



# ArtFBI

# ArtFax

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A Faxazine of Arts Information from Cyberspace to the Mid-Atlantic Community

## PFAW RELEASES FOURTH REPORT ON CHALLENGES TO ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Public support for freedom of expression is being diminished by the growing number of politicians who have adopted the right-wing strategy of exploiting culture war issues for political gain, according to a report released in early June by People For the American Way (PFAW).

The fourth edition of **Artistic Freedom Under Attack** documents 137 challenges to artistic expression in 41 states and the District of Columbia. Of those challenges, an "alarming 73 percent" were successful in having artwork removed or restricted in some way, PFAW reports.

For the first time, this year's **Artistic Freedom Under Attack** included incidents involving popular culture such as television, films, music and advertisements — in addition to the fine arts that have been the report's traditional focus. Twenty-

six percent of the reported challenges were in the pop culture category.

A few of the many incidents documented in **Artistic Freedom Under Attack** include: Six weeks into production, a high school principal and a school superintendent in Chehalis, Washington, decided to cancel a previously approved plan to stage Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the grounds that it contained "adult themes" that might prompt controversy. The decision came on the heels of complaints about a production of *South Pacific*. A community member wrote to the principal complaining about the classic musical's vulgarity and profanity.

City legislators in Anchorage, Alaska voted to cut city arts funding, citing a local theater's production of programs



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dealing with gay and lesbian themes. The legislators reduced the city's arts budget by \$20,000, which reflected the amount of funding recommended by the Arts Advisory Commission for the theater. But, after public demonstration of support of the arts, legislators restored the funding.

The report also indicates a trend in self-censorship as well as censorship of new media. "Rather than viewing new technologies like the Internet as an opportunity to inform, engage, and challenge one another," observes PFAW Research Director, Matthew Freeman, "self-appointed morality watchdogs are working to diminish those opportunities through censorship. And by grossly distorting the nature of most material available, they have eroded the public's natural opposition to censorship."

"Art by its very nature can be inspiring and challenging and controversial and unsettling," says PFAW Chair Carole Shields. "Because the arts are a reflection of our culture, they often deal with issues [that] make some of us uncomfortable: violence, sexuality, death. But what is more troubling is the drive to restrain America's creative spirit — through both censorship and lack of resources. The arts cannot flourish if free expression is stifled and financial support is cut off."

People For the American Way is a 300,000 member nonpartisan constitutional liberties organization. For more information, contact PFAW's artsave Project at 202.467.2340.

- Source: PFAW on Arts Wire

On Wednesday, June 12, 1996, three Federal judges — Dolores K. Sloviter, chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, judge Stewart Dalzell and judge Ronald L. Buckwalter of Federal District Court — declared the key parts of the Computer Decency Act (CDA) an unconstitutional violation of First Amendment rights and blocked the law's enforcement.

Lucidly, precisely and elegantly, the three judges defined the Internet and summarized its history in a readable 175 page decision that is more concise and accurate than the Internet definitions found in many of the thousands of Internet-related books that now dominate the computer sections of bookstores.

"The Internet is not a physical or tangible entity, but rather a giant network which interconnects innumerable smaller groups of linked computer networks. It is thus a network of networks," begins the section of the decision titled "The Nature of Cyberspace."

In separate statements, the three judges set out their objections to the CDA. "The Internet is a far more speech-enhancing medium than print, the village greens, or the mails," wrote judge Dalzell. "Because it would necessarily affect the Internet itself, the CDA would necessarily reduce the speech available for adults on the medium. This is a constitutionally intolerable result."

Noting that "just as the strength of the Internet



**Montpelier Cultural Art Center is hosting its 17th annual Invitational Sculpture Exhibit until August 22.**

**Selected by members of the Washington Sculptors Group, artists included are: Brent Crothers, Martha Tabor, Rosemary Lockett, Gail Gorlitz, Nancy Sansom Reynolds, Foon Sham, and Sandy Willcox.**

**The Montpelier Cultural Art Center is located at 12826 Laurel-Bowie Rd., in Laurel, MD. Gallery hours are from 10-5, seven days a week. For further info call: 301.953.1993 or 410.792.0664.**

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**ArtSites96, the regional biennial is now on the Web at <http://www.cais.com/koan/artwow.html>.**

**The content of the exhibition catalog, plus one sample work from each exhibiting artist can be found on this site.**

**The "real" shows close July 29.**

**OLD GLORY: THE AMERICAN FLAG IN CONTEMPORARY ART**, an exhibition in April at the Phoenix Art Museum that was attacked by Newt Gingrich and Arizona State legislators was good for attendance according to the May issue of ARTS RAG. As many people visited the museum in one day as normally visit in a week.

However, Arts Rag reports that although the museum is privately run, the city owns the land and building. A City Council member has suggested that the \$400,000 that the city contributes to the annual upkeep of the building be used to create community centers for teenagers, and one corporate sponsor recently withdrew a \$30,000 gift for two other museum projects as a result of the controversy.

For information about the controversy, contact Jean Fallow at NCFE (Tel: 206.340.9301, Email: jfallow@tmn.com). For information about the museum, call 602.257.1880.

• is chaos, so the strength of our  
• liberty depends upon the chaos  
• and cacophony of the unfettered  
• speech the First Amendment pro-  
• tects,” Dalzell observed that “It is  
• no exaggeration to conclude that  
• the Internet has achieved, and con-  
• tinues to achieve, the most partici-  
• patory marketplace of mass speech  
• that this country — and indeed  
• the world — has yet seen”.

• Dalzell also emphasized that the  
• Internet is different from broad-  
• cast radio and television, which  
• may legally be regulated for inde-  
• cent speech. The justification for  
• that control is based on the public’s  
• right to control the scarce band-  
• widths in the electromagnetic  
• spectrum, but that justification is  
• inapplicable to the Internet.

• Judge Sloviter was concerned by  
• Government arguments that pros-  
• ecutors would target only “smut”,  
• not art or literature. “That would  
• require a broad trust indeed from a  
• generation of judges not far removed  
• from the attacks on James Joyce’s  
• Ulysses as obscene,” she wrote.

• Judge Buckwalter concentrated on  
• the vagueness of the terms “pa-  
• tently offensive” and “indecent.”  
• “In statutes that break into rela-  
• tively new areas, such as this one,”  
• he wrote, “the need for definition  
• of terms is greater, because even  
• commonly understood terms may  
• have different connotations or  
• parameters in this new context.”

• The full text of the opinion and  
• other information can be found at  
• the ACLU Web site <http://www.aclu.org>


• - Sources: Judy Malloy and PFAW  
• on Arts Wire, NY Times Online

(<http://www.nytimes.com>), and  
The San Francisco Chronicle, June  
13, 1996

## Alexander Predicts 1997 NEA Funding Increase

“I am optimistic that our funding level will hold at \$99.5 million for 1997. And, I hope, come November we will have reason to believe that number will go up, not down,” predicted Jane Alexander, Chairman National Endowment for the Arts, on June 1 at the NALAA/TAAC Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

“My hope is predicated on a major factor: that people who care about culture, education, and quality of life issues go to the polls and vote,” Alexander said. “President Clinton is committed to the arts and humanities, and he recommended an increase to \$136 million for 1997 for the NEA’s budget.”

The TAAC/NALAA opening luncheon where Alexander spoke also featured keynote speeches by Jane Sheldon Hackney, Avery Brooks, and Elizabeth Nunez. Right before the luncheon began, there was a New Orleans Style Jazz Funeral March for the NEA Expansion Program. The Expansion Program made its final round of disbursements this year. Over the brief span of its life it provided support and funding for approximately 500 underserved, community-based cultural organizations, such as the American Indian Community House, New York, NY; Appalshop of Whitesburg, KY; Carpetbag Theatre, Knox- 

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ville, TN; the Dance Theater of Harlem, New York, NY; the East West Players, Los Angeles, CA; Galleria de la Raza, San Francisco, CA.

In the NALAA/TAAC speech, Alexander also announced two new international artist residency exchange projects that she described as “a cooperative agreement with NALAA and with the Arts Councils of Ireland and Northern Ireland and the British Council in a project to support the United States/Ireland/Northern Ireland Community Residencies Exchange, and lest you think there’s an Irish Murphias at work, we are also pleased to partner with the National Fund for Culture and the Arts and the U.S./Mexico Fund for culture to support the United States/Mexico Communities Residencies Exchange.”

One month residencies in Ireland and Northern Ireland will be provided for four U.S. artists. Two artists from Ireland and two artists from Northern Ireland will be given month long residencies in the U.S. where they will be hosted by local arts agencies. The ex-

change with Mexico will work the same way, except that the residencies will be for eight weeks.

NALAA will work with local arts agencies to select the U.S. artists for projects abroad and develop residencies with U.S. host sites. “We are delighted to be continuing our long tradition of cooperation with our local arts agency partners in this international exchange,” Alexander said.

She also urged participation in the AMERICAN CANVAS, the new NEA initiative that will outline ways to build a sound infrastructure for the arts in all sizes of cities and towns and recognize models that might be replicated elsewhere.

Over the next five months, American Canvas will go to six cities - Columbus, Ohio, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Rock Hill, South Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, San Antonio, and Miami — to ask people of all kinds what the value of the arts is to their communities and how they intend to sustain it.

- Source: NEA on Arts Wire

Woman’s Studio Workshop is accepting applications until July 15 for Fall Studio Arts Interns. One year long internships in papermaking and four month long general internships are available. The workshop is used by visiting artists who are working on their own project or are working with the workshop to produce a limited edition artists’ book. Off site housing is provided as well as a \$75 monthly stipend. Contact Women’s Studio Workshop Laura Moriarty, P.O. Box 489 Rosendale, NY 12472 Tel: 914.658.9133.

ARTFAX HIATUS

School’s out for the summer and so is ArtFBI ArtFax. We will resume publication in September.

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End  
Transmission

