every $1 the N.E.A. handed out, arts groups said. Even some of the most conservative New York members of Congress say they cannot back legislation that would deal a major blow not only to the New York's economy but also to its stature as a cultural center.

"Most Republicans in New York support funding for the arts, for obvious reasons," said Representative Amo Houghton, a Republican from Corning. Nine New York Republicans in Congress favor at least some Federal financing for the N.E.A., while five want to phase out the endowment. One is undecided.

Here is how members of New York's Republican delegation to Congress say they stand on the question of continued Federal financing for the National Endowment for the Arts.

In favor of continued support for the N.E.A., though not necessarily at the same level or in the same manner:

Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato
Representative Rick A. Lazio of Brightwaters
Representative Amo Houghton of Corning
Representative Michael P. Forbes of Quogue
Representative Sue W. Kelly of Katonah
Representative Benjamin A. Gilman of Middletown
Representative Sherwood L. Boehlert of New Hartford
Representative James T. Walsh of Syracuse
Representative John M. McHugh of Watertown

Opposed to continued Federal funds for the N.E.A.:

Representative Susan Molinari of Staten Island
Representative Peter T. King of Seaford
Representative Daniel Frisa of Westbury
Representative L. William Paxon of Amherst
Representative Gerald B.H. Solomon of Glens Falls

Undecided:

Representative Jack Quinn of Hamburg

"We've got to find some way of preserving it, and it's mindless for people to say it could be funded privately," Mr. Houghton said. "This is not just fluffy art; this is the whole concept of making life more meaningful and raising our standards, and it *is* the Government's responsibility.

One New York Republican who strenuously disagrees is Susan Molinari of Staten Island, a self-described moderate and the only House Republican from New York City. Ms. Molinari said the national endowment should be phased out because the Government simply cannot afford to provide funds for the arts. But she added that she was particularly opposed to endowment grants to individual artists.

"Grown-ups should not have to have the Government subsidize their employment," she said.

But a spokesman for Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, Harvey Valentine, said the Senator strongly supports the arts and would fight for New York's fair share of arts funds.

The support of most New York Republicans comes as something of a surprise to Democrats like Charles E. Schumer of Brooklyn, who said: "These people are showing a lot of courage, putting New York ahead of Newt. It's certainly the first time a *majority* have done that, and it does surprise me. But it's only going to be saved in a bipartisan way."

And it now seems that the Republicans working to broker a compromise may be best positioned to make continued financing palatable to the majority in Congress.

"You have to be practical and take into account the concerns of people who feel the agency has been used politically," said Representative Rick A. Lazio of Long Island. "We may have to redefine how we fund — or just fund performing arts," or find another way to make arts financing less objectionable to critics.

Mr. Lazio said it was not yet clear whether the House Rules Committee would allow a vote on an amendment to restore funds for the N.E.A. But like other New York Republicans who support the endowment, he said the N.E.A. had not always acted in its own best interest. "There's some sense of the N.E.A. being out of touch with Middle America," he said.

Some in Congress put 'New York ahead of Newt.'

A spokeswoman for the national endowment, Cherie Simon, contended that the N.E.A. has worked hard to be more accountable to the public and its critics since a series of public-relations disasters in the 1980's,

(CONT.)

when works like Andres Serrano's urine-soaked crucifix were included in shows paid for by the endowment.

But most of several dozen N.E.A.-financed artists who were interviewed were dismissive of proposals to offer grants only with more strings attached.

When asked what he would say to those who would ask why the Government should pay for his jazz piano lessons, Nicholas Balaban of Manhattan said: "I don't know what I would say because I don't think people who would ask that question would want an answer."

Republican supporters of the N.E.A. insist that artists and institutions must become more realistic about the changes that may be required to calm opponents and salvage financing.

"You give up a certain amount of artistic freedom when you go for taxpayer support," said Representative Michael P. Forbes of Long Island, a stalwart Gingrich conservative who says he favors continued N.E.A. funds, though at reduced levels. "There is a trade-off, and the artist has to know that."

Mr. Forbes said he was nonetheless disturbed by those who oppose the endowment because they feel the money goes to left-leaning artists. "I'm troubled by some people who get money, too, but I'm even more troubled by us trying to reward and punish people" for the politics of their art, he said.

A compromise will be tricky, Republican supporters say, because critics of the endowment fall into three rather distinct categories: those who believe government has no responsibility for financing the arts, those who believe the Government has been used to promote a liberal agenda, and those who say the arts are just not a priority for funds at a time when Congress is struggling to balance the budget.

Some in G.O.P. add support for a favorite conservative target.

Many artists believe individual grants are particularly vulnerable.

"I don't think I'll be getting another one of these for quite a while," said David P. Lopato, who now has his fourth N.E.A. grant, for $6,500, to compose "prepared piano" pieces, inserting bolts between strings of his Steinway to alter the sound of the music. "So, thank God for karaoke," said Mr. Lopato, who makes his living transcribing pop music.

Fears about funds for the future have caused schisms within the arts community. Although arts groups support one another in general terms, the prospect of deep cuts has created strong differences about which most deserve public funds.

Mr. Lopato, for example, said it was much more important to grant funds to individual artists like himself, whose work is avant-garde, than large institutions that can more easily raise money.

Others feel that programs that preserve culture are most vital.

"All of the folk-art programs are about preserving culture, not avant-garde culture but traditional fiddlers and cloggers," said Steve Zeitlin, executive director of City Lore, a New York agency that develops folklore projects. On a recent morning, the group used N.E.A. funds to pay $300 to a professional storyteller, Roslyn Bresnick-Perry, to tell traditional Jewish stories to kindergartners at Public School 106 in Queens.

Then there are those who say major institutions need public funds just as badly. "The N.E.A. allows us the opportunity to present the best there is to some people who would ordinarily not have the chance to see it," said Chuck Davis, artistic director of DanceAfrica, which through an N.E.A. grant to the Brooklyn Academy of Music performed and offered African dance lessons there.

But supporters from both major parties in both houses of Congress say they face an uphill battle — in no small measure because New York, a symbol of liberalism as well as culture, has the most to lose.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

To all members of Congress who oppose federal fundi

Do you really think
in your home state w
why these programs

This is just a sample of the hundreds of progra
by major cuts in federal funding for the a



New York City Ballet
Photo: Paul Kolnik

ALABAMA
Alabama Shakespeare Festival
Birmingham Children's Theatre
Stillman College Humanities Dept.

ALASKA
Alaska Public Radio Network
Institute of Alaska Native Arts
Communities of Memory

ARIZONA
The Border Playwrights Project
Navajo Community College
Hopi Dictionary Project

ARKANSAS
Arkansas Orchestra Society
Arkansas Repertory Theatre Company

HAWAII
Bamboo Ridge Press
Honolulu Theatre for Youth
Hurricane Iniki Restoration Project, Libraries & Museums

IDAHO
Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival
Humanities Grants to Schoolteachers

ILLINOIS
Glyn Ellyn Children's Chorus
Textile Arts Centre
Chicago Metro History Fair

INDIANA
Children's Museum of Indianapolis
Notre Dame University Dead Sea Scrolls Project

IOWA
The Iowa Review
1993 Floods Project, Dept. of Cultural Affairs, University of Iowa, Public Library of Des Moines

KANSAS
Wichita Symphony
Kansas State University Foreign Language Classes for Rural High School Teachers

MAINE
Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts
Castine Historic Site Excavation

MARYLAND
Baltimore Museum of Art
Maryland Symphony Orchestra
Wicomico Free Library

MASSACHUSETTS
The City Streets Photography Project
Boston Early Music Festival
Huntington Theatre Company

MICHIGAN
Kalamazoo Symphony
Michigan Schools Supplementary Humanities Programs and Materials

MINNESOTA
Minnesota Composer's Forum
MOTHERREAD-MN Family Reading Program

MISSISSIPPI
Sunflower River Blues Festival
Carnegie Public Library
Delta Blues Museum

NEBRASKA
Joslyn Art Museum
Omaha Ballet Society
Great Plains Chautauqua Tent Programs



Urban Gateways: The Center for Arts in Education

NEVADA
Cowboy Poets Festival
University of Nevada Hi
Newspaper Preservati



PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

ho oppose federal funding for the arts and the humanities:

ally think the voters e state will understand programs were killed?

e hundreds of programs that could be endangered eral funding for the arts and the humanities.

AINE
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ARYLAND
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ASSACHUSETTS
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ICHIGAN
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INNESOTA
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lta Blues Museum

NEBRASKA
Joslyn Art Museum
Omaha Ballet Society
Great Plains Chautauqua Traveling Tent Programs



Urban Gateways:
The Center for Arts in Education, Chicago, IL

NEVADA
Cowboy Poets Festival
University of Nevada Historic Newspaper Preservation



NEW MEXICO
Phoenix Bach Choir
Santa Fe Desert Chorale
Univ. of Mexico Translation Project, Papers of don Diego de Vargas

NEW YORK
Elders Share the Arts
Boy's Choir of Harlem
New York State and Public Libraries, Preservation of Historic State Newspapers

NORTH CAROLINA
John C. Campbell Folk School
The American Dance Festival

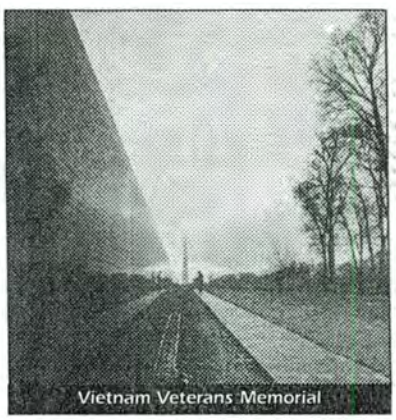
NORTH DAKOTA
Plains Art Museum
Great Plains Chautauqua Society

OHIO
Cleveland Public Theatre
Toledo Museum "The Age of Rubens"

OKLAHOMA
Museum of the Great Plains
OK Mozart
University of Oklahoma, Preservation of Cherokee Nation Records

OREGON
Oregon Shakespeare Festival
High Desert Museum Wing for Columbia River Plateau Indian Artifacts

PENNSYLVANIA
Pittsburgh Children's Festival
Afro-American Historical and



Vietnam Veterans Memorial

UTAH
Ballet West
Humanities Summer Studies for Teachers

VERMONT
Vermont Folklife Center
Vermont Library Assoc.
Vermont Center for the Book

VIRGINIA
Carter Family Memorial Music Center
The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello Exhibit

WASHINGTON
Seattle International Children's Festival
Earshot Jazz Society of Seattle
Sacred Encounters: Jesuit Missionaries and the Indians of the Rocky Mountain West Exhibit

Deaf West Theatre Company
Black Filmmaker Hall Of Fame
Compilation of Mark Twain's Writings

COLORADO

Colorado Dance Festival
Colorado School of Mines
Community Conversations and Conversations 2000

CONNECTICUT

National Theatre of the Deaf
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
Hartford Humanities Alliance

DELAWARE

Delaware Symphony
Library Assoc. Reading Series
Humanities Forum Visiting Scholars Program

FLORIDA

Miami City Ballet
Hurricane Andrew Restoration Project, Libraries & Schools

GEORGIA

Georgia Sea Island Folklore Festival
Savannah Symphony
Southeastern Library Network
Atlanta Opera Guild



Tears of Joy Theatre, Lewiston, ID

KENTUCKY

Louisville Children's Theatre
University of Kentucky Historic State Newspapers Preservation Project

LOUISIANA

Young Aspirations/Young Artists
Prime Time Family Literacy Project
Contemporary Arts Center

MISSOURI

Dance Saint Louis
Kansas City Ballet
Parents as Teachers of the Humanities, Inner-City Workshops

MONTANA

Montana Art Gallery
Montana Ballet Company
Center for the Rocky Mountain West

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Music Festival
Shaker Village in Canterbury

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey June Opera Festiv
Rutgers University Editing of Thomas Edison's Writings in & Electronic Formats

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We strongly urge continued Federal support for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services. Although each of us may have different views on one or another of the many activities assisted by these institutions, we are all in accord that Federal funding for them, without crippling cuts, should be sustained.

Among America's greatest contributions to the world are our culture and our ideas. Support for the arts, the humanities, our libraries and museums is a measure of the nation's commitment to our creative heritage and to our future creative life.

Beyond these reasons for supporting the NEA, NEH, and IMS, it is clear that these modest investments produce substantial economic dividends. Non-profit arts institutions alone generate $36 billion in economic activity annually. They support 1.3 million jobs and generate $3.4 billion in Federal tax revenues. Investment in the arts and humanities also contributes to the economic growth of American communities.

Every Federal dollar leve from the private, state and lo Federal contribution amount son each year for each Endo support there is no prospect the resulting gap or that stat will do so.

Since the NEA and NEH years ago and the IMS in 19 never been a partisan issue. Democrats in Congress help President, Republican and D

AMERICANS UNITED TO SAVE THE AR

Arthur G. Altschul, Sr.
President
The Overbrook Foundation
New York, NY

Paul A. Allaire
Chairman and CEO
Xerox Corp.
Stamford, CT

Thomas D. Barrow
President
Thomson-Barrow Corp.
Houston, TX

Anne Bartley
Officer
Rockefeller Family Fund
Pasadena, CA

James H. Binger
Minneapolis, MN

William Blair
Chairman
National Cultural Alliance
Canton, OH

Laura Lee Blanton
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ur libraries and museums is a
's commitment to our creative
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ons for supporting the NEA,
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ons alone generate $36 billion
nnually. They support 1.3 million
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n the arts and humanities also
nomic growth of American

Every Federal dollar leverages an average of $12 from the private, state and local sectors. Yet the Federal contribution amounts to only $.64 per person each year for each Endowment. Without Federal support there is no prospect that private funds will fill the resulting gap or that state and local governments will do so.

Since the NEA and NEH were established thirty years ago and the IMS in 1976, support for them has never been a partisan issue. Both Republicans and Democrats in Congress helped create them. Every President, Republican and Democrat, since the Endowments were founded in 1965 has strongly supported the arts and humanities.

For all these reasons, we, Republicans, Democrats and Independents, believing in a vigorous and vibrant American culture, are joining to advocate maintaining the modest but significant support with which the NEA, NEH and IMS aid the arts, the humanities, libraries and museums in our country.

We urge the Congress of the United States not to abandon or retreat from the world of ideas and culture. The arts, the humanities, libraries and museums are fundamental to the fabric of American life.

TO SAVE THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

erica

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MEMORANDUM

May 11, 1995

To: Members of the National Council on the Arts
All agency staff

From: The Chairman

As most of you know, a number of events have taken place in recent days on Capitol Hill that have a direct bearing on the future of the National Endowment for the Arts, and I want to take this opportunity to answer some of the questions you may have about them.

REAUTHORIZATION

Yesterday, the full Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee marked-up and reported to the full House the so-called Goodling 40-40-20 reauthorization legislation. The bill would phase out funding over three years, and dramatically increase the percentage of funds block-granted to the states. The administration is obviously opposed to the legislation.

During the mark-up, you should know that Mr. Goodling presented this bill as a positive first step - a bill not necessarily to our liking, but one crafted to garner enough Republican votes to report out of his committee - and therefore, facilitate the process of getting the Endowment an appropriation next year. Other committee Republicans indicated they would support Mr. Goodling in order to get the bill out of committee, but wanted the bill improved as it moves forward to the floor and down the road in the conference with the Senate. Mr. Goodling and his staff indicated a willingness to be cooperative in that respect.

In addition, during the committee's consideration Rep. Pat Williams (D-Montana) offered a substitute amendment that would have simply extended the Endowment at current funding levels for 2 years. It failed by a vote of 19 yeas to 24 noes. A second amendment offered by Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX) to eliminate the Endowment immediately failed by a vote of 11 yeas to 31 noes. There was clear bi-partisan opposition to the Johnson amendment - 12 Republicans voted no. A final vote to report the Goodling bill out of committee passed by a vote of 11 yeas to 2 noes with 18 voting present. The 18 present votes were an expression of dissatisfaction with the committee process that made no provision for hearings, no public discussion, or advance notice of the mark-up.

With respect to next steps, neither Speaker Gingrich nor the Majority Leader, Mr. Armey have indicated what they intend to do about scheduling the bill for consideration on the House floor. What we will do is work with moderate Republicans and Democrats in the intervening time to develop an alternative which could be offered as a substitute on the floor.

Regarding the Senate, while Senators Jeffords and Kassebaum have not introduced their bill, they will shortly because Senator Kassebaum has tentatively scheduled May 24 to mark the bill up in her Labor and Human Resources Committee. Although we have not seen it, we know that it will be a far more positive measure than the Goodling proposal. After the committee completes its work, the bill could be scheduled for consideration by the full Senate.

BUDGET

I am sure many of you read in the newspapers recently of the action taken by the House and Senate Budget Committees. Everyone should understand that the Congressional Budget process is very different and separate from the Congressional Appropriation process. The budget resolutions reported by the House and Senate are simply blueprints that suggest to the Appropriations and other committees how much they have to cut to reach certain targets over time - in this case a balanced budget by the year 2002. The House GOP plan, which envisions zeroing out funding for NEA, and the Senate GOP plan which envisions a 50 percent cut, are simply assumptions that are not binding on the Appropriations committees - they do not have the force of law.

That is not to say these assumptions are not worrisome. The fact is, the budget resolutions govern how much money each of the 13 Appropriations subcommittees will be allotted to pay for all of the programs within their respective jurisdictions. Therefore, if the resolution assumes a 50 percent cut in NEA, and Mr. Regula decides he doesn't want to make that cut, then he would have to cut other programs within his jurisdiction by the approximate amount he puts back into NEA.

I've attached a chart that appeared in the Washington Post that may shed some light on how this admittedly confusing process works.

What everyone must keep in mind is that although the budget resolutions have meaning, we are still a long way from the end-game of the FY 96 budget and appropriations process. The issue of how much the agency will be cut next year will very likely not be resolved until the Fall.

APPROPRIATIONS

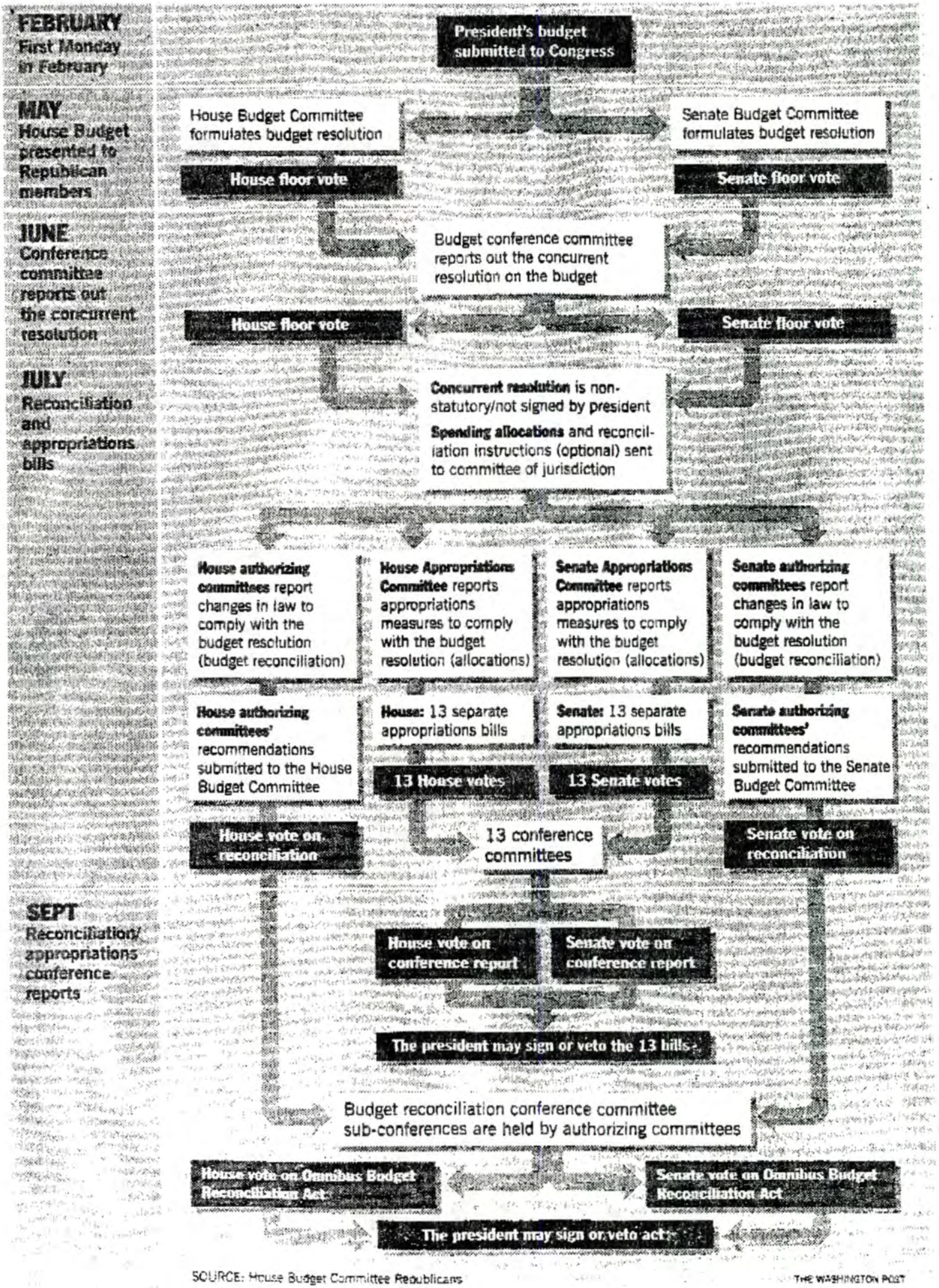
The fact that the authorization process has begun in the House improves the odds that Mr. Regula, the Chairman of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, will be able to provide an FY 96 appropriation for the Endowment in the House bill. His committee will mark-up the FY96 Interior bill tentatively during the first week of June.

The Senate committee does not act until after the House completes action on the appropriation bill. As you know, we believe our strength is much greater in the Senate.

A final word about the overall picture - I understand that everyone becomes concerned when a front page article in a major newspaper points out that the National Endowment for the Arts has been recommended a 50 percent cut. That can be depressing news. But I hope all of you will keep in mind that it is this kind of high-profile press attention that galvanizes our constituency to fight back. It is far better that the media report these hits than to have them occur without anyone knowing.

Furthermore, the fact that the Endowment was mentioned in the Post article in lieu of the hundreds of other programs suffering cuts - that the media considers proposed NEA cuts big news - is testimony to the fact that people in this country care about what happens to this agency.

Finally, I want to tell you something that I hope you already know - the National Endowment for the Arts is the finest agency in government. All of you are doing valuable and important work, and the majority of Americans know and appreciate that.



SOURCE: House Budget Committee Republicans

THE WASHINGTON POST

Don't silence diverse voices of the arts

By PENELOPE McPHEE

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and some of his colleagues in Congress have decided to focus their attention on eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Speaker Gingrich is not using the word "eliminate." Instead, he's calling for the "privatization" of the three agencies, but, make no mistake, he means to deal a deathblow to these three tiny bureaus of the federal government.



McPhee

Penelope McPhee, active in Miami's cultural arts community, wrote this article for The Herald.

Those of us who care about the arts, the quality of life in our communities, the preservation of our cultural patrimony and democratic values need to understand what their elimination will actually mean. We also need to understand why these agencies, with a combined annual budget of $648 million (7/100ths of one percent of the federal budget), have been targeted for extinction.

Most Americans support Gingrich's efforts to get the federal budget under control. But the demolition of the NEA has little to do with budget cutting. Nor is this an effort by the speaker and his cohorts to lift the tax burden on the middle class. The entire tax burden created by the NEA is 64 cents per American per year.

So, if the assault on the NEA is not really about dollars, what is it about and why has it turned so partisan? It's about the changing face of America, the proliferation of cultures and empowering people to express themselves. With 30 years of nonpartisan support, the NEA has succeeded beyond its wildest dreams in fostering a truly public access to the arts throughout the country — both for audiences and for artists. For the first time, the voices of America's heterogeneous cultures are being heard. It is these diverse, and sometimes critical, voices Gingrich hopes to silence by de-funding the NEA.

Gingrich and company — more through demagoguery than fact — are trying to use the specious argument that the arts should not be funded with tax dollars because they appeal to a narrow, "elite" segment of society who can damn well pay for it themselves. Let's ask the more than 100,000 people who attended the Pavarotti concert on Miami Beach last Sunday whether that concert should have been restricted to the 8,000 people who were able to pay ticket prices ranging from $50 to $2,500.

Government support at the local, state and federal level has always come with a lot of strings attached. In recent years, one of those strings has been an emphasis on reaching broad and diverse audiences. Even with government support, ticket prices are still too high. Many people who would like to attend the symphony, opera, ballet and theater can't afford to go on a regular basis. But, whenever public support has enabled organizations to offer free or reduced admission, thousands of people show up. Again, witness the Pavarotti concert; witness Joe Papp's free Shakespeare in New York's Central Park; witness the new Holocaust Museum in Washington. More Americans participated in arts activities last year than attended professional sporting events.

To understand why admission prices will skyrocket if federal support for the arts is eliminated, we must look at the complex economic structure of arts organizations. Income from ticket sales — even at today's astonishing $60 for many orchestra seats — doesn't pay the cost of production. For most arts organizations, ticket revenues cover 45-60 percent of the costs. That means for every $60 ticket sold, another $60-plus has to come from somewhere else. Arts organizations are very ingenious about looking for this "donated" income. They solicit contributions from individual donors, from foundations and corporations; they invent creative special events such as galas and benefits, and they seek grants from every level of government — municipal, county, state and federal.

This distinctive balance of public and private support is uniquely American.

For generations, the arts in America were funded exactly the way Speaker Gingrich is proposing. Wealthy individuals bought tickets and made donations to their favorite museum or orchestra so that they and their other rich friends could enjoy them. Outside of New York City, few communities had their own theater, dance or opera companies.

Then, in the mid-1960s, two coincident occurrences led to the proliferation of the arts as we know them today. The Ford Foundation decided to focus a portion of its resources on the development of regional arts organizations, and the NEA was established. These bold new programs solidified the public-private partnership that has since been the hallmark of American arts funding.

With its relatively small budget ($167 million annually), the NEA has provided broad-based support for the performing and visual arts across America for three decades. Although the NEA's support is rarely even 10 percent of any organization's budget, it's always been a significant percentage because it has leveraged many times its value in private support from foundations, corporations and individuals. Another one of those "strings" that government has attached has been to require arts organizations to match public dollars with private money. Each endowment dollar has generated $11 in private support. In South Florida, in the last three years, the Miami City Ballet, Greater Miami Opera and Florida Philharmonic alone have received more than $200,000 from the NEA, which has leveraged more than $1 million in private funding.

Contrary to Gingrich's claims, private support for the arts will not replace diminished public support. All the existing foundation and corporate philanthropic resources can't make up for the loss of government funding, and as other government programs dealing with health and human services are cut, the demand for philanthropic dollars will be stretched even further. The arts are but one dimension of America's public-private partnership. If anything, without the leadership of the NEA, private support for the arts will dwindle, and guess what — that's exactly what Gingrich wants. He doesn't simply want the NEA to go away; he wants art and artists to go away.

Gingrich wants the voices of America's diverse cultures silenced. If this were not the case, it would not be necessary to vilify the agency. He would simply say, "You guys are doing great work, but we're approaching a trillion-dollar deficit, so we have to cut everybody's budgets." But by demonizing the NEA, Gingrich is not only endeavoring to eliminate public support, he is sending a message that the arts are unworthy of support. Let's not let him get away with disguising his true mission.

The New York Times

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Don't Ax Federal Support for Art

The National Endowment for the Arts, now in its 30th year, has been a brilliant though sometimes controversial success. At a modest cost to the taxpayers, $167 million this year, it has helped channel private donations to an impressive variety of nonprofit arts institutions across the country. Institutions report that each dollar granted by the Endowment generates an average of $11 in matching private funds. As a result, many more Americans have been able to experience original art firsthand, and talented artists have been encouraged to pursue their work.

This is just what the Endowment was created to do. But now, for a variety of reasons, some conservative Republicans want to use their new Congressional majorities to cut off funds for the Endowment and shut it down. They should not be allowed to succeed.

The Endowment has some devoted conservative Republican defenders, for example Senators Orrin Hatch and Alan Simpson. But other conservatives remain ideologically opposed to public subsidies for the arts. Yet subsidies by governments and wealthy patrons are an ancient and necessary tradition. Even artists whose greatness has been acknowledged by posterity have had to struggle to support themselves during their lifetimes, particularly if their originality consisted in challenging received tastes. Enlightened societies all over the world recognize that there is a clear public interest in supporting such talents and to sustaining the traditions represented by art museums, libraries, symphonies and dance, opera and theatrical companies and making them available to wider audiences.

This is a wise and historically validated role for governments. The real risk of government subsidies lies not in overgenerous use of the taxpayers' money but in the the potential for political interference or censorship. The Endowment's designers wisely guarded against this danger by leaving initial grant-making decisions to panels of people knowledgeable about the arts. The awards are then subject to two higher levels of expert review. Most grants are awarded not to individual artists or productions but to institutions with a good track record. But a good track record in the arts includes a willingness to take the occasional risks on a promising new or controversial talent.

It is these risks that have gotten the endowment in trouble with demagogic politicians like Jesse Helms who will seize on provocative aspects of particular exhibits or performances put on by institutions receiving some Endowment support to caricature the whole of the Endowment's work. The most recent controversy, for example, centered on a bloodied paper towel flung by a performance artist, Ron Athey, at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis. The Endowment had awarded some $100,000 to the Walker to help support its entire season. The Walker in turn awarded about $150 of this money to Mr. Athey.

Not all great art is controversial and not all controversial art is great. But themes like eroticism, homosexuality and the provocative use of religious imagery that so upset the Endowment's critics have been entwined with great art for centuries. In recent years, the Endowment has tried to play it safe on these issues to appease its Congressional critics. But excessive caution shortchanges an important part of the Endowment's mission.

The zealous and small-minded are always willing to attack art and artists. But there is no reason to elevate their attacks to general Government policy. To do so would be a distortion of the mandate of the November election. To be blunt about it, prominent New York Republicans with ties to the city's extraordinary cultural institutions have an obligation to see that their more rambunctious members of Congress do not destroy the National Endowment for the Arts.

- 2 -

Proposed Arts Budget Cut Too Drastic, Study Finds

■ **The arts:** The private sector would be unable to fill in the gap if Congress' 40% reduction goes through, says the Rockefeller Foundation.

By ELIZABETH SHOGREN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—Private foundations will be unable to fill in the gap if Congress goes through with proposals to cut by 40% its funding of the National Endowments for Arts and Humanities, putting at risk the enormous growth in American culture since the agencies were created 30 years ago, according to research by the Rockefeller Foundation.

A sneak preview of the foundation's study of cultural philanthropy was given Tuesday at a meeting of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, a group of prominent citizens who advise the President on the state of arts and humanities in America. The committee asked the Rockefeller foundation to share its findings, which were initially planned for internal use only, as part of its effort to advise the President and the people on the potential impact of proposed budget cuts on the nation's arts and humanities.

"We have had 30 years of remarkable growth and achievement for American culture," Alberta Arthurs, director of arts and humanities for the Rockefeller Foundation told the group. "The cultural situation we have created in the last 30 years is a dense and delicate balance of private and public interests and funds. If it is disturbed, what will replace it?"

As a result of that combined public and private effort, since

Please see NEA, F7

LOS ANGELES TIMES

NEA: Study

Continued from F4

1965, the number of orchestras in the United States doubled and the nonprofit theaters grew from 56 to 426, dance companies mushroomed from 37 to 450 and opera companies increased from 27 to 120, she said.

Although the 35,000 private foundations nationwide kick in more than $1 billion yearly to support arts and humanities, their contributions are focused on particular agendas and tend to be mainstream projects.

"Only the NEA and the NEH operate with a systematic approach to fostering the growth of the arts and humanities," Arthurs said.

Under proposals under consideration in Congress, the funding for endowments would be cut by 40% next year and phased out in three years. Currently the budgets for the NEH and NEA are $177 million and $167 million, respectively.

The challenge ahead, she said, is to find a way to sustain the diverse and rich cultural achievements at a time when the federal government is intent on cutting back.

"Private funding is not in a situation to make up whatever funding might be lost in the public sector," Arthurs said.

Her foundation, for instance, plans to reduce funding because of its own economic troubles. A survey of 40 other major foundations showed that none felt they could increase their funding in the arts, and some others also had planned reductions in their donations.

Enthusiasts for arts and humanities across the country are worried about the implications for the cultural wealth developed over recent decades in their areas.

"Los Angeles has a substantial number of cultural facilities, museums and individuals that rely on support of public and private sector. There is great concern about what the future will be," said Irene Hirano, executive director and president of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles and a member of the committee. "The private sector will in no way be able to fill the gap. We will see a reduction in the services, number of performances and exhibitions."

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities was created by former President Ronald Reagan when he was trying to abolish the endowments. He later gave up that campaign, but the committee continued.

ENDOWMENTS' SURVIVAL IN DOUBT

Lobbyists for Arts and Humanities Are Grateful for Small Favors

By Stephen Burd



Isaac Stern: The national endowments for the arts and humanities "should be doubled in size, not cut."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM KITTNER FOR THE CHRONICLE

Alberta Arthurs: Private groups would not be able to make up for the loss of federal support.

WASHINGTON

A YEAR AGO, advocates for the arts and humanities would not have considered it good news.

But with Republicans in control of Congress, the advocates were relieved last week when a key lawmaker said he would support a plan to phase out the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities in the space of three years.

Without that support, the endowments could have lost all their funds by the next fiscal year.

The lawmaker was Rep. Ralph Regula, an Ohio Republican who is chairman of the House of Representatives committee in charge of the endowments' budgets. He said he would recommend that the House consider appropriating funds for the endowments even though they have not been reauthorized yet.

This was a major switch for Mr. Regula, who had pledged to block any unauthorized agencies from receiving appropriations. The endowments have remained unauthorized for two years.

'A GREAT ADVANTAGE'

"It would be a great advantage for the endowments if Mr. Regula succeeds," said John Hammer, director of the National Humanities Alliance, a lobbying group.

While the Congressman's decision holds out hope that the endowments will survive for at least three more years, they are likely to be much smaller than they are now. Last week, the House Appropriations Committee approved a bill that would slash the budget of the arts endowment by 40 per cent and the budget of the humanities endowment by 43 per cent for fiscal 1996.

Under the bill, the N.E.H. and the N.E.A. would receive $99-million each in fiscal 1996. The current budgets for the humanities and arts endowments are $177-million and $168-million, respectively.

One reason the endowments appear likely to be included in the appropriations bill is because several other programs in the same bill, including the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, have not been reauthorized, either. Because these programs are Republican favorites, it has been more difficult for G.O.P. lawmakers to keep their pledge to give funds only to authorized programs.

"The fact that the Bureau of Land Management is unauthorized strengthens our hand," said Mr. Hammer. "It would look odd if they chose to waive the rule on this bill inconsistently."

Should Mr. Regula succeed in getting the reauthorization requirement waived, however, it is likely that an attempt will be made to kill the endowments.

LOOKING TO THE SENATE

One arts-and-humanities lobbyist privately expressed concern that "we may not be ready for an up-and-down vote" on the existence of the endowments. However, N.E.H. staff members and lobbyists, like Mr. Hammer, were confident that the endowments would win such a vote.

If Republican lawmakers do not waive the reauthorization requirement, the only hope for the N.E.H. and the N.E.A. would be the Senate, which is expected to be more generous to the endowments than the House, and is expected to pass a reauthorization bill.

Then, the lobbyists believe, House and Senate negotiators, meeting in the fall, would choose to keep at least the humanities endowment alive.

The existence of the arts endowment would be less likely in such a scenario, advocates said. "In order for this to work, Republican conservatives would have to feel like they won," a lobbyist said privately. "The N.E.A. may not survive."

Jamil Zainaldin, the president of the Federation of State Humanities Councils, said he was confident that the humanities endowment would not be eliminated, no matter what legislative scenario occurred.

"If the humanities community conducts itself in an intelligent way and works together, rather than at cross-purposes, we will get through this," he said.

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Other advocates for the arts and humanities, however, were not so confident. Relying on the Senate to protect the endowments may be wishful thinking, they said. They feared that the N.E.A. and the N.E.H. will become hot issues in the Republican Presidential campaigns of Sen. Robert J. Dole of Kansas and Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas. Congressional-staff members say Mr. Dole does not want his fingerprints on the survival of the endowments.

Indeed, conservative groups are stepping up their campaign against the endowments. The Christian Action Network last week organized a showing of artworks it said were financed by the N.E.A. Speaking of these works, Martin Mawyer, the group's president, said the N.E.A. had supported art in which "the grotesque, the absurd, the silly, the mean-spirited, and the highly offensive are honored."

Included in the network's exhibit were 14 photographs by Diane Rosenblum that were part of the fall 1994 issue of the journal *TriQuarterly*, which is published at Northwestern University. Mr. Mawyer described the photos, titled *The Naked Truth About Women*, as "perverse."

'FALSE IMAGES OF WOMEN'

The N.E.A. awarded *TriQuarterly* two grants in 1994. Neither of them was for Ms. Rosenblum's photos, which show naked, overweight women.

Reginald Gibbons, the journal's editor and a professor of English at Northwestern, said the project was meant "to counteract the relentlessly prurient and false images of women in the mass media, and especially advertising." He said accusations that these photos were obscene were "laughable."

"If anyone was to accuse this exhibition as being pornographic or in any way obscene, I would have to put those accusers in the same category with those who insisted that the Sistine Chapel figures had to have fig leaves," he said.

Conservative columnist Cal Thomas told an audience gathered by the Christian Action Network that art like Ms. Rosenblum's proved that the endowments should be closed down. "You can't just reduce the budgets of these agencies, you've got to kill them, because, like the blob that ate Tokyo, they just keep coming back," he said.

Supporters of the N.E.A. and the N.E.H. responded that eliminating the endowments would cripple the cultural life of the country. Alberta Arthurs, director of arts and humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, told the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities last week that private groups would not be able to make up for the loss of federal support in these areas.

She pointed to a report by the Rockefeller Foundation, which found that arts and culture ranked lowest on the list of priorities of private donors for giving. All but one of the 40 foundations it surveyed believed that they would be more likely to reduce spending for the arts and humanities next year than to increase it.

"Several of these funders believed that there will be increased demand for their funds from social-welfare and human-services programs, with all the cutbacks Congress has planned in these areas," said Ms. Arthurs.

'HOLD UP A MIRROR'

The elimination of the endowments would be tragic for the nation, said Isaac Stern, the renowned violinist and a member of the President's committee. "I would hope that there would be some way we could all hold up a mirror to each of the Representatives and the Senators that will be voting in the coming months, and let them look at themselves as they really are," Mr. Stern said.

"What are they really doing for America? If anyone wants to talk about family values or what this country is supposed to mean or what it can mean, or how it can take the diverse elements that made this country what it was, what it is, and what it is possible to be, then these two disciplines, the N.E.A. and the N.E.H., should be doubled in size, not cut." ■

U.S. Report Questions 'Bakke' Defense of Affirmative Action

By Scott Jaschik

WASHINGTON

THE Justice Department issued a report last week suggesting that the Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision may no longer, by itself, be sufficient to justify campus affirmative-action programs. In light of recent Supreme Court decisions, the report said, "a court might demand some proof of a nexus between the diversification of the student body and the diversity of viewpoints expressed on the campus."

REGULARLY CITED BY COLLEGES

The *Bakke* decision banned the use of ethnic or racial quotas in college admissions. But the decision allowed colleges to use race and ethnicity as one factor among others in determining whom to admit.

Colleges could use affirmative action to bring diverse students and diverse opinions to campus, the *Bakke* decision said. And colleges regularly cite *Bakke* to defend their programs. But the decision did not require colleges to offer specific evidence that racial and ethnic diversity on campus would lead to a diversity of viewpoints.

The Justice Department said the recent Supreme Court decisions make it more likely that courts will demand such evidence.

The report was prepared by Assistant Attorney General Walter Dellinger and was distributed to all federal agencies. It was designed to assist agencies in evaluating affirmative-action programs in the wake of a Supreme Court decision last month. That decision said federal affirmative-action programs must meet the legal test of "strict scrutiny." The test generally requires evidence of past bias, and an affirmative-action remedy that is "narrowly tailored."

The Court's ruling came in a case involving government contracting preferences for minority-owned businesses. But its breadth prompted the Justice Department to prepare the report.

The report's references to *Bakke* indicated Administration support for the principles of that decision. But the department also noted criticisms of *Bakke*. For instance, it said, the *Bakke* decision's premise about the link between racial diversity and viewpoint diversity could be attacked. "It could be said that this thesis is rooted in racial stereotype, one that presumes that members of racial and ethnic groups have a 'minority perspective' to convey."

But the report also cited "sound arguments" to defend *Bakke*. "The thesis does not presume that *all* individuals of a particular race or ethnic background think alike. Rather, it is premised on what seems to be a common sense proposition that in the aggregate, increasing the diversity of the student body is bound to make a difference in the array of perspectives communicated at a university."

FACULTY RECRUITING

Colleges have cited the *Bakke* decision to defend a broad array of their racial preferences, not just those involving admissions. In a footnote, the Justice Department report said the decision "may carry over to the selection of university faculty: the greater the racial and ethnic diversity of the professors, the greater the array of perspectives to which the students would be exposed."

But the footnote also said this theory "apparently has not been tested to any significant degree in the courts." ■

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Back Stage

Cultural Tourism, NEA Discussed by Arts Committee

By Amy Herab

Drawing foreign and domestic tourists to sites of cultural significance was among the top items of discussion when the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities met in Washington, D.C., on June 27. In addition, violinist and arts advocate Isaac Stern made an impassioned plea for the future of federal arts funding.

The Committee decided at the meeting to issue a special report on cultural tourism at the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism this fall. The conference is slated for Oct. 30 and 31, with 1,700 delegates from the industry expected to attend.

"When you look at the arts and humanities, we turn out to be one of the most important attractions to foreign and domestic tourists," commented Malcolm Richardson, deputy director of the President's Committee. "Performing arts festivals are huge tourist attractions." For example, the

Continued on page 4

Theatre Projects

Theatre Space: Two New Magazines Are Set to Cover New York Stages

By Ilana Wernick

At the same time that the theatre world has become something of a media wallflower—attracting less and less attention from television stations, newspapers, and magazines over the years—two new publications are not only setting their sights on the New York City theatre scene, but providing free performance listings in the bargain.

Flatiron News and *Time Out New York* will both feature listings and full-length stories on theatre and other cultural happenings in the city. *Flatiron*'s premier issue already can be found on newsstands and at other venues; *Time Out New York*—which is owned by a consortium of private investors, including Tony Elliott, founder of the 27-year-old London listings magazine *Time Out*—is aiming to show its face sometime in the fall.

"I think it's great," said Virginia P. Louloudes, executive director of the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York. "The more the better."

But even while some publications are snubbing theatre, the ones that do cover the stage scene already boast healthy listings of Manhattan theatrical events—from Broadway to Off-Broadway to Off-

Stivers—formerly deputy editor of *Premiere* magazine—was tight-lipped about exactly how she plans to fill those gaps; she said she doesn't want to give away any ideas, and she also won't be going into full-throttle brainstorming until her staff is in place. She did divulge that the magazine would cover theatre, film, music, books, sports, TV highlights, gay life, classical music, and more,

"From our point of view, the more quality niche magazines there are, the better."

—Michael Abramson

and that the magazine would have a distinctly New York spin.

Stivers promised that while the magazine intends to concentrate most on film and music (those genres will take up the most space in the magazine), there would also be "substantial" theatre coverage.

"We'll be covering major Broadway shows, Off-Broadway shows and as much Off-Off-

Union Vote Nears For "Superstar" Crew Members

By Robert Kolker

Eight crew members from a national tour of "Jesus Christ Superstar" are planning to vote soon on joining the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, according to the National Labor Relations Board in New York. As *Back Stage* was going to press, the labor board was still finalizing a date in late July for the secret-ballot election.

The IA's international office is calling "Superstar" the first of several labor organizing efforts of non-union tours slated for the near future. But the musical's managing director says it's too soon to tell how the upcoming vote will affect "Superstar" 's limited run. "If it is decided that [the crew members] want to be represented by the IA, then there's a bargaining between us and the IA about how much to pay," said Jeff Thomson, managing director of the Judas Company.

The New York City-based compa-

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President's Arts Committee Meets

Continued from page 3

Spoleto festival in Charleston, S.C., [illegible] a multi-million dollar impact on the local economy."

One of the speakers at the June 27 meeting observed that "cultural tourism has enabled the Charleston-area economy to weather huge reductions in defense spending," Richardson reported. "There are many military bases in the area. With the closing of bases, the Charleston economy was vulnerable. The city has made a very conscious effort to develop a year-round tourism strategy."

Richardson also noted that the Committee believes there is a reciprocal relationship between cultural institutions and the travel industry. "People in the travel industry need to think about the consequences for their industry if arts groups are suffering financially. Conversely, those of us in the cultural sector need to be more alert to our earned income and support from the activity of tourists."

Private sector funding of the arts and humanities was also discussed at the Committee meeting. Alberta Arthurs, director of the Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, announced that the organization was putting together a study on the topic that should be complete within the next three months. The study will feature interviews with other foundations, and Arthurs stated that "every donor except one reported that their foundations are not in a position to increase their culture portfolios. Many reported, in fact, that they were anticipating decreased funding at their own institutions."

Arthurs also said, "All the patterns suggest that arts and humanities will continue to be the last on the list of sectors supported by private donors. And trends suggest that private sector support will continue to favor large,

uled address to committee members. Stern said, in part: "I do not believe that there should be any cuts. I think, if anything, if anybody wants to talk about family values or what this country's supposed to mean...then these two disciplines, the NEA and the NEH, should be doubled in size, not cut. To attack them for a few unhappy drops in an ocean of brilliant and constant results, to choose easy targets for abuse and derision, is to make a mockery of healthy and much-needed support for civilized comment and inquiry."

He added, "We have to be part of giving every child a chance to know beauty, to live decently, to have a future, to have a hope. The arts in basic education is the only way. The educators in each of the states have not done this. The NEA has tried to fill a gap that is very necessary—the NEH as well."

The Committee meeting took place at 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, which also houses the NEA, the NEH, and the Institute of Museum Services. The next meeting of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities is scheduled for Oct. 18.

Show League Scores

The following are scores from the Broadway Show League games played on July 6:

Smokey Joe's-Death-Stomp 12, Say Brothers 4; Shuberts 13, Les Misérables 3; Sunset Boulevard 10, Grease 9; Show Boat 8, Inspector-Love! Valour! Compassion! 5; Local #751 10, Heiress-Chronicles 2; Actors' Fund 7, Kiss of the Spider Woman 0; Damn Yankees 18, Tony n' Tina's Wedding 10; Phantom of the Opera 9, Three Timing Women 8; London Suite 7, Defending the Caveman 6; Local #1 20, Lincoln Center-Arcadia 5; Jujamcyn 7, Actors' Equity 3; Miss Saigon 12,

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the Committee ... Arthurs, director of the Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, announced that the organization was putting together a study on the topic that should be complete within the next three months. The study will feature interviews with other foundations, and Arthurs stated that "every donor except one reported that their foundations are not in a position to increase their culture portfolios. Many reported, in fact, that they were anticipating decreased funding at their own institutions."

Arthurs also said, "All the patterns suggest that arts and humanities will continue to be the last on the list of sectors supported by private donors. And trends suggest that private sector support will continue to favor large, regionally important, well-established organizations over the smaller, community-oriented, less visible organizations that the public sector funds." Museums and performing arts organizations will probably continue "to be funded more generously than other cultural agencies," if current trends continue.

The importance of the endowments for the arts and humanities was stressed by Isaac Stern in an unsched-

Show League Scores

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The next games will be played on Thurs., July 13 (11:30 am, 1:30 pm, 3 pm, and 3:30 pm), at Heckscher Field in Central Park. Also, at 4:30, "Defending the Caveman" and "How to Succeed..." are tentatively scheduled. Information/rain-out announcements: (212) 769-8010.

A. Rosenberg, ... Tallmer

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NEA IN THE 104th CONGRESS

Congress continues its frantic pace as the new Republican majority races against its 100 day timetable to meet the goals of the Contract with America. As the GOP leadership attempts to dramatically restructure the federal government by consolidating and eliminating many domestic programs, discussion has centered on the future of cultural funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on three legislative fronts: the budget, annual appropriations, and authorization.

BUDGET: President Clinton, on February 6, released his $1.61 trillion budget request for FY 96 which includes small increases for the three cultural agencies: NEA receives $172.4 million, the NEH $182 million, and the Institute for Museum Services (IMS) $28.9 million. While these increases indicate the Administration's support, congressional leaders quickly denounced the overall budget plan as unrealistic, with many Republicans and Democrats alike pledging to seek deeper domestic funding cuts.

FY96 BUDGET RESOLUTION: The House and Senate Budget Committees have been holding a series of hearings to prepare for the FY 96 Budget Resolution. Budget committee members are now working on a plan that would balance the budget by the year 2002.

RESCISSIONS: Following the Administration's FY 96 budget presentation, House Republicans began meeting to roll back FY 95 spending in a process known as rescissions. The House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Representative Robert Livingston (R-LA), on March 2nd agreed to a $17 billion package that includes a $5 million reduction for both the NEA and NEH. If approved, the NEA would lose $1 million from its budget for administration and $4 million from unobligated program funds, and would be directed to eliminate funding, to the maximum extent possible, for individual fellowships, with the exception of Heritage Award fellowships to folk artists. The plan is expected to be debated by the full House of Representatives sometime the week of March 13 and then move to the Senate for consideration.

APPROPRIATIONS: Senate Action- -NEA and NEH Chairs Jane Alexander and Sheldon Hackney testified on March 1 before the Senate Appropriations Interior Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), on FY 96 funding for their agencies. In calling for a $172.4 million appropriation, about 66 cents per capita, Jane Alexander emphasized that there is no substitute for national leadership in important arenas including: national recognition of excellence, touring programs (especially to rural areas and internationally), convening arts leaders from various disciplines, and developing arts education projects. In his testimony, Mr. Hackney underscored efforts to implement a "National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity," an initiative designed to "bring people of differing views and backgrounds together to explore what it means to be an American as we enter the twenty-first century." In response to Senator Gorton's inquiry about how their agencies would handle dramatic FY 96 funding cuts, Ms. Alexander and Mr. Hackney emphasized the need to reexamine priorities.

House Action- -At a February 16 House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee hearing, prominent defenders of the NEA provided powerful testimony on the importance of the federal role in advancing arts and culture nationwide, especially in rural areas. Representative Amo Houghton (R-NY), financier Richard Franke, historian David McCullough, film maker Ken Burns, and scholar Clay S. Jenkinson predicted that, absent national support, the arts and humanities would be limited to individuals who could afford them.

While Representatives present acknowledged the compelling testimony, Subcommittee Chair Ralph Regula (R-OH) stressed that no agency would be funded without an authorization. The Alliance

thanks Representative Sidney R. Yates (D-IL) for initiating the hearing.

AUTHORIZATION: Senate Action- -The Senate Education, Arts and Humanities Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Jim Jeffords (R-VT), on February 23 heard from ten public witnesses, both supporters and opponents, on NEA reauthorization. While many witnesses lauded the NEA for its remarkable 30 year history of achievements, much of the hearing focused on alternative funding proposals, including privatization, copyright reform, increased state grants and restructuring the current agency. The subcommittee next will consider testimony on NEH and IMS reauthorization and then will begin drafting a reauthorization bill.

House Action- - The House has yet to schedule a reauthorization hearing.

ALLIANCE/SERVICE ORGANIZATION ACTION: The Alliance and member Service Organizations have mounted a national campaign to preserve cultural funding. In partnership with a coalition of 40 national arts and humanities groups, the Alliance is spearheading daily meetings on Capitol Hill with key legislators and staff. The Alliance and the Service Organizations also have organized a massive grassroots effort to demonstrate broad-based support for the arts in communities nationwide, and have helped develop a proactive media strategy.

AAA ON THE INTERNET

In response to the imminent threat to the survival of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the American Arts Alliance is pleased to announce the creation of an "advocacy homepage" and gopher site accessible to the 35 million users of the Internet. Access to the Alliance homepage is available through the World Wide Web at the URL address **http://www.tmn.com/0h/Artswire/www/aaa/aaahome.html** or through the Arts Wire gopher: **gopher.tmn.com**, menu item number 5 (Artswire), then select "American Arts Alliance". The homepage provides advocacy information and tools to help arts supporters communicate to their Senators and Representatives about the need for continued federal arts support.

The Alliance hopes this information, which includes our 900 number (1-900-370-9000 to generate mailgrams to members of Congress), a sample letter, NEA facts and general information, advances the arts community's continuing efforts to generate support for cultural agencies through local grassroots contacts with elected officials. Computer users can easily transform the data into a uniquely personal letter to send to their representatives in Washington. Check it out!

SENATE REJECTS BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

In a major defeat for the Senate Republican leadership, the Senate on March 2 rejected a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. (A two-thirds majority is required to amend the Constitution.) The amendment would have required the federal government to balance its budget by fiscal 2002 or two years after ratification by three-quarters of the states.

The Alliance has worked with a large coalition of national organizations to oppose the amendment. While the Alliance supports the need to cut the deficit for the economic health of the country, a balanced budget amendment would imperil the economy and eliminate or weaken vital programs. It also would seriously threaten federal support for the arts, as Congress would be forced to cut spending dramatically (or raise taxes) to balance the budget.

HOUSE COMMITTEE VOTES GOALS 2000 CUTS

The House Appropriations Committee on March 2 approved a 43% cut in Goals 2000 funds as part of the overall rescission package that would roll back current funds by $17 billion for a large number of programs. Under this plan, FY 95 funds for GOALS 2000 national programs would be eliminated, threatening targeted support for educational reform activities in poor communities, depriving the federal government of the means to evaluate the impact of educational reform on student achievement, and terminating other national leadership and technical assistance. In addition, funds for state and local education improvement were drastically scaled back by 38%, negatively impacting efforts to develop and implement comprehensive strategies for systematic education reform. The rescission package next moves to the House floor for consideration with a vote expected the week of March 13.

POSTAL SERVICE ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS

In March, the United States Postal Service (USPS) is expected to publish in the *Federal Register* third-class nonprofit eligibility restrictions required by the 1993 postal compromise legislation. These eligibility restrictions, originally scheduled to take effect last fall, were delayed because Congress required that the rules be rewritten to allow third-class nonprofit periodical publications to continue carrying paid space advertising. The restrictions are expected to go into effect on October 1, 1995, along with the third of six rate increases.

The new eligibility restrictions

are expected to allow nonprofit third-class publications to carry advertising for products and services. Under the USPS rules, a third-class nonprofit publication likely will be defined as follows: consist of at least 25% nonadvertising matter; have a distinguishable style and size; be produced on paper (not computer disk); and contain an ID statement that includes the title, the issue date, the frequency, the name and address of the nonprofit organization, the issue number, and if applicable, ISSN or USPS number and the subscription price. The new rules will not affect current advertising restrictions on travel, insurance, and financial arrangements.

Third-class nonprofit mailings which do not fit the above third-class publication definition will be subject to restrictions defining "substantially related" advertising. Catalogues which offer items, or even one item, not "substantially related" to the mission of the organization will be unable to be sent at the third-class nonprofit rate. If your catalogue presents a problem, please contact your Service Organization or the Alliance. The Alliance last year was successful on Capitol Hill in ensuring that third-class nonprofit periodical publications could continue carrying paid space advertising.

APRIL TAX DEADLINE: ARE YOUR DONORS PREPARED?

With the April 17 (normally April 15) tax filing deadline approaching, nonprofit organizations should make sure that their contributors are given the necessary documentation to meet new substantiation and disclosure rules. Effective for tax year 1994, nonprofit organizations must comply with the following two basic requirements:

Substantiation: Organizations must provide donors with written acknowledgment of donations of $250 or more. (A cancelled check no longer suffices.) These acknowledgments must be "contemporaneous," that is, donors must have documentation no later than the due date (including extensions) for the tax year in which the contribution was made.

The written substantiation must include the amount of cash or describe the donated property. If the donor received any goods or services in return for the gift, documentation must include an estimate of their fair market value. If the donor received nothing in return, the written substantiation must state nothing was received.

Disclosure: Organizations must provide donors with a written report noting both the deductible and nondeductible portions of payments of more than $75 that involve a quid pro quo contribution, which is a payment made partly as a gift and partly for goods or services the nonprofits provide the donor. The nonprofit must make a "good faith estimate" of the value of the goods and services provided.

For more information, contact your Service Organization or the Alliance.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY DAY

Plans are in full swing for the March 14 National Advocacy Day. Activities are planned in Washington, D.C. and in communities nationwide. In Washington, two events are underway:

Advocacy Day: The Alliance has joined a coalition of forty other cultural organizations for the annual American Council for the Arts (ACA) Advocacy Day. Advocates will gather in Washington on March 13 and 14 to meet with Members of Congress. For more information, contact your Service Organization or the Alliance.

America for the NEA: Representatives Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Amo Houghton (R-NY), two of the arts community's most vocal congressional champions, have organized "America For the NEA" to bring arts supporters to Washington on March 14 to meet with Members of Congress. Those interested in participating in this effort should call 1-800-862-1113 for details on state coordinators, group transportation and appointments with legislators.

In communities across the country, advocates unable to come to Washington can join the effort through National Call-In Day. On March 14 call, fax, or write your Senators and Representatives. Deliver the message that Congress must support continued funding of the NEA, NEH and the Institute of Museum of Services (IMS). When making calls, advocates need to remember to leave their name and addresses.

You can also call the Alliance Hotline at 1-900-370-9000, and for just $1.99 a minute mailgrams will be delivered to your Representative and two Senators.

EXON INTRODUCES CONTENT RESTRICTIONS BILL

Senator James Exon (D-NE) has introduced the "Communications Decency Act," a bill that would place strict content restrictions on information transmitted over any telecommunications device to prevent "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, or indecent material". Exon offered a similar bill at the end of the last Congress and intends to amend the act to this year's Senate telecommunications reform package. Action is expected on this comprehensive reform bill sometime in March.

The broadly worded bill would subject all forms of electronic communication to government censorship, including the infinite amount of data downloaded/uploaded on the Internet and private E-mail messages. The need for online companies to monitor every transmission and posting for indecency would drastically reduce public access as companies seek to limit the present high-volume of information exchange to a reviewable level. In addition to impeding the growth of the Internet, this measure also poses serious free speech and privacy concerns.

FEDERAL TECHNOLOGY GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released on February 10 applications for its popular information technology matching grant program, the Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance

Program (TIIAP). $64 million will be awarded this year, up from $24.4 million in 1994. **ALL** applicants must send the NTIA a non-binding letter of intent to submit an application by **March 23, 1995**. The application deadline is April 20 or June 22, depending on the funding amount requested. A step-by-step guidebook for filling out the application is available. For more information or a copy of the application and guidebook, call the NTIA at (202) 482-2048 or download this material from the NTIA's electronic bulletin board via modem at (202) 482-1199.

The NTIA grant program helps to promote the use of telecommunications and information technology by non-profit organizations and non-federal governmental agencies and supports the development of educational, economic and cultural telecommunication services through partnerships with other public and private organizations. For example, last year the Museum Computer Network (MCN) received $158,150 to support the Cultural Heritage Information Online (CHIO) project. Created by MCN and members of the Consortium for Computer Interchange, CHIO will offer a database of 5,000 multimedia folk art records over the Internet. Partners in this project include the Canadian Heritage Information Network, the Getty Art History Information Program, and the Research Libraries Information Network.

NTIA Workshops have been scheduled to assist potential applicants as follows: March 8 - Portland, OR; March 11 - Albany, NY; and March 17 - Austin, TX.

LOBBY DISCLOSURE REINTRODUCED

Both the House and Senate have reintroduced lobby disclosure bills. Senators Carl Levin (D-MI) and William Cohen (R-ME) have proposed a revised version of last session's Lobby Disclosure Act (S. 101) that includes several beneficial changes. The measure would, in certain cases, allow nonprofits to use 1990 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) lobbying regulations to comply. In the House, Representative John Bryant (D-TX) introduced H.R. 119, the same measure that passed last session. The Alliance, along with other nonprofits, objected to many provisions in the bill. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS) has asked Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to develop new lobbying disclosure and gift ban legislation. However, mindful of public skepticism towards Congress, Senator McConnell is concerned about any restrictions on constituent communications. Both lobby disclosure, along with gift ban legislation remain highly polarized issues. The White House continues to call for reform. In his State of the Union address, President Clinton asked Congress to send to him "the strongest possible lobbying bill" that "requires lobbyists to tell the people for whom they work, what they're spending and what they want."

NEW CRIME PREVENTION BILL PASSES HOUSE

Fulfilling another provision in their "Contract with America," the Republican-controlled House passed crime prevention legislation on February 14 which eliminates nearly all of the crime prevention programs enacted in last year's crime bill. The new Local Law Enforcement Block Grants Act eliminates all federal prevention grant programs that either specifically mention or allow arts institutions to seek funding, including the In & After-School Youth Programs, the Local Partnership Grants, and the Local Crime Prevention Block Grants. FY 95 grants that already have been distributed are unaffected.

Replacing these programs will be a $10 billion block grant program ($2 billion each year from 1996 to 2000) that local law enforcement can use for any crime reduction or public safety program they see fit. Examples of possible activities under the bill's broad goal to "reduce crime and improve public safety" could range from hiring new officers, paying personnel overtime, purchasing police equipment, and paving city streets/highways, to funding local crime prevention programs. Funding for any arts-based prevention program now would be decided solely by state and local governments. While it is distressing to see direct federal sources of arts funding eliminated, under this legislation arts institutions remain eligible to receive crime prevention money.

Supporters of the bill maintain that the bill's block grant structure offer localities greater flexibility in determining how best to utilize federal resources in reducing crime. Opponents of these changes argue that communities will use the grant money in ways wholly unrelated to crime and/or prevention.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration and probable lengthy deliberations.

BUDGET TIMETABLE

April 15 Deadline for adoption of a conference report on the FY 96 congressional budget resolution.

May 15 Appropriations bills may be considered in the House starting on this date.

June 10 Deadline for the House Committee on Appropriations to report out all 13 appropriation bills.

Oct. 1 FY 96 begins. Deadline for enactment of appropriations bills.

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The American Arts Alliance is the principal advocate for America's professional nonprofit arts organizations, their artists and publics, and advances support for the arts before Congress, the White House and Federal agencies.

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AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE

ACTION ALERT

CALL TO DEMONSTRATE CULTURAL FUNDING SUPPORT

ISSUE: Following the Administration's FY 96 budget presentation, House Republicans began meeting to rollback FY 95 spending in a process known as rescissions. The House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Representative Robert Livingston (R-LA), on March 2 agreed to a $17 billion package that includes a $5 million reduction for both the NEA and NEH. If approved, the NEA would lose $1 million from its administration budget and $4 million from unobligated program funds, and would be directed to eliminate funding, to the maximum extent possible, for individual fellowships, with the exception of Heritage Award fellowships to folk artists. The plan is expected to be debated by the full House of Representatives sometime during the week of March 13 and then move to the Senate for consideration.

While painful, the cuts could have been more drastic given the current congressional climate to downsize the federal government. NEA opponents have indicated that they may seek deeper reductions when the full House votes on the rescissions package the week of March 13. This vote is important because it likely will set the tone for what will be a series of votes this year that will impact on both the NEA and NEH. (The Alliance shortly will have a schedule available of upcoming congressional hearings and votes. Keep in mind that those hearings and votes may last well into the fall.)

HOUSE ACTION NEEDED: To register support for cultural funding and prevent even more drastic funding reductions when the rescission package goes to the House floor, we urge you to call your Representatives the week of March 13 when floor action is expected. Fortunately, March 14 coincides with "National Call-In Day for Arts and Culture" when arts supporters from around the country will inundate Capitol Hill with phone calls and faxes in support of federal funding for the arts and humanities. These efforts, along with Capitol Hill visits, will demonstrate the tremendous support the cultural agencies enjoy with the American public. You either may call to express your specific opposition to further NEA cuts by using the sample message below (the congressional switchboard number is 202-224-3121) or register your general support for the NEA and the NEH with calls on March 14. (You can use the Alliance hotline number 1-900-370-9000 to send a general message). Both are effective and helpful. Be sure to MAKE THAT CALL!

SAMPLE MESSAGE

The House soon will be considering a rescission package that includes a $5 million cut to this year's (FY 95) budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Please resist all attempts to impose larger reductions.

This rescission represents a 3% reduction, for example, in the NEA's budget and comes on top of past cuts that have been imposed over the last several years. Such cuts have limited the agency's ability to serve the American public. Both the NEA and the NEH are wise investments that merit national support. These cultural agencies help your constituents. These agencies' investments help generate jobs, create future labor force workers, revitalize communities, improve education, enhance tax bases and stimulate economic growth, increase tourism, and improve the development and growth of auxiliary services.

March 7, 1995

1319 F Street, NW, Suite 500 • Washington, DC 20004

WARNING: CULTURE AND THE ARTS ARE IN DANGER!

Federal support for culture and the arts is under attack. The new Congress will soon vote on whether to *eliminate* the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute for Museum Services.

THE LOSS OF THESE FEDERAL AGENCIES COULD MEAN THE END of local museum exhibits, opera, dance and theatre companies, symphony orchestras, and other cultural programs across America. The only way these programs will be saved is through the support of people like you. Please contact your Senators and Representatives TODAY.

Call 1-900-370-9000 for $1.99 per minute (9 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST) which will appear on your next phone bill and cover the cost of messages to your two Senators and your Representative. (Callers must be at least 18 years of age)

Make your voice heard. Send a message that this funding is a good use of your tax dollars... a boost to local economies, jobs, and community development... a good investment in our children and families... important to the quality of life. *WE WILL SEND AN EMERGENCY MAILGRAM TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS WITHIN 72 HOURS* telling them that you support our national cultural agencies and you want them to fight for their survival. Share this number with your friends.

HELP SAVE CULTURE AND THE ARTS!

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE TO SAVE CULTURE AND THE ARTS, a project of the American Arts Alliance, 1319 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004

EMERGENCY ACTION NEEDED

The new Congress is seriously questioning national support for the arts and culture. We need your help, **NOW**. The National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and other cultural agencies are targeted for drastic funding reductions or elimination. These severe actions could begin to take place during the first 100 days of the new Congress, which convened on January 4th.

It is vital that you make your voice heard. One way to quickly register your support for cultural funding is to call our Emergency Committee To Save Culture and the Arts hotline at **1-900-370-9000** ($1.99 per minute; 9am to 10pm EST). **Three emergency mailgrams will be sent from you to both of your Senators and your Representative within 72 hours telling them that you support our national cultural agencies and you want them to fight for their survival.** Please share this number with your friends. Arts supporters across the country must send a message that this funding is a good use of tax dollars...a boost to local economies and community development...a good investment in our children and families...and important to the quality of life in our communities.

Other important means of communicating with your members of Congress include writing letters to them and calling their Washington offices (call 202-224-3121 for the Capitol operator). Following is a draft letter that you can personalize and mail to your Members and can also be used as a script when calling their offices. Remember to leave your name and address with the person taking your message and request a response from your Member.

The Honorable (insert full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

or

The Honorable (insert full name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator/Representative (insert last name of Member):

As a resident of (insert name of town/city) and someone who cares about arts and culture, I strongly encourage you to support continued funding of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). NEA funding to nonprofit cultural and arts institutions and organizations in (insert name of town/city) serve as important investments in our local economy and benefit families and the children of my community. Continued support of the NEA will ensure the survival of our local arts organizations and the quality of life in our community.

National support for the arts benefits our local economy through creating jobs, boosting tourism, and encouraging growth in related businesses. One Endowment dollar attracts $11 or more from private sources. For example, last year $123 million in NEA grants generated more than $1.3 billion in matching funds. Funding for the arts also benefits the children of our community by improving problem-solving and reasoning skills and instilling self-esteem and discipline, valuable skills for the competitive labor market. Additionally, NEA funding brings families together through music festivals and mobile museums for rural and inner-city, among others. Please support funding for the arts and continue this vital investment in my community.

(1/10/95)

AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE

TAKE NOTE

THE NEW CONGRESS, SUPPORT FOR CULTURE, AND THE ROLE OF GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

The Congressional climate has changed dramatically as the result of the recent mid-term elections which led to Republican control of Congress. These elections signal a deep dissatisfaction with the status quo, specifically:

- Distrust of centralized government (after those seeking office for the past two decades have run against government and, in the process, have weakened what they now are striving to control);
- Repudiation of the Clinton Presidency;
- Public penchant for divided government and cynicism toward elected officials;
- Deep insecurity due to changes in the economy and local labor markets, a decreasing middle class, and increasing income disparities;
- Opposition to what some call a valueless society; and
- Changes and challenges resulting from an increasingly diverse population.

Republicans have taken control of, not only the Senate and House, but equally importantly the agenda, and are viewing the election results as a mandate to dramatically change the federal government's roles and responsibilities. Consequently, national support for the arts and humanities is facing its strongest challenge ever, as newly elected Congressional leaders consider privatizing, eliminating or severely reducing funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and Institute for Museum Services (IMS) and/or blockgranting any funds to the states. (Privatization often has been a code word for elimination, and blockgranting in the past often has been the first step toward defunding.)

Not only national support is at issue. If federal support is drastically reduced or eliminated, reductions in state and local support will follow. Additionally, as federal support diminishes in many areas and the government attempts to transfer responsibilities to an overly burdened private sector, this sector (including corporations and foundations) will face more funding demands. Furthermore, if government deems the arts no longer worthy of direct support, indirect outlays may be at-risk: Thus, in this climate, nonprofit tax status, postal subsidies, and charitable deductions to culture also may be endangered.

Opposition to national support (mostly to the NEA and less frequently to the NEH) takes a variety of forms (with some allegations used as covers for others):

- Deficit Reduction: Budget cutters currently are working to reduce federal spending, often in an unprincipled way. Others offer principled discussions in an area which has become extremely politicized. Some who seek to eliminate federal cultural grants have labeled such support "pork for the elite."
- Reexamination of the role of national, state and local governments: Many members of Congress currently are reexamining the roles and responsibilities of the national government, especially in relation to states and localities. Two groups are prominent here: Libertarians who support

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very limited national functions such as defense and foreign affairs (but certainly not culture); and those who are debating federalism and seek to determine the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the national, state, and local governments. Two earlier federalism debates, one each in the Nixon and Reagan Administrations, achieved limited change. The significant difference today is that both Republicans and "new" Democrats support this reexamination. However, after agreeing on generalities, many questions remain: Is the goal of this reexamination to make all government smaller, or just the federal government? Is it to make it better? These and other questions remain unanswered, with no agreed upon overarching federal goals.

A prominent strain in the current debate alleges that the national government should do little; that most decisions and power should be concentrated at, not even the state, but the local level. Such a debate leads to concerns that the notion of our nationhood, what holds us together, is being weakened. Certainly, many Great Society and New Deal programs are being targeted for elimination.

- Allegations that the NEA has funded "immoralities" and the NEH disrespects our history, and thus are undermining our country's and family's values. Segments of the Right use these allegations to raise money and attack the opposition, citing both artists such as Mapplethorpe, Serrano, Witkin, and Athey (whether or not they received NEA funding for the particular work being attacked) and the voluntary history standards the NEH helped develop, in an attempt to delegitimate culture and eliminate government support. Such attacks have turned the arts into a wedge issue, a potent symbol of the so-called "culture wars" that represent, from their viewpoints, unwelcome changes in the status quo.

- Allegations that public funding hurts the arts, helps the elite, and diminishes the power of the public to influence culture's direction. Central to this allegation is the notion that the free market should decide who and what is funded, that the arts are damaged by government involvement, and that ungrateful artists view grants as entitlements.

Both opposition to, and support for, government cultural funding is not homogeneous. While a significant number of Republican members of Congress oppose federal cultural support, many also support such efforts. And opponents include some Democrats as well. In fact, the arts and humanities are nonpartisan. Thus, the American Arts Alliances' overall strategy is to advocate for support from the entire Congress, but most especially Congressional leadership, both Republican and Democratic, members of targeted committees (Budget, Appropriations, Labor and Human Resources), moderate Republicans, and new Members of Congress. The Arts Alliance's Washington and grassroots efforts are based on deconstructing the symbol that opponents have created from government funding of the NEA and NEH. Different messages work in different offices. Some members of Congress understand and support culture because of its intrinsic value. Because others respond to different messages, the Arts Alliance has articulate different reasons to support the arts and humanities based on the fact that cultural funding helps to meet national challenges in communities across the country. It instills spiritual values; provides a necessary tool for an increasingly diverse society by bringing people together to build community; improves education; helps to create future labor force workers; stimulates economic growth; and offers a vital constituent service.

To make the case successfully, the Alliance has developed a two track strategy based on efforts in Washington D.C. and in the grassroots. Washington efforts have focused on NEA, NEH, and IMS authorization and appropriations and the overall budget process. (An authorization establishes the legal entity, while appropriations allocates funding. The budget process involves FY 95 unobligated and FY

- The Clinton Administration released its FY 96 budget that includes small, but important, increases for the three cultural agencies: NEA receives $172.4 million, the NEH $182 million, and the IMS $28.9 million.

- In the Senate, during a January 26 Senate committee hearing, Committee Chair Senator Nancy Kassenbaum (R-KS) asserted the federal role in supporting culture. However, she also emphasized the need to look at all options, from maintaining the status quo to eliminating the cultural agencies.

  Senator James Jeffords (R-VT), Chair of the Senate Authorization Subcommittee, held a February 23 hearing on the NEA, during which alternative funding proposals were discussed. These proposals include: privatization, copyright reform, and changing the current structure of the NEA.

  Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), head of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee heard testimony from Jane Alexander (NEA Chair) and Sheldon Hackney (NEH Chair) on March 1 about FY 96 funding for their respective agencies. In calling for a $172.4 million appropriation, about 66 cents per capita, Jane Alexander emphasized that there is no substitute for national leadership in important arenas such as: national recognition of excellence, touring programs (especially to rural areas and internationally), convening arts leaders from various disciplines, and developing arts education projects. In his testimony, Mr. Hackney underscored efforts to implement a "National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity," an initiative designed to "bring people of differing views and backgrounds together to explore what it means to be an American as we enter the twenty-first century." In response to Senator Gorton's inquiry about how their agencies would handle any dramatic FY 96 funding cuts, Ms. Alexander and Mr. Hackney emphasized the need to reexamine priorities.

- In the House, Appropriations Chair Robert Livingston (R-LA) held a January 11 hearing during which the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute, among others, testified for the NEA's elimination. These hearings were part of the rescission process whereby the Appropriations Committee sought to determine cuts in FY 95 unobligated funds. In late February, the Subcommittee voted to cut $5 million each from NEA and NEH's FY 95 unobligated funds.

  On January 14, Representative Ralph Regula (R-OH) heard testimony on the cultural agencies from both opponents (the two former heads of the NEH, Lynn Cheney and William Bennett) and supporters (the actor Charlton Heston and former NEA Chair Frank Hodsell). Bennett repeated most of the current allegations against the agencies and proposed the agencies' privatization. With regard to the proper role of government, Bennett alleged that support for the two cultural agencies is unnecessary and negative. He attacked the cultural agencies for having been the causative factors behind what he views as three decades of cultural decline and also raised the "immorality" allegation, repeating the refrain that the agencies (especially the NEA) have subsidized obscenities. He also attacked recipients for acting as if grants are entitlements which they then throw in the public's face.

  A February 16 House Appropriations Subcommittee hearing allowed supporters of the NEH the opportunity to testify. These witnesses included film maker Ken Burns, historian David McCullough, and Representative Amo Houghton (R-NY).

  Representative Duke Cunningham (D-CA), Chair of the Authorization Subcommittee, has

indicated that he shortly will hold a hearing. No date has been announced.

Future House dates include a March 21 hearing during which NEH Chair Sheldon Hackney and IMS Chair Diane Frankel will discuss FY 96 funding, and an April 5 hearing when NEA Chair Jane Alexander will discuss her agency's FY 96 funding.

- The Contract with America and the Balanced Budget Amendment have negative implications for cultural funding, as do any additional cuts reflected in the FY 96 Budget Resolution and any reconciliation bill. (While the Senate recently rejected the Balanced Budget Amendment, Majority Leader Robert Dole (D-KS) has indicated he will bring it up again.) These initiatives point to the important role played by Senator Dole as well as Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (D-GA), Budget Committee Chair, Representative John Kasich (R-OH) and Appropriations Chair Robert Livingston (R-LA).

From daily Arts Alliance meetings on the Hill, members of Congress and their staffs have relayed to us the following: The status quo will be difficult to maintain; "Something" is wrong with the agencies and needs fixing: The "challenging" art that the NEA has funded are labeled as "mistakes"; Some members of Congress are seeking to fund, if they are going to fund anything, unobjectionable art that reflects the "American" mainstream; The private sector easily can make up for any loss of government funds; Grants to states are viewed as a way to guarantee accountability, while grants to individuals and seasonal support do not lend themselves to such accountability; Alternate sources of support discussed include copyright reform and funding from the for-profit sector; Freshmen Members of Congress know very little about government support for culture; and Speaker Gingrich needs to keep the Republican caucus together.

Given this situation, the American Arts Alliance has helped to establish a broad coalition of over 40 national arts and humanities organizations to work in support of the cultural agencies. We have urged supporters in Washington and the grassroots to: clarify the reason for national support; explain that government funding of culture exemplifies a successful public/private partnership; demystify what support for art is; broaden the base of support for the arts in Washington and in the grassroots (by urging support, for example, from trustees and local businesses), and use the 1-900 number (1-900-370-9000) to generate letters to Members of Congress. Reports from Congressional offices indicate that grassroots letters and calls are beginning to have an impact. Sustained effort is crucial, given that votes on the NEA, NEH, and IMS could take place from now until the late fall.

Grassroots advocacy is essential, especially generating increased support by skillfully using cultural venues (institutions and audiences), taking the debate outside of Washington (to the districts and states of members of Congress), broadening the base of support for culture by asking colleagues, friends, and trustees to let every member of Congress know of their support for cultural funding, and calling on those, like local restaurants, hotels, taxi services, printing companies, and other business vendors that benefit from curtains going up or exhibitions opening, to speak out in support of national cultural funding. For the price annually of several postage stamps per capita, the NEA, NEH, and IMS help the cultural community to generate jobs, revitalize communities, enhance tax bases, increase tourism, and improve the development and growth of auxiliary services.

D.C.-based arts advocates and the grassroots need each other to help respond to current challenges. While these challenges are many and serious, as was once said: In Washington "it's not over until its over....and then it's not over."

AMERICAN
ARTS
ALLIANCE

ADVOCATES FOR THE ARTS

FY 96 NEA AND NEH APPROPRIATIONS HEARING
March 1, 1995

The Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), heard testimony in support of federal funding of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). NEA Chair Jane Alexander and NEH Chair Sheldon Hackney spoke in favor of a strong federal role and responded to questions regarding the future of the Endowments under possible decreased funding levels.

Jane Alexander opened her testimony with a request for $172.4 million in FY 96 funding. Ms. Alexander reminded the Committee that, while she was aware of the present budget crisis, the NEA budget has been cut consistently for the past three years. Ms. Alexander emphasized, "There is no duplication for the federal role," and described the importance of national leadership in areas such as developing arts education, expanding outreach to rural communities, and establishing an international arts presence. Ms. Alexander added, "If the NEA did not exist today, we would have to create it."

Describing her activities as Chair, Ms. Alexander spoke of her visits to communities in all 50 states, the elimination of the subgranting program, and the request for interim reports for seasonal grants. Responding to Senator Gorton's question regarding the future of a privatized NEA, Ms. Alexander restated that there was no replacement for the Federal role and added that any privatization effort must provide only supplemental support. When asked what impact the $5 million in rescissions would have on the agency and its programs, Ms. Alexander expressed concern about the $4 million cut in grants for individual fellowships, insisting that "individuals are the backbone of the arts." She reported that the $1 million administrative cut may result in an eight-day furlough for staff. When asked where agency cuts would be made in the case of drastic funding reductions, Ms. Alexander responded that she would need to reexamine the agency's priorities and would possibly reduce the number of grant categories.

During the hearing, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) expressed support for the NEA and NEH, noting successful NEA-sponsored programs in rural areas of his state, and asked whether block grants would provide a sufficient source of funding for rural states. Ms. Alexander replied, "I don't think block grants would accomplish anything that we can't handle better right now." Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT) reflected on the positive effect of the NEA imprimatur in leveraging funding for arts programs in rural Utah adding, "This Senator will do his best to see that the NEA is not destroyed in the budget-cutting process." Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) applauded the NEA's educational outreach programs and the agency's efforts to reach a diverse audience stating, "If we ratchet down funding for the arts, we are making them elite."

Referring to seasonal support grants, Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) asked, "Why do we have grants where utilization of taxpayers' funds are allocated to undesignated projects?" and asked what precautions would be taken to ensure quality. Ms. Alexander responded that the content of seasonal grants are being monitored through interim reports and added that, in the case of a project which does not meet NEA standards, she would "use the power vested in me by the President and Senate to use those funds in another area." Senator Dale Bumpers (D-AR) voiced his support for both agencies, along with Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) who pointed out that Nevada's highly successful Cowboy

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Poetry Festival would have been impossible without NEA grant support.

Sheldon Hackney, Chair of the NEH, began by stating, "High profile we are not. We are the blue collar workers of the cultural world." In his testimony before the Subcommittee, Mr. Hackney urged continued federal support of the agency which, he said, "helps to preserve our culture and strengthen our understanding of it." He described his efforts during his tenure to streamline the agency, improve the relationship between the NEH and state humanities councils, and create and implement *The National Conversation on American Pluralism and Diversity*, a program designed to create a national forum for discussion.

Displaying to the subcommittee the original copy of one of George Washington's letters, Mr. Hackney listed compilation, conservation, and publication of the writings of American Presidents and scholars as some of the valuable NEH efforts that would be jeopardized by funding cuts. Mr. Hackney also noted that seminars in the humanities for elementary, secondary, and college instructors also would be threatened by NEH budget reductions and that, should Federal funding for the NEH be drastically decreased, he would not make across-the-board cuts in the agency. Rather, he would reduce the number of grant programs.

In response to Mr. Hackney's testimony, Senator Gorton remarked, "If your agency's history standards were in place years ago, this generation would hardly know who George Washington was." Mr. Hackney responded, "I am not here to endorse or condemn those history standards of my predecessors," and explained that decisions to implement the standards are made voluntarily at the state and local level. He also added that the director of the project has agreed to republish the standards without the controversial teaching examples and to create a panel to review changing the document.

Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT) began his remarks to Mr. Hackney by stating, "The movement to make us all politically correct scares me to death," and described America as a country founded on a common "idea" rather than on fractured tribal or ethnic identities. He concluded, "I can think of nothing more fundamental than government funding of an institution which preserves this idea." Mr. Hackney remarked, "Only through an awareness of our cultural heritage can we see ourselves as full members of a community and a nation."

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FY 96 NEA AND NEH AUTHORIZATION HEARING
February 23, 1995

The Senate Education, Arts, and Humanities Subcommittee, chaired by Senator James Jeffords (R-VT), heard testimony on February 23 about the federal cultural agencies, especially the National Endowments for the Arts (NEA). Topics discussed included proposals to restructure the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Ten witnesses, testifying in three panels, articulated the reasons they support or oppose cultural funding.

Christopher Reeve, an actor and officer of the Creative Coalition, opened his testimony by affirming his support of federal funding for the NEA and emphasizing the leveraging power of federal funding which cannot be duplicated by the private sector. He also argued that federal support for arts and culture is not a "hand out" to the arts community, but acts as a stimulus for further support. Mr. Reeve continued by pointing out that, in light of current criticism of the NEA, "We must see that people with concerns are accommodated in some responsible way." He suggested a plan in which, over a period of seven years, part of the NEA budget would be set aside, to be matched by private funds, in order to create an endowment free of federal support. Mr. Reeve was first alerted to this plan during a conversation with Representative Steve Gunderson (R-WI). Reflecting on the legislative history of the NEA, Mr. Reeve stated, "The arts should not have to grovel every couple of years and beg for the federal government to renew its promises."

George White, President and Founder of the Eugene O'Neill Theatre and member of the National Council on the Arts, recommended a plan to supplement NEA funds with revenue from copyright reform. Under this plan, expired copyrights would be extended for a designated period of time. Ownership of the extended copyright would be auctioned, and the revenue added to the Endowments' budgets. Mr. White insisted that, "In no way can this be considered a convenient alternative to government support," and suggested that additional revenues would supplement Endowment funding, strengthening the "fragile life-line...in the form of the enlightened private-public partnership that is the NEA and NEH."

Leonard Garment, a Washington lawyer, former official in the Nixon Administration, and co-chair of the 1990 bipartisan Independent Commission charged to recommend reforms for the NEA, proposed combining the NEA and NEH into one agency. This single endowment would include a council, made up of Senate-confirmed Presidential and Congressional appointments, which would make grant recommendations. Mr. Garment specified that under this "National Endowment," funding would be limited to "institutions which, along with their activities, are essentially irreplaceable and constitute the nation's cultural patrimony." Additionally, he proposed that no grants would be awarded to individual artists. He emphasized that "grants to individuals...belong in the private realm, supported by private endowments, foundations, corporations, individual patrons, and the artists' own investment of sweat equity in their art." Mr. Garment also added that "implementation shall not involve preferential treatment based on ethnic, racial, gender-related or other special considerations that compromise the Endowment's governing principles of national standing and qualitative excellence."

Dean Amhaus, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Arts Board, testified to the merits of local and state responsibility for distributing arts funding and affirmed the role of a federal agency for "arts education, touring and projects that bring states and communities from different parts of the country together." Citing *Wisconsin Idea*, an arts program in his state, Mr. Amhaus proposed an increase in local funding responsibility including a program in which grants to states could be matched by local communities. He argued that this regranting program would create a more effective NEA dollar and enable local agencies to determine which programs to fund. Mr. Amhaus urged, "It is the empowerment of citizens at the local level that will determine the success or failure of the arts."

Mayor Joseph Riley, of Charleston, South Carolina, encouraged continued support of the NEA and NEH. Mayor Riley cited *Spoleto USA*, a cultural festival in Charleston that has received NEA funding, as an example of the positive economic and cultural impacts of federal arts funding. As a result of the festival's success, "Tourism has increased by more than 300%, our cultural life has exploded, and about $500 million has been invested in revitalization projects downtown and statewide." Mayor Riley added that the festival features a broad artistic community and reaches a diverse audience. He described programs in rural areas of North Carolina, including the Cultural Visions program and the Mayor's Institute on City Design, which have used NEA funding to develop programs that foster community involvement in culture and the arts. Mr. Riley concluded that, "In each of these instances (arts programs) would never have happened, and our nation would be poorer for it."

John Ong, CEO of the B.F. Goodrich Company and a trustee of the Cleveland Orchestra, testified on the economic benefits of federal support for culture and the arts. Mr. Ong cited data reflecting the ability of the NEA funds to leverage local support and stimulate growth in local businesses. He noted that, "The arts also strengthen business by inspiring the creativity that we must have to keep our competitive edge," and emphasized, "Given the economic benefits that accrue to us nationally from the arts and humanities, it therefore seems in our national interest to continue federal support of the NEA."

Harold Williams, President and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust, stated, "In my judgment, it is absolutely essential that the National Endowment for the Arts be reauthorized." Mr. Williams' testimony focused on the NEA's role in increasing access to the arts through outreach and education programs. He emphasized that, "Art education assures that our citizens develop the understanding and appreciation for the arts that will lead them to be future patrons, without which private support for the arts cannot be expected to continue." Mr Williams noted that Federal funding allows support to reach rural areas which would otherwise not be served and added, "I can state with absolute confidence that private funding, which is already inadequate to meet the legitimate needs of our arts and cultural institutions, certainly could not substitute for the Endowment were the latter not reauthorized."

Richard Gurin, President and CEO of Binney & Smith, Inc., also testified in support of federal funding of the NEA and NEH and focused on the benefits of arts education. Mr. Gurin described the impact that NEA programs have on nurturing the arts and supporting arts education for children. He argued that the national leadership provided by the NEA encourages support from businesses and private foundations and stated that, "We need the leadership of the federal government to enable the NEA, NEH, and IMS to lead the non-profit arts and cultural community, as well as the public education system."

Charles Clotfelter, professor of public policy at Duke University, explored alternatives to the current system of arts and humanities funding including establishing a true endowment, enhancing charitable deductions, and creating a tax checkoff. Mr. Clotfelter remarked that the amount needed to establish a true endowment is "substantial" and that "the fundraising challenge would be enormous." He noted that enhanced tax incentives for charitable deductions may result in increased giving, and thereby could supply additional funding for the arts. Mr. Clotfelter also described how a tax checkoff could work in conjunction with the establishment of a true endowment and emphasized that, in regards to all three of these options, "The issue of the amount of funding for the arts and humanities is quite distinct from the question of how the available funds should be allocated among competing programs."

Dr. Laurence Jarvik, of the Center for Popular Culture, testified in opposition to reauthorization of the NEA. Dr. Jarvik asserted, "I do not believe the NEA merits any support whatsoever." He criticized both the process and content of the NEA's grant programs as working "against aesthetic excellence," and opposed George White's proposal to use revenues generated by extended copyrights to supplement NEA funding. He stated that, "The earmarked tax proposed on copyright would have all the disadvantages of the present system with the added disincentive of reduced Congressional oversight for the NEA."

In response to the testimony offered, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) remarked, "I find it extraordinary that we're spending so much time on this issue. The NEA has a remarkable record of only 30 controversial projects over 30 years. Any federal agency that has this record deserves a medal." Senator Spencer Abraham (R-MI) asked whether revenues from successful projects such as *Spoleto USA* in South Carolina could be funneled back to the NEA. Mayor Riley replied that economic benefits return to his community through the continuation and growth of the festival and added, "This should not be a zero-sum issue." Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA) asked, "Who will set the standards for defining which art is appropriate for public use and funding?" Mr. Reeve responded to a dissatisfied Senator Gorton, "We must trust the artists and the NEA to be selective and responsible." Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) confirmed that Mr. Reeve was referring to the selection process utilized by the NEA's peer review panel.

Representative Mike DeWine (R-OH) expressed his concern that, under any program, "money should be spent for people who would otherwise be unable to attend or be exposed to art," and asked how the controversy surrounding specific grant projects could be eliminated. Mr. Garment responded that the controversial projects were "the tip of the iceberg to the heap of mediocrity represented by NEA grants." He restated his suggestion that the two endowments be merged under increased congressional review. Senator Paul Simon (D-IL) indicated his interest in the concept of auctioning extended copyrights and emphasized that, "The arts help to bring us together as a people and inspire us." Senator Pell asked Mr. Williams whether he considered the NEA to be "a dictator to the arts." Mr. Williams replied that was not the case and emphasized that the primary goals of the NEA rested in education and outreach. In addition, Mr. Williams voiced concern about Mr. Reeve's plan to set up an endowment over seven years because the funds thereby collected would be insufficient.

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ADVOCATES FOR THE ARTS

FY 96 NEA AND NEH APPROPRIATIONS TESTIMONY
February 17, 1995

The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Representative Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), heard testimony in support of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Five witnesses testified on the Endowments' cultural, educational, and economic contributions and urged continued federal funding of the two agencies.

Representative Amo Houghton (R-NY) opened his testimony in support of the NEA by proposing recommendations for the agency's future. While recognizing that "times are difficult, the budget must be balanced, expenses are out of control," he urged the subcommittee to, "cut NEA funding in proportion to other similar groups, but do not eliminate or phase out." He also recommended that a congressional advisory committee be formed to oversee the NEA and concluded by noting, "The arts, spearheaded by the Federal and State non-commercial interests,... encourage all citizens to reach beyond themselves for a better life, a better nation."

Richard Franke, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the John Nuveen Company, a financial services company, asserted that federal funding of the NEA, NEH, and IMS is a sound public investment in the culture and economy of this country. In his testimony, Mr. Franke suggested that, in order to economize, the agencies might "cut back on administrative costs in order to retain as much funding for projects as possible." Mr. Franke added, "Based on my experience in Chicago, I can attest that a vibrant cultural life contributes to a strong city and a strong economy in ways that are difficult to measure....Take away Chicago's symphony orchestra, its opera, its lively theatre, art and music community and you would find a much diminished city. I suggest that severing the link of federal support for organizations like these would have serious repercussions for many cities, towns and villages throughout the nation."

David McCullough, historian and trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, urged that federal funding "shouldn't be cut, but should be doubled." His testimony focused on the contributions of the NEA and NEH to the preservation of culture and increased access to the arts and humanities. Mr. McCullough pointed to the national significance of the arts and culture stating, "A great nation takes its measure by the quality of life of its citizens. A great nation takes care of its children, provides schools second to none, schools where painting and music are never dismissed as frills, never ever considered expendable. A great nation prizes its poets no less than the best of its politicians." In refuting critics advocating the elimination of the agencies due to controversial programming, Mr. McCullough remarked, "It would be like saying that because of the Tailhook Scandal we must get rid of the Navy."

Ken Burns, producer of historical documentary films including a series on the Civil War, emphasized the National Endowment for the Humanities' "rigorous proposal process." Mr. Burns' testified that, in his NEH supported projects, "Their interest in our progress insured at critical junctures that we did not stray into myth or hagiography." Mr. Burns also insisted that "the marketplace will not produce the good works of the Endowments."

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Clay S. Jenkinson, Visiting Scholar at the University at Nevada-Reno, testified to the Endowments' contributions to increasing accessibility to the arts and humanities both nation-wide, and specifically in rural areas. Mr. Jenkinson argued that the endowments are not tailored for the elites but achieve increased access to the arts and culture nationwide. He stated, "The humanities will not go away if the NEH declines, but they will be less well coordinated, less efficient, less interesting, and I think less excellent. If the NEH ceased to exist the humanities would be impoverished spiritually throughout the United States and bankrupted financially in many districts, particularly in rural America where citizens have more interest in than access to cultural events."

Representative Sidney Yates (D-IL) applauded the testimony of all the witnesses. Representative Charles Taylor (R-NC), who mentioned that he was attempting to write poetry, commented that despite the future of the NEA and NEH, congressional support for the arts continues in education, libraries, and institutions such as the Kennedy Center and the National Gallery. Representative Taylor asked whether funding in the form of block grants might replace the national agencies. Representative Houghton responded that block grants would result only in reduced funding for state agencies. Mr. Jenkinson added that block grants would not provide the necessary funding for rural states and would not be applicable to projects that are "national in scope." Mr. Burns also responded to Representative Taylor's suggestion by pointing to the Endowments' role in stimulating additional funding. Mr. Burns concluded, "To take away the medal that the NEH places on a project is to take away the key for funding."

Representative Joe Skeen (R-NM) remarked that, "Depression-era funding of the arts was worthwhile," and spoke in favor of the role of culture and the arts in his home state of New Mexico. "We are what we leave behind," stated Representative Skeen, noting the role of federal funding in providing development and preserving the arts and culture. Representative Skeen concluded by asking, "What have we done with public funding?" Mr. Franke responded that federal funding of the arts and humanities represents "high leverage investment in the best elements of what this country is all about." At the end of the hearing, Chairman Regula complimented the witnesses on their testimony, emphasized that no appropriation would be made without an authorization, and proposed that the agencies not be abolished but made to be, "more effective and responsive to the people."

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Congress a poor art critic

Members of the U.S. Senate have been handed budget knives and asked to make like art critics. On the chopping block is funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, and guiding the hand of Congress is the misguided notion that the public wants politicians setting a national standard for artistic taste.

The House has already agreed to cut 2 percent of the NEA budget, though hardline Republicans wanted to chop deeper. Bristling conservatives, unhappy that government money might be spent in support of art they find distasteful, have aimed their anger at NEA funding.

In debates last month, Rep. Robert Dornan, R-Calif., referred to one NEA-sponsored artist as a "porno freak" as he whipped up Republican support for a failed attempt at a bigger cut. Said Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., leader of the House art critics: "Art should provide us with a whiff of greatness, provide optimism. It should cultivate good taste and elevate the human spirit. It should not turn to pessimism and negation and be sponsored by the federal government."

A Senate committee has recommended a 5 percent cut totaling $8.5 million that includes $1.5 million less for matching grants and challenge grants.

The cuts are unmistakably part of a punitive drive, and as such should be turned back.

This kneejerk legislation was motivated, in part at least, by widespread coverage of Minneapolis performance artist Ron Athey's act last spring in which the HIV-infected man cut himself, then dangled a bloody towel over the heads of the audience.

Mr. Athey received a small grant from the NEA. Many may disagree with what he called art, but government should not be in the habit of censoring art through budgeting. The NEA, besides, supports much more than that.

Testifying before the House appropriations subcommittee in May, New Orleans restaurateur Leah Chase, who spoke as a trustee of the New Orleans Museum of Art, talked about another side to government funding of the arts.

"Today more than ever before, our country needs the arts to nourish the minds of our children to the creative wonderment of life and to soften the hearts of all people who call the United States their home," Mrs. Chase said.

"For me, support of the arts is an investment in the artistic excellence of my people, an investment in the education of the neighborhood kids, who like me a time ago, needed to see something beautiful and breathtaking in order to aspire to higher things and to value living more."

That is the unending potential of the arts. Members of Congress should not trample on all that potential just to get at the few who offend them.

ARTS & LEISURE

THE CLARION-LEDGER ■ JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI



LESLIE R. MYERS

Arts Columnist
The Clarion-Ledger

NEA needs you to help keep arts alive and kicking

Do unto others.

Lend the National Endowment for the Arts your voice. Once again, the U.S. Congress is after the NEA's throat.

After all, the NEA always has lent a hand to Mississippi. The federal grants-making agency has backed our arts and artists through all the years the Mississippi Legislature didn't see fit to support our nationally lauded literary, musical and artistic people and programs.

In these pages today, you'll see how the NEA helps our own Mississippi Arts Commission, which the NEA helped found in 1968. The NEA and the commission support such diverse arts as Jackson's USA International Ballet Competition, Shakespeare in the park at Lucedale and arts activities at the Hay Festival in tiny Artesia, once the "Hay Capital of the World."

Finally, this year, our Legislature is beginning to provide funds to preserve and nurture Mississippi arts via Arts Commission grants.

But the U.S Congress again is using the NEA as a political whipping boy to stop government waste. (Let's pretend for a moment that Congress did not invent government waste.)

This month, U.S. lawmakers are NEA bashing because just $150 of the agency's $171 million budget helped fund a controversial performance in Minneapolis in March. That's their excuse to slash the NEA's budget. Some even dare say the NEA should be abolished.

That's akin to closing down the federal interstate highway system just because "the stack" at I-55 and I-20 in south Jackson is a mess.

A spatter of paint

To put things in federal budget perspective, the NEA's $170.1 million 1995 budget as proposed by President Clinton is loose change. The Pentagon budget in this post-Cold War era is $260 *billion*. According to *The Des Moines Register*, "between 1990 and 1993, Congress appropriated $28.7 *billion* for defense programs that the Pentagon never asked for, didn't need and didn't want." In those pork barrels, NEA funds don't equal a bite of bacon.

Most recently, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee (of which Mississippi's Sen. Thad Cochran is a member) recommended cutting the NEA budget to a level below its *fiscal 1994* budget. That would cut NEA theater and visual arts grants programs 42 percent each, challenge grants 5 percent, and presenting and commissioning grants 40.5 percent.

Do you care? You should.

There isn't a major arts group in Mississippi that would be as it is today without the NEA. NEA help has boosted arts programs in virtually every county in Mississippi. Specifically, a $500,000 NEA challenge grant to the Mississippi Museum of Art lifted the museum to a new level of excellence and public outreach.

Remember the first great painting or performance you saw? Should your child have less?

Keeping up quality of life

At last enough Mississippi legislators have read studies showing the arts enhance our educational, cultural and economic livelihoods.

Key lawmakers who brought the arts home to their legislative houses this year included: Senators Bunky Huggins of Greenwood, Terry Burton of Newton and Tommy Robertson of Moss Point; and Representatives Charlie Capps of Cleveland, David Halbrook of Belzoni, Steve Holland of Plantersville and Bob Short of Gulfport, said Mississippi Arts Commission executive director Jane Crater Hiatt.

Per capita arts funding for Mississippians still is just half the national average. So our Legislature took a step in the right direction, but we're not waltzing yet.

The Arts Commission's grants champion is Hiatt, who is wise enough not to see an impossible hurdle when she crosses it.

Now, you have some phone calls to make.

First, call those champions in the Legislature, thank them — and remember them at re-election time. Then call Mississippi's U.S. Senators Cochran (965-4459) and Trent Lott (965-4644). Tell them to fully fund the NEA. That issue is expected to come up before the Senate this week. Remember them at re-election time. ■

Leslie R. Myers' arts column appears on Sunday. To contact her, call 961-7280.

The Seattle Times

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THE SEATTLE TIMES • SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER SECTION M SUNDAY, JULY 17, 1994

It's time again for Congress' tiresome assault on the arts

MELINDA BARGREEN
Times staff columnist



Nothing is certain but death and taxes — and annual blasts from Congress against the National Endowment for the Arts.

Never mind that the NEA spends 68 cents per American on bringing the arts to the people, through grants to orchestras, art museums, theater companies, presenting organizations, heritage groups and youth ensembles. Never mind that more than 99 percent of the NEA's $170 million budget is spent on programs that don't excite an atom of controversy.

It's that extra fraction of a percent that gets the congressional juices flowing and boosts the blood pressure of arts arch-foe Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., now buttressed by Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., and Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla.

Largely because of a one-night performance March 5 (attended by around 100 theatergoers) for which the artist received $150 in federal funds through the Walker Arts Center of Minneapolis, Congress has begun its huffing and puffing in earnest this year. The House of Representatives already had passed a measure reducing the NEA funding by 2 percent by June 28, when the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Byrd, proposed a 5 percent cut in next year's budget.

What's different, and more alarming, about the Senate's proposal is that it targets three specific NEA programs that have aroused the past wrath of Congress: theater (to be cut by $3.1 million), visual artists ($2 million) and presenting/commissioning ($1.9 million). This puts the Senate in the censorship business, big time.

Yes, the $150 in question in Minneapolis — one ten-billionth of our federal budget — was probably not spent the way most of us would like to see our tax dollars spent. It went to what NEA chair Jane Alexander, in a letter to the Representatives, calls "ritualistic work exploring modern day martyrdom as it relates to AIDS." In plainer English, performance artist Ron Athey, who is HIV-positive, punctured a pattern on the back of a fellow HIV-negative artist, then blotted the blood with a towel and hung the towel from a clothesline above the audience. The performance was overseen by the Minnesota Health Department, which decided that all proper health precautions were met.

Is this art? Possibly not. But: penalizing the NEA for this grant is ludicrous. Did you ever hear of other federal agencies, such as the Pentagon, incurring budget cuts because of a program that drew some public ire, such as a bad defense contract?

As one Des Moines columnist observed, Congress authorized spending another $918 million on the $8 billion "MILSTAR" program, a system of satellites designed to secure military communications while we fought a nuclear war. It took the program 13 years to get the first satellite into the air earlier this year; the satellite's power system already has failed and it's running on a backup power system.

Stories about the thousand-dollar wrenches and toilet seats at the Pentagon, where the budget is $260 *billion*, are so common that one wonders why the senators are even bothering with the NEA's pittance of $170 million.

They aren't seriously worried about spending money; paring down specific federal grant categories by a million or two is the equivalent of your decision whether to buy an extra apple at the local supermarket. What the NEA squabbles are really about is the use of power. Righteous indignation over the radical fringe of the arts is a first-rate pulpit from which to hurl thunderbolts. Pronouncements about decency and morality look great on campaign literature.

Here's something that looks even better on campaign literature, for those who know how to read it. Washington Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Bremerton, launched an impassioned appeal for the NEA during the House debate on the issue, making a number of cogent points. The arts are a major job-creating activity, earning $25.2 billion dollars nationwide in annual salaries and income. The arts provide an alternative to crime and violence for our youth. Every dollar invested as seed money through the NEA reaps $11 in private sector investment, much of it in matching-grant money. The NEA's budget has been eroded by 46 percent in real dollars since 1979.

Dicks is right. Let's hope equally sane heads prevail in the coming days, when an NEA appropriation vote on the Senate floor will be followed by a reconciliation conference between the House and Senate versions.

Does Congress really have time for this annual round of NEA-bashing, this year over one grant among 4,000 the agency dispensed? Maybe it's time for everybody to cool off — preferably in the local art museum.

Journal

FRANK RICH

Trail Of Lies

As early as Tuesday the United States Senate may vote to maim American cultural institutions from the Old Globe Theater in San Diego to the Art Institute of Chicago to Kennedy Center in Washington. And it has all happened because of a firestorm accidentally ignited by two middle-aged friends — Dennis Yelkin, a hair stylist, and Jim Berenson, a flight attendant — who went to a performance in a tiny cabaret theater in Minneapolis four months ago.

How did a visit to a show by two arts-loving suburbanites evolve into a crisis imperiling the National Endowment for the Arts? The story would be a farce if the stakes weren't so high — and if the threat to the N.E.A. were not another example of how the religious right poisons the civic atmosphere.

The performance Mr. Yelkin and Mr. Berenson saw, an adults-only fringe event sponsored by the Walker Art Center, was given by the now notorious Ron Athey, who uses ritual tattooing as part of his autobiographical art. But at the time Mr. Athey's show was not notorious; it only became so after surfacing in The Minneapolis Star Tribune three weeks later.

In that front-page article, Mr. Yelkin and Mr. Berenson are the only two audience members quoted by name. Their description of the Athey event suggested that a panicked crowd fled from overhead towels allegedly soaked with a performer's H.I.V.-positive blood. The story also reported that $150 in N.E.A. funds had been spent on the show.

Soon the Christian Action Network was recycling the account in a "Declaration of War" asking its faithful for money to prevent the N.E.A. chairwoman, Jane Alexander, from seeking a $50 billion budget for "dripping blood on the audience." (The N.E.A.'s actual budget is a mere $49.83 billion short of that figure.) Before long The Washington Times imported this hysteria to the capital, running a dozen pieces, among them a crude satirical fantasy of Ms. Alexander's being kidnapped by North Korea's Kim Jong Il.

The noise reached the prim Senator Robert Byrd, all-powerful Democrat who is chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and he has now responded by supporting unprecedented cuts of 40 percent to specific N.E.A. programs. A typical example: Theater grants would be reduced from $8.3 million to $5.2 million — thereby making the entire Federal largesse to American drama, much of it spent on programs for children, less than half the budget of a single Broadway musical like "Beauty and the Beast."

How did things reach this pass? By one long trail of lies. Last week both Mr. Yelkin and Mr. Berenson, furious at their exploitation by N.E.A. opponents, told me that their words were taken out of context in the original Star Tribune article; both called the Athey performance "valid," if shocking, art. Other witnesses have said that there was no panic, no dripping blood and no health hazard that night in Minneapolis. For that matter, the $104,500 Walker Art Center grant from which came the infamous $150 was not even approved by Ms. Alexander but by her conservative predecessor, Anne-Imelda Radice, who had been installed by George Bush to placate the religious right.

Now dozens of cultural institutions — including the Wheeling Symphony in Senator Byrd's own West Virginia — stand to be penalized because of a cunning fear campaign designed to make voting against the N.E.A. synonymous with voting against AIDS-infected blood. Whatever happens in Congress, the hysteria will enrich the Christian Action Network, its political patrons and their fight against abortion rights, homosexuals and the separation of church and state.

Senators who threaten to vote against the N.E.A. say they are safeguarding either the public health or the taxpayers' dollars. Don't believe them. There was no health threat, and why would the same politicians who slept through the grand larceny of the S.& L. scandal be so concerned about $150 — or the rest of a tiny N.E.A. budget that is less than the Government spends each year on military bands? And if protecting public morality is the issue, why not cut the defense budget for the outrages of Tailhook?

The N.E.A., about to be punished for a crime it didn't commit, is simply an easy, politically cost-free whipping boy for the far right as it seeks to raise money and support for its larger agenda. Since the N.E.A.'s most powerful Washington allies are at this moment so busy with their own larger agenda, especially health care, the arts need all the friends they can get — and now.

A witch hunt targets the arts.

New York Newsday
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Bad Theater



Alexander

This just in: The annual attack on the National Endowment for the Arts is underway. Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) wants to slash federal money for the arts because NEA gave a measly $150 to a Minneapolis theater that put on a performance by a conceptual artist who is HIV-positive. Byrd, whose letter to the NEA suggests that he doesn't know how AIDS is transmitted, thinks the public health was threatened when the performer pricked himself with needles on stage. Is he serious?

The complaint about the Minneapolis show is obviously the 1994 excuse for NEA's detractors' real agenda — decreased federal support for the arts. The cuts Byrd proposes would hit New York particularly hard. His cuts would put funding for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, TheatreMoves in Queens and a program that brings Shakespeare to school kids at risk. While he'd cut 5 percent from NEA's total budget, these theaters face a 40 percent hit.

NEA chair Jane Alexander has ably defended the agency's method of making grants. NEA correctly believes that each community is best able to decide what kind of art is appropriate for its audience. The Senate should restore the funds Byrd would cut and give the NEA the $170.2 million it received last year.

THE ARTS

Act Two, Scene One

Culture: Jane Alexander faces cuts at the NEA



Waxing philosophical: *It's not easy pulling the endowment out of the doghouse*

JANE ALEXANDER IS NO STRANGER TO controversy. When she played James Earl Jones's girlfriend in the 1968 Broadway hit "The Great White Hope," hate mail forced her to take her name off her apartment building's directory. Since she took over as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts last October, the brickbats haven't been personal. But she has heard the agency she defends decried from the House floor. Some artists who've gotten NEA grants were even called "porno freaks" by Rep. Robert Dornan, Republican of California.

Last week the 54-year-old actor talked about the NEA's latest run-in with Congress. It started with artist Ron Athey, who is HIV-positive, and a performance he did in Minneapolis last March. Inspired partly by African ritual, and to focus on the issue of AIDS, he cut patterns into the back of another performer with a scalpel and stuck himself with acupuncture needles. The NEA had made a grant to the Walker Art Center to sponsor a series of performances, one of which was Athey's. At most, $150 in federal money supported the Athey event. Though that grant was awarded under the Bush administration, Alexander, a Clinton appointee, is catching the flak. This week the Senate is expected to consider a 5 percent cut in the NEA's $170 million budget, proposed by Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia to protest federal support of Athey's work. The House has already voted a 2 percent whack, with the Athey performance figuring prominently in the debate. (After the Senate vote, a conference committee will hammer out the final cut.)

"They want to punish us," Alexander says bluntly. "They" are the well-organized Christian right and the swelling ranks of NEA opponents in Congress. Dornan proposes defunding the NEA: "I'd like to see [NEA supporters in Congress] say in front of their constituents, 'I'd rather give money to Ron Athey with rings through his nipples.'" But even lawmakers with less provocative arguments are questioning the agency's existence. Four years ago a House proposal to abolish the NEA got 64 votes; this year it got 113.

Alexander has defended Athey's piece as a "disturbing but important contemporary subject" and tries to be philosophical about the brouhaha. "The media and the public in general really love things that titillate them, that outrage them," she says with a brave, second-balcony smile. "So it's not surprising that art [like Athey's] is grabbed onto and run with in the media." But she wishes the media would pay more attention to the overwhelming majority of NEA grants that seed not-for-profit community arts centers; that bring dance and theater to children in rural areas; that support promising unknown writers, such as former recipients William Kennedy and Wendy Wasserstein.

Poise and praise: Alexander's poise under fire has won her praise in the art world. Roy Goodman, a Republican member of the National Council on the Arts, which reviews all NEA grants, thinks she has won back some centrists who defected after the NEA funded a Robert Mapplethorpe show in 1988. "She did an extensive tour of Congress," he says, "and assured them that she would keep a weather eye out while making sure there would be a defense of artistic freedom. It was a no-nonsense, very direct approach."

Roger Mandle, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and a Reagan appointee to the National Council, says, "Jane has the artist's perspective. She's defended experimental art in every speech she's given."

But Alexander still has a long way to go to pull the NEA out of the congressional doghouse. Though she's had the political savvy to take tea with Sen. Jesse Helms and to embark on a nationwide tour to build grassroots support, she's clearly shaken by the agency's fragility in the face of the Athey tempest. Her acting career may be on hold, but her new job is turning out to be a very tough role.

PETER PLAGENS with
MARC PEYSER in New York and
KATHARINE CHEREPOW
in Washington

The offensive art of grandstanding

It was meant to outrage, and it did. At a Minneapolis nightclub last March, performance artist Ron Athey used a scalpel to cut superficial patterns into the shoulder of another performer, and then blotted the bloody patterns with a piece of paper that he displayed to the audience of roughly 100 people.

Athey's startling one-night performance has now become a cause celebre in Congress, where opponents of the National Endowment for the Arts have seized upon it as evidence that the NEA, under new chairwoman Jane Alexander, continues to waste taxpayers' money on immoral garbage.

There's no merit whatsoever to the charge.

Athey's show was sponsored in part by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. The Walker Art Center, in turn, is subsidized in part by a $104,500 grant from the NEA. That much is true.

However, the grant to the Walker Art Center was made under the Bush administration, before Alexander took over.

Furthermore, the total amount of taxpayer subsidy to Athey's performance works out to roughly $150. NEA administers a budget of $170 million. It is inconceivable that it would lose 5 percent of its budget, as Congress now proposes, because it mishandled 0.0000008 percent of its budget.

The cuts proposed by Congress target the NEA's theater and visual arts programs, meaning that groups such as Atlanta's Woodruff Arts Center, the Center for Puppetry Arts, Theatre Gael, Seven Stages and Cobb County's Theatre in the Square face a 40 percent cut in NEA support if the reduction is approved.

The Defense Department allows the sale of Penthouse and Playboy magazines on base to soldiers. Let's cut the defense budget by 5 percent as punishment for smut-peddling, and save the taxpayers some real money.

However, if that's to be the new way of doing things in Washington, let's go for it. The Department of Defense allows the sale of Penthouse and Playboy magazines on base to American soldiers. Let's cut the defense budget by 5 percent as punishment for smut-peddling, and save the taxpayers some *real* money.

Likewise, the elaborate computer system at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California recently was discovered to contain more than 1,000 pornographic images, stored there by an employee. If Livermore's management didn't condone that act, they also didn't prevent it. So let's cut the lab's budget by 5 percent.

Of course, nobody in Congress is making such arguments. That's because the real issue is not obscenity, and it's not misspent taxpayer money. It's just political grandstanding, a highly subsidized form of performance art that ought to sicken the American people.

Harry Belafonte

Don't Cut the Arts Fund

Government help opened a new world for me—and many others.

Many of our distinguished elected representatives are perilously close to being hijacked by a point of view that most Americans don't share: the termination of federal support for the arts. The coming Senate vote on appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts can already be viewed as a clear victory for those who have never wanted the federal government involved in supporting art and culture. They have succeeded in reducing the issue of NEA appropriations to a debate on a single issue: Should the federal government support only "decent" art?

The Senate Appropriations Committee, headed by Robert C. Byrd, has allowed the enemies of the NEA to trot out their most recent example of art that strains or offends mainstream sensibilities and to use the minuscule financial role the NEA played in its presentation as a litmus test for support of the entire agency. The committee voted to cut the arts endowment's budget by $8.5 million, a 5 percent reduction, because some members objected to a performance that occurred at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, which the NEA indirectly supported with $150.


BY TIM BRINTON

That performer and his performance are not the issue here. The issue is that responsible and level-headed elected officials have swallowed the hook baited by Sen. Jesse Helms, which seeks to create controversy from the work of a few contemporary artists while ignoring the enormous public benefits the agency creates and stimulates. Lost in the scramble for this righteous political high ground is the fact that cultural organizations—both large and small, and in every region of the country—have benefited from the support provided by the arts endowment.

It is a recognized fact that groups affiliated with Sen. Helms, which oppose federal support of the arts, conduct active research on any and all NEA-supported projects that might be elevated to the status of the "controversy of the month." They often distort the content or context of the performance or art work and use each "incident" effectively in direct-mail fund-raising efforts for their organizations. This well-organized campaign has succeeded in drawing the media's attention to the periodic controversies. The net result is that the positive NEA work has been eclipsed by the controversies.

As one who has performed across the land, I can tell you that our country and our youth need more of what the arts have to offer. When performers like Anna Deavere Smith created great theater works out of the racial acrimony she found in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Los Angeles, the endowment was there lending financial support. Smith's performances have helped communities that are racially polarized bridge some of their differences.

This is one of the great attributes of the arts—the ability to transcend boundaries and reduce differences. Few people in this country knew anything about the Caribbean until they started singing "The Banana Boat Song." As an artist, I put America in touch with its neighbor, and I put people in the Caribbean in touch with America, and in doing this helped to stimulate an exchange that was beneficial to both.

When I see thousands of young people partici pating in NEA-supported dance, theater and arts workshops around the country, I know that they are being given tools that help them resist the violence and drug scourge that permeates many of their communities. My principal frustration is in recognizing that as a society, we are not reaching enough of our youth with these positive programs.

In the 1950s, after being exposed to the work of the American Negro Theater in Harlem, I decided to pursue a life in the theater. Because I was a veteran, I had rights to the GI Bill. It meant that the federal government would pay for this luxury of going to a school of drama to do this thing that had opened my heart and opened my mind.

I went to the New School of Social Research, and in that class I looked upon the faces of a number of young men and women, most of whom were being supported by the government because they were returning veterans. In my class were Marlon Brando and Rod Steiger, Walter Matthau, Bea Arthur and Tony Curtis. And the head of the school took this (then) boy who was struggling with the ability to read, trying to overcome dyslexia, having an enormous appetite to know more, and exposed him to Jean Paul Sartre, to Shakespeare and to Tennessee Williams, Steinbeck and Langston Hughes.

By the end of my course of study, I had come to know that there was nothing more inspiring than art, nothing more moving than words, nothing more powerful than an individual who is in the service of all of that. For 29 years the National Endowment for the Arts has helped younger generations of American citizens find and nurture their creative muses. Can we as a nation turn the clock back?

The writer, an actor and singer, is a trustee of the American Council for the Arts.

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Threatening The Arts

The arts have again come under attack. And once more, the barbarians are at the gates.

After organized protests by groups such as the Christian Coalition and the Christian Action Network, as well as rabble-rousing by conservative talk show hosts, the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts is under assault. Cutting that budget would not only endanger local arts events, but would also signal to us all a perilous change in public policy.

The latest NEA brouhaha was caused by a March 5 event at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Ron Athey, a gay man and former heroin user with the HIV virus, pierced himself with needles onstage, in a performance entitled "Excerpted Rites Transformation." After blotting paper towels with his own blood, he suspended them on a clothesline over the audience.

The average person's idea of art? Certainly not. But should the entire NEA be judged by the actions of a man who received only $150 in government funds?

Of the 100,000 grants given out by the NEA since its inception in 1965, only about 25 have proved controversial. That's hardly reason to punish the entire NEA — and all the worthwhile projects it helps to create.

The majority of NEA grants go to help fund local arts events such as the ones we enjoy in central Vermont. Anyone who has seen one of the Onion River Arts Council's Celebration Series events at the Barre Opera House or enjoyed the performers at the just-concluded Midsummer Festival of the Arts in Montpelier should understand the importance of public support for the arts.

Faced with the furor over the Athey performance, both the House and the Senate appropriations committees voted to cut the NEA budget by 5 percent. However, the proposed Senate cut is more insidious because it targets the hand that reaches out to artists. In cutting 40 percent of the NEA's Presenting and Commissioning Program, 42 percent of its theater budget, and 41.7 of its visual arts budget, the Senate is clearly trying to maim the NEA's ability to support art that's new and different.

Although few people want to see bleeding on stage presented as art, no one is forced to attend such an arts event. And the fact is that our culture suffers from exposure to too few controversial ideas and images, not too many. Increasing Americans' artistic and cultural vocabulary is a valuable goal, even if it can prove distressing at times.

Those self-appointed guardians of popular taste who want the NEA budget cut — or eliminated altogether — argue that we should let the free market determine which arts will thrive. But anyone who believes the marketplace will inevitably nurture the arts should consider how our consumer culture has helped shape the vast wasteland we call network television.

Part of the reason for the lamentable state of the arts in our culture is that Americans devote so little public funding to it — only 65 cents per capita for the entire NEA budget. Looking at what other countries — such as those of Europe — spend to subsidize the arts, and it's not hard to see that the citizens of those nations hold the arts in high esteem.

The Interior Appropriations Bill, which contains the NEA funding, is scheduled for congressional action, probably early next week. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., has already spoken out against the proposed NEA cuts.

Perhaps our elected officials should know how strongly we feel about the danger to our local arts community. Call Leahy (202) 224-4242, Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., (202) 224-5141 or Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., (202) 225-4115. Let your voice be heard.

Letters to the Editor

Recycled and misleading views about the NEA

I was disappointed to see Jeff Jacoby recycle a popular yet misleading strategy to attack the National Endowment for the Arts. His column "Insufferable art" (op ed, July 16), selected a few examples of NEA grants while ignoring the overall conservatism of its funding practices. The NEA has given more than 100,000 grants since its inception in 1965. Fewer than 25 have generated any controversy.

The Walker Art Center actually offers a good example of this disparity. True, it received more than $100,000 to support an annual performing arts series, but most of that money was spent on such radical performers as the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Cleveland String Quartet. Less than $150 of the NEA money was spent on Ron Athey's production. That grant, by the way, was approved under the Bush administration.

Contrary to what Jacoby would like us to believe, the NEA does not provide general operating support money but instead funds individual programs or exhibitions. The NEA did not provide an individual grant for the "Abject Art" show at the Whitney Museum, so none of the $300,000 mentioned by Jacoby was used to support that exhibition.

We apply for NEA funding on a regular basis, and I can assure you that we are not dealing with a bunch of wild-eyed, liberal free spenders bent upon shocking the general public. Proposals are closely considered by professional peer committees who try their best to distribute meager funding to deserving groups. More than 1,000 taxpayers participate in these review committees, including people who are not professional artists, curators or arts administrators.

I do not know why so many people fear the NEA. Frankly, it would need a much bigger budget to successfully corrupt our cultural landscape. The NEA costs each of us only 65 cents a year, and yet the projects it funded in 1992 had an overall economic impact of $1.37 billion. A recent Harris survey indicated that Americans would be willing to spend an additional $15 a year in taxes if they knew it would be spent on the arts. That higher levy still represents far less than what Europeans pay in taxes to support the arts in their countries.

Ultimately, carping about the NEA obscures the real issue. When the general public considers contemporary art indecipherable or threatening, the museums, not the NEA, are to blame. Museums need to educate their audiences, expose them to working artists, help them understand what they are experiencing and encourage them to make their own judgments. Art might not appeal to everyone. We should not assume that it will automatically appeal to everyone else.

PAUL MASTER-KARNIK, director
DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park

Save the NEA

The National Endowment for the Arts and its important work are under attack by pols who want art only in vanilla and chocolate

POLITICIANS MAKE damn poor art critics. That's one reason they should stay out of the business of deciding what artists make and what they don't. The other reason is the First Amendment, which protects from government censors people who write, draw, speak and perform.

The National Endowment for the Arts is under fire in Congress. Some critics want to disembowel it; others would settle for the extraction of a vital organ or two.

The NEA is a venture capitalist for the arts. Its $170 million-a-year in seed money (65 cents from every citizen) spreads through the country, nurturing acts of the imagination that, to succeed, need to be free from political interference, not to mention political timidity and duplicity.

Instead of condemnation, the NEA deserves our enthusiastic endorsement.

Art is in the eye of the beholder. If a few especially powerful beholders can fashion art to their own narrow appreciation, it will survive only as a dull, flat and choked enterprise hardly worthy of its name.

Like flies to offal, it doesn't take much to attract NEA bashers.

The latest *cause célèbre* is an indirect NEA contribution of $150 to a Minneapolis performance given by Ron Athey, an HIV-positive gay man, who is a former heroin user and onetime Pentacostal Christian. After bloodying his own body with acupuncture needles and a hypodermic needle, Athey traced patterns with a scalpel on the body of another performer who is HIV negative, then blotted up the man's blood with paper towels and suspended the "art" on a clothesline over the audience of 100. Unnerving, yes; but not a health risk.

This may not be Jesse Helms' idea of a good time (or a lot of other peoples'). Still, it's hard to argue that it's not provocative. And isn't that an essential ingredient of good art? We don't go the theater to be bored to death. The Minneapolis audience surely will remember Athey for a long time.

Art must be bold and experimental, even disgusting to some, unless we want to make an aesthetic feast out of sitcom reruns.

Athey's performance is hardly typical of work funded by the NEA. Millions of Americans enjoy uplifting, as well as disquieting, performances and other artistic presentations made possible by NEA grants.

Jane Alexander, the actress who took over as NEA director less than a year ago, has worked hard to restore the luster of the agency, which was frequently embroiled in similar controversies during the years of the Bush administration (Robert Mapplethorpe, Andres Serrano, Karen Finley etc.).

To her vast credit, Alexander refused to disavow Athey's work. "Not all art is for everybody," she said, describing the performance as "a study exploring modern day martyrdom as it relates to AIDS. It is a very disturbing but important contemporary subject."

Alexander was forced to cancel a San Francisco town hall meeting Wednesday because of the congressional funding fight. That battle shouldn't be allowed to undermine the NEA's important work.

Lest you suspect a political motivation here, we must add that we're also outraged by the National Education Association's threat to boycott orange juice if Rush Limbaugh is kept on as spokesman for Florida citrus growers. We're against any powerful special interests that try to bully people who don't agree with their ideas.

The education association, Helms and communist China share the same method for dealing with dissidents: gag 'em.

We can't afford to let the American artistic imagination be crushed by politicians cruising for an issue to exploit. Immorality is that which tries to stifle freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

Time again to bash the arts

NEA'S ANNUAL GRILLING
It costs you 68¢ a year to aid American culture. Every year, someone claims it's too much.

It has become an annual ritual in Congress, something akin to the Pamplona bull run: Each year, a handful of congressmen stampede to the microphones to denounce the National Endowment for the Arts, snorting anathemas and goring the agency's tiny budget. Every year, the endowment's defenders save it from extinction. But most years, a little more of its funds are pared away.

By all rights, this year should have been different. NEA Director Jane Alexander — a popular actress and a gifted ambassador for the arts — had explained and defended the agency to more audiences than previous directors ever attempted. She won high marks for diplomacy and openness.

But appropriations time rolled around once more, and, like clockwork, out came the bulls. First out of the chute this year was Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va. The red cape that set him off: One arts grant in Minneapolis — for $150. (That's *not* a typo; we're talking about one-half the price of a coach-class flight from Minneapolis to Wheeling.)

The $150 was part of a grant to the distinguished Walker Arts Center, which used it to book an appearance by performance artist Ron Athey. Mr. Athey does an unsavory little routine in which he draws blood from an accomplice, blots the blood with paper towels, then hangs the towels from a clothesline. Although Mr. Athey is infected with the virus that causes AIDS, the accomplice is not. Still, an audience member complained, and the matter got into the newspapers.

A bad use of $150 in government funds? Maybe. But a reason to slash 40 percent from the endowment's budget for theater, visual arts, and newly commissioned work? Senator Byrd and a cadre of practiced NEA-bashers think so. Wiser heads need to prevail.

The NEA costs each American 68 cents per year. In exchange, it supports ballets and folk-dance clubs, schools and museums and community theaters — and, yes, a few risky, cutting-edge arts groups that may (or may not) advance American culture. It has put an average of $1.7 million a year into the arts in Florida. It supports dozens of local programs, from the New World Symphony to *Teatro Avante* to a program for inner-city kids at risk.

There's no way to do all that, in thousands of small grants to adventurous institutions across 50 states, without occasionally offending someone. So the Walker Arts Center, spending one ten-billionth of the federal budget, offended someone. Is this shocking?

Every federal expenditure riles somebody. But the NEA's $170 million budget also incubates American culture, from the Greater Miami Opera to a Liberty City music program, from abstract sculpture to illustrations for children's books, from Shakespeare to Neil Simon. These are good things, necessary to a fast-changing, comparatively new nation. The supported artists (frequently young, often ingenious, always amazing) enrich America far beyond the pennies that it costs to support them.

Put the congressional bulls back in their pens. This annual fuss over a small and beneficial program is tedious, cynical, and hurtful. Ms. Alexander deserves a break, and her agency deserves a hand.

The art that frightens

Jeff Jacoby (op ed, July 7) uses four out-of-context examples to show us why the National Endowment for the Arts is "elitist and insufferable" and that "the time has come to shut it down." In all four cases the presenter, not the artist, was funded – but only in part – by the NEA.

Art can comfort and offend. We have the right to create and respond to that art, and Jacoby has. But that offensiveness does not justify the end of NEA. Remember, no one is forced to go to an art gallery, the theater or the concert hall.

The NEA has done a great deal of good that is conveniently ignored by its opponents. Let us accept the fact that not all art is for everyone. Squelching the art that frightens us is far more frightening, to me, than the art itself.

BENJAMIN SEARS
Boston

EDITORIALS

ARTS AFIRE

Congressional critics scour NEA over a $150 indirect grant

Here's something to think about as you enjoy this weekend's second installment of Downtown Neon Saturday Nights.

Even if the National Endowment for the Arts did anything wrong – and it didn't — when some of its money supported a controversial Minneapolis artist's performance earlier this year, one small contribution like that would hardly constitute the demonization of the NEA, which funded a good portion of tonight's downtown event — and hundreds of other worthy, noncontroversial arts projects around the nation.

But the agency was been harshly attacked by the usual suspects during discussion about its budget in the House of Representatives two weeks ago. The detractors focused on artist Ron Athey's one-time performance in March in which he pierced himself with needles and drew patterns on an assistant with a scalpel.

The performance's bizarre and provocative nature was perfect fodder for the anti-NEA crowd, who claimed Athey's performance was reason to slash the endowment's money in half — one Republican even called for a complete disbanding of the agency. Luckily, more level heads prevailed and the agency only received a 2 percent cut — hardly cause for celebration, but certainly not as drastic as it could have been. It will likely come up in the Senate next week, where Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) are salivating at the prospect of grand-standing about it.

Well, no surprise, but the conservative critics' cries are seriously inflated. The New York Times reported Thursday that Athey only received a total of $150 in NEA money, and that came indirectly: the endowment gives money to Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, which gave Athey some support. Because of the hysteria created over that little money, the House hotly debated the entire agency's funding for two days — and the whole NEA budget only represents two hundredths of 1 percent of the federal budget.

The detractors also failed to mention that the money was approved during the Bush administration, and not under President Clinton or the current NEA head, actress Jane Alexander, who has courageously borne most of the criticism.

So does it make sense to drastically cut or completely do away with an agency that makes possible so many community events — including Artbreak, Arts in Education, the Fair Park Culture Series, the Shreveport Symphony's free concerts for public school kids, and on and on — based on an indirect contribution of $150? Last time we looked, it took more than that to buy one toilet seat in the military budget, but no one called for dismantling the Department of Defense.

The congressional critics of NEA are doing what they've frequently done: making cheap political points based on skimpy and misleading information. The arts agency should be funded -- and increased.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE MONDAY, JULY 4, 1994

Beyond criticism

A Senate panel goes too far in trying to curb the NEA

A committee of the U.S. Senate has recommended that the National Endowment for the Arts appropriation be cut 5 percent because of one questionable grant. That is as ludicrous as it would be for Congress to slash the Pentagon budget 5 percent because of one questionable defense contract.

The action of the Senate Appropriation Committee is made the more draconian by the fact that the panel has stipulated three specific programs in which the overall reduction must be achieved.

As a result, the funding the NEA got last year for theater, visual arts and for presenting and commissioning would be cut in half. Were these reductions to be distributed in direct proportion to allocations made this year by the NEA, 43 Pittsburgh organizations, including the Public Theater, the Mattress Factory and the Pittsburgh Dance Council, would lose $560,000.

The House of Representatives had already passed a measure cutting the NEA appropriation funding by 2 percent when the Senate panel decided to slash even further, reducing NEA support to $134 million. The action followed a letter being sent to the NEA by committee chairman Robert Byrd, a West Virginia Democrat, and Don Nickles of Oklahoma, the ranking Republican, in which they chastised the NEA for giving some financial support to a presentation in Minneapolis by an HIV-positive performance artist in which spilling of his blood was simulated.

However objectionable the senators may have found his presentation, it was the recipient of but one of 4,000 grants the NEA made this year (and one of more than 100,000 it has disbursed since its founding). The number of grants that have been questioned on artistic grounds by politicians (such as the Robert Mapplethorpe photography exhibit) has been infinitesimal in relation to the volume of projects evaluated.

In this instance, the endowment had given the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis $104,000 to fund 100 performances of which this was but one. The artist himself received but $150 in federal funds. These are flimsy grounds for such a punitive response.

The NEA's artistic judgment is always fair game for criticism and second-guessing. But there is no fairness in punishing other artistic endeavors financially because of an occasional lapse by the disbursing agent. Nor does it stimulate artistic experimentation to so intimidate the NEA that it will lend its support only to "safe" projects.

The cuts the Senate Appropriations Committee has recommended can be restored by the congressional conference committee and, if there is no stronger basis for sustaining them than has been articulated, they should be

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

Monday, July 4, 1994

The writer is director of Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum.

'Arts Endowment Record Enviable'

BY GRAHAM W.J. BEAL

RESPONSE TO JUNE 25 EDITORIAL: 'BLOODY CLOTH NOT ART TO MANY TAXPAYERS'

The World-Herald has done it again, reprinting inaccurate information about an event subsidized by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and using the sensationalized description to characterize the agency as "approving art that glorifies perversion and ridicules religious beliefs."

Regarding the performance (held at an alternative space in Minneapolis, under the auspices of Walker Art Center), the individual whose blood was blotted with paper towels had tested HIV negative, and the Minnesota state health authorities have confirmed that there was no risk to the public. Previous publicity had described the nature of the performance, and the audience did not part, Red Sea-like, when the lightly stained towel passed over their heads.

Some audience members walked out early in the performance and, having already made up their minds, were not around for the question-and-answer session that followed. Had they stayed, they would have learned that the cuts symbolized the scarification process common to many cultures and which, in some African societies, signifies ennoblement. Not exactly Norman Rockwell stuff, I grant you, but hardly the irresponsible happening inflicted on an unsuspecting audience as reported in some parts of the press.

The details of such events notwithstanding — and I completely understand why government support for certain aspects of contemporary art does not sit will with many taxpayers — I would like, by citing examples from Joslyn Art Museum's experience, to draw attention to overwhelmingly positive contributions that the Endowment makes to the arts in the United States.

Two years ago, Joslyn was awarded an NEA grant of $30,000 toward our exhibition, "David Nash: Voyages and Vessels," the total cash budget for which was more than $100,000. It is especially difficult to get sponsorship for contemporary art — even when it is as positive and enhancing as David Nash's — and I can state categorically that, without this early support to build on, it would have been very difficult for us at Joslyn to proceed with such an ambitious project.

The exhibition recently closed here and opens soon in San Diego. It then goes to the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu and, probably, to museums in Vancouver, B.C., Madison, Wis., Houston and Tampa. As each participant pays Joslyn an "organizational fee," what started life as a risky and expensive venture ended, through early NEA commitment, as a prestigious project that drew cash and kudos to our state.

Other recent NEA support to Joslyn includes grants totalling more than $29,000 to restore works in our collection, including the Paul Manship sculptures in our East Foyer, our Greek Vases and much-beloved 19th-century French paintings, as well as support for both of our Midlands Invitational exhibitions ($30,000 each), and Stuart Davis and "The Day of the Dead" ($10,000 each). Thousands of similar examples can be cited every year for institutions all over the country, but when Joslyn and other Nebraska institutions receive generous subsidies from the NEA, mention in The World-Herald is limited to a small factual report. Why no full-blooded editorials (no pun intended) praising the agency?

"If symphonies and operas are all that important to the NEA," the editorial asks, "why does it, again and again, risk its ability to provide support?" Again and again? The agency is being held hostage over a handful of grants out of 100,000 given over a 30-year period. We should be talking about an extraordinary and consistent effort to support institutions across the country and to bring high-quality art to the communities and schools they serve.

What a record! It should be the envy of every other government agency in the country. Instead, the NEA is remorselessly held to standards higher than any other agency.

Think about it. An art center 400 miles away spends $150 of NEA money on a performance, and the Jesse Helmses of this world are finally successful in getting rid of the agency. The American taxpayer can now go to bed each night secure in the knowledge that not a single penny of his or her hard-earned money can, even indirectly, be used to support what The World-Herald characterizes as " 'art' that ridicules the very values they live by."

Great. But exactly who is being punished here: The NEA? A few "risky" artists? Or institutions like Joslyn? The answer, it seems to me, is all of the above, and that, I think, is not so great. Where I come from, it's called "throwing the baby out with the bathwater."



Eduardo Diaz

Funding for arts dwindles

It's a tough times for the arts again. The national War on Culture continues unabated.

Texas is about to drop from 55th to 56th in per capita arts funding among U.S. states and territories.

The Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs has received funding applications requesting considerably more than we have to distribute. In my field of arts administration, it's a struggle to keep things in perspective.

On June 23, the House of Representatives passed an amendment to cut the Fiscal Year 1995 budget for the National Endowment for the Arts by 2 percent, reducing the agency's budget by $3.42 million, from $171.1 to $167.6 million.

For yet another year, Rep. Philip Crane (R-Ill.) introduced an amendment to abolish the NEA. While the amendment was defeated, more representatives voted for it this year than last.

Efforts to abolish and debilitate the NEA come on the heels of a congressional outcry over partial endowment funding of a recent performance before some 100 persons at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. On March 5, artist Ron Athey and a three-member cast performed excerpts from his ritualistic work exploring modern-day martyrdom as it relates to AIDS. Athey is HIV-positive and his work includes scarification and the use of acupuncture needles.

The Walker and the Minnesota Health Department took health precautions, and the Walker also advised viewer discretion in all press and program materials. Three days after the performance, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported (erroneously) that audience members panicked as blood-soaked paper towels were being hoisted over their heads. Well, needless to say, the wire services picked up the story. Several influential congressmen have since written NEA Chairman Jane Alexander complaining about the Walker performance, threatening the agency's appropriation.

I had an opportunity to read Alexander's response to Congress on the Walker-Athey matter. I thought she did a creditable job of explaining the NEA's position and correcting the distortions caused by the admittedly erroneous reporting on what actually happened at the Walker, one of this country's most prestigious arts institutions.

It apparently didn't work. On June 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a 5 percent cut for the NEA. This bill is scheduled to go to the Senate floor soon. Barring a minor miracle, the Senate will likely approve a funding cut for the NEA.

Recent legislative action in Louisiana will probably mean that Texas is about to sink to the bottom of the barrel — again. Hawaii spends $7.67 per person on the arts. For crying out loud, Oklahoma beats Texas, again! Oklahoma, 96 cents, Texas, 19 cents. The national average is 95 cents per capita.

Excuse me for sounding bitter, but the arts funding situation in this state is more than a bit embarrassing. More importantly, it is an impediment to the Texas Commission on the Arts implementation of its ambitious arts plan which seeks to respond to cultural needs in urban, suburban and rural areas.

The good news is that a Cultural Trust Endowment has been established, and it is hoped the Legislature will act to secure a designated funding source that will help us climb out of the cellar soon.

On the local level, the Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs has received some $3.6 million in requests. If things work out as expected, we will likely have approximately $2.1 million to distribute.

Being the largest arts funder in the San Antonio is never easy; the arts community's attention is riveted on everything we do. This year we are implementing a revised funding program, including open peer panel meetings and initial staff funding recommendations.

But the simple reality is that there are not enough local dollars to meet a growing arts/ cultural community's desires.

At the federal, state and local level we can only hope for the formation of sound public policies and the implementation of open and judicious funding processes.

What a way to make a living.

Eduardo Diaz is director of Arts and Cultural Affairs, City of San Antonio.

EDITORIALS

ARTS FUNDING

National Endowment plays an important role

It has become a ritual on Capitol Hill. Every year, it seems, the National Endowment for the Arts is forced to fend off attempts to slash its budget or abolish the agency outright. This year is no different. Last week, in a contentious debate, the House considered proposals to cut the endowment's appropriation in half or eliminate it entirely. The fact that the lawmakers ultimately trimmed the budget by only 2 percent was considered a victory of sorts for the besieged agency.

It would be one thing if the budget debate were driven by fiscal concerns. But nothing so responsible was behind the plans to kill or cripple the National Endowment for the Arts. Instead, the whole work of the agency was being judged on the basis of a single grant it had made. Clearly, a number of congressmen were out to punish the entire endowment because of one controversial — some would say, misunderstood — performance it had helped to underwrite this year.

Hinging a $171 million budget on a $150 grant is not only unfair; it is terribly shortsighted. Anyone who takes the time to consider the full sweep of the agency's work realizes that the National Endowment for the Arts makes an important contribution to the richness that is American life. One of this year's 4,500 grant recipients, for example, is the Dallas Symphony's Young Strings program, which is introducing the beauty of classical music to inner-city youngsters.

Obviously, since the agency draws its support from the public, it needs to be mindful of general standards of decency in awarding its grants. Still, art is inherently controversial. What some people regard as valid artistic expression other people will find objectionable. The challenge facing the endowment is to make sure that as many viewpoints as possible are represented among the 1,000 citizen panelists who review and judge the 18,000 grant applications received every year.

Congress should not lose sight of the larger issue at stake here. The arts are an essential element in our way of life — perhaps now more than ever. Educators have discovered that students are more engaged in all subjects when they learn about the arts. And, lately, the arts even have been used as a way to give juveniles a positive alternative to crime. That kind of bold work should be encouraged by Congress, not discouraged. When the funding comes before the full Senate, the lawmakers should resist efforts to make punitive cuts.

Sense and Nonsense About Art Funding

Artist's stunt may have been off base, but so was the congressional attack it provoked

The Tailhook scandal was a disgrace to the Navy. The drunken debauchery and sexual exhibitionism that occurred on that occasion put the participants far outside the American mainstream. But would anyone propose that because of Tailhook the Navy be disbanded?

Rep. Philip M. Crane, an Illinois Republican, recently proposed something almost that ridiculous for the National Endowment for the Arts. Because of a minor scandal at the NEA-assisted Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, Crane proposed abolishing the NEA.

It seems that in a performance at the Walker, an HIV-positive artist used a razor blade to carve a pattern into the back of another (HIV-negative) artist, blotted the pattern with a towel and then dangled the blood-stained towel above the heads of the audience on a clothesline.

We have our doubts—let us say—about the artistic merit of the performance, and we reiterate our view that when federal arts money is at issue the public will always expect and want that public money to be used sensibly. Those who accept and use public money, whether museums or major arts centers or even individual artists, have to understand and accept this expectation.

But let's put the Walker incident in perspective. The artist received only about $125 of the $104,500 the Walker Center received from the NEA in 1993. And the Walker Center money is itself a tiny fraction of the NEA's $171-million budget. Crane's amendment deserved the 313-113 trouncing it received on June 24. In the end the House voted 98% of the funds originally appropriated for the NEA's 1994 budget.

There was no reason, however, for even a token reduction. The NEA chairman cannot answer for every offensive artist any more than the secretary of the Navy can answer for every drunken sailor. Crane and the relatively small number of conservatives who agree with him are free to oppose the public funding of art on principle, though their arguments have not convinced Congress; that's democracy. But they are not free to distort the record of the NEA every time its budget comes under review.

Congress should focus on what the NEA typically supports. Body-carving is no more typical of the NEA than Tailhook is typical of the Navy. Pretending otherwise, Crane in his misguided efforts has wasted far more than the $125 the NEA spent on the object of his indignation.

No one likes to see public money wasted—not in an arts center, but also not in the halls of Congress.

OVER THE COFFEE



Donald
KAUL

Playing games with the NEA

Once a year Congress, like the villain in a silent film melodrama, ties the National Endowment for the Arts to the rails and threatens to leave it there until the train comes. And every year, just as the choo-choo arrives, it cuts it loose so that it can torment the poor thing another day.

It happened again just last week.

The solons (that's classical Greek for "chowderheads") always have an excuse for their inexcusable behavior. If it's not an NEA-sponsored exhibition of homoerotic photographs, it's an exhibit featuring a "sculpture" of Christ immersed in urine that gets the good ol' boys going.

Such controversies bring the virtuous in Congress to their feet quicker than "The Star-Spangled Banner." They angrily seize the microphones to announce their outrage at the immorality *du jour* and thunder at the degenerates who would inflict such decadence on the public at government expense. It's not the immorality that gets them so much, it's the wasting of the taxpayers' precious dollars. They threaten to cut off funding for the NEA. Then they get voted down. That's the drill.

This year the spark was provided by a performance artist in Minneapolis. Ron Athey, who is HIV-positive, punctured a pattern on the back of a fellow, HIV-negative, artist then blotted the blood with a towel and sailed the result on a wire above the heads of the audience. The event was sponsored by the Walker Art Center, a recipient of NEA funds. It seems a little weird to me too, but the bottom line is that Athey's share of the NEA loot figured out to be about 160 bucks.

That was enough for the fellows in Congress, however.

"How can you rationalize throwing this money away?" asked Rep. Philip Crane of Indiana, who promptly introduced an amendment to abolish the NEA.

Another representative suggested the $171 million NEA budget be diverted to children's program. Senators Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., issued dark threats and warnings. Draconian cuts were insinuated.

It went back and forth like that for a couple of days. The House finally approved a 2 percent cut in the NEA budget, while the relevant Senate committee opted for a 5 percent slice. The republic is saved.

But don't kid yourself for even one minute that any of those clowns were concerned about wasting taxpayers' money. If you're looking to save taxpayers' money, you don't turn to the NEA; $170 million is a lot if you win it in the lottery, but in terms of the federal budget it's not even petty cash.

You want waste? You want big bucks? Look at the Pentagon. That budget is $260 *billion* and the waste is astronomical — literally — and often deliberate.

Take the MILSTAR program, for example, a system of satellites meant to secure military communications while we fought a nuclear war *for as long as six months*. It took 13 years and $8 billion to get the first satellite into the air earlier this year and already it is pooping out and running on a back-up power system. Also, there is no longer anyone to fight a six-month nuclear war with, if there ever was.

But does that mean our parsimonious Congress — Messirs Helms, Byrd, Crane and the rest — has ashcanned it? No. It means it authorized spending another $918 million for it this year.

As a matter of fact, according to a new report, between 1990 and 1993, Congress appropriated $28.7 billion for defense programs that the Pentagon never asked for, didn't need and didn't want.

In another report, the Pentagon's own inspector general pointed to $1.4 billion in questionable spending on building projects and said: "Every military construction project in the Department of Defense is suspect."

And still Congress votes for them, because there's a project in there someplace that benefits virtually each member's district.

For example, last year Senators Hollings of South Carolina, Johnston of Louisiana and Sasser of Tennessee gave an extra $10 million to the Defense Department for the maintenance and operation of C-130 military transport planes, but insisted that the money be used only for planes in South Carolina, Louisiana and Tennessee. Great conservatives all.

So don't tell me they're trying to save money with the NEA. Most senators and representatives should recuse themselves voting on the NEA's budget, anyway, on the basis of conflict of interest. It's an educational institution and they have a vested interest in keeping the public dumb.

WHAT'S ART?

Senate yahoos again threaten National Endowment for Arts

WHERE WE STAND

Federal funding of arts should stay at current levels

The senatorial Philistines are at it again.

This time the assault on the National Endowment for the Arts is being led by the fiddle player from West Virginia, Democrat Robert Byrd, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Sen. Byrd, the champion at winning large chunks of the federal budget for his home state, has seized upon the latest silly use of arts money to warn that the entire budget of the endowment was in "serious jeopardy." He was referring to a "performance" in Minneapolis by an HIV-positive artist, whose blood was drawn and who in turn put blood from a fellow artist onto bloody towels that were then suspended over his audience.



We have no idea what qualifies this as art, why it may have received federal funding, whether it threatened the audience as Byrd says, or even why performances with sexual and political themes are in the arts budget. Such outrageousness, however, provides the perfect opportunity for yahoos in Congress to bay at the agency and lash out at federal support of the arts.

Byrd's committee has proposed an $8.5 million or 5 percent cut from the current overall budget, even deeper than the 2 percent approved by the House last week. The Senate committee said it wants "only the most meritorious examples of artistic excellence which will reach broad audiences" to be funded. Naturally, the judgment of what's meritorious would come from senators like Byrd, Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Don Nickles of Oklahoma and their own narrow philosophies.

Congress should make up its mind: Either fund the National Endowment for the Arts at a reasonable level and allow its volunteer and paid staff to administer the money, or eliminate all federal support. The latter would be a disgrace. The governments of most civilized countries help artistic endeavors and our country too should supplement private support so culture can remain an important part of improving the quality of all our lives.

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Journal

FRANK RICH

The Gay Card

"Jane Alexander defends the slopping around of AIDS-infecting blood!" shouted Representative Robert Dornan of California on the House floor on Thursday. Jane Alexander? How did the sedate chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts land in this gory mess?

To understand that, you have to appreciate just how ruthlessly demagogues will play the gay card, especially in an election year. No matter how large the show of force by homosexual men and women in today's Stonewall march in New York, gay-bashing remains a booming political sport for the right — a sure-fire way to whip up votes, campaign contributions and a national witch hunt in the grim tradition of Salem and Joe McCarthy.

Ms. Alexander's bizarre new predicament is a classic illustration of how bigotry spreads like an epidemic through the body politic. For two days last week, the House vote on the N.E.A. budget was held hostage by the likes of Mr. Dornan and Representative Clifford Stearns of Florida, who ranted about endowment support of an artist named Ron Athey who allegedly exposed an audience to H.I.V.-infected blood during a theatrical performance. When Ms. Alexander refused to disavow either Mr. Athey or the grant, she, too, became a target.

The chairwoman was right to stand her ground, and not just for honoring the principle of artistic freedom. The Dornan gang distorted the facts. Mr. Athey, who used at most $150 in N.E.A. funds from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, did indeed cut

Jane Alexander draws blood.

a tattoo-like pattern into another man's back as part of a performance using ritual to dramatize his own struggle with suicide and healing. And he did blot the tiny amount of blood with paper towels. But the blood was H.I.V. negative, not positive, and no blood or towels had any contact with anyone on stage or in the tiny audience, as verified by Minnesota health authorities.

But why let the facts stand in the way of a cause? Mr. Athey, who is himself H.I.V. positive and openly gay, is just the homosexual punching bag the right was searching for now that Robert Mapplethorpe is dead. He was plucked from obscurity after a sensationalized, secondhand account of his performance appeared in The Minneapolis Star-Tribune. Now the artist is a villainous poster boy for a national fund-raising pitch by the Christian Action Network. Jesse Helms, Robert Byrd and Don Nickles are all wielding his performance as a club to threaten N.E.A. funding in the Senate later this summer.

The politicians who smear Mr. Athey are after far bigger game than the minuscule Federal arts appropriation, however. Their real aim is to win support for the far right's entire agenda by spreading homophobic panic. And the easiest way to foment that panic is to insinuate that gay men are conspiratorially spreading a lethal virus among heterosexuals.

Lest anyone doubt the effectiveness of this Big Lie technique, consider the case of another vilified gay man who returned to the spotlight last week: David Acer, the Florida dentist who was accused by six patients of infecting them with AIDS.

As "60 Minutes" reported last Sunday, exposing evidence secured under the Freedom of Information Act, there is now strong reason to suspect that Dr. Acer was the innocent victim of both a witch hunt and an inadequate investigation by the Centers for Disease Control. A sworn videotaped deposition and a gynecological exam reveal that the dentist's most famous "victim," the late Kimberly Bergalis, though publicly declaring herself virginal, had a history of both sexual activity and venereal infection.

"I did not do anything wrong," said Ms. Bergalis in her famous Congressional testimony of 1991 — an appearance promoted in part by Jesse Helms. Her case was used by the right then much as Ron Athey's Minneapolis performance is now — to frighten the ignorant into voting for politicians who promise to protect them from gay subversives out to destroy America.

Unlike Dr. Acer, Mr. Athey is around to speak for himself. But as the apolitical product of an evangelical Christian upbringing, he is more baffled than angry about his sudden notoriety on Capitol Hill. "None of the beauty of my art is being talked about," he says in genuine innocence, as if he might somehow still move the hearts of those in Washington who are busy turning his very name into a rallying cry of hate. □

OUR PERSPECTIVE

The arts

Don't distort NEA record in political fray

The senators' letter to Jane Alexander, chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts, was couched oh-so-politely. It ended "With kindest regards." Yet its threat was unmistakable: Unless she responded with assurances that the agency would change its ways, "NEA funding for FY1995 is in serious jeopardy." Here we go again.

Sens. Robert Byrd and Don Nickles may well feel that they're on a moral mission, but their careless crusade is worse than unfortunate. When single examples of provocative, on-the-edge art are distorted and used as tools to destroy the NEA, an organization with a stellar record, citizens in every corner of every state are the potential big losers.

This time around, the art that landed in the political arena was a March 5 Minneapolis performance by Los Angeles artist Ron Athey — a performance sponsored by the Walker Art Center. Both the Walker and the NEA say that less than $150 of the Walker's NEA grant was used to support the show. Among other themes, the performance explored AIDS, martyrdom and religious rituals. A scarification ritual apparently shocked some of the audience members — at least one of whom worried about potential health risks (discounted by health officials but exploited by senators) because some blood was involved. Such art is ripe for discussion, and members of Congress have every right to question public expenditures. But senators peddling fears as facts are totally out of line.

Those who would cut or eliminate federal support for the arts on the basis of a very few controversial expenditures threaten a solid and elaborate mechanism that leverages each dollar spent by up to 20 times through matching gifts and grants. The endowment brings art to rural areas starving for it, to inner cities struggling to see and hear it, to suburban children whose school systems long since relegated the arts to the realm of the extracurricular.

The arts speak to the soul. They have the power to create tremendous controversy precisely because they touch us emotionally as well as intellectually. They delight and inspire, yes. They also confront and confound. That ability is central to their power, and that is at the root of the NEA's vulnerability. Because the arts do elicit in those who partake of them the most profound of reactions, the arts are quite naturally thrust into the public debate.

There is nothing wrong with a spirited debate over particular works of art; it can prove stimulating and instructive. Star Tribune reporter/critic Mary Abbe entered into such a debate in a column involving the very work that worries the senators — a performance that some audience members found moving, and others found repellent. But when such debates are seized upon and distorted for use as ammunition in politicians' culture wars, the result is destructive.

By now, the NEA's processes are among the most scrutinized, most second-guessed, most argued-over in Washington. Its peer-review system provides a sound process for providing public support to a broad range of arts programs. It does not deserve this threat.

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Return of the NEA-Bashers

IN THE YEAR since the National Endowment for the Arts came into Chairman Jane Alexander's capable hands, groups that missed the old, bullet-ridden NEA have been trying to find some outrage with which to reignite the fires that raged so conveniently throughout the Bush administration, generating piles of campaign cash and campaign rhetoric about "taxpayer-funded pornography" and culture war. Alas for them, the hot-button cases of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano were long gone; the NEA had resumed its actual identity as an industrious, low-key distributor of matching grants for useful and unoffensive endeavors like school dance programs and regional theaters.

Why, then, is the House of Representatives poised to vote today on yet another amendment to defund the NEA 5 percent as punishment for being "offensive," having just defeated the annual attempt to abolish the agency entirely? Because the NEA's critics, who include Sen. Jesse Helms as usual along with Sens. Robert Byrd and Don Nickles, just can't give up the luxury of NEA-bashing. This time the supposed offense is so contrived that it vanishes on inspection.

In March, journalists started getting insistent calls from groups trying to stir resentment at reports of a single experimental theater performance that had taken place at an NEA-funded arts center in Minneapolis. Two men undertook to reenact Indian tribal scarification rituals on stage: One cut a ritual pattern into the other's back with a razor, blotted the pattern with paper towels and sent the towels on a clothesline over the audience. Press reports in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, by a reporter who proved not to have been at the performance, said there had been audience consternation and debate—both pro and con—when some audience members thought they had been exposed to HIV-positive blood.

Had there been a health hazard to an audience, or even just a disgusting spectacle sprung on an audience without warning, that might in fact merit concern. Ms. Alexander was asked to look into it, and responded in a June 15 letter to members of Congress that there had been no health hazard, no HIV-positive blood on the towels and no problem of unsuspecting or unadvised patrons, since the theater had posted ample pre-performance descriptions of what was to come. She added that there had been much positive as well as negative response to the performance and that those who found it thought-provoking and stirring "are taxpayers too."

With disdain for all this, Sens. Nickles and Byrd have forged ahead, and the House will today vote on Rep. Clifford Stearns's amendment to cut the budget because of "offensive" NEA behavior. It's the same old stuff, pursued with sublime indifference to actual cases. If this is the worst thing the NEA's critics can find the endowment has done lately, their passion looks pretty pathetic. If members who support the NEA can't make that case, they're the pathetic ones.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Journal

FRANK RICH

Who Lost The Arts?

What if Barbra Streisand had not defended the National Endowment for the Arts at Harvard? What if Bill Clinton had defended the N.E.A. as vociferously as he did public broadcasting? What if Christopher Reeve, the most driven celebrity lobbyist for the arts, had not fallen from his horse? What if Time had run Robert Hughes's take-no-prisoners defense of Federal arts funding on its cover before rather than after the crucial Congressional votes? What if Melanie Griffith had not only lobbied Newt Gingrich but accepted a pouting-sex-kitten role in the screen version of his novel?

Now that Congress has almost gutted the Arts and Humanities Endowments — in the House's case cutting their budgets by up to 40 percent and setting a two-year deadline for the N.E.A.'s extinction — it's fair to ask: Did this drama have to reach this dire climax? An informal survey of some on the barricades suggests that while the battle to save the N.E.A. was often scattershot, the agency never stood a chance once it became the designated scourge of the religious right.

There were some heroes, including, arguably, Ms. Griffith; the literary fellowships she defended to the Speaker may be the only individual grants to survive the purge. Among others who made a difference: Isaac Stern, an energetic lobbyist; Jodie Foster, who made a public-service announcement, and Michael Greene, the music-industry executive who turned the Grammy Awards show into an N.E.A. jamboree.

But George Searchinger, a documentary film maker, had a real point when he wrote a letter to The Times last month asking, "Where are the television network leaders, the movie moguls, the opera impresarios, the great commentators now that we need them?" The powerful TV and movie industry barons whose products are often made by N.E.A. alumni were too apathetic to speak up. Press commentary on the N.E.A., especially on Sunday TV talk shows, was often scant and flip, as if the only thing at stake were the future of chamber music.

Robert Bennett, a conservative

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Robert Bennett, a conservative Utah Republican who was among those trying to improve the N.E.A.'s lot in the Senate yesterday, says that classy cultural icons might have made the case on the Hill better than flashy Hollywood stars associated with liberal causes. But such figures were only intermittently mobilized. The arts world has its advocacy groups, but it is too poor and com-

Not
Melanie
Griffith.

partmentalized to create a focused Washington presence to match the National Rifle Association.

And what about all those Republican fat cats who sit on the boards of N.E.A.-funded institutions? The president of the Metropolitan Museum, William Luers, who joined with blue-chip business and cultural leaders to form Americans United to Save the Arts and Humanities, found that in the end "not enough of them had the courage to call Newt on this."

The dispirited Mr. Luers, like others I spoke to, also soon discovered that the endowments' fate was not tied to "a rational, intelligent debate over what the arts and humanities do" in any case. No argument — esthetic, economic, educational or even patriotic — could save the N.E.A. as long as it was on the religious right's hit list.

You need only read the American Family Association's fund-raising letters to see that the assault on the N.E.A. was never about the Federal role in the arts or the budget; the agency was merely a symbolic target. The actual targets? It's not happenstance that virtually every artist demonized in such mailings is either black, gay or outspokenly female — or better still, some combination thereof — even if that requires digging up artists long gone and never directly funded by the N.E.A., like the undying Robert Mapplethorpe.

Now that the endowment is on life support, the Republican leadership can cut to the chase and go after the religious right's real nemeses rather than the tiny agency scapegoated as their surrogate. Indeed, that's already happening, as Congress's new-passed abortion restrictions and the far-right tilt of the welfare-reform debate attest.

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Given the enormous wealth and power of the real forces arrayed against it, you can only marvel that the N.E.A. is even standing. And you can only thank those arts advocates, however outgunned, who served as the first line of defense against an intolerant social revolution that will soon engulf us all. □

Thomas L. Friedman is on vacation.

Saying 'Nay' to NEA

The politics of funding the arts

Congress has approved a budget blueprint that eliminates the federal deficit in seven years by cutting hundreds of government programs. This is the third in an occasional series.

BUDGET BATTLEGROUND
On the Chopping Block

By William Douglas
WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington — Federal budget cutters have the Bach Aria Group of Stony Brook singing the blues.

Some members of the new, more conservative 104th Congress want to cut funding for — and eventually eliminate — the National Endowment for the Arts, the 30-year-old agency that has awarded the nine-member singing group thousands of dollars in grants over the past 14 years.

"You get chipped away $8,000 here, $10,000 there, pretty soon you won't have an endowment," said Carol Baron, executive director of the Bach Aria Group Association, which won $8,900 in NEA grants last year to help cover the cost of its yearly festival and summer music school. "I think you're going to see a folding of a lot of arts organizations."

Although one of the smallest agencies on Washington's chopping block — its budget is .01 percent of the $1.5-trillion 1995 federal budget — the NEA has had enough controversy to make it a fat target for Republicans who have promised to eliminate the federal deficit by 2002.

In 1989, NEA-funded exhibits by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, which featured homoerotic photographs, and Andres Serrano, whose work included a crucifix submerged in a jar of urine, first raised the eyebrows and hackles of conservative lawmakers and religious organizations.

The endowment gained more unwanted publicity last year when Ron Athey, an HIV-positive performance artist who received $150 in NEA money from an arts group, cut himself as part of his show at a Minneapolis cabaret.

Conservative foes like Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) have long opposed the agency. Its woes are compounded by the Republican landslide last November, the budget squeeze and House Speaker Newt Gingrich's view that endowment funding is "patronage for an elite group" that should be left to the private sector.

Taking the speaker's lead, the House Appropriations Committee late last month approved a measure to cut the NEA's budget from $167.4 million to $99.5 million next year and phase out the endowment in three years. The House is expected to vote on the bill this week.

If both houses of Congress approve the measure, the amount of NEA money New York receives would drop from $30 million last year to $4 million in 1996, endowment officials say.

Rallying to the NEA a bipartisan group of senators has introduced a bill that would fund the NEA, but reduce it from $158.8 million next year to $146.4 million in the year 2000.

"The cuts that are being discussed would be

Please see NEA on Page A18

NEA Sampling

The National Endowment for the Arts awarded more than $30 million worth of grants in New York State. Here are some of the grants awarded to Long Island groups last year:

The Museums at Stony Brook. $35,000 in grants for the first phase of an upgrade of the museums' storage facilities and the preparation of a catalogue of the museums' William Sidney Mount collection.

The Sea Cliff Chamber Players. $4,000 to support artists' fees and related costs for chamber music performances during the 1994-95 season.

The Long Island Philharmonic. $12,500 to support its Stars of the Future Concert Series and the philharmonic's education program, which serves students in school districts across Long Island.

The Bach Aria Group Association of Stony Brook. $8,900 to support artists' fees for its annual Bach Aria Festival and the program of fellowship aid to students enrolled in the 1994 summer Bach Aria Institute.

The Dance Notation Bureau of Glen Head. $15,000 to support a national conference on dance and technology and projects which document choreography.

SOURCE: The National Endowment for the Arts

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Saying 'Nay' to NEA

NEA from Page A4

devastating," NEA spokeswoman Cherie Simon said. "The funding infrastructure for the arts is going to collapse."

But Tom Kilgannon, a spokesman for the Virginia-based Christian Action Network, which held an exhibit on Capitol Hill last month of NEA-supported art it considers obscene, said, "The federal government should have no role in the arts, especially if they are going to use tax dollars to fund projects that mock the religious beliefs of the American public. What people can't understand is that we represent a constituency that can't understand why they are paying taxes to help museums put a crucifix in a jar of urine or Robert Mapplethorpe put a bullwhip in his rectum."

The endowment has some conservative supporters, including Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) and actor Charlton Heston. These backers concede the agency has made some mistakes — but very few. Of the 110,000 grants the endowment has awarded since 1965, only a dozen could be considered questionable, they say.

But within the NEA and the arts community, supporters say the endowment is being used as a scapegoat by conservatives and the religious right to push their political and ideological agendas.

"They tried to depict the NEA as an agency out of control," said Robert Lynch, president of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, a group lobbying to save the endowment. "It was really a deliberate effort for their own benefit, whether it was for votes or publicity."

The bad publicity, Lynch says, has obscured the fact that the National Endowment for the Arts is fulfilling its mission statement to "foster the excellence, diversity and vitality to the arts in the United States; and to help broaden the availability and appreciation of that excellence . . ."

Established by Congress in 1965 with a modest $2.5-million budget, the NEA was created to offer federal support and nurturing to all aspects of the arts from music and dance to fashion and industrial design. And while it was born during Democrat Lyndon Johnson's presidency, the NEA came of age under Republican Richard Nixon's: From 1969 to 1974, its budget swelled from nearly $7.8 million to almost $60.8 million.

The NEA now awards about 4,000 grants a year to individuals, art groups and other nonprofit organizations. Usually, the grants must be matched at least with other nonfederal funds.

Lynch and NEA officials say the proof of the endowment's influence and importance to America's arts is evident nationwide.

Between 1965 and 1992 the number of orchestras nationally has grown from 110 to 230; opera companies from 27 to 120; nonprofit theater companies from 56 to 420; dance companies from 37 to 450; and local arts agencies from 65 to 3,800, according to Lynch.

"The trickle-down effect from the money stimulated these groups," Lynch said, borrowing an economic theory from Ronald Reagan's presidency. "What the NEA did was set up a system that never existed before."

But NEA opponents like House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) say that the 65 cents each taxpayer contributes to the endowment would be better used buying small boxes of crayons for every American.

Armey and Gingrich say the private sector should fund the arts, which makes the arts community from large symphonies to individual performers nervous and angry.

"Years ago, we were receiving generous donations from the aviation companies and family-owned banks," Baron said. "But they were bought out by the big banks that aren't centered on Long Island. They don't have the same kind of community interest that the local banks took, so that's been cut off."

To make matters worse, "there have been changes in the tax laws so there's less incentive for businesses to make contributions," Baron said.

And Camille Reed, executive director of the Long Island Philharmonic, fears the message Washington is sending about public funding will sift down to state and local governments.

Reed said the philharmonic already is getting a deep cut in state grants and would be hard-pressed if it lost NEA support. This year, it plans to use $9,200 in NEA grants for arts and education programs.

"It's easier for a televangelist to raise millions of dollars than it is for the Long Island Philharmonic to raise $100,000," Reed said. "There are definitely going to be a lot of institutions that will not make it."

Baron thinks the NEA will be cut, but without lingering effects.

"When people start missing [illegible] day night, they are going to start wanting it [illegible]

Arts Targeted

Congress is now debating the $1.6-trillion federal budget for 1996, the first step in Republican plans to balance spending by the year 2002. To help do that, Republicans in the House and the Senate propose cutting as many as 400 federal agencies and programs; the National Endowment for the Arts is one of them.

Program: The National Endowment for the Arts.
Age/history: Created by Congress in 1965.
Budget: $167.4 million for fiscal 1995.
Mission: "To foster the excellence, diversity and vitality of the arts in the United States" and "to help broaden the availability and appreciation of that excellence."
Supporters: President Bill Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), most House Democrats, several moderate House Republicans, the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies and Charlton Heston.
Opponents: Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas), the Christian Coalition, the Christian Action Network, former National Endowment for the Humanities Secretaries William Bennett and Lynne Cheney.
Prospects: Unclear. The House plans to vote on NEA's appropriation this week. The Senate's Labor and Human Resources Committee [illegible] would preserve the NEA later this month. If the NEA [illegible]

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Newsday
7/10/95

COVER STORY

Opposing Interests Brace For a Culture Clash

As GOP considers spending cuts, horizon looks bleak for backers of arts, public broadcasting subsidies

Patrick A. Trueman has waited a long time for this day to come.

Trueman is the director of government affairs for the American Family Association, a group of conservative Christians founded by the Rev. Donald Wildmon of Tupelo, Miss. The group has been trying for five years to stop the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) from funding what it calls filth.

Now the NEA is fighting for its life, or rather, its lifeblood — its annual federal subsidy, which amounted to $167.8 million in fiscal 1995. And the new Republican majorities in the House and Senate are not giving it much hope.

"Of the 73 new Republican freshmen," Trueman said, "probably 65 of them oppose NEA funding altogether.... I don't see [the NEA] surviving." Last year an amendment to eliminate funding for the NEA fell 105 votes short of passing, while one to slash its budget by 54 percent fell 86 votes short. *(1994 Weekly Report, p. 1692)*



RICHARD ELLIS

At hearings Jan. 26, NEA Director Jane Alexander says the NEA's yearly cost to each taxpayer is equal to two stamps.

Other conservative groups are clamoring for Congress to end funding not only for the NEA, but also for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery. For some or all of these efforts, they have allies in the House in Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, Majority Whip Tom DeLay, R-Texas, and Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert L. Livingston, R-La.

The supporters of these cultural programs have mounted a heavy public lobbying campaign, just as they did in the face of previous threats to their funding during the Reagan and Bush administrations. And the lobbying appears to be making inroads — witness Gingrich's remarks at a Republican fundraiser Jan. 26. There, Gingrich said he did not mean to suggest that public television should be ended, he simply wanted to find an alternative to the taxpayer subsidy.

There are at least two differences in the political landscape this time, though, that give the critics confidence: Republicans are in control of both the federal purse strings and key congressional rules, and the new brand of GOP leadership counts the "cultural elite" among its enemies, not its benefactors.

The theme of this year's efforts also has shifted from that of past debates over the endowments. The forces who once focused their ire on the product of the cultural subsidies — the homoerotic exhibitions, the paintings of Christ with a needle in his arm — now talk first about the budget deficit and the need to cut spending on "frills."

Some moderate and rural Republicans still break from the leadership to support cultural subsidies, often because they see the subsidies making the arts more available to their constituents. But the need for budget cuts is pushing more Republicans into the conservatives' corner — weakening support for the NEA, NEH and CPB. House members such as Republican John Edward Porter of Illinois, the new chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, speak of the value of such institutions, yet question whether the country can still afford the $630 million they cost in fiscal 1995.

"To me they're not questions of culture," Porter said in a recent interview. "They're questions of funding. They're questions of budgets and deficits."

The result has been the strongest challenge to date to the federal government's fundamental role in cultural programs. Loosely organized, it is not a systematic campaign against cultural subsidies so much as a determined assault on the most prominent federally funded cultural institutions and the type of work they produce.

The Broad Reach

The federal government subsidizes a wide array of cultural pursuits, with some of the largest beginning as Great Society programs in the mid-1960s.

By Jon Healey

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worth $1.37 billion, said Josh Dare, a spokesman for the endowment.

While the NEA touts this federal "seal of approval," it epitomizes the politicization that government brings to culture, said Stephen Moore, director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute, a group that advocates individual liberty and limited government. "It's a violation of free speech. . . . It's forced speech. Taxpayers have to subsidize the speech of another person," Moore said.

Cultural War?

Lynne Cheney, Bennett's successor at the NEH, similarly has gone from an advocate of the NEH to a foe of the two endowments. And like Bennett, her objection relates in large measure to the work produced by federally subsidized artists and scholars.

In Cheney's view, much of contemporary art and scholarship is so culturally damaging, the taxpayers should not be asked to support it. Testifying before Appropriations' Interior Subcommittee, she said that postmodern artists and scholars reject all standards of quality and aesthetics, "so major art museum shows exhibit works that are contemptuous of ideas like originality and formal coherence, works whose subjects [were] chosen to be as disgusting as possible: puddles of vomit, piles of excrement, photographs of corpses."

The Smithsonian has run into its share of troubles recently as a handful of exhibits have generated a storm of protest. The most notable example is the proposed exhibit of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan, at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. Critics of the exhibit say that it would promote a revisionist view of history that depicts the United States as the villain and Japan as the victim.

Eighty-one House members have written a letter to Smithsonian Secretary I. Michael Heyman, demanding that the museum's director be fired. The institution's board of regents is expected to respond to the critics at its next meeting, scheduled for Jan. 30.

In anticipation of this meeting, Gingrich appointed one of the letter's authors to the board of regents: Republican Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas. Johnson is a former Air Force pilot and Vietnam prisoner of war.

Frank Hodsoll, the first NEA chief appointed by Reagan, suggested that good administrators can guard against objectionable grants and programs. Tom Kilgannon of the Christian Action Network, a conservative Christian group, disagreed, saying, "The weirdos and the wackos are going to get [grants], whether it's by mistake or by payoffs and patronage."

Conservatives have long accused the peer-review panels that review grant applications for the NEA of cronyism and discrimination against traditional artists. Bennett goes a step further, saying that there is a disturbing elitism built into the process. By taking tax dollars from the public and giving them to a panel to spend on art for the country, Bennett says, the NEA is telling ordinary citizens that they aren't capable of deciding for themselves what arts to support.



MICHAEL P. SMITH

Programs that receive federal money include ethnic heritage programs.

A related complaint by some conservatives is that the federal cultural subsidies in general benefit mainly the "cultural elite." For example, Nancy Mitchell of the Citizens for a Sound Economy told Appropriations' Interior Subcommittee on Jan. 11 that blue-collar workers make up just 7 percent of the audience for art museums.

Like critics of the endowments, opponents of the CPB focus on what they find to be offensive in its programming. Tim Graham of the conservative Media Research Center, a group that has tried to point out liberal bias in the mass media, said, "Conservatives here feel a greater sense of offense because this is their viewpoint and their politicians being demeaned with their money. . . . We don't care so much if public television is biased if we're not paying for it."

This allegation comes from the conservative Republican wing represented by Gingrich and commentator Pat Buchanan, not the moderates who have supported the endowments and the CPB over the years. It reflects the longstanding tension between social conservatives, who have used issues such as funding for so-called offensive artists to build their base, and the members whose conservatism is confined largely to fiscal issues.

The enormity of the deficit could bring those two camps together. In fact, even supporters of the endowments say they do not expect to avoid cuts; rather, they want to avoid being "zeroed out."

To Democratic Rep. Sidney R. Yates of Illinois, an appropriator and longtime supporter of the endowments, the budget deficit is just a smoke screen. This year's battle is just the latest in the long-running "cultural war" between conservatives and liberals, a fight that conservatives see as a defense of what they call traditional American values.

The Free Market's Tastes

Bennett and other conservatives argue that private groups do not do more in the cultural arena because the government does it for them. Another effect of the subsidies, they say, is that they diminish the power of the public to influence the direction of culture.

Those are two of the central arguments for privatizing the CPB and eliminating cultural subsidies. The free market, not federal appointees, should decide which artists, filmmakers and broadcasters to sustain and reward.

One argument against privatization, said the NEA's Dare, is that the not-for-profit arts have relied throughout history on government support. "If we rely on market forces, we are not going to get the kind of arts that would endure through the years," he said.

Nor would private dollars be able to take the place of federal subsidies in small towns and rural areas, where the markets may not be large enough to support the arts, said NEA Chairman Jane Alexander. Cutting off federal subsidies also could spell doom for small public broadcasting stations, supporters of the CPB say.

Larry Pressler, R-S.D., chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, says that several private telecommunications companies have told him that they want to fill in for the CPB in sup-

At President Lyndon B. Johnson's request, Congress created the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, the parent organization for the NEA and NEH, in 1965. The arts endowment is slated to receive $168 million in fiscal 1995; the humanities, $167.8 million.

The original legislation (PL 89-209) lays out several justifications for a federal role in the arts and humanities, mainly based on their importance to civilization and democracy. "While no government can call a great artist or scholar into existence, it is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent," it says.

Funding for the endowments skyrocketed under President Richard M. Nixon, at the urging of White House Counsel Leonard Garment. Nixon not only thought the endowments were worthwhile, he also liked the irony of being the one to aid a cause so important to liberals, Garment said.

From its creation in 1967, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has grown into a $2 billion enterprise. Only 14 percent, or $285 million in fiscal 1995, of that money comes from the federal government, however.

When it launched the CPB, Congress declared that "it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational and cultural purposes." It also asserted that the public had an interest in encouraging programs that took creative risks and addressed the need of children and minorities.

Most of the federal aid to CPB goes into operating subsidies for public radio and television stations. Congress appropriated an additional $29 million in fiscal 1995 for grants to help build public telecommunications facilities — a subsidy that may be threatened by the Clinton administration.

Perhaps the oldest organization receiving substantial subsidies is the Smithsonian Institution, a trust that was established in 1846 as a bequest from a British scientist. The complex, which includes 12 museums and a zoo, has grown significantly over the years, as has the amount of its federal support; in fiscal 1995, Congress provided $371.8 million, or 75 percent of the Smithsonian's operating budget.

The Smithsonian's museums are not the only ones receiving federal aid. The National Gallery of Art, which Congress began supporting in the 1930s, received $53 million in fiscal 1995. The Institute of Museum Services, which supports museums across the country and their special programs, received almost $29 million.

Other programs supported by the federal government range from cultural programs in schools to deter illegal drug use and violence, heritage programs for American Indians and other ethnic groups, regional music programs, overseas fellowship and exchange programs, and historical preservation efforts. A number of new programs also were authorized last year, including one to preserve the nation's maritime heritage and a New Orleans Jazz Commission and national historical park.

Who Pays?

William J. Bennett, who was President Ronald Reagan's first chairman of the NEH and later his secretary of Education, said that the endowments may have been created with a noble purpose. But "the question [today] is, Is the federal government the right place to do it?"

The answer, Bennett says, is no. "One of the most important contributions the new Republican majority can make is to challenge a core assumption of this city, which is that anything in life which is worth doing or having demands the involvement and financial support of the federal government," Bennett said in testimony submitted to the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee on Jan. 24.

For the federal government, even a modest role in the arts and humanities is inappropriate and counterproductive, Bennett argued. Through the two endowments, he contended, the government has contributed to the worsening of the arts and humanities; improperly served as the arbiter of art and scholarship; funded "obscene, pornographic ... blasphemous" and "politically tendentious" works; and fostered an entitlement mentality among artists and scholars.

Bennett's own stance on cultural funding has shifted since the early 1980s, when he led the NEH. In those days, he supported the endowment's existence, albeit with a smaller budget and narrower purpose.

Supporters of the endowments argue that their missteps have been few, albeit notorious. They also point to the way federal grants yield huge returns, as private corporations and foundations follow the federal government's lead. In 1992, for instance, the NEA awarded $123 million in grants that helped finance arts projects

Key Programs

Here are the major federal subsidies for cultural programs and their fiscal 1995 appropriation:



- **Smithsonian Institution.** A non-governmental trust almost 150 years old, it supports 12 museums of art, history and science, a zoo, and numerous research and support programs. $372 million.
- **Corporation for Public Broadcasting.** Created in 1967, it distributes money to public radio and television stations and helps develop programs for those stations. $285 million.
- **National Endowment for the Humanities.** Created in 1965, it promotes the study and preservation of history, literature, philosophy, languages and other humanities through grants, seminars, exhibitions, films and other media. $177 million.
- **National Endowment for the Arts.** Created at the same time as the endowment for the humanities, it provides matching grants for arts, funding for state art organizations and other forms of support for artists and art institutions. $168 million.
- **National Gallery of Art.** Created in 1937, it is a collection of significant works of art and an exhibition space for major touring collections. $53 million.
- **Institute of Museum Services.** Created in 1976, it aids museums with grants for operations, conservation and public service. $29 million.

port of public broadcasting. Besides, Pressler said in a Senate speech Jan. 24, the great expansion of broadcast television and other media outlets, such as cable and satellite television, have eliminated the media scarcity that was the original justification for the CPB.

One of the main differences between public broadcasting and commercial stations is the absence of overt commercial pitches. While its supporters say this is one of the beauties of non-commercial television, Graham of the Media Research Center said it is another form of elitism.

"Public television is television for people who hate television. The NEA becomes a bastion for people who hate anything the corporations could support.... What's inside that shell is the nut, 'We're unpopular and we know it. We can't survive in the marketplace because nobody will like us,'" he said.

Supporters of the endowments and the CPB counter that they are decidedly not elitist. The programs serve the exact opposite function, they say — to increase access to the arts and humanities in areas that do not otherwise have the resources, and to expand culture beyond the ranks of the well-to-do.

To support this argument, the NEA notes how artistic and cultural groups have multiplied in the 30 years since the endowments were established. The number of state and territorial arts agencies has grown from five to 56, the number of theater, dance and opera companies from 120 to more than 925, and the number of orchestras from about 100 to more than 230. This growth, agency supports say, is the fruit of the NEA's "seed money."

With the increase in numbers has come an increase in access to the arts throughout the country. Actor Charlton Heston, a longtime advocate of federal arts subsidies, noted that the theater industry used to exist only in a small section of New York City. Regional theaters now can be found throughout the country, he said, adding, "The regional theater is one of the spectacular successes of the NEA."

Critics of the federal subsidies complain that rather than flowing out to rural and neglected areas, the dollars have been concentrated in the cities already rich in the arts. Republican Rep. Philip M. Crane of Illinois pointed to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., which received $10.3 million in fiscal 1995, as an example of how the entire nation is forced to subsidize cultural events attended only by people in the capital.

Noting all the roads and bridges built with public funds, Dare said, "Not everything that your tax dollars go for you will use.... But if we all pay collectively for things that we all agree are universally beneficial, then there will be opportunities for those things that you're interested in."



RICHARD ELLIS

From left, Cheney, Dr. Edward Delattre of Boston University and Bennett at a hearing Jan. 24.

John H. Hammer of the National Humanities Alliance, a coalition of groups involved in scholarship and preservation, noted that one of the NEH's major ongoing projects is making digital copies of books to retain their text after their paper crumbles from age.

Private industry cannot be relied on to preserve the nation's cultural heritage in general, Hammer said. Nor is there much private support today for many areas of scholarship that the NEH supports and brings to the general public, he argued.

A Different Ballgame

Supporters of cultural programs have faced similar criticism and attacks before. In 1981, for example, Reagan proposed to cut the budgets for NEA and NEH by 50 percent. The effort was undermined, however, by an administration task force led by Heston, which concluded that federal funding should be sustained.

At the hearing Jan. 24, Heston said to Yates, "We've been down this road before, have we not?"

Actually, the road has changed significantly since 1981, as illustrated by one of the men sitting to Heston's left: freshman Republican Rep. George Nethercutt of Washington state. With Heston's high-profile help, Nethercutt ousted the Democratic incumbent, former House Speaker Thomas S. Foley, in one of the signal victories in the Republicans' move from minority to majority.

In recent fiscal years, Democrats have been able to steer money to the endowments through the annual Interior appropriations bills even as Republican critics stopped the endowments from being reauthorized. With the help of the Democratic controlled Rules Committee, the NEA's allies in the House simply waived the rule against sending money to unauthorized agencies in fiscal 1994 and 1995.

Now, Appropriations' Interior Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula, R-Ohio, says the Rules Committee will not lift a finger to help the endowments if they are not reauthorized. The key battles over the NEA, the NEH and the federal museum subsidies will be fought in the authorizing committee — Economic and Educational Opportunities, led by Bill Goodling, R-Pa.

The NEA and NEH appears to be in particularly tough shape there, as Republican members ponder the appropriate federal role in a time of limited dollars. That leaves supporters of the endowments and possibly the museums looking to the Senate for help. Senate appropriators are not so dependent on authorizations, and the authorizing committee — Senate Labor and Human Resources — is not so eager to slash the endowments.

Still, the Republicans' desire to balance the budget is no less strong in the Senate than the House. The Senate also is home to Jesse Helms, R-N.C., who led efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s to trim the NEA and stop funding for "offensive" art. His efforts met with limited success then, but the last election made both the Senate and the Republican caucus more conservative and less friendly to the endowments.

For his part, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Pete V. Domenici, R-N.M., said the question of cultural subsidies is just one of many that lawmakers ought to be asking, adding, "I don't know that that's more fundamental than any other." ■

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Chipping Away at Opposition, Senate Passes Mandates Bill

Displaying unity as the new majority party, Republicans in both chambers are steadily wearing down resistance to a major initiative that would curb unfunded federal mandates and limit the reach of Washington bureaucrats.

In the Senate, GOP lawmakers overcame Democratic procedural delays and amendments that would have weakened the measure (S 1), passing it Jan. 27 by a vote of 86-10. All the opponents were Democrats.

Conservative and moderate Senate Republicans closed ranks, as Phil Gramm, R-Texas, agreed to withdraw an amendment that would have required 60 senators to approve an unfunded mandate. Gramm said he may pursue the issue next year.

The fate of the bill now rests with the House, where Republican leaders held firm on their promise of an open rule despite facing 168 amendments and numerous roll call votes. By day's end Jan. 27, the often fractious chamber had disposed of just 25 amendments, some en bloc, and lawmakers still faced considerable work on the House version (HR 5) the week of Jan. 30.

There are few major differences between the two versions, although House sponsors say they want to clean up language in their bill that could give a competitive edge to local government enterprises that compete with private companies over such services as waste disposal. Republicans in both chambers spent the week of Jan. 23 overcoming Democratic amendments that would have exempted many environmental and health regulations from the bill's reach.

Still, the 59 hours of debate and 44 roll call votes on the bill in the Senate took a toll on GOP leaders and presaged lengthy battles over more ambitious conservative objectives, such as the balanced-budget amendment. In the House, the debate tested the pledge for unrestricted floor debate. *(Box, p. 277)*

"If this was a warm-up, then we've got a lot of work ahead of us," said Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., after the bill passed.

By David Hosansky



BOXSCORE

Bill: S 1 (S Rept 104-1, S Rept 104-2), HR 5 (H Rept 104-1, Parts 1 and 2) — Unfunded mandates.

Latest action: Senate on Jan. 27 passed S 1, 86-10. House set HR 5 aside Jan. 24 and resumed debate Jan. 27.

Next likely action: House action continues Jan. 30.

Reference: Weekly Report, pp. 207, 149, 40; 1994 Weekly Report, pp. 3604, 3177, 2874.

For their part, Democrats blamed the new GOP leadership for rushing the bill through committees without allowing enough time for debate and amendments. The GOP strategy forced a thorough examination of the bill on the House and Senate floors, they said.

The legislation, strongly backed by state and local government officials nationwide, is designed to curb the imposing of new requirements on states and local governments without providing federal dollars to pay for them. Some Democrats complain that it could force states to raise local taxes. *(Box, 278)*

Under both versions, any bill that would impose unfunded costs of more than $50 million on state and local governments would be subject to an additional procedural hurdle known as a point of order. Lawmakers in each chamber would have to win a majority vote before they could waive the point of order and move the legislation to the floor. Bills relating to such pivotal issues as civil rights, national security and disaster relief would be exempt.

The bill would require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to estimate the costs of bills, amendments and conference reports that impose such mandates.

Supporters have long said that action is needed because Congress has imposed dozens of new, expensive mandates on state and local governments in recent years, essentially taking money away from local priorities. But critics say the bill would undermine important environmental, health and labor laws.

President Clinton, who has consistently supported curbing such mandates, used his State of the Union address Jan. 24 to call on Congress to pass a "reasonable" version of the bill, though he offered no specifics. In a hint of the administration's preferences, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol M. Browner backed an amendment by Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., that would have exempted mandates regulating the health of children, pregnant women or the frail elderly from the bill's scope.

That amendment was killed Jan. 25 on a tabling motion by bill sponsor Dirk Kempthorne, R-Idaho, on a mostly party-line vote, 55-44. *(Vote 44, p. 307)*

A succession of other Democratic amendments met with a similar fate the week of Jan. 23. The Senate:

- Tabled on Jan. 24, 63-34, an amendment by Byron L. Dorgan of North Dakota and Tom Harkin of Iowa that would have required the Federal Reserve System to submit a report to Congress on any action changing the discount rate, the federal funds rate or market interest rates. *(Vote 37, p. 307)*
- Tabled on Jan. 24, 52-44, a nonbinding resolution by Dorgan saying that calculation of the Consumer Price Index should be left to economists and not be subject to political pressure. *(Vote 38, p. 307)*
- Tabled on Jan. 24, 58-39, an amendment by Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico that would have exempted from the bill various mandates regulating public health and welfare. *(Vote 39, p. 307)*
- Tabled on Jan. 24, 57-40, a Bing-

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Amy E. Schwartz

Culture Truce?

The arts and humanities people take heart from a close—if losing—vote.

Better-than-expected doesn't count for as much in an appropriations battle as it does in a political campaign, but it's still worth something. The beleaguered supporters of the National Endowment for the Arts took faint comfort last week in the closeness by which they lost the vote on which they had pegged their greatest hopes. The Senate Appropriations Committee voted just 15-13 not to restore $20 million to the agency's budget, which was supposed to be cut by 40 percent to $99.5 million.

The amendment to restore the $20 million, offered by Sens. Patrick Leahy and Robert Bennett, would have made the cut 28 rather than 40 percent. Its failure meant the agency is slated for the same size cutback ordered by the House, where the intent is to fund the NEA for two years and then eliminate it.

Supporters had expected gentler treatment from the Senate; 40 percent means mass layoffs and major rethinking. And yet if the arts endowment could still get this close, some folks reasoned—if it got within two votes of a committee win after being this favored a target of rhetoric—then maybe, just maybe, things aren't so bad.

However things turn out, there's no doubt the abused arts agency is taking a surprising amount of effort to squelch. A series of votes in both chambers has demonstrated that the sentiment for eliminating the endowment immediately is far from a majority even in the House. The stomp-'em-dead amendments that used to come up every year and fail—Rep. Philip Crane's to eliminate, Sen. Spencer Abraham's to "privatize"—flopped again solidly this year, with Crane's failing even to come to the House floor and Abraham's losing in committee.

This doesn't, of course, translate into an enthusiastic endorsement of the agency and all its works. Both the Crane and Abraham attempts were forgone in favor of cuts that, if they go through, guarantee either a very short lifespan or a drastic change in design for the NEA, along with deep cuts in the humanities endowment and the tiny Institute for Museum Services.

Even if more money gets restored on the Senate floor, any authorizing legislation that goes anywhere will oblige the agency's management to make serious changes. The version by Sens. Nancy Kassebaum and James Jeffords, which jumped the first few committee hurdles, doesn't cut too deeply right away—five percent a year for five years. But it requires the arts and humanities endowments to merge services, focus grant money on arts institutions of "national significance" and stop funding individual artists other than a few writers.

What's happening? Is there, after all, support for federal arts funding? One thing the debate highlights is that the case against the arts endowment has always had a certain reality/fantasy split. On the one hand is an intermittently serious argument among serious people as to whether this tiny trickle of federal money to artists and scholars could be better spent, whether parts of it are wasteful or trendy and whether the art-and-offensiveness tangle means unsolvable trouble in political days such as these. These arguments get reflected in such proposals as the Kassebaum/Jeffords reauthorization plan, which cuts less but requires comprehensive change. (The endowment was to announce today internal changes of its own.)

This discussion, though, is overshadowed by a constantly shifting nightmare vision of an NEA made up of pornographers, screamers and chocolate-covered razor wielders who somehow symbolize everything nasty

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

and permissive in a society some see as heading frighteningly downhill and out of control. It is this vision of the NEA that drives Christian Coalition representatives to put the endowment on must-kill lists and otherwise wavering committee members, who might be susceptible to softening on public broadcasting or even to dropping a few extra dollars on the humanities and museum endowments, to panic when it looks like they might be seen voting for the arts endowment.

It was this notion of the NEA as part of a culture war, not hatred of the American Ballet Theatre or schoolchildren's night at the symphony, that drove a hundred or so furious Republican freshmen to rebel against their own leadership July 13 during a vote on a House rule, reducing the lifetime of the NEA from an already severe three-year phase-out to two. It doesn't help that, when called on to join in what the right refers to as culture wars, many artists find it all too tempting to oblige by doing a convincing impersonation of the agency's monster-self.

It's still unclear whether the vision of culture war will swallow up the actual business of legislating on the NEA issue or, as it has with some other highly ideology-prone matters, be relegated to a sideshow. Much depends on the mix between lawmakers who are aware of the arts activities favored by their constituents and those who are more responsive to their constituents' generalized cultural fears. It depends too on whether the various reform plans and cuts will be seen as punitive and cleansing enough to gain votes from those who can't get past the symbolism.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, who with Sen. Robert Bennett last week offered a different reauthorization plan, caught a little of both reactions from home for a proposal that would collapse the three endowments into one locally oriented, resolutely non-cutting-edge operation. Those in the debate paid little attention to the plan, calling it unworkable and too late; still, the Republican senator, assailed on talk radio for supporting the NEA and lauded by a newspaper with the Abilene Opera in its circulation area, represents the kind of ground still up for grabs. So far, it seems, out-and-out culture war isn't leading in the vote counts. You wonder if there's really a public appetite for it.

The writer is a member of the editorial page staff.

it would require the tobacco companies to agree to stop providing their products to vendors caught selling cigarettes to kids. Moreover, the president would retain his authority to regulate tobacco.

Some anti-tobacco advocates have claimed this option is somehow "voluntary," and therefore weak. However, unlike voluntary measures initiated in the past by the tobacco companies, this one would have the Department of Health and Human Services monitoring compliance and administering the programs under a binding, written agreement. We must not, and need not, rely on the tobacco industry to self-police an agreement.

The president is getting a lot of advice on tobacco issues of late, much of it political in nature. Some have urged him to take on the tobacco companies, even if he will eventually lose, because polling data suggests that such a fight would produce winning presidential politics. Others have urged the president to avoid FDA regulation in order to save southern Democrats in Congress. Both views put politics before the interests of our kids.

If the president decides that FDA regulation is the best way to get help to kids, I will support that decision and work to make it stick. But if our country can do more to protect the health of our children without facing years of gridlock, why wouldn't we choose that course?

The writer is a Democratic representative from Oregon.

Arts, Culture and Condiments

A year ago, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities did not seem to have much chance of surviving the budget buzz saw in Congress. With bipartisan support, however, they have hung on. Forced to cut grants and personnel, they have begun to look for alternative sources of funding from companies and individuals to stay alive in the years ahead. The endowments' efforts deserve support, but they also pose a new kind of danger. Outside fund-raising should not siphon private giving away from other arts programs or compromise the endowments' independent mission.

Government support for the arts is often criticized as a luxury and an intrusion into a field best supported by private patronage and giving. But private contributions are not growing at a sufficient pace, and the 40 percent budget cut suffered by the arts endowment this year has dealt a blow to many worthwhile arts programs. A recent report sponsored by a Presidential panel on the arts and humanities and subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation found that private giving had actually fallen since the late 1980's.

Corporate giving has gone up, and many national institutions like the Kennedy Center, the Holocaust Museum and the National Gallery have benefited. Increasingly, however, corporate contributions to the arts are tied to marketing strategies by the companies involved. Recently, for example, the arts endowment announced its biggest corporate gift ever — $450,000 from the H. J. Heinz Company to support arts education in schools. The announcement of the gift was tied to a separate corporate initiative to promote a contest among schoolchildren to redesign the keystone-shaped label for Heinz ketchup. Three winners will have their designs appear on ketchup bottles next year to celebrate 100 years of "the nation's favorite condiment." A news conference attended by the arts endowment's chairwoman, Jane Alexander, announced both the grant and the ketchup label contest.

There does not seem to be anything inherently wrong with letting a company promote its ketchup if that is what it takes to generate money for arts programs in schools. Museums, performing arts groups and many other worthy causes would be nowhere without the generosity or benign self-interest of private companies, which should not be forced to remain anonymous about their giving. Nevertheless, the National Arts Endowment has to be careful about endorsing corporate advertising campaigns.

For companies, there may be an advantage to giving money to the endowment, forgoing the need to examine the worthiness of arts groups on their own. But some companies may choose to avoid going through an endowment that has had to be politically cautious in order not to offend conservatives in Congress.

Ms. Alexander, a respected actress, author and producer, has brought energy and creativity to the embattled campaign for government support of the arts. She has forcefully made the case that the United States can do more and has won the respect of Republicans and Democrats while managing the agency's cutbacks and streamlining the grant-giving operations. Her attempt to tap other sources of funding is commendable. But it would be a shame if, in the process, critics of the endowment use them as an excuse to squeeze it tighter. Support for the arts is a worthy objective of any government that cares about elevating and educating all its citizens.

Notes on High Water Out West

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Senate Panel Has Bad Budget News for Arts Agency

By Jacqueline Trescott
Washington Post Staff Writer

After delivering a friendly warning that the National Endowment for the Arts budget for next year would most likely remain flat, both Republican and Democratic senators said yesterday at a hearing on the agency that they approved of the reforms it had undertaken.

"The changes are steps in the right direction," said Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), a member of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the NEA's funding.

In her annual review, Chairman Jane Alexander told the committee the agency is processing one-fourth as many applications as in the past, is making fewer and smaller grants, and is searching for supplemental funds from the private sector. In addition, she said, the agency has overhauled its grant-making structure and eliminated some funding categories. It is able to fund only "the best of the best," she said.

After being told that the 1996 funding of $99.5 million was the most her agency was likely to receive for 1997, Alexander responded that the $136 million requested by the administration was barely enough. After last year's reduction of 39 percent, she said, each American's contribution to the arts amounted to "38 cents, less than the cost of a candy bar." That, she testified, "puts the agency's purchasing power in real dollars back to where it was in 1972—nearly 25 years ago. It is a cut that far exceeds that imposed upon almost every other agency in government."

Furthermore, she said, the NEA cuts contribute to an already tenuous funding situation. "Half of performing arts organizations are in some kind of deficit," said Alexander.

The subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.), listened sympathetically, citing programs in their own states that had benefited from NEA funding.

Alexander warned that may not always be the case. "The average basic state grant dropped by over $130,000 this year, hitting the smallest states hardest," she said. "While some states have increased their contribution in recent years, overall state appropriations for arts-related activities are down in real dollars by approximately 25 percent since 1990."

Though he praised the endowment's performance, Gorton pressed Alexander on the agency's position on the funding of material that is protected by the First Amendment but still objectionable to many Americans.

"New art is often difficult art," Alexander responded. "You wouldn't want to cut out total controversy in any case because it is an expression of the variety of who we are as a people. Nonetheless, once in a while, we can make mistakes."

When Gorton asked her to restate her views, Alexander replied that the agency has "enough prohibition right now. We do not fund obscenity, as defined by a court of law. I think that is sufficient." Thanking her for her candor, Gorton said her response was "troubling" but did not elaborate.

The Washington Post
Thursday, May 9, 1996

Anxiety-A-Tax

D.C. Council Chairman **Dave Clarke** is appealing his property tax assessment.

Just hours before last week's deadline, Clarke leapt from his city car at 441 Fourth St. NW—where the District's assessment offices are located—to file the paperwork on one of his Mount Pleasant properties: a shingled Victorian, bought in 1977 for $45,000, which he rents out.

The total assessment for land and house, with its peeling paint and unmowed lawn, climbed 11.7 percent from $169,200 in 1995 to $189,075 this year. But the building alone jumped by nearly 40 percent, from $51,223 to $71,098 in the past year and "there haven't been any improvements," said Clarke spokesman **Bob Hainey.**

Clarke "doesn't want a hearing, he just wants the city to check the figures. If they're right, he'll pay," Hainey told The Source. Actually, Clarke's tenants will pay, but Hainey said Clarke felt "obligated" to fight on their behalf.

After all, that house is very much like Clarke's residence—a white frame home just around the corner, which he bought in 1977 for $20,000 and which could also use a paint job. Its assessment rose only seven-tenths of 1 percent, from $180,900 to $182,175.

I have searched my conscience and my heart and I find that sadly I cannot accept the nomination. I prefer to stand instead with the egregiously overlooked cast.

—Julie Andrews, star of Broadway's $8.5 million hit "Victor/Victoria," and the show's lone Tony nominee, telling a Broadway matinee audience yesterday why she asked that the honor be withdrawn. The show was produced by Andrews's husband Blake Edwards.

FILE PHOTO

THE WASHINGTON POST
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1996

By Ann Gerhart and Annie Groer

NOW YOU KNOW. . .

■ **Martin Lawrence's** physician yesterday attributed his patient's bizarre **Margot Kidder**-like episode on Tuesday to "dehydration and exhaustion" but said the raunchy actor should be able to return to work in the next few days. He currently is filming "Nothing to Lose" with **Tim Robbins.**

Police found Lawrence, 30, waving a gun and screaming obscenities in the middle of a busy Los Angeles intersection. He had apparently walked away from a car wash. A witness told the Associated Press Lawrence was hollering, "Fight, don't give up, fight the power."

The actor "has been given a toxicology screen and no drugs that would have contributed to his condition were discovered," said Lawrence's physician, William I. Young.



FILE PHOTO

Tuckwell, tooting his horn for the U.S.A.

Mike Qualls, a spokesman for the L.A. district attorney, said no decision had been made on whether to file weapons charges against Lawrence.

The actor, who appears in a weekly show on Fox, is scheduled to begin filming "Bad Boys II" with **Will Smith** two weeks after his current production wraps.

■ Australian-born **Barry Tuckwell,** music director of the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, will play the French horn and give a speech at a ceremony May 17 when he and 324 others become U.S. citizens.

Tuckwell, 65, is switching flags because he's been coming to this country for 30 years, has an American wife and "in a way I have more friends all over the U.S. than anywhere else."



BY CHRIS PIZZELLO—ASSOCIATED PRESS

Martin Lawrence, with wife Pamela: Street scene.

■ The hit of the night at chef **Jean-Louis Palladin's** 50th birthday party aboard the Odyssey Tuesday was not the foie gras, not the kilo of caviar, not the fabulous flowers or even the fireworks in Old Town. It was the Oeufs Mimosa—deviled eggs—whipped up by chef **Gerard Cabrol** of Bistro Francais. Let's hear it for comfort food.

■ Illinois Gov. **Jim Edgar's** twin-engine airplane was struck by lightning and caught fire yesterday while flying south of Peoria, the Associated Press reported, but landed safely with no injuries.



FILE PHOTO ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jackson and Edgar, two very lucky guys.

"They told us that it was probably a miracle that the tail stayed on and that we were able to land" in the Beechcraft King Air, Edgar said. He planned to travel on to Chicago—by car.

■ Oscar-nominated actor **Samuel L. Jackson** won a $540,000 award yesterday from a New York City appeals court, the ciated Press reported. Jackson sued the New York Transit Authority in December 1994, after his foot was caught in a subway train door and he was dragged along the platform.

■ **George C. Scott** has no plans to return to the Broadway show "Inherit the Wind," for which he received a Tony nomination.

Gary Springer, a spokesman for the show, said the actor, 68, would remain in California, where he is being treated for an aortic aneurysm, the Associated Press reported.

Scott left New York last week and was replaced in his "Inherit" role by **Tony Randall.**

Scott's heart problem became an issue last week in a $3.1 million sexual harassment lawsuit filed against the "Patton" star by a 26-year-old woman who had worked as his personal assistant. Her lawyer wanted to question Scott before what Scott suggested would be life-threatening surgery, but a judge refused the request.

WATERMELON WOMAN

TALKING POINTS

--I am deeply concerned about an effort on the part of conservatives to pit the African-American community against the National Endowment for the Arts.

--I am referring to a Washington Times article that appeared on Friday criticizing the NEA, and the work of a young African-American, woman filmmaker named Cheryl Dunye.

--Ms. Dunye is a very talented, up and coming artist whose work as been hailed at numerous national and international film festivals. She is one of very few minority women in an art medium that is expensive and difficult to break into.

--The film, entitled Watermelon Woman, is a very respectful movie about a fictional African-American movie character from the 1930's known only as the Watermelon Woman. The story is about the author's quest to identify this actress and to end her anonymity.

--Although the Times article criticized Ms. Dunye for being a lesbian, and characterized her movie as containing the "hottest dyke sex scene ever recorded on celluloid," the movie is, in fact, very reverential in tone, and would earn an R rating in any theater showing.

--The Times article also quoted a number of African-American conservatives who spoke out against the NEA and the movie, and referred to unidentified critics who "say NEA is using black artists to push a homosexual agenda."

--The article is clearly a set-up, purposefully timed to coincide with the House's consideration of our appropriation bill this week.

--National Council on the Arts member Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, defended both Ms. Dunye and NEA in a letter sent to the Times this morning. She said Ms. Dunye "speaks from her experience...enriches rather than diminishes our collective American experience and the breadth and depth of this country's cultural spectrum."

PAGE A2 / FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1996 ★★ The Washington Times

Black lesbian film likely to rekindle arts-funding furor

NEA defends graphic comedy

By Julia Duin
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

It's black, lesbian, quirky, steamy — and taxpayer-funded.

"The Watermelon Woman," directed by Cheryl Dunye, seeks to promote a part of black sexual history she says the history books have left out.

Miss Dunye, 30, a Philadelphia native with a dry wit, androgynous clothing and a shaved head, has been compared to filmmakers Spike Lee and Woody Allen.

But her low-budget film on a mythical 1930s black actress who falls in love with a white woman differs somewhat from "Do the Right Thing" or "Annie Hall."

The film features what one review described as "the hottest dyke sex scene ever recorded on celluloid" — and was funded by a $31,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Critics say the NEA is using black artists to push a homosexual agenda, but Miss Dunye says the work is merely a comedy meant to show homosexuals' human side.

The debut of "Watermelon Woman" this Sunday at the New York Lesbian and Gay Video and Film Festival raises the question of whether the NEA should be marketing a sexually explicit film as black history. The agency's news release says the film merely "re-creates historical black cinematic images and attempts to point out the lack of information about black women in history."

"There is no demand in the black community for this movie," said Edmund Peterson, chairman of Project 21, a Washington-based organization of conservative blacks. "This is a classic example of the Clinton administration being in bed with the gay-lesbian movement and funding a project through tax dollars that can't get funded any other way.

"Everything gets put under the cover of black history. If we have a film on black criminals, is that black history? If there was a movie on black Christians, it wouldn't get funded. The NEA wouldn't fund a movie about black businesses in America. I'm not arguing her right to do a movie. It's just using taxpayer money to do it."

The NEA, which has been criticized in recent years for funding erotic, obscene or sacreligious art, approved the grant at about the same time last year that NEA chairman Jane Alexander was appearing before Congress and fighting for the life of the agency.

No sooner had Miss Alexander reassured politicians that only 40 of the 100,000 endowment grants awarded over a 30-year span had been controversial, NEA panelists approved funding for what Miss Dunye billed as one of the first feature films ever directed by a black lesbian.

Congress gets to discuss the matter again when a bill to fund the Department of the Interior, which includes the NEA, is tentatively set to be debated Wednesday on the floor of the House. The NEA, which took a 40 percent funding cut last year, is budgeted at $99.5 million for fiscal 1997, the same as fiscal 1996.

The film is bound to cause controversy, said Harvard Medical School psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint, the writer of an article in Ebony magazine on black homosexuals. He lists several famous black activists and entertainers he believes were homosexual and likens "Watermelon Woman" to



Cheryl Dunye, director of "Watermelon Woman," says her film may not have been made without National Endowment for the Arts funding.

"Tongues Untied," a controversial PBS film on the lives of gay black men.

"I think it's a story that hasn't been told," he said. "It's risky on the part of the NEA. As long as you don't preach it, then people in the black community won't go after you. People feel homosexuality is not black. It's not natural to the black community. It's been foisted on us by the white community and there's no history of black lesbians in Africa."

The film includes cameo appearances by lesbian writers Camille Paglia, Cheryl Clarke and Sarah Schulman and by black actor Brian Freeman of the performance troupe Pomo Afro Homos.

Women Make Movies, a New York-based distributor of ethnic, feminist and lesbian films, sponsored the film's NEA application, and the NEA funded it because Miss Dunye showed promise, endowment spokeswoman Cherie Simon said.

"She was funny. She was a good actress, a great writer," Miss Simon said. "They compared her to Spike Lee, and she looked to be a good emerging filmmaker."

Miss Dunye's intent on showcasing black lesbians was clearly spelled out in her application.

"The film will be among the few to document the rich histories of black women — lesbian and straight — who appeared on the screen in early Hollywood cinema," Miss Dunye wrote.

"With your support," she promised, "I can be one of the first African-American lesbian filmmakers who promotes our rarely seen lifestyles and histories."

But "black people are overwhelmingly against homosexuality," said social policy commentator Starr Daily, director of the Coalition on Urban Affairs in Los Angeles.

"But," she said, "we pit our morals against our code of silence. Black people should find this offensive that moviemakers have no problems showing illicit activity between blacks. But they know black people won't cause an outcry as long as they have black people in the film."

Had it not been for the fortuitous NEA grant, Miss Dunye says, the project might have gotten nowhere.

"It made [the film] financially workable and kind of said we're on the right path," she said. "The bills have not been paid on this project, so everyone's been working free.

"I think they [the NEA] were interested in the way I was making up my own history to make up for a lack of history," she said. "It was a tool of empowerment to question what was real, what was hearsay, and the sexuality issue is part of it."

Some things would go better left



Fae Richards, the title character in "The Watermelon Woman," is a fictional 1930s movie actress. She is played by Lisa Marie Bronson.

unsaid, says Jesse Peterson, founder and director of the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, a Los Angeles-based group aimed at black men.

"To associate this with the clout of black people is a disgrace and a slap in the face of black people who have died for the advance of black people in America," he said. "Dr. [Martin Luther] King would be outraged by this. He didn't die so that black homosexuals or any other homosexuals could force their lifestyle on black people."

Miss Dunye explains her work is not meant to offend.

"I worked with my cinematographer to not make it sexual, but passion-filled," she explained. "It's lesbians experiencing their sexual desire for each other . . . there was lots of kissing, lots of rolling," especially in a steamy scene depicting Miss Dunye's affair with a woman played by Guin Turner, star of the 1995 lesbian film "Go Fish."

"Watermelon Woman" may also be the last film of its kind the NEA ever funds. When President Clinton signed an Interior Department omnibus spending bill April 26, it came with wording inserted by Sen. Jesse Helms, North Carolina Republican, that forbids funding for art that "depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

After hearing of NEA's part in "Watermelon Woman," Mr. Helms threatened to try cutting all NEA funding next year.

"I had high hopes that Jane Alexander would forbid further outrages by the NEA, but apparently even she — nice lady that she is — lacks the power and the will to put an end to the NEA's obsession with handing out the taxpayers' money to self-proclaimed 'artists' whose mentality is just so much flotsam floating around in a sewer," he said.

But Miss Dunye insists her movie is meant to be educational and humorous, not controversial.

"I want to get black people laughing and back to the movies again — something without guns," she said.

...he Arts Agency That Won't Say Die

Chief Says Congress Should Take New Look

THE WASHINGTON POST
THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1996

By Jacqueline Trescott
Washington Post Staff Writer

This year could be the next to the last for the National Endowment for the Arts if House Republicans have their way, and the agency's chairman is arguing that it is doing just what Congress ordered. A top-to-bottom restructuring, Jane Alexander pleaded yesterday, should be rewarded with survival.

"We are doing exactly what they want the government to do well," Alexander said. The NEA reorganized its business, she said; it responded to their leadership and strives to be a catalyst.

"We put money down. . . . We are the stimulant, we are the economic engine. It is what the government does generally very well when it works well. That is why I think this Congress is so short-sighted."

The agency has spent almost nine months rewriting its guidelines, trimmed its staff by 90 people, shifted its 17 program areas into four

See NEA, C2, Col. 3

NEA, From C1

broad categories and decided organizations could submit only one application for grants from the general categories each year.

Despite this effort, the NEA is once again teetering on the edge of a crisis. Its funding is tied up in the budget impasse. While the prospect of another continuing resolution gives some breathing room past tomorrow, Alexander still has to figure out how this year's grants will be funded, given that all of the budgeted money has not been released. The agency is already working within a budget of $99.5 million, which reflects the 40 percent reduction that Congress levied last year.

Alexander outlined the new operations and the strategy for the agency's survival yesterday at a reporters' round table in her Pennsylvania Avenue NW office. Office space, including hers, has been cut in half. She called the remaining staff a "M*A*S*H" unit.

While the changes are being touted as noteworthy for the agency's detractors, the artistic constituency of the agency will be facing some painful times, she said.

What have hit the cultural community hardest, and distressed Alexander personally, she said, are the inability to fund individual artists and the prospect of small groups folding. Congress ordered that only literary artists, such as playwrights, can be awarded NEA funds. The agency received 9,000 applications last year from individual artists.

"I am the first to say the individual artist is the beginning and end of the creative process," said Alexander, who was an award-winning actress before her appointment more than two years ago.

Smaller and newer arts organizations "don't have a lot of corporate or foundation access. . . . They don't have the connections," she said. The NEA will fund some, but "we can't fund the numbers we did in the past. . . . It is like a little light going out."

This year is the second phase of an uphill battle to win funding, and life, from the Republican-controlled Congress. The NEA's budget is contained in the Interior Department appropriations bill, one of six that have not been approved. In addition, the House Republicans are standing by an agreement with their freshman colleagues to fund the agency for only two more years.

The freshman bloc that negotiated the two-years-and-out agreement gives arts advocates pause, especially coupled with the announced retirements of their strong allies in both Republican and Democratic camps. "In meetings with the freshman Republicans last year, it was very clear that the staff had little understanding of what it meant to be a nonprofit arts organization and how their financial structures worked," said Lee Kessler, executive director of the American Arts Alliance, a lobbying group. Other groups, such as the Christian Action Network, have written House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), applauding the House efforts to eliminate the NEA.

The agency will undoubtedly continue to have to defend itself. On "Meet the Press," and again on "Nightline," Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), the House majority whip, said the NEA could be included in a bill of targeted appropriations.

"We're going to only fund those programs we want to fund," DeLay said on "Meet the Press." "If we don't want a program or if we don't want the National Endowment for the Arts . . . we just don't bring it up on the floor and fund it."

This stance, said Alexander yesterday, has been brought on by years of reports that the agency has funded controversial art. Alexander said only 40 out of 100,000 grants in 30 years have caused problems.

"Our critics want to see us out the window, but to my mind they are operating out of old news and irrational interests. What we need to do is say let's look at exactly what you are doing to your communities," she said. President Clinton, in his appropriations veto message last month, called the 1996 NEA funding level "a dramatic departure from our commitment."

A year ago, when the then-new Republican leadership raised the prospects of eliminating the agency, NEA supporters mounted an aggressive campaign to save it. They enlisted celebrities and drummed in the message that the cultural institutions brought money into communities.

This year, said Kessler, the strategy is to demonstrate the impact on individuals. "We will continue to get the story out," she said. Yesterday the U.S. Conference of Mayors sent a letter to political leaders saying that the $162.3 million invested in the NEA last year triggered $650 million more from the mayors, and added that that partnership was "in serious jeopardy."

A major part of Alexander's argument for survival is that the agency is not sitting still and is adjusting to the political and economic reality. The recent reorganization, she said, was the first major change at the agency in 30 years.

After years of budget reductions, Alexander stopped what she called "the dangerous trend" of cutting up the funding pie in such a way as to give everybody something.

"We are going to award the most exceptional art," she said. The new categories, she said, would encourage "cross-fertilization," and the agency is looking carefully at shoring up areas that depend heavily on public funding, such as dance touring.

To further satisfy a congressional request, the NEA has established an enterprise development office.

Yesterday Alexander announced the preliminary plans for a series of small conferences to be called "American Canvas," which will examine the future of arts funding. The project will be underwritten by private sources, she said.

"We will begin to isolate what works, what doesn't, what is the role of the business community in any given town, what is the role of the legislature, what is the role of private citizen," said Alexander. "Do people care at all about the arts, do we need to keep pushing this at them? If they want it, how are they going to support it?"

Josh—
This is the best recent article.

THE WASHINGTON POST
THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1996

TV Preview

A Wet and Wild Smithsonian Birthday

By Tom Shales
Washington Post Staff Writer

"Smithsonian Fantastic Journey" gives new meaning to the phrase "dropping anchor" when it lowers Dan Rather 3,000 feet to the ocean floor. "What happens if you have a puncture in this submersible?" Rather asks the scientist next to him. The answer is not pretty. Dan would be Spam before you could say "Courage."

Deep-Sea Dan is one of five segments that make up "Journey," a fairly fascinating hour airing tonight at 8 on Channel 9. It's part of a joint venture with CBS News to celebrate the Smithsonian's 150th anniversary.

In addition, on Saturday CBS began airing occasional "Smithsonian Minutes," informational tidbits similar to the "Bicentennial Minutes" of 1976. Each offers a fun fact about the Smithsonian as delivered by a celebrity such as Whoopi Goldberg, Barbara Bush, Mike Wallace or Kermit T. Frog.

See TV PREVIEW, C4, Col. 1

TV PREVIEW, From C1

Frog also turns up as correspondent on one segment of "Fantastic Journey." It's a shameless but enjoyable plug for the Smithsonian's forthcoming two-year traveling exhibit, the first time ever that an assortment of the Smithsonian's 140 million artifacts have gone on tour across the country.

The exhibit, scheduled to visit 12 cities, will include Amelia Earhart's flight suit, Judy Garland's ruby slippers, Pat Nixon's 1969 inaugural gown, Gen. Robert E. Lee's wartime chair and Lincoln's hat—the very one he wore on an ill-advised trip to Ford's Theatre.

"Fantastic Journey" is not about objects but about things in motion. In the first segment, correspondent Russ Mitchell goes to India to find out how mahouts train elephants and perhaps learn why captive elephants at circuses and in zoos sometimes go on rampages. Of course the answer to that seems obvious: They go on rampages because they don't like being caged up and gawked at.

Ed Bradley follows "volcanologists" Steve and Donna O'Meara as they go searching for volcanoes that are about to spout off. They've been to "50 eruptions, all over the world," Steve proudly declares. Why do they go? As some amazing footage shows, volcanoes with their red-hot lava and white-hot fireworks are spectacular to see. And besides, Steve explains, it helps adjust his perspective: "We're losing quickly all semblance of anything greater than ourselves."

In East Africa, Peter Van Sant joins scientists who are trying to determine why lions and other great cats carry a feline version of the HIV virus, which causes AIDS in humans, yet do not become sick themselves. The segment is confusing and gets off the track, but the lion footage, while hardly up to National Geographic standards, is compelling.

Rather's underwater excursion is the last sequence on the show, which Rather also hosts. Rather prides himself on being intrepid and may indeed be the first network anchor to visit the ocean floor. Walter Cronkite, of course, wanted to go up in the space shuttle but so far hasn't made it.

In addition to the reports, the program is punctuated with "Smithsonian Minutes" of its own. One is hosted by Robin Williams, talking about Albert Einstein. Unfortunately, the introduction to the show makes it look as if Williams will be a major part of it. He is a minor one.

Someday one of our Capitol Hill cuckoos will no doubt suggest privatizing the Smithsonian completely—maybe letting Disney take it over and turn the Mall into a theme park. "Fantastic Journey" is a reminder of how inadvisable that would be and what a nice old institution the Smithsonian is.

Journal

FRANK RICH

Silence Of the Lambs

Which is the biggest scandal in Hollywood this week? The strange death of "Top Gun" producer Don Simpson? Tom Arnold's tasteless display of sexism at the Golden Globe Awards? The behind-the-scenes effort to deny Jane Austen an Oscar nomination for any of her three hit movies of '95?

For those who care about the future of culture in America, these stories pale next to the entertainment industry's shameful refusal to make good on its debt to the National Endowment for the Arts at its time of greatest need.

That debt can be seen in the credits of almost any Hollywood product. For years movie studios and TV networks have used N.E.A.-supported cultural institutions — regional and Off Broadway theater companies, the American Film Institute, the Sundance Film Festival — the way they once used Schwab's drugstore: as pickup spots for new talent. Just a short list of those whose early careers were nurtured by taxpayer-funded N.E.A. grants would include movie stars like Meryl Streep, John Malkovich and Kevin Kline, sitcom stalwarts like Christine Baranski ("Cybill") and David Hyde Pierce ("Frasier"), the Oscar-winning screenwriters of "Moonstruck" and "Silence of the Lambs," and directors and producers at Emmy-winning TV series as various as "Picket Fences," "Murphy Brown" and "Mad About You." One alumnus of N.E.A.-supported theaters alone — Alan Menken, composer of the Disney animated megahits — has helped make Hollywood billions of dollars.

Now many of the cultural institutions that gave us these talents and countless like them are hurting. To address the current Congress's punitive 40 percent cut of the Endowment's already small budget — from $162 million to $99.5 million — its chairman, Jane Alexander, has cut bureaucracy to the bone, eliminating 89 employees. Even so, grants will be far fewer and far smaller, with particularly devastating effects on smaller arts institutions beyond the big cities. A typical victim: Jacob's Pillow, the country's premier summer dance festival, which cannot replace its projected $75,000-plus loss in Endowment funds with either ticket sales (it already sells out) or new heavy-hitting corporate donors (there are none in its rural western Massachusetts neighborhood).

Hollywood and the N.E.A.

Instead of mounting a major campaign to stanch the bleeding of the wounded arts organizations that do its artistic research and development free, Hollywood is actually campaigning against one of Ms. Alexander's own rescue efforts. She has proposed that a bill extending the copyright period — and thus the potential royalties — for authors turn back some of this new income to the Arts Endowment.

Among the show-business powers opposing Ms. Alexander are two longtime champions of the N.E.A. — Jack Valenti of the Motion Picture Association of America, and the songwriter Marilyn Bergman, of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. In recent conversations, both argued on legal and practical grounds against a royalty giveback. But when I asked them what other plans or large-scale mobilization Hollywood was developing to help protect the nonprofit arts world, they threw up their hands, citing only a few individual contributors and past pro-N.E.A. lobbying efforts.

Except for the recording-industr leader Michael Greene, who calls th demonization of the N.E.A. by th religious right and its Congressiona patrons "the most vicious onslaugh on the arts since the McCarth years," Hollywood isn't speaking ou much about the Endowment toda The star-laden Hollywood Women Political Committee doesn't eve mention the N.E.A. on the elabora Internet site it unveiled this week.

This isn't to say that another Ba bra Streisand speech at Harva would save the endangered cultur infrastructure of America. Or th Hollywood money alone can repla what should be a prideful Feder role in supporting our cultural ins tutions. But the conspicuous gap b tween the entertainment industry huge debt to the nonprofit arts wor and its dilettantish efforts on th endangered world's behalf is the sc of ideological disconnect that giv Hollywood liberalism a bad name. the cultural institutions that serve farm clubs for Hollywood's best t ent wither along with the N.E.A., t movies are going to get a lot wor too.

The Washington Times
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1995

NEA cuts, not cutoff, agreed to

By David R. Sands
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A1

House and Senate negotiators yesterday agreed to deep cuts in federal spending on the arts but were sharply divided on whether to cut off funding altogether by 1998.

Lawmakers settled on a 39 percent cut, to $99.5 million, for the National Endowment for the Arts, rejecting a Senate proposal to add $11 million to the agency's funding.

Conservative GOP freshmen in the House have made the NEA one of their top candidates for abolition, objecting to individual grants that have been called obscene and offensive and to the general proposition that taxpayer money should subsidize art.

"Based on what I've heard, it's a good agreement," said Rep. Steve Largent, Oklahoma Republican, who helped lead a revolt by fellow freshmen in July to force the Republican leadership to accept a cutoff in funding for the NEA after two years.

"We've got a commitment that NEA begins with a zero appropriation in two years," he said. "I think that's the best we can do."

see NEA, *page A13*

'98 arts funding survives attack

From page A1

The NEA received $163 million for fiscal 1995. The National Endowment for the Humanities got $172 million.

But negotiators from the Senate, where the arts agency enjoys far more bipartisan support, forced the House to drop bill language saying the NEA could receive no money unless it was authorized by House legislation. That wording theoretically could have forced an immediate shutdown because the House has not passed an authorizing bill.

Marking up a fiscal 1996 appropriations bill that includes the Interior Department, the National Endowment for the Humanities and a number of other independent agencies, the two chambers' negotiators agreed to disagree on whether the NEA and NEH will receive any money after fiscal 1997.

Rep. Sidney R. Yates, Illinois Democrat and the NEA's most prominent backer in the House, said the language in the bill offers some solace for arts supporters.

"It still gives us an opportunity to review funding levels and try to save these agencies," he said. With words echoing Mr. Largent, he added, "That's as good as we can expect in this climate."

Sen. Robert F. Bennett, Utah Republican, fought unsuccessfully in the conference committee for the higher funding.

"Many senators view raising the number as a statement that the NEA is not headed for abolition," he said. "We really want to see a number north of $100 million."

With the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, the Senate and House remained deadlocked on another major spending bill, which includes the budgets for the Treasury Department, the Postal Service and the White House.

Lawmakers called off a negotiating session after failing to reach an agreement on a provision in the House bill imposing new lobbying restrictions on nonprofit groups that accept federal grant money. The Senate has refused to accept the provision, authored by Rep. Ernest Istook, Oklahoma Republican, and supported by the House GOP leadership.

On a third spending bill, the Senate devoted a good chunk of yesterday to a debate on fresh vs. frozen chicken.

In a fight pitting West Coast poultry producers against competitors in the South and East, the Senate voted to prevent the Department of Agriculture from spending money to enforce a rule to take effect next August on when poultry can be labeled fresh.

Current regulations allow producers in Arkansas, Alabama and other major poultry states to sell "fresh" chickens that have been shipped in trucks at temperatures in the mid-20s. The new rule would require those chickens to be labeled "hard-chilled" if the temperature drops below 26 degrees Fahrenheit and "frozen" if the storage temperature drops below zero.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, California Democrat, argued that the regulation represents "truth in labeling" consumer protection, but Democrats and Republicans from other poultry-producing states said California companies are trying to shut off competition.

At one point, Mrs. Boxer tried to make her point by pounding a frozen chicken against her desk, only to be stymied by Senate Majority Whip Trent Lott, Mississippi Republican, who said the use of a chicken as a prop violated Senate debate rules.

In the NEA debate, Mr. Yates unsuccessfully tried to remove bill language authored by Sen. Jesse Helms, North Carolina Republican, banning the NEA from funding, among other things, performances that "depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, . . . sexual activities or organs."

"Is a hug a sexual activity? Is a kiss?" Mr. Yates asked Rep. Ralph Regula, Ohio Republican and head of the House delegation at the conference. "What does 'sexual activity' mean?"

"I think the Senate would know more about that than I would," Mr. Regula replied to general laughter.



"Based on what I've heard, it's a good agreement."
— Rep. Steve Largent

The Washington Times
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1995

Bush hits 'voices of isolation' in U.S.

He decries bashing of Japan, China

By Willis Witter
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A1

OSAKA, Japan — The United States should ease its rhetoric toward Japan and "must stay involved" in Asia, said former President George Bush, who yesterday concluded a three-nation swing through the world's most dynamic region.

Warning against the "selfish voices of isolation," Mr. Bush said in a wide-ranging interview with The Washington Times that the U.S. administration should take the word "bash" out of its lexicon in dealing with Japan and avoid appearing to be "lecturing all the time" in dealing with China.

It was the former president's first such interview with a national newspaper since he left office in 1993. He concluded a tour of Vietnam, China and Japan yesterday.

"We must speak out against the selfish voices of isolation and protectionism we hear from time to time in our own country," said Mr. Bush, who has sought since leaving office to remain above the fray of domestic and international politics.

"If South Korea or Japan or China ever got the feeling that we were going to listen to the selfish siren's call of isolation, then the world would really be in a trap....

"We must stay involved. We must keep our commitments and we must lead," Mr. Bush said.

In a crisp white shirt and a dark

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From page A1

business suit, Mr. Bush, 71, seemed as relaxed as if he were about to walk outside for a backyard barbecue and a game of horseshoes. Instead, he was on his way to a banquet sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace.

He looks a decade younger than when he left office and said he was enjoying semi-retirement.

"In terms of politics [as an ex-president], you don't have to care what others think or what some pressure group wants. It's a wonderful feeling of liberation. I spend a lot more time with my family. I do miss some things about Washington, but not a lot."

"I just feel like this huge burden has been lifted."

Elder statesman or not, Mr. Bush couldn't resist taking a jab at Bella Abzug, the former New York congresswoman who recently sent verbal jabs at him, when, a week earlier, they were in Beijing at the same time — Mr. Bush at a conference on food production and Mrs. Abzug at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women.

"I wasn't that closely attuned to the [women's] conference, nor that interested," Mr. Bush said. "I made one joking reference to feeling sorry for the Chinese with longtime liberal activist Bella Abzug running around China."

Critics upbraided Mr. Bush, accusing him of making light of the harassment of about 26,000 women participants by Chinese security police.

"I was not over there to talk about Bella Abzug or this women's conference," Mr. Bush said, although he said he was "turned off" by the extreme agenda presented by some participants.

Mr. Bush yesterday called his remarks about Mrs. Abzug "a kind of joking shot at a slow-moving target."

"To her credit, Bella responded: 'What do you expect, George was speaking at a fertilizer convention' — funny one, Bella — but the extreme agenda presented by some at that conference turned me off. I think far more important than that conference is the U.S.-China relationship, and I'm afraid the conference did nothing at all to improve our relations with China."

If the women's conference dampened U.S.-China relations, how about Hillary Rodham Clinton's scathing public criticism of the Chinese hosts? Mrs. Clinton's speech became a highlight of the conference and won praise at home from conservatives and liberals alike.

"Sorry," Mr. Bush replied amiably. "I won't answer this one. I have tried not to criticize the president or the first lady."

He further declined to talk about domestic politics or to indicate a preference for the players on the Republican ticket for 1996.

With two sons active in politics — George Bush Jr. was elected governor of Texas last November and Jeb Bush narrowly lost a bid to be elected governor of Florida on the same day — Mr. Bush wants to keep his opinions to himself.

"If I get into a lot of issues that affect them, such as tort reform, crime or education reform, reporters just run down and say, 'Your father said this. Do you agree or disagree?'

"It's their time in the arena now. The politics that interest me are the politics of my boys, and I don't want to clutter up the arena."

The former president concluded his trip with an eight-day swing through Japan that ended with a speech yesterday in the southern city of Fukuoka.

The trip provided an opportunity for Mr. Bush to revisit themes that marked U.S. foreign policy in Asia throughout his four years in office — maintaining a high-profile U.S. presence through low-key diplomacy.

As the first sitting or former president to visit Vietnam since Lyndon B. Johnson visited the troops before the fall of Saigon 20 years ago, he urged speedier reconciliation between old enemies.

In China he met separately with President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng at a time when U.S.-China relations are arguably at their lowest point since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

"I don't consider China a threat," Mr. Bush said. "The best way to allay any such fear is for the United States to stay involved with China ... to confront less and consult more."

U.S.-China relations plummeted after a June visit to the United States by Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, the expulsion of two U.S. military attaches and the arrest of human rights activist Harry Wu.

"It may be great domestic politics to publicly confront and embarrass the Chinese, but it is not the way to accomplish what we want," said Mr. Bush, who served as ambassador to Beijing in the mid-1970s.

As president, Mr. Bush led an international effort to impose sanctions on China after Tiananmen. But he refused to revoke China's most-favored-nation trade status.

> *"I don't consider China a threat. The best way to allay any such fears is for the United States to stay involved with China . . . to confront less and consult more."*
>
> *— Former President George Bush*

"I remain convinced that the more business we do with China, the more contact we have with China, the more likely it is that China will move further down the road to more freedoms," he said.

"We should stand for human rights and certainly for democracy, but we must not insist that every Asian country be exactly like we are."

His visit set off rumors in Beijing that he would return to serve again as ambassador, something Mr. Bush said he would never consider.

The former president used his time in Japan to emphasize the themes of reconciliation 50 years after World War II and the need to maintain a close security alliance with Japan.

Despite flare-ups on issues such as the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution and the Japanese apology for the war, Mr. Bush said, "We've come so far that it's hard to be negative on the relationship."

He recalled his 1989 visit to Japan to attend the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. The decision drew fire from veterans groups angered over the emperor's wartime role as a god-man for whom Japanese soldiers eagerly fought to the death.

"I thought I had unique credentials to do it, having fought in the war," said Mr. Bush. "I think the Japanese appreciated it." Mr. Bush, as a young Navy torpedo-patrol plane pilot, was shot down in the South Pacific and rescued at sea.

"I keep pointing out that [the United States and Japan] must stay together. We are friends, not enemies. We've come a long way. We have healed the wounds and, I think there's great receptivity to that.

"I must confess I was worried a few months ago when there was a lot of name-calling and confrontation on trade matters. I'd like to see the word 'bash' out of our vocabularies."

Just two decades after the Vietnam war, Mr. Bush said, there's potential for the wounds to heal quickly. He credits veterans who visit with messages of reconciliation, such as Sen. John McCain, Arizona Republican and a one-time prisoner of the Vietnamese, who abused and tortured him.

The United States this summer re-established diplomatic ties with Vietnam, 20 years after the fall of Saigon.

"Vietnam, now embarking on a market economy, is about where China was 20 years ago. We've got big differences with them on their [political] system, big differences with them on human rights and in many areas.

"But I get the distinct impression that as they move toward a market economy we're going to see a vast improvement in individual liberties."

Even in China, he said, "there are far more human rights and individual liberties ... than there were when President Nixon" opened diplomatic ties in 1972.

On other topics, Mr. Bush:

- Warned against complacency in the nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula, saying, "The best way to guarantee peace on the peninsula is for the U.S. to keep its security commitments with South Korea."
- Said the United States should advocate democracy but warned that many authoritarian Asian countries see America's crime and violence and fear becoming like the United States.

Asked what he would do differently if he had another four years in office, Mr. Bush replied: "I'd be a better communicator. I just couldn't convince the American people that we weren't in a depression, even though the economy was growing at a 5.8 percent rate. I tried to convince the press, but they just said, 'Bush is out of touch.'

"We handed a very robust economy to my successor. But beyond that I haven't really thought about it. I closed that chapter when I left the White House."

Arts Endowment Budget Cut Set at 40 Percent

NEA Survives Move to Eliminate Agency in Two Years

By Jacqueline Trescott
Washington Post Staff Writer

A joint Senate-House conference committee agreed to cut nearly 40 percent from the National Endowment for the Arts budget next year, but killed a provision calling for the elimination of the beleaguered arts agency in two years. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) succeeded in his long-thwarted effort to ban NEA grants for sexually explicit material or projects that offend followers of particular religions.

NEA Chairman Jane Alexander predicted that the Helms amendments would led to First Amendment battles. "We believe that stringent restrictions on content are anathema to artists and the creative process and ultimately may cost the American taxpayers more money when they are challenged in the courts," she said.

The committee also removed language from the Interior Department appropriations bill that would have tied up NEA funds until the agency is reauthorized—a separate process that has not passed either the House or the Senate.

Despite giving ground on the two-year timeline, House Republican leaders promised anti-NEA forces in the House that they would continue to fight to abolish the agency. Rep. Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over cultural agencies, said a report attached to the bill would include strongly worded language to show that the House GOP is still intent on killing the NEA.

"We are going to be very clear about that," said Regula. "If I am here in that third year, I am not going to put a dime in their budget."

Senate managers of the bill, led by Appropriations Committee Chairman Slade Gorton (R-Wash.), promised to write in the report that they sharply disagree with the drive to kill the NEA.

The conference committee also approved a budget of $110 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities, a reduction of 37 percent from its current budget. The Institute of Museum Services is slated for a 27 percent cut, to $21 million for the next fiscal year.

"It is as good as we could do under the circumstances," said Rep. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.), a staunch supporter of the cultural agencies.

The conference committee decisions are part of the large and contentious package that must now be approved by the full House and Senate and signed by President Clinton. The bill also contains funding for the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art and the Kennedy Center.

Beating the two-year deadline is viewed as a resounding victory for the NEA. Since taking power almost a year ago, the Republican leadership has vowed to restructure funding for the country's arts and humanities programs. Chairmen of the various committees with jurisdiction over the NEA have proposed plans that would have put the endowment on the road to oblivion. The two-year plan grew out of a late-night rebellion in July led by a group of freshmen who demanded a specific—and short—timeline.

House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.) told his colleagues yesterday that the timeline was likely to be stricken, and apparently he was assured their support.

Aware that budget cuts are headed their way, officials at the NEA and NEH have been preparing plans for general reorganization, staff reductions and program consolidation. Said Alexander: "The endowment, while absorbing a major cut, must and will continue to serve a crucial role not filled by any other entity—that of a strong national leader in the arts."

Report Backs Funding For Needle Exchanges

Anti-AIDS Programs Didn't Promote Drug Use

By John Schwartz
Washington Post Staff Writer

Controversial "needle exchange" programs reduce the spread of the virus that causes AIDS without encouraging illegal drug use, says the most exhaustive report yet on the subject.

The new report recommends lifting the ban on federal funding for programs that provide drug users with sterile injection equipment or bleach for sterilizing needles.

A series of laws passed since 1988 prohibits federal funding for such programs. According to the wording of legislation passed by Congress in 1992, the ban on federal support must continue "unless the Surgeon General of the United States determines that such programs are effective in preventing the spread of HIV and do not encourage the use of illegal drugs."

There are currently about 75 needle exchange programs in 55 cities funded from other sources.

In a statement, Philip R. Lee, assistant secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, called needle exchange programs "an extraordinarily complex public policy strategy" and said the Clinton administration would review the report. He noted that Congress has opposed federal funding for such programs.

The Surgeon General's office has been vacant since President Clinton fired Joycelyn Elders last December. HHS officials said it is unclear whether the wording of the various laws passed by Congress can be satisfied by any other public official's determination.

Shared needles are a growing cause of HIV infection. The proportion of new AIDS cases linked to sex between men has decreased to 47 percent in 1993 from 74 percent in 1981. During the same time, the proportion of cases attributed to the sharing of needles by drug users has increased to 28 percent from 12 percent.

The 319-page report, "Preventing HIV Transmission: The Role of Sterile Needles and Bleach," was released yesterday by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, congressionally chartered private research organizations that provide policy advice in science, technology and health. A panel reviewed case studies of needle exchange programs in cities around the country—including a short-lived program in Washington, D.C.—and evaluated the large body of research on the subject.

The panel reaffirmed the findings of several other bodies. The American Medical Association, the General Accounting Office and two reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have all recommended that the government lift the funding ban.

The Clinton Administration has not acted on that recommendation. Last February, Lee said, "I have not been convinced on the evidence that has been presented so far," and cited unpublished studies "which have raised further doubts—in my mind, at least—whether HIV transmission is, in fact, reduced in needle exchange programs."

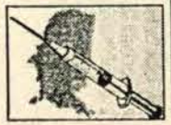
The new report, however, found that almost all studies of needle exchange programs provided evidence that they reduce transmission of the AIDS virus, do not increase the use of illegal drugs, and have other benefits.

"The activities of needle exchange and bleach distribution programs go beyond just providing sterile injection equipment and bottles of bleach," Lincoln E. Moses, a Stanford University scholar who chaired the panel said in a statement. "The programs often result in more referrals to drug abuse treatment."

The new report is "a vindication for all of the needle exchange workers around the country, as well as the scientists who have been coming to these conclusions for years," said Peter Lurie, an assistant professor with the University of California, San Francisco's Center for AIDS Prevention and lead researcher on a major 1993 report on needle exchange programs. The government, he said, "can no longer hide from the weight of scientific evidence on this issue."

SYRINGE SALES

The following jurisdictions are the only ones that require a prescription to buy syringes at a pharmacy:*



California
Delaware
Massachusetts
Illinois
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Puerto Rico
District of Columbia

*In other states, pharmacies may set their own store policies.

SOURCE: "Preventing HIV Transmission: The Role of Sterile Needles and Bleach"

THE WASHINGTON POST

S&L Bill Could Be Disruptive, Trade Group Says

By Albert B. Crenshaw
Washington Post Staff Writer

A measure approved yesterday by the House Banking Committee to compel all federally chartered savings and loans to become national banks or state-regulated thrifts could disrupt the industry and severely damage some institutions if parts of it are not modified, thrift industry officials said.

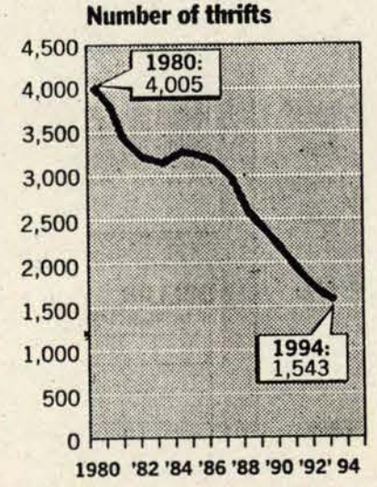
The industry's principal regulator, the Office of Thrift Supervision—which would be eliminated under the measure—also expressed reservations, though it endorsed the reforms in principle.

"We are urging caution in approaching this because the past history of government intervention in the thrift industry has had unintended and unfortunate consequences at times, and if forcing a thrift to convert doesn't meet a market need, the risk is the institution will be weakened rather than strengthened," an OTS spokesman said.

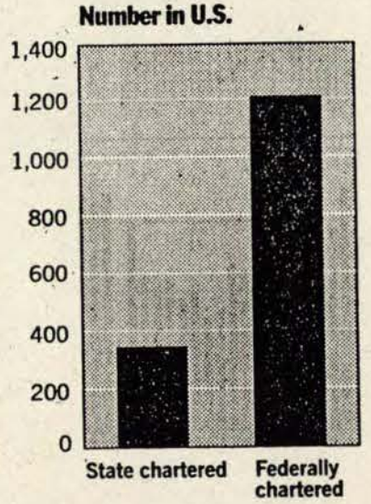
The measure, which would effectively wipe out an industry set up more than 50 years ago to help fund the nation's housing markets, was approved as part of the Banking Committee's work in the budget reconciliation process. It would raise some $5 billion in revenue in fiscal 1996—a major consideration encouraging its adoption.

THE FATE OF THRIFTS

There are less than half the number of thrifts now than in 1980...



... and most of those are federally chartered.



SOURCES: Office of Thrift Supervision

THE WASHINGTON POST

Committee Chairman James A. Leach (R-Iowa) conceded yesterday that "the committee has not had a chance to deal with all nuances" of the thrift issue, but "we are moving at this time to avoid" such revenue-raising alternatives as boosting fees for Federal Housing Administration loans or premiums for federal flood insurance.

"The time frame . . . was not the best," said Rep. Marge Roukema (R-N.J.), a principal backer of the measure, but failure to act now would mean that the opportunity "could be lost for the indefinite future, so I thought we would strike while the iron was hot."

Driving the issue was a problem with the fund that insures savings and loan deposits. That fund has been undercapitalized, and S&Ls have been forced to pay premiums six times those that banks must pay into their insurance fund, which is now fully capitalized.

The plan would boost the thrift fund with a one-time assessment on the industry that would bring in some $6 billion, about $5 billion of which could be counted as revenue for deficit-reduction purposes in fiscal 1996.

Robert R. Davis, chief economist of America's Community Bankers, a thrift trade group, said that while his members applaud the action on the insurance fund, the measure could trigger severe tax consequences for S&Ls that become banks, perhaps as much as $4 billion.

He also said that since thrifts are now allowed to engage in businesses forbidden to banks—such as insurance, real estate brokerage and development—conversion would force some of them into a "fire sale" of assets that could disrupt markets and damage institutions.

Davis said the measure has "an air of political retribution about it."

Bankers, on the other hand, support the measure.

"We think it is absolutely essential" that the thrift charter be merged into the bank charter, said Ed Yingling of the American Bankers Association. ". . . Otherwise we run the risk having another savings and loan rescue bill two years from now if there's a problem."

Living Without The NEA

By Ruth Berenson
Special to The Washington Post

In 1985 Stephen Sondheim won a Pulitzer Prize for "Sunday in the Park With George," a music theater piece inspired by Georges Seurat's "Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grand Jatte," painted 100 years earlier.

Sondheim contrasts the two centuries. In the first act, he shows Seurat as compulsive and single-minded in pursuit of his art, totally oblivious of the world around him. Other artists, critics, dealers, collectors—even women—exist only as stimuli to his painterly imagination.

The second act focuses on young George, Seurat's American great-grandson and also an artist. Haunted by his ancestor's genius and consumed by a longing for fame, he wears Armani suits and spends his time buttering up art world moguls—the museum director, the critic, the bejeweled collector—hoping to wangle a commission, a grant; he hasn't produced anything since he won a fellowship fresh out of art school. This being a fairy tale of sorts, he finally realizes that only by working as hard and as single-mindedly as Seurat can he succeed—but he knows that if he does so, he risks Seurat's fate: death at 32 without having sold a single picture.

Recently the Bravo network showed a film of "Sunday in the Park" to mark its 10th anniversary. It has aged well: Sondheim emerges not just as a brilliant composer and librettist but as a prophet as well—for with the crumbling of the support system on which American artists and arts institutions have depended for the past 30 years, today they face the same stark choice that confronted the latter-day George. They can keep on working and have faith in themselves as artists, or they can give up. It's that simple.

At this writing, the fate of the National Endowment for the Arts is still undecided. It may be summarily terminated or given a reprieve; perhaps it will be privatized, though nobody seems to have figured out what this might entail. Equally uncertain is whether the state arts councils will continue to receive federal funding if NEA is abolished. What *is* clear is that the not-for-profit arts—i.e., all art disciplines not financed by our highly successful entertainment industry—must either find new infusions of money or make radical changes, artistic as well as economic, to continue to flourish.

Can they learn from history? The first half of the 20th century, a time of incredible artistic excitement all over the Western world, witnessed the birth of such typically American creations as jazz, modern dance, Mickey Mouse, skyscrapers, big bands and abstract expressionism; our art museums, opera companies and symphony orchestras became world-famous. Children, even those with immigrant parents, went to public schools, read Mark Twain and Shakespeare, and learned the rudiments of music and art. No support system sustained this. The federal government had nothing to do with it, except—and it's an important exception—for the income tax amendment of 1919 that allowed deductions for charitable contributions to nonprofit institutions.

Of course, artists and arts institutions spent a lot of energy courting prospective patrons, mostly individuals, some very rich, many not. Tax-free foundations and corporate philanthropy programs were unknown until after World II. To eat, artists found outside jobs, preferably teaching. Many found employment in their own medium through WPA (Works Progress Administration), a New Deal "make work" program that expired after Pearl Harbor. Artists had a hard time—but they always have, even geniuses.

Nobody has ever explained why these years witnessed such an unprecedented burst of creativity, or why, at least for the time being, we seem to have lost steam. But the very fact that it happened should make us cautiously optimistic about an NEA-less future.

Those who have speculated that the private sector—i.e., arts-oriented foundations and corporate donors—will fill the gap opened by the decline in public funding are doomed to disappointment. It won't. A study to be published by the Rockefeller Foundation in September found that the thousand largest arts-involved foundations expect to *reduce* their arts portfolios because of declining assets and increased pressure to contribute more generously to social welfare and human services; corporate donors said they would likely follow suit.

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How artists and arts institutions are affected by these new conditions will, of course, vary from discipline to discipline:

■ **Mainstream Organizations.** The big and famous institutions are likely to be least affected. The Rockefeller study found that most private-sector arts dollars are distributed locally, mainly to museums and performing arts organizations, with one-third of all private grants going to just 160 mainstream institutions across the country. These presumably include our world-famous symphony orchestras, opera companies, ballet companies and art museums. The government support they receive is negligible by comparison, so most will hardly notice its disappearance.

■ **Nonprofit Theaters.** They'll probably be okay, if local support holds. Their numbers have grown from 56 in 1966 to 450 today, mainly because of strong support from individuals and local businesses—but rising costs and union demands are a constant drain. The loss of government money could mean even higher ticket prices, and to keep drawing audiences, they may have to dumb down their repertories with more Broadway hits, fewer classics and fewer "difficult" playwrights. And they'll have to be careful not to offend the state and local arts councils on which their survival depends.

Experimental off-off Broadway theaters that seek new playwrights and performers are at great risk. Occasionally, as when Playwrights Horizons helped develop "Sunday in the Park," such theaters spawn a big hit and collect royalties. But most live hand-to-mouth.

■ **Dance.** Big trouble. The New York City Ballet is the exception, because it's big enough to be mainstream. But many equally well known dance companies—including the Washington Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company and the Joffrey Ballet—have teetered on the brink of bankruptcy for years. Their expenses are astronomical. Lacking permanent homes, they are ineligible for state or municipal support. Smaller modern dance companies survive through residencies in colleges or universities and by touring. Many disband after completing a season's engagements, hiring new performers for the next.

Dance as an art form is bound to be affected by economics. There will be smaller ensembles requiring different choreography. Solo recitals, now rare but common among dance pioneers such as Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, might be revived.

■ **Classical Music.** Could be an endangered species. Many symphony orchestras founded in a burst of civic pride during in the 1950s and '60s have given up the ghost. The survivors give fewer concerts, stick to the tried and true (Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, "Rhapsody in Blue") and are getting involved in arts education. Chamber Music America reports that things are looking up for small ensembles: They are abandoning straightforward concerts for residencies in colleges and small towns, where they are quickly accepted as members of the community. The basic reason for classical music's decline, however, is that music teaching in the public schools has become nearly as obsolete as McGuffey Readers.

■ **Jazz.** It's healthy. Festivals, mostly nonprofit, are thriving, and featuring young performers.

■ **Opera.** This is a field enlivened by new work—especially in Houston. Some companies—the Metropolitan, Chicago, Houston, perhaps San Francisco—are strong mainstream institutions. The futures of the rest, including (alas) the chance-taking Santa Fe Opera and the New York City Opera, are very uncertain. The Washington Opera may have a reprieve, thanks to the appointment of superstar tenor Placido Domingo as artistic director. Few companies dare depart from the standard repertory, so many critically acclaimed new operas premiered over the past decade have not had second performances. American singers, composers and conductors are finding work abroad, especially in Germany.

■ **Painting, Sculpture, Assemblage, Etc.** The "isms" and "trends" that began with abstract expressionism and succeeded one another in bewildering rapidity into the early 1990s were supported by an art world elite almost identical to the one wooed by young George in "Sunday in the Park"—museum directors and curators, critics, nonprofit foundations (Rockefeller, Ford) and in-house corporate foundations specializing in arts support (AT&T, Binney & Smith). A bemused public reads about them in Time and Newsweek and views them in commercial galleries and museums, happily aware that they aren't expected to buy anything. Only museums and serious collectors with a lot of wall space and storage room do much buying.

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THE WASHINGTON POST
SUNDAY, JULY 23, 1995

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usually as an investment. Until the early '90s, auction prices for contemporary art rose steadily, infuriating artists who had sold cheap and now saw collectors coining money at their expense.

Dance critic Arlene Croce has sparked an angry response when she named the current ism: "Victim Art." She was referring to dance, more specifically to choreographer Bill T. Jones—but it accurately describes the subject matter of today's American version of old-time Communist agitprop: AIDS, battered women, sexually abused children and government oppression, often epitomized by a graffiti-like portrait of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). Its lasting value is debatable. What will they paint when they don't have Helms to kick around anymore?

■ **Graphics, Photography, Crafts.** Affordable art for you and me. This art sells; so does folk art. You don't have to go to SoHo or Underground Atlanta to find it—it's everywhere, and thriving—even in the so-called nonprofit (though expensive) shops run by museums.

■ **Museums, Alternative Spaces.** Museums were created to show paintings and sculpture from all ages and places—but in recent years they also have made their facilities available to performers of all kinds, traditional and contemporary, which has helped them lose their elitist image. Private-sector support for flashy temporary exhibitions will continue to be more forthcoming than the steady funding for less glamorous causes such as arts education, preservation laboratories or repairs to the roof.

Alternative spaces originated in the '60s as part of the youthful "don't trust anybody over 30" rebellion; now they're celebrating their own 30th birthdays. Like their human counterparts heading toward middle age, many have metamorphosed into respected and prosperous members of their communities. Some have succeeded in maintaining a true "cutting edge," seeking out new forms such as computer art and electronic music. A few have been closely involved with the scandals that sparked the culture wars over NEA.

Many of these spaces could be in trouble.

■ **Literature.** There's trouble ahead for small presses and little magazines. The conglomerate takeovers of publishing have meant the near-extinction of those publishers willing to take a chance on a young writer. State and municipal humanities councils support small, nonprofit presses to fill this gap; nevertheless, not all of the presses will weather the loss of federal funding. "Little mags" without university affiliations are also shaky. Private-sector support for literature in any form is almost nonexistent apart from the MacArthur grants, Pulitzer Prizes and Guggenheim fellowships—and these honors, of course, go only to published writers and poets. This makes the profession a part-time occupation for all but the few who achieve best-sellerdom.

■ **New Media Art Forms.** To many young artists, new media are more challenging than traditional forms. Their reach is international: Composers in Spokane freely swap with colleagues in Seoul; if they compose, say, an orchestral piece, they can hear their music quickly on electronic instruments, a pleasure denied to traditional composers. To date, much new media work is done in university labs donated by the electronics industry.

Clearly, the crisis confronting culture and the arts is not just about money: It goes deeper. The voters who threw out liberal Democrats last November were simply fed up with talking heads denigrating religion, old-fashioned patriotism and "family values." And they were fed up with schools that defined English as "language arts," where their kids weren't learning to read but were becoming experts in drugs, guns and condoms. The headline-making vulgarities of a tiny minority of NEA's grantees were more of the same—but easier to fix: *Kill NEA!* Get government out of the culture business once and for all.

Apparently none of those defending NEA ever really believed they might lose. The Rockefeller study, for instance, speaks of "reduced government support"—not a complete end to it. Now 14 of the largest foundations involved in the arts have established a think tank, the Center for Arts and Culture, to sponsor research on issues related to cultural policy. One can only hope they will go further, beyond thinking to action—using their millions to somehow reassemble some of the shards left by NEA's disappearance.

The Washington Times
★ FRIDAY, JULY 14, 1995

A work of art by the GOP freshmen

House rookies win earlier NEA cutoff

By David R. Sands
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A1

Rebellious freshman House Republicans yesterday celebrated their biggest legislative coup to date, forcing their elders to speed up the funding cutoff for federal aid to the arts.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia and other House GOP leaders agreed to eliminate all funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) after the 1997 fiscal year after 61 Republicans, most of them rookies, took the unusual step of voting against a rule for an appropriations bill that would have preserved the funding for at least three years.

"I think this has tremendous symbolic significance," said Rep. John Shadegg, a freshman from Arizona. "It's our first clear demonstration that we will confront the leadership to prove we are committed to what we came here to do."

"We may suffer from a lack of historical perspective on programs compared to some people in this town," said another freshman Republican, Steve Largent of Oklahoma, "but I think it shows we get more impatient about getting things done."

The House Appropriations Interior subcommittee approved a bill that would have cut funding for the NEA from $162 million in fiscal 1995 to $99.5 million in fiscal 1996, eliminating all funding for the endowment in three years.

The original rule for the bill, which reached the House floor Wednesday night, would have blocked any amendments on funding for the NEA or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A number of NEA grants to artists and organizations in recent years have been criticized by conservatives, who argue that taxpayers should not be subsidizing art, particularly NEA-backed works that are obscene or offensive.

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HOUSE

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Colleagues credited Mr. Largent, Rep. Mark E. Souder of Indiana and Rep. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, all first-term Republicans, with rallying conservatives to vote against the rule.

The rule failed Wednesday night, preventing consideration of the entire $12 billion Interior appropriations package. The bill includes money for the departments of Energy and Interior, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and a range of federal arts programs.

House Republican leaders, including Mr. Gingrich and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert L. Livingston of Louisiana, then agreed to the two-year funding cutoff for the NEA, including passage of authorizing legislation terminating the agency.

After the deal was struck, the rule passed yesterday on a 229-195 vote.

While the difference between cutting off funds in 1997 or 1998 may not seem great, the House leaders pledged to hold fast to the new cutoff date in the coming House-Senate conference. NEA supporters in the Senate are pushing for a seven-year phaseout of federal support for the NEA, with only very slight funding reductions in the interim.

"We have as firm a commitment as you can get in this town from the speaker and the Appropriations chairman" for the earlier House date, Mr. Largent said.

"What we feared was that there would be a compromise to end NEA after, say, five years," Mr. Shadegg said. "The reality is, if you push the cutoff date five years out, you haven't really eliminated anything."

Mr. Largent took pains to say GOP first-termers remain "team players," despite the revolt. "We met with the leadership two weeks ago on this," he said. "We didn't lie in the weeds or try to surprise anyone on this. We told them exactly what we planned to do."

He said the leadership's decision to proceed with the restrictive rule meant "one, that they were quietly hopeful we'd succeed, or two, that they didn't think we'd have the gumption to pull down the rule."

The House labored late last night on the overall Interior appropriations bill, wading through about 70 amendments in hopes of completing passage before today.

The Washington Times
★ FRIDAY, JULY 14, 1995

GOP budget cutters pull punches

By Major Garrett
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A1

House Republicans who vowed to carry out the revolution that the Democratic Congress thwarted during the Reagan-Bush years have overlooked sizable budgetary targets of both administrations.

In several recent appropriations bills, Republicans preserved hefty funding for New Deal and Great Society agencies that many budget watchdogs believe have long since outlived their usefulness.

Examples include allocations of $348 million for the Economic Development Administration (EDA), $278 million for the Legal Services Corp., $103 million for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and $142 million for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Targeted agencies alive and kicking

All were prime targets for elimination during the Reagan administration. And the spending approved so far exceeds or resembles requests sought by President Bush when he was dealing with a hostile Democratic Congress.

ARC spending exceeds by $92 million Mr. Bush's 1991 request. Funds for the EDA are $328 million higher than Mr. Bush's request for 1991.

Rep. Scott L. Klug, Wisconsin Republican, tried unsuccessfully to eliminate funding for the TVA, a relic of the New Deal, and the ARC, a product of the Great Society. In both instances, more than 100 Republicans lined up against him.

"It's an extraordinary indication of how tepid our resolve has

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BUDGET

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been," Mr. Klug said. "Two months ago we had the bright promise of a revolution, and the evidence is we haven't met the mark."

Mr. Klug came up against Republicans inside and outside Congress who previously supported trimming some of these agencies.

Govs. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania and Don Sundquist of Tennessee wrote letters backing funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. As members of the House, both men in 1993 voted for a $90 billion budget-cutting bill that sought to cut both agencies.

Mr. Klug believes Republicans are setting themselves up for a fall if voters conclude their approach is only slightly stingier than the Democrats'.

"I thought the election last year was about a trend in government to making it smaller and reducing its involvement in people's lives," Mr. Klug said. "But so far we haven't locked the doors, turned out the lights and rolled out the cabinets of a single agency."

Rep. Robert L. Livingston, Louisiana Republican and chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said hundreds of small government agencies are being eliminated. He said lawmakers will cut $22 billion from the 1995 budget,

> *"So far we haven't locked the doors, turned out the lights and rolled out the cabinets of a single agency."*
>
> *— Rep. Scott L. Klug*

the largest single-year reduction in domestic discretionary spending in recent memory.

"Oh, give me a break," Mr. Livingston said. "We're meeting every target and we're cutting back everywhere. If that doesn't satisfy them, nothing will."

The spending for these and other programs is smaller than was approved last year. But Mr. Klug believes that should be expected of a Republican Congress and much tougher cuts have to be made to prove that a true revolution is taking place.

Steve Moore, a budget analyst with the Cato Institute, said Republicans have met spending targets in their budget plan but have shown little or no interest in uprooting obsolete programs.

"This is the budget revolution that wasn't," Mr. Moore said. "This is the exact same mistake the Reagan administration made. It reduced spending on some programs ... but the spending went up later. If you want to have a lasting impact on how this town operates, you have to pull these programs out by the roots. And if you don't have the strength to eliminate them now, you won't ever have the strength."

Rep. Harold Rogers, Kentucky Republican, defended the allocations for the Legal Services Corp. and the EDA that his subcommittee approved. He said Legal Services eventually will perish and this year's funding keeps the agency going until another congressional committee decides how to close it down.

He also said new rules will prevent the agency from providing legal aid to illegal aliens or engage in lobbying or working of redistricting cases — activities that have drawn the most conservative fire.

He said the EDA enjoys vast bipartisan support because it doles out grants to local governments across the nation. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations thought most of the grants were wasteful.

Mr. Rogers, who represents southeast Kentucky, defended the ARC for helping reduce poverty in the 13-state region where federal grants help pay for water projects and road construction.

The ARC has also spent millions on non-poverty programs.

House Accord Would Kill Arts Endowment by 1997

Early Cutoff Also Threatens Humanities Fund

By JERRY GRAY A1

WASHINGTON, July 13 — Faced with a freshman-led mutiny, House Republican leaders agreed today to cut off all Federal funding to the National Endowment for the Arts within two years — a year earlier than they had planned and five years ahead of the Senate's schedule.

The House, mired in a daylong debate over an $11.96 billion Interior Department appropriations bill for 1996, did not reach a similar agreement to shorten the life of the National Endowment for the Humanities. But wending through the House and toward likely approval are two amendments that would set in law the 1997 deadline for both the arts and humanities agencies.

Another of the conservative's favorite cultural targets, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is also in line for a phaseout of Government financing. An Appropriations subcommittee has approved a $240 million subsidy for 1996, a reduction from 1995 of $20 million, or 7.7 percent. While the cutback is far smaller than had originally been threatened, the subcommittee has put the corporation too on the road toward an end of all Federal financing. A proposal to that effect could come before the full House as early as next week.

The future of the endowments has become the focal point of the debate over the Interior Department's appropriations bill.

The bill would cut financing for the endowments by 40 percent over their current budgets — leaving arts and humanities each with $99.5 million for 1996, while heading them toward an end to all Federal monies.

The bill would also immediately eliminate financing for President Clinton's national service program, known as Americorps, and for new land purchases. And it would terminate the agency that helps compile the endangered species list, the National Biological Service; and transfer its duties to the United States Geological Survey; begin the phaseout of the Bureau of Mines; and provide only nominal funding, $1, for a proposed new Federal park in the Mojave National Preserve. Current language in the bill extends a 14-year-old moratorium on any new offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration, but removes a ban on new mining patents.

The battle over the endowments opened with a curious skirmish.

Before debate can begin on a bill, lawmakers must first approve the rules or guidelines under which the debate will proceed. With 232 Republicans in the 435-seat House, Republican leaders had expected to push through the Interior bill over Democratic opposition, by adopting a rule that would have limited both debate and the opportunity for amendments to restore money for the endowments and other programs.

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But that plan fell apart late Wednesday night when dozens of Republicans, most of them freshmen, joined Democrats to reject that rule, 238 to 177. While Democrats wanted the chance to put money in, conservatives were angry that the rule would also have denied them the chance to kill Federal funding immediately for the arts and humanities.

Bowing to those angry rumblings from the Republican freshmen, the House leadership this morning put forward a new rule, which was approved by a 229-to-195 vote, that not only opened the floodgates for dozens of amendments, but also included language that would end the arts endowment funding in two years unless Congress later authorizes new spending.

The original House legislation had specified three more years of funding, and the Senate has indicated it would settle on seven years. After losing on the first rule, House Republican leaders suggested as a compromise phasing out the endowment subsidy over five years.

That idea was met this morning with swift and angry rejection from conservative and mostly junior Republicans.

"That doesn't demonstrate that we're moving toward the fiscal discipline many of us came here to accomplish," said Representative John Shadegg of Arizona, a freshman Republican.

Just about half of the appropriation — $6 billion — would go toward financing the Interior Department programs that manage and study the country's animal, plant and mineral resources. The rest of the money is allocated among programs dealing with culture, art, agriculture, energy and Indian affairs, all of which have traditionally been lumped together for budget purposes.

The appropriation is $1.56 billion less than in 1995 and $1.85 billion less than the Clinton Administration requested. A majority of the cuts come from budgets for the arts and culture — $72.6 million from the humanities endowment; $62.9 million from the arts endowment; $12 million from the Smithsonian Institution, which will receive $350 million; $7.7 million from the Institute of Museum Services, which would leave it with $21 million; $6.9 million from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which would receive $6.2 million.

Only the National Holocaust Museum, where the attendance is four times greater than projected, received a major increase. The bill provided $28.7 million, $2.1 million more than in 1995 and the same as the President requested.

Conservatives have criticized the National Endowment for the Arts for financing controversial, some say obscene, projects and have charged that the National Endowment for the Humanities has favored liberal causes in doling out money for media grants, museums, and historical organizations.

But while much of the wrangling of the past two days has focused on the endowments, Democrats have also charged that the Republicans are using the Interior appropriations bill to weaken environmental laws and programs. Representative David R. Obey of Wisconsin, the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, called the cuts in the National Biological Service as "a back-door means of gutting the Endangered Species Act."

The bill provides $53 million for the protection of endangered species, $16 million less than in 1995. But it does not provide money for expanding the endangered species list, pending reauthorization of the 22-year-old Endangered Species Act.

The National Biological Service was established in 1993 by the Interior Secretary to research and to catalogue plants and animals. But the agency has been embroiled in controversy since its creation because of its role in adding to the endangered species list.

The service employs 1,900 people at 15 science centers, 90 field stations and 54 cooperative research units.

Supporters of the service have said that an independent agency is needed to provide unbiased scientific research on the nation's fauna and flora. But opponents, especially a bloc of Western lawmakers, have argued that the service has encouraged Federal encroachment on private property and that the used of volunteers decreases the validity of the scientific data it collects.

The agency had a budget of $162 million in 1995. But under the appropriations bill, its research duties and the university-based research programs it oversees would be transferred to the geological survey, where it would receive $112 million. Language in the appropriations bill would prohibit the service from conducting new surveys on private lands without the permission of the land owner.

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