

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

FOR

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

2001 Study Report
Onondaga Citizens League

ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE

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PREFACE

For over 20 years, the Onondaga Citizens League has represented an outstanding example of citizen participation in public affairs in Central New York. Founded in 1977 and incorporated in 1979, OCL is an independent not-for-profit organization that encourages citizen education and involvement in public issues. The OCL's annual study on a topic of community-wide relevance culminates in a report designed to help citizens comprehend the issue and its implications, and give decision-makers recommendations for action.

This year's study topic, civic leadership, was selected because the theme underlies all other issues the Citizens League has studied. While other groups in the community have addressed the issue of leadership from different perspectives, the study committee chose to take a broader view of decision-making in the community. This resulting report will, we hope, provide a blueprint for building opportunities for community change through civic participation.

The Onondaga Citizens League is open to any resident, business or organization in Central New York. While some join to become involved in the study process, many become members to support the concept and practice of citizen involvement in the study and resolution of pressing community issues.

Special thanks are extended to the individual and corporate members who support the work of the League through their membership dues and financial donations, and to Syracuse University Continuing Education, which provides substantial administrative assistance to the Citizens League and the study.

Sandra Barrett
Executive Vice President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to thank Leadership Greater Syracuse, Tomorrow's Neighborhood's Today and WCNY-TV for the opportunity to expand the format and audience of the study session. And without the support of Sandra Barrett and University College, the study would not have been possible.

Melissa Hall

Judith Mower

STUDY SESSION TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

(listed chronologically)

April 12, 2001 *Citizen Empowerment and Community Transformation*
Mayor William Johnson of Rochester addresses the public at
Thursday Morning Roundtable

June 7, 2001 *Leadership Development Programs Panel Discussion*

Carol Heil, University College of Syracuse University
Brian Moore, Central New York Community Foundation
Sherry Mossotti, Leadership Greater Syracuse
Deb Warner, Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce

June 14, 2001 *Corporate & Civic Leadership Panel Discussion*

Mary Cotter, Time Warner Cable
John Frantz, The Sutton Companies
Patrick Mannion, Unity Mutual
David Shomar, Shomar Enterprises

June 26, 2001 *Community Leadership Conference*
William Noah Allyn International Center for Training and
Development

Dennis Connors, Onondaga Historical Association
The Impact Today of Decisions Made Yesterday

Michael Gilman, Association for Better Living
Grassroots Leadership

Ann C. Michel, Syracuse 20/20
A Better Way to See the Issues

Keynote: Steven A. Minter, The Cleveland Foundation
Cleveland Tomorrow and Collaborative Leadership

Melissa Hall and Judith Mower
Civic Leadership for Community Transformation
Conference Participants' Interviews

- September 19, 2001 *Human Services Leadership Panel Discussion*
(in partnership with Leadership Greater Syracuse)
- Jesse Dowdell, Southwest Community Center
Merriette Pollard, Dunbar Center
Roberta Schofield, Salvation Army
Tom Slater, Food Bank of Central New York
Mark Wagner, United Way
Brian Walton, Catholic Charities
- September 29, 2001 *Grassroots Neighborhood Leadership Panel Discussion*
(in partnership with Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today's Neighborhood Summit)
- Rachael Gazdick, North East Syracuse Community Organization (NESCO)
Michael Gilman, Association for Better Living
Mary Grace Hicks, North East Hawley Development Association (NEHDA)
Mary Marquis, Newell Community Garden
- October 10, 2001 *Central Issues: Leadership Within Us*
WCNY-TV Televised Town Meeting featuring over thirty civic leaders and concerned citizens in the studio audience
Curtis Johnson, Facilitator
Dan Cummings, Moderator
- October 11, 2001 *Civic Leadership: Collaborating with Strangers*
Curtis Johnson addresses the public at Thursday Morning Roundtable

HELPFUL DESCRIPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The Citistates Group and Peirce Reports

“The Citistates Group is a network of journalists, speakers and advisers committed to competitive, equitable and sustainable 21st century metropolitan regions. To aid regions, the Group offers quick, one-stop access to its constellation of leading American thinkers—and experienced actors—in forging stronger, more coherent regions. The Citistate or Peirce Reports prepare customized services for newspapers on the strategic position and future potential of their citistates regions. These reports provide challenging “outsider” views—designed to inform and energize local civic forces—on the future prospects of urban regions. These Citistates Reports are generally commissioned by a major local newspaper. The Citistates team interviews a broad range of metropolitan leaders and citizens’ groups. Then, in a series of in-depth articles, the team draws on what has been learned from community leaders and citizens, as well as its knowledge of regions nationwide. An independent assessment of the region’s major problems and opportunities is written and then appears in the newspaper, either as a day-to-day series or as a special pull-out section.”

The above description was reprinted from the Citistates Group website, www.citistates.com. For more information on the Citistates Group and the Peirce Reports visit their website at www.citistates.com.

“Community-friendly” Policies

The Study Committee started using the term “Community-friendly” as a way to describe how “Family friendly” companies may adapt some of their existing policies to foster civic involvement on the part of their employees. “Family friendly employers develop and maintain work/family benefits in spite of economic challenges, diversity of workforce and reorganizations within the company. The services they offer are widely utilized and extremely valuable to their employees. In this way, family friendly companies are able to recruit the “best & the brightest” workforce (Child Care News You Can Use, Spring 1996, Child Care Council of Onondaga County). Family friendly policies include: alternative work schedules, flex-time, job sharing, telecommuting, child care, information and education, referral systems, elder care assistance, wellness and health information, sabbaticals, parental or health related leave policies, employee assistance programs, emergency time off pools, and a spectrum of training and support of managers and employees.” The Committee believes that “community friendly” policies that include alternative work schedules and training and support for employees participating in civic organizations would promote greater involvement.

The description of “Family friendly” employers and services was reprinted from the website of the United Way of Central New York, www.unitedway-cny.org.

Curtis Johnson, President, The Citistates Group

“Curtis Johnson’s career is one of those rare combinations of activist and commentator. He’s had leading roles in government, education and civic organizations, and since the mid-1980s, as an independent journalist on metropolitan issues. Johnson has frequently played the role of moderator and sometimes mediator in the search for common ground among builders, local governments, regional policy makers and environmentalists.”

Bio reprinted from the Citistates Group website, www.citistates.com.

Metropolitan Development Association

“Established in 1959, the MDA is a not-for-profit planning, research and development organization, serving Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Cortland, and Oswego counties. The MDA's accomplishments represent the efforts of a diverse group of people who share one common goal: a better way of life in Central New York and enhanced opportunities for all who live here. The MDA, representing the business leadership of Central New York, is the region’s principal private-sector vehicle for the implementation of key development projects. The MDA focuses unprecedented resources on initiatives involving economic development, education, transportation, urban planning, and regional cooperation.”

The above description was reprinted from their website at www.mda-cny.com.

Social Capital

Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam in his book *Bowling Alone* drew national attention to the concept of “social capital”: the network of reciprocal social relations that bond people together, and which serves as the lifeblood of democratic participation. To measure our community’s “social capital” is to measure our level of social connectedness and social trust.

Success By 6

“Success By 6, a community-wide initiative to improve the lives of children in Onondaga County, is a long term collaborative effort that brings together key businesses, government, health, human services, education, labor, religious, volunteer, and neighborhood leaders under the auspices of the United Way of Central New York. This unique collaboration focuses attention on our community’s youngest children by bringing people together to work on issues facing children today and by educating the public about these issues. Success By 6 began in Syracuse in 1991. The impetus for this program was the community’s high infant mortality rate and low immunization rate in the late 1980s. Niagara Mohawk, through the leadership of President and CEO, Bill Donlon, and Mary Ann Shaw, Associate of the Chancellor, Syracuse University, began the planning process which took one and a half years. Work began in 1993 on Success By 6’s first initiative, immunization.”

The above description was reprinted from the United Way of Central New York’s website, www.unitedway-cny.org. For more information on the United Way and the Success By 6 program visit their website at www.unitedway-cny.org.

Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today

“Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today, or TNT, is an initiative of the Office of Community Development, Neighborhood Planning Division, designed to build on the strength of the

neighborhood associations and individual citizens who care about their neighborhoods, as well as the human service agencies and businesses who serve these neighborhoods. The City of Syracuse and its citizens have established eight neighborhood planning councils in all sections of the city. All residents, agencies, and businesses of the areas are invited and encouraged to participate in neighborhood planning. Each council meets regularly to address issues of concern and work on long-term plans for their areas.”

The above description was reprinted from the Community Connection section of the [www.syracuse.com](http://community.syracuse.com/cc/tnt/) website, at <http://community.syracuse.com/cc/tnt/>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Civic Leadership and Community Transformation” provides a picture of the current state of civic leadership in the greater Syracuse area, and provides practical strategies for change.

This current report diverges from previous reports in its structure and methodology. The Study Committee felt that an outside, expert perspective was needed to supplement the contributions of knowledgeable community participants. In order to broaden the attendance at the Annual Leadership Conference, the Conference became a one-day event held in Skaneateles, making it accessible to a greater number of people. The study sessions included panel discussions typical of OCL studies. The Committee worked cooperatively with Leadership Greater Syracuse and Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today to bring some of those panel discussions to larger audiences. Finally, this study is the first to have one of its sessions televised live on WCNY-TV, reaching out to a viewing public.

In addition to the innovations in the study sessions, and the emphasis on practical recommendations, the Study Committee insisted that this report serve as a beginning to a larger effort, not as an end in itself. We are pleased to report that the Central New York Community Foundation, the Rosamond Gifford Foundation and the Syracuse Newspapers, among other interested parties, are already following through on our recommendation to have a team of consultants from The Citistates Group revisit our community to produce an assessment of our regional potential and publish a Peirce Report in the Syracuse Newspapers.

The Study Committee formulated four questions that were used to guide our investigation:

- How do we characterize the leadership of our community? How is the current state of leadership exhibited?
- How do we build community leadership, both formally and informally, and how do we broaden community leadership, across all aspects of diversity and other boundaries?
- How do we install and transition leadership without leaving gaps in crucial areas? How do we transition legitimacy and power, e.g., from one generation to the next, or from one entity to another?
- How well do we accept and support current and/or developing leadership? How well do we foster or inspire follower-ship?

Even though this report is not structured to provide direct answers to the above questions, you will find that all of the issues raised by these questions have been thoroughly addressed by the recommendations and findings.

While we were formulating the specific recommendations and findings contained in this report, we observed that there are two major issues that impact every aspect of civic leadership in our community: collaboration and communication. In terms of collaboration, we felt that we do not work hard enough to include those different from ourselves, nor do we encourage an open dialogue with differing viewpoints and perspectives. “Newcomers” and “outsiders” find it difficult to participate in civic practices. Competition among city and county governments, community and human services organizations, appears to be the norm. In terms of communication, we feel that the city and county governments do not communicate well with each other or with their constituents, resulting in a lack of accountability for decision-making. The proliferate community organizations do not communicate well with each other, resulting in fragmentation, the lack of a sense of community, and a duplication of efforts. Furthermore, the local media are too quick to criticize and too slow to praise in their communications to the public.

Communication and collaboration are obviously closely related to each other. The better we are at sharing information and success, the more likely it will be that we can work together toward a common goal. To that end, *we recommend that the city and county government together develop communication protocols between each other, their constituents and community organizations. We recommend that the media devote more coverage to community leaders and positive aspects of our communities instead of criminals and the problems. And we recommend that community organizations increase their efforts not only to recruit the disenfranchised and marginalized but also to establish a dialogue and a practice in which those recruited are empowered to participate.*

You will find that the issues of communication and collaboration manifest throughout the findings and recommendations in this report. We have found that the obstacles to the most effective civic leadership and community transformation in Greater Syracuse can be categorized into six areas: 1) Putting Ideas into Action, 2) The Generation Gap, 3) The Civic Leadership Role of the Business Community, 4) Politics

and Government, 5) Fellowship and Building Social Capital, and 6) Making the Table Larger and Rounder. We have developed recommendations that suggest strategies for change and assign responsibilities to various people and entities, from the Mayor's Office, to the Chamber of Commerce, to neighborhood organizations. Those recommendations follow immediately. The remainder of this report contains our findings and the summaries and transcripts of our sources of research. It is the sincerest hope of the committee that those who read this report find it as enlightening and as provocative as we did while producing it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee recommends the following actions to address the findings in this report.

1. Putting Ideas into Action

- The OCL Study Committee recommends that the comprehensive plan now being developed by **city government** be regional in scope and have the strong support of **county government**. We further recommend that as this plan develops, the city reach out to business and non-profit organizations, and to civic, religious and neighborhood groups in order to ensure their support for the plan.
- The OCL Study Committee recommends that those with information, especially **the strategic plans** for the region and the city, share that information with business and civic organizations. There is power in part ownership of the information.
- We recommend that the **Mayor and County Executive** together meet quarterly with all civic groups in a Council for Regional Action, and that the Council evolves to form issue-oriented committees and task forces.
- We recommend that the progress the community has made be publicized by the TV, radio and print media to dispel the perception that no ideas are being put into action.
- The OCL Study Committee challenges the **Mayor's Office** to facilitate communication and coordination among business and non-profit organizations and all the civic, religious and neighborhood groups to accomplish common goals and to avoid the loss of energy and ideas that results from the duplication of projects and labor.

2. The Generation Gap

- We recommend a collaborative effort among **civic organizations, universities, colleges and high schools** to create structures of study and incentives that will promote the involvement of young adults in civic affairs.
- We recommend an increase in the number of **experienced civic leaders** who will serve as mentors for younger people to promote civic involvement.
- The Committee recommends that the **Onondaga Citizens League** in collaboration with **students from Syracuse University's Maxwell School** conduct a survey of 18 to 34 year-olds in our community to discover what issues are of interest to them. The results should be used as a recruiting tool to involve the younger population in civic organizations and political processes.

3. The Civic Leadership Role of the Business Community

- We recommend that organizations such as the **Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Association** communicate strongly to their members the importance of “community friendly” policies. We recommend using **peer-driven** models such as United Way’s Success by 6, the distribution of meaningful civic awards and existing “family-friendly” policies.
- We recommend that the **Business Executives** promote the message that “what is good for the community is good for business” and model contributing to the community for their employees. Exemplary models include United Way’s Success by 6 and matching grant programs where companies contribute funds to organizations where their employees donate or volunteer.
- We recommend that the **Chamber of Commerce** ask their **non-profit executives** to develop a leadership program and leadership incentives for member small businesses in order to make small businesses aware of service opportunities.
- We recommend that **the Community Foundation, the Gifford Foundation and the United Way** assist in harnessing the energy and resources of the business community in collaborative endeavors.
- We recommend that **civic groups and non-profit organizations** look beyond the high profile positions of President or CEO, and beyond the typically targeted professions of lawyer or consultant, when recruiting talent and support for the Boards of their organizations.
- We recommend that the **Chamber of Commerce** recruit executives from non-profit organizations for seats on their Board, and communicate to other businesses the value of contributions non-profit executives can make to the Boards of their businesses.

4. Politics and Government

- We recommend that **city and county governments** communicate better with each other and with their constituents.
- We recommend that **neighborhood organizations** demonstrate to their constituents the impact that elected representatives have on the community. We recommend that urban and suburban neighborhood organizations adapt the model the Neighborhood Alliance used in this year’s election to mobilize their constituents to participate in the local political process, particularly to exercise their right to vote.
- The Study Committee recommends that **the media (television, radio, print) and the political parties** work jointly to remove barriers that prevent potential candidates from running for office and discourage newcomers from participating in the political process.

5. Fellowship and Building Social Capital

- The Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee recommends that **the City's Department of Community Development** distribute its registry of civic groups to every group listed in the registry and publish the registry on the city's website, thereby fostering more cooperation and shared endeavors.
- We recommend more **community building events** like OCL's Leadership Conference and TNT's Neighborhood Summit in order to keep in touch with other leaders in the community, to meet those leaders whom we do not yet recognize and to welcome newcomers. We also recommend that we develop a sense of community by bringing people together in casual venues, such as open houses or ice cream socials, to talk about sharing rather than competing.
- We recommend that **television and radio stations** institute programs modeled after WCNY-TV's "Central Issues" that have a positive message and promote civic involvement.
- We challenge our **newspapers** to focus on the positive and to create a forum where new ideas can be tried and tested fairly and publicly.

6. Making the Table Larger and Rounder

- We recommend that **civic leaders** make pointed efforts to collaborate with people who think differently than they do. We recommend that outreach efforts to communities of color and the economically disadvantaged be intensified.
- We recommend that those developing **the city's comprehensive plan** look critically at the recommendations made in this report and ensure there is broad participation by all groups.
- As a follow-up to the Social Capital Study, we recommend that **the Central New York Community Foundation and Onondaga Citizens League** collaborate to develop a mechanism for finding out what prevents people from participating in this community. This inquiry should distinguish those who do not participate because they feel unwelcome from those who do not participate because they feel they are more effective working in the margins.
- We recommend that more "bridge-building" and "boundary-crossing" leaders be developed in organizations like **Leadership Greater Syracuse** and the **Inter-Religious Council** through the creation of "buddy systems" that bring participants with different backgrounds together.
- The Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee recommends that **The Citistates Group** conduct an assessment of our region and to publish their findings in Peirce Reports in the local newspaper as they have for other regions. We recommend a primary subject of the Citistates investigation should be the strengths and weaknesses of collaboration in our community.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Onondaga Citizens League, in making “leadership” the topic of this year’s study, based their decision on the perception of those engaged in civic affairs that there is a lack of leadership in the greater Syracuse area. This perception can be characterized either as: “we are a community that lacks leadership,” or “we are a community that has too much leadership acting in isolated pockets in uncoordinated, ineffective efforts.” We believe that the transformation of a community is dependent upon the quality of its leadership. We are asserting that we need quality leadership in our community. Throughout our discussions in trying to ground our questions, we began to notice recurring themes.

Concerning styles of leadership, we see effective leadership as occurring along a continuum, with mutualistic, collaborative models at one pole and individual action-based, hierarchical models of leadership at the other. The approach of leadership shown in any given instance falls along this continuum, as a function of the circumstances at hand and the individual preferences of the engaged leaders. We also observe that there are inequities of power in our community that enable some leaders to feel comfortable opening any door, while others with leadership talent and motivation feel unwelcome. There is a common perception that Greater Syracuse does not allow “outsiders” with leadership qualities and community knowledge to have much influence, despite their qualifications to lead. Yet, certain individuals who have poor leadership qualities or inadequate knowledge of community are allowed too much influence—solely on the basis of their positions. We also identify and establish as a premise that there are boundaries within our community that effective leadership can help us cross. These boundaries are based on geography (downtown, neighborhoods, suburbs, etc.); sector (corporate, political, non-profit, etc.); diversity (race, class, disability, education, etc.); and ideology (liberal, conservative, Christian, Muslim, etc.).

Clarification of Terms

1. Our intent is to study civic leadership, which we define as leadership in the realm of public affairs and human actions that affect our whole community and which is meant to *transform* our community so that it will be a better place to live for all its residents.
2. It is not our intent to study leadership as it may be exercised within an organization—such as a business, educational institution, nonprofit agency, religious or service group—unless that leadership is for the purpose of advancing the community as a whole. We distinguish leadership from administration or management. We see the focus of leadership as *outward and upward*—beyond the boundaries of an organization or group.
3. In our case, that context is the community of Greater Syracuse, which we define geographically as the city, its suburbs in Onondaga County, and the surrounding region wherever people live who make use of the cultural and other assets of Syracuse.
4. To be even more specific, we will concentrate on civic leadership, whether practiced by an individual or a group, that is *boundary crossing*. We can think of four kinds of boundaries—geography (e.g. city/suburb, north side/south side), sector (e.g. business/education, public/private), diversity (e.g. Hispanic/Anglo, rich/poor), and ideology (e.g. liberal/conservative, Muslim/Christian). We will look at leadership that brings people and resources together across such boundaries.
5. We are only minimally interested in identifying the personal qualities or characteristics of people who serve as civic leaders. We believe there is no one

“leadership style” or set of attributes that makes one a civic leader. Nor are we interested in the age-old “nature versus nurture” controversy. We believe that certain personality factors, possibly influenced by heredity, *in combination with* certain experiences produce the ability and motivation to be a leader in the civic arena.

6. Instead, we are interested in finding out how, and how well, does the Greater Syracuse community do the following things:
 - How do we characterize the leadership of our community? How is the current state of leadership exhibited?
 - How do we build community leadership, both formally and informally, and how do we broaden community leadership, across all aspects of diversity and other boundaries?
 - How do we install and transition leadership without leaving gaps in crucial areas? How do we transition legitimacy and power, e.g., from one generation to the next, or from one entity to another?
 - How well do we accept and support current and/or developing leadership? How well do we foster or inspire follower-ship?

Methodology

The Study Committee decided that a variety of sources would be required in order to answer our questions: reference materials, panel discussions featuring local participants, events featuring guest speakers, and a survey of individuals actively engaged in the civic arena.

Our reference materials include two historical perspectives: “Metropolitan Decision-Making: Further Analyses from the Syracuse Study of Local Community Leadership” by Linton C. Freeman, et. al., published in 1962, and “Impact of Past Decisions” by Dennis Connors, a paper presented at the Onondaga Citizens League Conference on Leadership in June 2001. The Central New York Community Foundation’s presentation of the results of their study of Social Capital proved invaluable in providing a context for how Syracuse rates in comparison with other regions in terms of our social connectedness. Our fourth reference is *Boundary Crossers* by Neil Peirce and Curtis Johnson. This work provided critical benchmarks and concepts for our study on leadership and the influence of this work can be seen throughout this report.

In order to gather an assessment of the state of our current leadership, we invited effective leaders in four different sectors to share with us their insights. The first panel discussion featured those who administer leadership development programs, the second featured corporate leaders, the third consisted of leaders in the human services and the final panelists were neighborhood grassroots leaders. Every conversation among the panelists was informative and provocative, and the interaction between the audience and the panelists yielded even more insights.

The Study Committee realized that to perform a comprehensive study we would need to look to other cities and regions as models and standards for comparison. To that end, we invited several notable figures to speak on the topic of leadership. The first was Mayor William A. Johnson of Rochester who shared with an audience at Thursday Morning Roundtable the lessons he learned in leading Rochester. The second was Steven Minter of the Cleveland Foundation who related the dramatic turnaround of the city of Cleveland and iterated the lessons the civic leadership there learned in the process of revitalizing their city. Curtis Johnson, co-author of *Boundary Crossers*, also addressed the community at Thursday Morning Roundtable and not only presented us with a mini-evaluation of our community but also responded to the pressing questions raised by the audience.

An event that featured Curtis Johnson also brought our civic leaders together to participate in an informative and provocative discussion for the Onondaga Citizens League and for the greater Syracuse area. On October 10th, WCNY-TV in collaboration with the Onondaga Citizens League and its study committee, aired a live “Town Meeting” on leadership. The event brought five of the lessons of Boundary Crossers, the voices of many of our noted civic leaders, and the wisdom of Curtis Johnson to the viewing audience of WCNY-TV.

The last method by which we attempted to answer our crucial questions was to present variations of the questions themselves to our colleagues diligently working in the civic arena. In the afternoon session of the Onondaga Citizens League Community Leadership Conference, attendees were invited to participate in a serial interviewing process where every individual had the opportunity to respond to eight different questions. A total of 60 people gave their perspectives on the state of leadership in our community and shared their recommendations for improving it.

This variety of materials and practices has provided the Study Committee with information of significant breadth and depth. We are confident that this report delivers practical recommendations for change, provocative and inspiring messages and a reality check for the civic leadership of our community.

FINDINGS

Based on our research, the Study Committee found the following to be true about civic leadership and about civic leadership in the Greater Syracuse community.

1. Putting Ideas into Action

Curtis Johnson characterized Syracuse as a city famous for trying out new things and for engaging in all types of processes. There is a general feeling that even though we are rich in resources and ideas, we are slow to put those ideas into action. We are a community with many assets and many interested citizens. Yet, throughout the presentations and discussions, we heard variations on a theme:

All the ingredients are in place, we're missing the "big play;" something with transformative impact to pull us all together to be a team.

We need a publicly recognized visionary leader to whom people can look for direction.

There are a lot of leaders in different areas. Without a master plan for the city, leaders can't work together.

We have not defined "community" for Syracuse; until we have that definition, we can't act.

Stephen Minter of Cleveland attributed much of his city's turnaround to "strong political vision" stating that "the business community can serve as catalyst and partner and organizations like Cleveland Tomorrow can play a quarterback role in major changes, but nothing will happen without strong political vision." John Frantz of The Sutton Companies echoed Minter when he observed that "there is a proliferation of visions but no single plan. It is not the job of private industry or grass roots organizations to synthesize the myriad of visions into an executable plan. That is the government's job." However, the big challenge may not be to find a leader, vision or plan that can put our ideas into action, but as Roberta Schofield of the Salvation Army observed, the big challenge may be to overcome the pessimism that "this is how it's always going to be."

2. The Generation Gap

When measuring Central New Yorkers' sense of community, the Social Capital study commissioned by the Central New York Community Foundation found that the age group who scored especially low was the 18 to 34 year olds. Nationally, 75% of this age group feel they have a sense of community, but in Central New York only 59% feel that they are part of the community. There are several reasons for the existence of a generation gap in our civic leadership. One, most of our existing organizations are not currently structured to attract the younger age groups. How many young adults can take the time away from school or fledgling careers to attend meetings during the day or volunteer to spend several hours in meetings where nothing seems to happen? Second, we don't get young leaders because we don't present the issues they deal with and are interested in. The concerns of those just beginning their adult lives will naturally be different from those who are raising families or considering retirement. Lastly, the generation gap in civic leadership can be attributed to the fact that most young people actively working in grassroots organizations feel that other forums in the civic arena are closed to them. The young people need to be invited in order to feel welcome.

Mary Marquis of the Newell Community Gardens said in a panel discussion that “what creates a leader or community participant is identifying myself, my personal well-being as the same as the well being of the community. When I work for one, I work for the other.” If our young adults do not feel a sense of community for the reasons listed above, then they will be less likely to get involved or to seek leadership roles.

3. The Civic Leadership Role of the Business Community

Mark Wagner of the United Way remarked that “Three things make a community great: economic development, physical development and human care development. We must balance all three because it takes all three.” David Shomar of Shomar Enterprises echoed the same sentiment from within the business community: “Business leaders need to get involved because civic leadership gives business decision makers a sense of the greater whole and sense of investment in the community.” In Cleveland, it was the business leaders who really cared who stayed to lead and change the political and civic climate of their community. Curtis Johnson noted that in his experience, coalitions with business leaders typically are the most successful in effecting community transformations. Business leaders need to use their clout and resources to collaborate with civic organizations to make changes. After all, what’s good for the community is good for business.

However, with changes in the economic climate, it can be more difficult to engage branch offices of national or even global corporations in the affairs of the local community. In addition, with an average number of four employees, new businesses are harder to track. It is more difficult to make connections with the smaller businesses and to capture the energy of their leadership for civic causes.

4. Politics and Government

In their book *Boundary Crossers*, Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson point out that government always needs reforming, but reforms always need government. In Rochester, citizen reaction to City Hall’s redistribution of power was the typical “everything from City Hall gets shelved, there’s never any follow through, nothing ever really happens, we’ve heard all this before.” Yet to overcome resistance and frustrations caused by negative citizens and territorial groups, the new citizen leaders had to see that their work had value. Only the city government could give that value, and the city experienced tremendous success as a result.

The quality of our political leadership was a recurring topic. Our political climate was characterized as one that “breeds mediocrity.” We have “low expectations of our political leaders that are easily met.” We demand leaders who will dismantle government rather than do the good that government should do. Lastly, our government was described as a “them” in opposition to “us.”

Curtis Johnson of The Citistates Group observed that our political structure was lacking in harmony. If the structure is as bad as it seems, then good people are trapped in a bad system and incentives in the system are producing undesirable behaviors. We elect people on very narrow, parochial, territorial platforms and punish those who try to cross lines. What we have to do is cultivate a breed of positive politicians who are willing to sacrifice brief careers in order to do something that makes sense.

To bring about a political collaboration that can effect change to benefit the city, county and region, one of two things must happen. Either there is an unspeakable crisis which forces the leadership to pool its resources, or a well-organized coalition representing a variety of interests united under a single vision gets the governments to think and act regionally. We need a broader sense of “Who” can do it, instead of merely electing someone, and we need to build a safe enough ground for elected officials to act differently than they have been up until now.

5. Fellowship and Building Social Capital

As a community, we admire the problems, but don't focus on the positive aspects and recent successes our community experiences. Our more seasoned leaders are afraid to act because they are afraid of the criticism they'll receive from the Syracuse Newspaper and other media, knowing that praise will not get equal air time. We have to accentuate the positive. In Rochester, everyone was quite aware of the problems, but participants in the neighborhood organizations were challenged to identify positive aspects and to focus their energy on possible solutions. When the groups met, the city supported "progress review parties," where everyone involved could celebrate the accomplishments of the group, resulting in high levels of trust between citizens and City Hall. In Cleveland, after the huge success of the collaboration that produced the city's entertainment district, the overwhelming response was "If we can do this, why not another?" The media and the community need to be focusing on the "good stuff."

Michael Gilman of the Association for Better Living shared how difficult it is to convince people who don't even have basic life skills that they are the creators of their own lives and that they can be the sparks that create change in their communities. Fellowship precedes leadership. Gatherings with food but no agenda create an atmosphere where people communicate and get things done on an informal basis. Networks and connections to resources are formed. Ice cream socials may be a thing of the past, but events where people communicate successes and meet and get to know their neighbors are important to fostering trust, belonging, confidence and momentum.

6. Making the Table Larger and Rounder

We complain about our inability to work together, and about our fear of sharing the credit and the blame. If civic leadership means "coming together" then we're not doing well. As Jesse Dowdell of the Southwest Community Center said, "Coming together is non-existent in day-to-day stuff. It depends on the effort 'I' put in, in order to access civic leadership." It has been said repeatedly that there are too many groups in the community doing the same thing, that talent and resources are stretched too thin, that the same overworked faces are at all the meetings, and that there is too much personality, turf and pride. We know that if everyone came together, then there would be more strength and talent to be put to work. So what is holding us back?

According to the Social Capital Study, Central New York residents participate at especially high levels in sports/outdoor activity clubs, youth organizations, parents' organizations, seniors groups and labor unions. These groups not only bring people together in some form of social interaction and enable them to trust one another more, but moreover, they tend to get thing done for the community more broadly. However, we have to distinguish between "bonding" forms of social capital, where we participate with others like ourselves, and "bridging" social capital, where we participate across lines of race, class, educational background, and so forth. These "bridging ties" are especially valuable in producing community solidarity and in forging a larger consensus on how communities need to work together to improve their surroundings. Central New York had high rankings on schmoozing, which indicates mostly the "bonding" variety of social capital and little "bridging." The associational involvements noted above tend to widen our circles somewhat, but probably not sufficiently.

Curtis Johnson remarked that "we are open to collaboration, but not with strangers" and that our "affinity is iconic." We have succeeded in severe separation and "take great lengths to avoid those not in our income class." The findings of the Social Capital Study indicate that the divisions are racial, geographical, and social:

Race

Racial trust here is especially high in the suburbs. Those outside the center city scored 13 points higher in the Social Capital Study on inter-racial trust than those in the center city. Given the homogeneity of the suburbs compared to the center city, this fact reflects more of a state of mind or sense of values than lived practice in everyday life. This is especially important to consider given the recent census data that shows that whites continue to move away from the city in such large numbers. The challenge for suburban residents is how to channel this sense of racial trust into active engagement with others different from themselves.

Geography

City and suburb residents have an “us” vs. “them” mindset, and there is no sense of unity or teamwork. In Onondaga County, there is a suburban/urban disparity on most all levels of civic engagement. Residents of the center city score higher than those in the county on informal social participation, but lower on all other measures. This is consistent with findings elsewhere given lower rates of education and lower incomes in the city. But this does mean that investment in the city is especially needed.

Society

Many people do not come to the table if they feel the organization or the system doesn't reflect them and their interests. And there are larger social forces at work that keep people in patterns of roles that are hierarchical: one up, one down.

There is no pat answer to the difficulties raised by one's life situation that would limit participation. Curtis Johnson observed that “too much of what we congratulate as collaboration is the practice of the leisure class.” Representation of the marginalized must be part of civic dialogues; problems can be resolved by people connecting across seemingly divisive racial, geographical, and social lines. There must be a way to get those voices heard. The problem is a design problem and we need a different civic architecture. There are too many who are willing but who are shut out systematically.

The measure of success is a real civic meeting where we can guarantee we will disagree but be committed to progress. Collaboration is not about people showing up to the process with their minds already made up. Collaboration is not negotiation; you can't listen if you're selling your agenda. There are a few surprises that arise from the “real civic meeting.” The first surprise we discover is that more people care about their community than we think. The second surprise is that the more connections there are across lines that alienate, the more the improbable becomes possible. And the third surprise is that there is real wisdom in reaching out, that making the table rounded results in better answers, not just bigger meetings. The bottom line is that racial and income differences are not as important as they seem as long as issues are taken to the scale of the entire community.

SUMMARIES OF SOURCE MATERIALS

PANEL DISCUSSIONS FEATURING LOCAL PARTICIPANTS

Leadership Development Programs Panel Discussion

On June 7, 2000, Carol Heil of University College of Syracuse University, Brian Moore of the Central New York Community Foundation, Sherry Mossotti of Leadership Greater Syracuse, and Deborah Warner of Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce participated in an intimate panel discussion where they described their leadership development programs. The following descriptions of each program were based on their presentations.

The **Central New York Community Foundation's Neighborhood Leadership Program** teaches leaders of neighborhood organizations how to build the capacity to make change. The program is founded on the belief that "community change most effectively occurs when those who live in the community are engaged in that change." To that end, neighborhood organizations may choose two representatives to attend the program. Class size is limited to two representatives from six neighborhood groups for a total of twelve. Participants in the program learn how to map assets and strengths, access resources and write grant applications.

Leadership Greater Syracuse is a year-long community education and adult leadership-training program. An opening retreat inspires students to reach inside themselves for a better understanding of their individual leadership styles and personal goals. At this time, students also help to design their course of study for the year. There are six pre-determined classes, with four classes decided upon by each class at the retreat. Each class is designed by the Program Facilitator, Judith Mower, Ph.D., who brings together experts in the field, coupled with past and present class members to develop a class day that is experiential, interactive and timely.

Since 1991, Leadership Greater Syracuse has brought together a cross-representation of people from business, industry, education, non-profit, and government entities to learn about issues facing the Greater Syracuse community. Participants discuss ways to develop strengths and overcome challenges. The classes study Central New York's economic and educational infrastructure, government structure, and human service organizations. Leadership Greater Syracuse gives participants the information they will need to become involved in leadership roles, and to be conduits for positive change in the community.

In 1994, graduates of Leadership Greater Syracuse decided to develop a youth program for high school students. Their goals were to foster the development of leadership, organizational, and communication skills, and to create a sense of community that would encourage these young leaders to begin their professional lives in the Greater Syracuse area. Youth Leadership Greater Syracuse involves a three year commitment that combines interactive classroom training with a partnership program that aims to expose these future leaders to places and processes that even many adults have never had a chance to experience.

The **Political Training Institute of the Chamber of Commerce** began as a strategy to incorporate business interests into the political arena. Political officials do not typically understand the impact businesses have on community life and the contributions that the business community can make. There is value in the skill sets business leaders have in finance, organization, management and the exhibition of leadership. It is not the healthiest situation for a community if people currently in office run un-opposed. The mission of the Institute is to train business-minded individuals to run for office, manage campaigns and become involved in the political arena.

University College in an attempt to make leadership programs available to the local, larger community developed two initiatives. The Leadership Institute offers training and services in a number of formats to organizations. The Bachelor's of

Professional Studies was designed with the help of local employers to identify leadership skill sets in the certificate areas of legal, computer, communications and organizational leadership. University College strives to be as accessible as possible. The only criteria for acceptance is proven success professionally, academically or personally, and the College has increased its efforts to make financial aid as accessible as possible.

The impact of the leadership development programs can be seen in their facilitation of collaboration among the various participants. The Central New York Community Foundation in their program always includes a bus tour which provides the diverse range of participants from different areas of Syracuse with a view of all neighborhoods and a broader context. Participants are exposed to the concerns of other individuals in other areas of the city. Leadership Greater Syracuse builds collaborations by reaching across networks and sharing the day to day challenges from all sectors. The program broadens the horizons of individuals who take that with them back to their organizations. Even though the Chamber of Commerce does reflect the interests of the business community, they do it in the political arena where it is difficult for newcomers to promote their ideas. The business community in the political arena tries to negotiate the perks and the costs of economic development.

Corporate & Civic Leadership Panel Discussion

On June 14, 2001, the Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee brought together Mary Cotter of Time Warner Cable, John Frantz of The Sutton Companies, Patrick Mannion of Unity Mutual and David Shomar of Shomar Enterprises to discuss the differences between corporate and civic leadership. The panelists were asked to describe how learning to lead in the business community transfers to the civic arena, and to characterize the leadership exhibited by the business community.

Mary Cotter of Time Warner Cable chooses to be involved with organizations where she believes her time and skills are the most needed and the most valued. Many organizations don't have the expertise that those in the business community can provide. When asked why more business leaders aren't involved in the community she cited that it is not a result of a lack of interest, but of a lack of time. There is a group of a select few who care, and that same group of few does as much as possible. She believes that CEO's are in a unique position to get talent out of the ranks and into the community. However, with too many groups in the community doing the same thing, talent and resources are stretched thin. If everyone came together then there would be more strength and talent. There is too much personality, turf, and pride, and if we don't remove the territorial leaders, we'll never get anywhere.

John Frantz of the Sutton Companies believes that the balkanization of interests is inevitable. There is a proliferation of visions, but no single plan. It is not the job of private industry or grass roots organizations to synthesize the myriad of visions into an executable plan. That is the government's job. The good old days of civic leadership when a few powerful men sat around the table and made decisions is not a good model. There is no new model to replace the old one; that is the challenge for public leadership. The first and best lesson he learned in business is good for civic leadership: "Give people responsibility, hold them accountable for results, do not punish for mistakes." But something is fundamentally wrong. We have to decide what we want as a community and what we want from our leaders.

Patrick Mannion is inspired by truly great leaders who put their constituents above themselves. He believes that good people put into "leadership" positions will do good things and learn while they do it. Too much emphasis is placed on money: brain power is the limiting resource not money. Business people bring a grand arrogance to the Civic Arena that says: "Business knows what we're doing, you don't, so we'll take it from here." As a community, we admire the problems but don't focus on the great stuff. No one can even envision a plan that if we accomplished only 10% of it, there would be a great impact. The political climate breeds mediocrity. We have low expectations of our political leaders that are easily met: we expect nothing from the politicians but a balanced budget and a clean street. Our political leaders are a reflection of ourselves: "we are a community of magnificent underachievers."

David Shomar, entrepreneur and CEO of Shomar Enterprises lived 21 years in Lebanon, and lived the past 25 years in Syracuse. He studied American government as a non-American. In his view, the issue is not a lack of vision, or a lack of leadership, the issue is not even one of fragmentation. We have divided ourselves from government and have re-defined government as "them." It is now "us" vs. "them," when government is supposed to be "us." We demand leaders who will break down the government rather than do the good that government should do. We want and have mediocre leaders who have nothing to lead because they have to promise to get rid of the job in order to get the job. The denigration of government is not local, but national. We have to, but are unable to, bring the best of us to the "entity" know as government. Business leaders need to get involved because civic leadership gives business decision makers a sense of the greater whole and a sense of investment in the community. Time is a major issue. The structural flow in our society is getting worse instead of better; everything has a dollar value. We

would have to change the national psychology in order for business individuals to avail themselves of leadership opportunities.

Human Services Leadership Panel Discussion

On September 19th 2001, Jesse Dowdell of the Southwest Community Center, Merriette Pollard of the Dunbar Center, Roberta Schofield of the Salvation Army, Tom Slater of the Food Bank of Central New York, Mark Wagner of the United Way and Brian Walton of Catholic Charities participated in a panel discussion co-sponsored by the Onondaga Citizens League and Leadership Greater Syracuse. As executive directors of not-for-profit organizations that have significant impact in our community, they were asked to share their insights on what they feel is working and what is not working in the civic leadership of greater Syracuse.

The discussion began by addressing the terrorist events of September 11th and asking the panelists to characterize the impact that these events had on their staff, clientele and their leadership. Bobbie Schofield remarked that we are “so tied up in what our response ‘should be’ that we’re not thinking about what the response *is* for our clientele. ‘Business as usual’ is not where leadership comes in. We insert individual leadership in ways we never expected.” Brian Walton noted that the very definition of leadership changed to mean “leaders who are prepared when they couldn’t possibly have been prepared.” The Food Bank’s role as collaborator was reinforced by the tragedy, and Tom Slater observed that “collaboration eases the strain while increasing the strength of leadership.” Merriette Pollard reminded the audience that leadership needs to happen on the every day level. It was up to her to make the decision to continue or to stop; in light of the fact that 3 out of 4 of her staff had relatives missing, she decided to stop. Leadership took the form of ministering, first to the staff and then to the community, teaching people to lead within their own families. The additional burden of leadership for the Dunbar Center was to confront racism in the wake of the events and to speak out openly about discrimination and what this means for disenfranchised people who already are “victims” of tight security in the absence of “disaster.” Even though the number of members of the help line and volunteer center increased following September 11th, so did the challenges for United Way Director Mark Wagner. On being offered \$15,000 in matching funds for the crisis, the United Way faced an awkward situation, because the United Way raises funds for local causes. In his mind, leadership makes the tough decisions, and must discover creative options.

The next question posed by Judy Mower, facilitator, was “how does leadership within the agency translate into civic leadership?” The discussion that ensued yielded the following ideas on how this translation happens:

Brian Walton: “We have a responsibility but no one defines it. Many subjective definitions become the perception of a lack of leadership. It’s the essence of herding cats. Leadership is getting people to come along versus making them.”

Tom Slater: “In the position of executive director, you are the ‘authority’ on what you do. Perform studies, become experts on hunger. Information proliferation; if information is shared, people are more educated. If we all had the same information, we’d all be heading in the same direction.”

Bobbie Schofield: “There is a magnetic force and different personality types. Leaders can be ‘prisoners of their own juices.’ The same internal forces at work in the organization are also at work in the community. If you have sick organizations, then you have a sick community. It is in your best interests to lead in the community. Some individuals have a natural inclination to lead. The leader’s challenge is to make people want to be like you, so you must be the best you can be.”

Merriette Pollard: “In a community venue, you are always a representative for your agency, so you must have a conscious use of self. Your message is always your operating philosophy. I am expected to speak for my community. A leader must touch the expectations that people have of you.”

A member of the audience made the observation of the double bind that leaders of human service agencies face, remarking that “among politicians, the tasks of service

agencies and leaders is to get 'other people' to speak the same message. The leadership you are exercising is discounted as 'special interest' or dismissed if expressing a viewpoint outside your expertise." The responses from the panelists shed positive insights on the described situation. Tom Slater stated that leadership is "empowering others to convince the politicians that the problem is solvable, they will not listen to him alone." And Brian Walton added that he and others are "perceived as special interests before they get to the table. Competence and leadership go hand in hand." Bobbie Schofield also acknowledged the reality of the situation saying "Board members defer to her on matters of the community, as she would defer if she were on a committee at Chase, and didn't have the knowledge about the federal interest rate. The business of leadership is to learn and the process of leadership is to learn about all the elements. I *must* know the community re-investment act and the federal interest rate. Leadership would be too small and narrow if we're not learning outside our field."

Judy Mower asked the panelists to assess our civic leadership: what's right, what's wrong, how can it change? An audience member requested that the panelists include their definition of civic leadership in their responses.

Mark Wagner repeated a quote that he believes is true about community: "Three things make a community great, economic development, physical development, and human care development." He went on to say that we "must balance all three because it takes all three to make a community. There is a need for more collaboration between those three."

Earlier in the discussion, Judy Mower remarked that non-profits pay dues to the Chamber of Commerce, yet no executive directors of non-profits have seats on the Board.

Merriette Pollard added that "businesses do not have human service people on their boards, yet have human services needs." These examples were cited by *Mark Wagner* as evidence of this absence of collaboration.

Brian Walton made the observation that: "if Civic leadership means 'coming together' then we're not doing well. The message is 'you're on your own.' Until this mindset changes, civic leadership will not include 'coming together.'"

Jesse Dowdell in his assessment stated: "Coming together is non-existent in day to day stuff. It depends upon the effort 'I' put in, in order to access Civic Leadership."

Bobbie Schofield responded that we are "better than we were, but not as good as we could be. The big challenge is overcoming the pessimism that this is how it's always going to be. Our civic message is not getting communicated to our 'own,' let alone others."

Merriette Pollard offered this evaluation: "There are a lot of leaders in different areas, but no coming together. Without a master plan for the city, leaders can't work together. We have not defined community for Syracuse, until we have that definition we can't act."

The discussion naturally evolved into the final question: "Are we really just talking about ourselves? Why don't we know what to do? Why don't we do it?" There were final comments and conclusions voiced by panelists and audience members. One member remarked on the personal intervention on the part of Brian Walton to cool off negativity at a political scene and suggested that "leaders must step up and say 'it's not the end of the world'." Another audience member voiced a differing sentiment, "I never hear anyone stepping out. We're so afraid of taking chances." Bobbie Schofield suggested that "the more seasoned the leader, the more fear they have. They find out where the land mines are. The Syracuse Newspaper is a huge one; we need to engage the media." Jesse Dowdell used a sports metaphor which not only summarized his thoughts but reflected many of the ideas discussed throughout the conversation: "all the ingredients are in place, we're missing the 'big play,' something to pull us all together to be a team."

Grassroots Neighborhood Leadership Panel Discussion

On September 29th, Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today sponsored their first Neighborhood Summit, hosted by LeMoyne College. The Onondaga Citizens League's panel discussion on Grassroots Neighborhood Leadership was included as one of several workshops on the Summit's agenda. Over thirty people participating in the Summit were in attendance for the Onondaga Citizens League Panel Discussion. The panelists were Mary Marquis of Newell Community Garden, Mary Grace Hicks of NEHDA, Michael Gilman of the Association for Better Living and Rachael Gazdick of NESCO. The session was highly interactive and involved the audience as participants; Judy Mower served as facilitator.

Judy Mower framed the discussion in terms of community transformation from the bottom up and referred to the panelists as having the four components to be leaders: talent, drive, skills and character. The discussion began with the panelists sharing their personal stories of how they grew to be leaders.

Michael Gilman remembers always being involved, but an incident in 1994 became a catalyst and leadership found him. There was a conflict between landlords and tenants, and he was a member of the landlords association. "I invited everyone to the same group and that organization grew. Seeing how people's lives are affected is a great feeling. You feel it once and you want to keep doing it, the spark is always there."

Mary Grace Hicks was born and raised on the North Side. Now there are many absentee landlords and she got tired of the trash and boarded up houses. This was not the neighborhood she grew up in. She began teaching absentee landlords to get it back to normal, and her vision includes bringing North Salina Street back to a Little Italy. She just got tired.

Mary Marquis has the same qualities everyone has. Her family had hard times and had to fight for survival and her family was a source of strength. The family is the first experience in working in a group, training to get together to work for something. She learned in 1960's student protests that change is important, that change from the roots has a bigger impact, and that everybody's voice counts. People that are most disenfranchised are the people with the most power. Everybody is a leader and has a role.

Rachael Gazdick had elders and teachers in educational environment that served as mentors. In classrooms where issues of social justice came up, she was pushed to think about the roots of the problems, pressing and questioning the "isms." She continued to volunteer as a student at Syracuse University. She participated in Teach for America in Southwest Louisiana. In an isolated rural community with no resources, she realized the potential of community and the power of human potential when people are brought together. Southwest Louisiana is where she had time to think through how to connect people to effect change. At NESCO, she saw the possibilities of a faith based model bringing so many congregations together.

In addition to the critical incident, anger, modeling and studying the panelists discussed above, the audience offered other possibilities for the creation of leaders. Leaders refuse "no" and refuse "hopelessness" and see possibilities and ways to make things happen. Leaders have pride in the community, focus on needs, are committed and persevere. One audience member thought that the laundry list of qualities undervalues human nature, we are more than that, stronger and more diverse. We were reminded by another that our families and our people are more than stereotypes. When many are saying, "somebody should," there is someone who actually steps forward and does.

Judy Mower suggested that neighborhood and grass roots leaders are unaware of the difficulties and barriers to effecting change since they act outside the system. The panel was asked to characterize what they saw as their greatest barriers. The responses were as diverse as the participants.

Mary Marquis is frustrated by the inability of people to take ownership and fully participate in the garden. Participants impose a hierarchical structure to the garden,

asking Mary “what do you want me to do for your garden?” Mary becomes the Coordinator by default and identifies that larger social forces are at work that keep people in place, in patterns of roles of one up, one down.

Mary Grace Hicks finds Councilors to be biggest obstacle. Laws need to be passed in order to make changes in their neighborhood, but they are put off month after month. On the third month, they say “yes we’re going to pass,” but then they keep “holding it” She relates that at one meeting stood up and yelled at them and they finally passed it in the fourth month. You have to fight for it. You’re not a bully, you need it. Councilors need to hear that you need it.

Michael Gilman named three barriers. One is money and resources, and the second is the lack of community participation and group consciousness. The third barrier is the most significant: hopelessness. It is difficult to convince people who don’t even have basic life skills that they are the creators of their own life, that they can be the sparks that create change, that they have potential.

Rachael Gazdick identified two barriers: turf issues and the generation gap. Turf issues arise because of funding constraints and the replication of services. On the one hand, the same overworked faces are at all the meetings, and on the other hand, she relates of an instance when someone was shut out of a collaborative effort. The generation gap occurs because there are two groups of people of different backgrounds: young people that run grassroots non-profit organizations and retired persons. We need an intergenerational mix to balance the two types of energy, wisdom and experience of both groups, yet young people need to be invited to forums because they feel that those forums are closed to them.

As a follow-up Judy Mower asked both the audience and the panelists: “what can the community do to create more leaders?” Mary Marquis stressed the importance of fellowship preceding leadership: “many community gardens get together every Saturday, no agenda, no purpose, we just hang out and eat, build fellowship, and connections happen, and things get done.” Michael Gilman agreed, “we need the ice cream social, events where people communicate, where we can meet people and get to know our neighbors.” Rachael Gazdick emphasized that the “representation of the marginalized must be part of the dialogues. Problems can be resolved by people connecting.” She also added the we need to build relationships and make better use of resources within the city, for example, Syracuse University can “send” their students to areas within town to learn Spanish instead of sending them abroad.

The audience had more to say and many insights on the subject to add to the discussion:

“As an outsider, it is difficult because everyone knows everyone else and people only go to people they know. An outsider has to be brought in and newcomers need to be integrated.”

“We need to educate the community; the community does not know what we’re doing.”

“We need mentors willing to work with people who are different.”

“Syracuse has no “sense of community”: we need to concentrate community and do our share, and inspire more followership. If you can’t follow, you can’t lead.”

“The concerns of people two blocks away are different, we have to change outreach from a big area to a small area. To organize, we must do it locally; the smaller it is the more likely people will self-identify as leaders.”

“Working at a Community Center, bringing people together in casual terms to talk about sharing rather than competing.”

“Leaders cannot stereotype people: how we dress, where we hang out. We have equal opportunities, we want fairness. We have to give people the chance.”

“Collaboration is the way to go, issue by issue, neighborhood by neighborhood. We don’t get young leaders because we don’t present the issues they deal with and are interested in.”

“People don’t step forward, they have to be asked. Leaders need to delegate responsibility.”

After such a provocative discussion, the panelists were asked to do the impossible, and provide some closure to the conversation. What follows are the “final thoughts” of the panelists.

“What creates a leader, or community participant, is identifying myself, my personal well-being, as the *same* as the well being of the community. When I work for one, I work for the other.” —Mary Marquis

“Always accept and try new ideas offered to you and take that idea to other people and places.” —Mary Grace Hicks

“Events like these bring people out and together and are a unique opportunity for communication. Keep them going.” —Michael Gilman

“In South Africa, instead of greeting one another with ‘hello how are you’ they greet each other with ‘I see you. I am here.’ We need to ‘see’ people instead of ideas, to listen and to be in the presence of each other. The deeper relationship is potential for deeper change, it gives us permission to put into action in the presence of others.” —Rachael Gazdick

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Impact of Past Decisions by Dennis Connors

Dennis Connors of the Onondaga Historical Association was the first speaker at this year's Community Leadership Conference. His paper provided the historical perspective that described the past decisions that had a lasting impact on our community, and set the stage for talking about our current leadership and the future that we are presently creating. His paper highlighted four significant examples of changes to the physical aspects of our community that we continue to live with today. What follows is an abstract that covers the major points and highlights of his presentation. This abstract was prepared with Mr. Connors' permission by the Study Writer, Tracy Youells.

The Skaneateles Lake to Syracuse Water System of 1894

In 1880, Onondaga Creek was the major source for Syracuse's water supply. The creek was polluted and it was inadequate for supporting industrial growth. The water system was privately owned, and the company that owned the rights could not deliver. In 1886, voters turned down a referendum to make the water supply a public system.

However, in 1888 and 1889, State Senator Francis Hendricks pushed two key pieces of legislation that enabled the development of a municipal project that would correct the water system. The Woodland Reservoir went on line in 1894 and is still used today.

When a new holding tank was required in 1910, a brick façade was built to protect the tank and to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the site. Just a few years ago, in 1999, the city designed its new water treatment building to match the original 1894 structure. Woodland Reservoir represents a municipal decision with a long range vision and a comprehensive perspective.

Onondaga Lake's Shoreline

The existence of a public park along much of Onondaga Lake dates to the 1780's when New York State negotiated a land treaty with the Onondaga Nation. Public ownership of the land around the lake was an economically motivated decision: the politicians wanted to avoid a monopoly of the "salt lake." Since then, most of the land has never been out of public ownership, which is good for the park. However, the Onondaga Nation continues to remind us of the legacy of "treaties."

With the decline in salt production and the abandonment of canal projects in the early 1920s, much of the lakeshore was deteriorating. Enter Joseph Abbot Griffin. His vision for the lakeshore included athletic facilities, gardens, marinas, museums, bridle paths, and even a polo field. He developed a plan in 1928 that outlined his vision, including the construction of a landscaped parkway that would be his project's first step. The depression of the 1930s brought public funding with the help of Franklin Roosevelt that helped bring half of Griffin's dream to fruition. However, no local metropolitan agency would fund the project since it was located outside the city. As a result, the land became oil tank fields, junk yards and truck depots for most of the century.

Now we could say that we are following through on Griffin's original dream: we will have a marina, natural amphitheater and a creek walk into the city. Our next challenge will be to sustain the visionary spirit in order to address the development of the mall, and its impact on the land around Onondaga Lake.

Trains in the Streets/Cars above our Heads

In 1837, the village of Syracuse granted the permission to Syracuse and Utica Railroad to run railroad tracks down Washington Street. The small train company eventually became part of New York Central with two major railroad lines carrying the largest steam engines through the center of town. Seventy years later, the railroad lines became the biggest problem faced by local officials.

Two alternatives were presented to voters in a public vote: 1) elevate the track and keep the station downtown where the hotels are, or 2) re-route the track around the city's center to the north. The vote that ensued depended more on the railroads than on thoughtful planning. The railroads claimed that they had never agreed to a northern route decision, and although many people believed that the railroads could be forced to comply, it might have taken prolonged litigation. And voters just wanted the trains off the street as soon as possible, so they voted to elevate the trains which would be more expedient.

By the 1940's the tracks were elevated, but no one could have foreseen the Great Depression, the interstate highway system or flying. By 1962, New York Central decided to re-route the trains to the north anyway. The abandoned train elevation proved useful in the construction of East-West 690, which prevented a disruption of city life.

The decisions surrounding the construction of Route 81 paralleled the railroad decision in that it focused on the development of an elevated system that would serve a major transportation artery. The debate centered on the ugliness of an elevated highway and the placement of its path through the center of town. The highway would be constructed in a part of town that was slated for demolition as part of urban renewal; a primarily African-American neighborhood that no one saw as a link between the university and the downtown. State officials assured Syracuseans that designers would come up with something aesthetically pleasing.

The design and construction began in the 1950s and by 1967, local citizens realized that what was supposed to be a beautiful open system of trestle construction was in reality a "permanent Syracuse eyesore," as it was coined by the Syracuse Post Standard. The impact of the Route 81 decisions and construction can be felt today in the isolation between the University and the downtown, the continued spending of funds to improve ramps and signage, and the intimidating noise.

Cultural Facilities.

The 1945 Post War Plan for the downtown called for a community-wide commitment to develop up-to-date culture facilities. A bequest by Helen Everson provided a stimulus for the idea of a modern art museum, which in turn proved to be a catalyst for the planned development of a cultural complex on the east side of downtown. The complex was to have three museums (art, science, history) and a performing arts center.

By the 1960s the city initiative for the state-of-the-art cultural complex and civic plaza had to be funded by the private sector because the city's finances were declining. Cultural facilities were not eligible for federal urban renewal dollars, which meant that private donors would have to support the project's development. The Everson came to be, but the remaining projects found no major benefactors.

Eventually, the remaining components to the cultural complex were constructed and developed, however, they did not all find their homes in the originally planned plaza. In 1970, County Executive Mulroy decided that the development of major cultural facilities was an appropriate role for county government and by 1975, Syracuse had the John H. Mulroy Civic Center and performing arts facility. The county next partnered with the Onondaga Historical Association to expand into a much larger building. The idea of creating a combined cultural complex was bypassed and the Onondaga Historical Association moved into a new site that was near its old one, rather than move to the east

side of downtown near the Everson. The Science museum also exists in the form of the MOST Discovery Center, even though it's located in Armory Square.

Greater Syracuse did not secure the state-of-the-art cultural complex once envisioned, but we have made great progress on the cultural front. We have a performing arts facility, a fine arts museum, a science museum, a history museum and the multi-use Landmark Theatre. Hindsight shows us that it is probably better that these cultural facilities are scattered throughout the downtown and yet within walking distance of each other.

Dennis Connors closed by saying: "In 1945 and 1965 Syracuse dreamed of arts and culture as helping to define the community's future. We have come a long way thanks to many positive decision in both the private and public sectors, but the package remains incomplete. The need might be stronger now than ever as citizens wonder whether anyone will escape the lure of the world's largest mall to explore our downtown. Will the leadership to achieve this vision surface in our public and private sector? Will the right decisions be made? As we have seen, the future shape of Syracuse will be on the line."

[end of the abstract of Mr. Connors' paper]

Keynote Speaker Steven Minter of the Cleveland Foundation

Steven Minter of the Cleveland Foundation was the keynote speaker at the Onondaga Citizens League's Conference on Leadership held on June 26th, 2001. He shared with those in attendance an historical overview of Cleveland's turnaround and the six lessons learned in civic leadership that were put into practice.

The Cleveland Foundation was established in 1914 and is the 2nd largest community foundation in the nation, with \$1.6 billion in assets. They award 75 million per year in grants and loans. Their mission is to: "Improve quality of life for all generations, now and in the future." They accomplish their mission in three ways:

1. Building the Community Foundation's Endowment
2. Being an Active Grantmaker
3. Providing Leadership on key issues.

The Cleveland Foundation received its first money in 1919, so what did the Cleveland Foundation do from 1914 to 1919? They did what Pittsburgh did, and performed a survey of the issues, borrowing Pittsburgh's model. The first studies addressed the following topics, in chronological order:

1. Public Schools: the study recommended that Cleveland acquire the best leadership they could. A superintendent was recruited after a national search and Cleveland had the best system until the 1950s.
2. Welfare: Until the study, welfare was administered by private agencies; after the study welfare was organized into a system that lasted until the depression.
3. Parks and Recreation: In 1917, legislation was passed to create park authority in every county.
4. The Americanization of Eastern European Immigrants: the study attempted to find how to facilitate the transition from a socialist mentality to a capitalist one.
5. Criminal Justice System: The Foundation recruited the Dean of the Harvard Law School to do the study.
6. Merger of Case with Western Reserve University: The study recommended the merger, however the recommendation was not immediately followed. The union of the two universities did not occur until 1965.

In total there were 22 volumes completed. These studies exemplify enduring issues while addressing fundamental civic issues. At present, there are eleven Board member who are Civic Leaders and partners in a philanthropic community. Mr. Minter characterized the leadership of the Cleveland Foundation as a "500 pound gorilla with velvet hands."

The second half of the 20th century challenged the leadership of Cleveland as it suffered a decline of its population by nearly half (the decline and subsequent revitalization of Cleveland was examined in a Harvard Case Study entitled "The Cleveland Turnaround."). In 1950, the population of Cleveland was 978,000. In 2000, the population was 478,000.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the business community felt let down by the political leadership in Cleveland. Minter described the mindset of some business leaders following the election of Dennis Kucinich in 1977 as "the Bolsheviks are taking over, we're getting out." However, if the business leaders really cared they needed to stay, lead and change the climate of the community. In 1978, the city of Cleveland defaulted on loans to the State in the amount of 14 million dollars. This proved to be the catalyst for the business community who found a candidate for mayor that they could support in the upcoming election of 1979. They endorsed George Voinovich on the two conditions that he not raise a cent for his campaign, and that he gain support for a review of city

government. Voinovich was elected in 1979 and the Operations Improvement Task Force was formed to study city government.

The Cleveland Foundation contributed \$150,000, the Gund Foundation contributed \$100,000 and the Business Community invested \$600,000 into the comprehensive study. The study produced 800 recommendations. As a result of the study, the number of city council members was reduced from 33 to 21 and the term limits for council members and the mayor were increased from two to four years. The study began a public private partnership that continues to this day. The creation of the organizations Cleveland Tomorrow, the Greater Cleveland Roundtable and Regional Economic Issues was a result of the Operations Improvement Task Force's review.

Cleveland Tomorrow has the most power in terms of influence. Created in 1982 with a grant from the George Gund Foundation, it was not the first group created. It primarily addressed the root causes of economic decline: a loss of market share in manufacturing and a lack of participation in growth industries. The organization grew from thirty-six executives to fifty. The Greater Cleveland Roundtable was the first group, created in 1981. The Roundtable was value-centered and dealt with race and race relations through both dialogue and action. They studied Detroit and were the first to deal with public schools, minority economic development, and neighborhoods. The first step taken by Regional Economic Issues was to get real data. They enlisted the Rand Corporation to do a survey of economic factors and created a comprehensive database. Regional Economic Issues became a major partner to Cleveland Tomorrow in answering the tough questions. And in 1977, Leadership Cleveland was established to develop the young and emerging leadership.

The Cleveland Growth Organization, an organization similar to a Chamber of Commerce, was a vibrant force in the community. In 1969, there was a movement towards greater inclusion. Instead of being an organization of exclusively business executives, the Cleveland Growth Organization would invite civic leaders from other sectors to also become members.

In 2001, both the Cleveland Growth Organization and Greater Cleveland Roundtable are more vital than ever, and with Cleveland Tomorrow, these three form an umbrella for dealing with fundamental civic issues. Out of all of these organizations came many initiatives, including the creation of the Entertainment District and Playhouse Square. The Entertainment District and Playhouse Square of Cleveland attract 1.2 million people a year, second only to New York City's Lincoln Center. Over 70 million dollars was invested in the project and required the participation of the State, County, and City Governments, the Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland Tomorrow, Greater Cleveland Roundtable and many others. This was the first project where "it all came together." The overwhelming response was "If we can do this, why not tackle issues in the neighborhoods?" Consequently, there has been \$170 million invested in neighborhoods over the past three years.

After the historical perspective, Mr. Minter shared the following six lessons learned by the civic leadership of Cleveland in the process of the revitalization of their city:

1. Pool power through public/private partnerships.
Public/private partnerships cannot be formed without sustained, strong political leadership. Ohio had two consecutive governors who were from Cleveland and Cleveland had two consecutive strong mayors for a total of 22 years. They also had the benefit of a consistently strong county government. The business community can serve as catalyst and partner and organizations like Cleveland Tomorrow can play a quarterback role in major changes, but nothing will happen without strong political vision.
2. Use strategic plans and research to gain consensus.
There was a great deal of symmetry in strategic plans among the various organizations and partners, for example, all had education as a high priority so all groups were able to help in their own way, working towards a common goal.
3. Make long term bets.
Long term means fifteen to twenty years; nothing can be done in three years. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame took nine years. Nobody in the establishment wanted it, but the radio station executives did. When USA Today conducted a poll on where the Hall of Fame should be located, the Cleveland radio disc jockeys persuaded their listeners to respond to the poll, making a case for Cleveland. The result is history. A sidebar to this lesson is that even with all the planning, you cannot discount serendipity.
4. Use intermediaries to maintain focus.
Cleveland Tomorrow does not operate anything; they create the right organization, get the money behind it and facilitate partnerships. The intermediaries can get the right funds to the right people. Intermediaries can also know when to conduct the funeral and to begin new, and can help others to not get bogged down.
5. Capitalize on site visits.
Go see what others do: Cleveland groups went to Baltimore to see what they did. They took a trip to the waterfronts in Europe and came back thinking, "if they can do it, why not us?" Go to various cities and countries in order to see what they did.
6. Rely on staffed partnerships.
No one organization has all of the expertise. You have to attract the best staff from business, philanthropy, and public policy into Public/Private Partnerships.

Conference Participants' Responses in Serial Interviewing Process

In the afternoon workshop at the Community Leadership Conference, Onondaga Citizens League members and other conference attendees were invited to participate in a serial interviewing process. Over 60 individuals through group discussions provided answers to the following questions regarding leadership in our community.

Question 1: Describe 3 things someone should do in order to prepare for civic leadership in Greater Syracuse.

There was a general consensus that getting involved, experienced and informed are essential. A knowledge of history, finding a mentor, formal training, listening and visiting other sites to see what works were also listed. Other strategies worth noting were networking with community leaders and getting involved with groups outside of one's comfort zone.

Question 2: Describe three things our community could do better in order to identify and prepare civic leaders.

The general consensus was the promotion and support of leadership training organizations and higher education facilities for different age groups. Mentoring was also something that everyone agreed we could do better. Our community could proactively reach out to all segments of the community to identify leadership potential and provide opportunities for experience, by opening up board and planning meetings for example. An idea worth noting is to provide incentives for students who are engaged in community service, such as school credit.

Questions 3: Describe three assets of our community that contribute to our being able to rely on able and committed civic leaders.

Even though there was no clear consensus by the group, most agreed on the following assets: number of higher education institutions in the area; number of leadership training opportunities; high level of social capital—a caring community; small geographic area that creates trust; diversity; volunteerism; and finally the quality of media reporting.

Question 4: Describe three barriers in our community that might prevent someone from becoming a civic leader, even though they have the motivation and talent for that role.

Barriers identified by everyone in the group were lack of time, energy and money; power exclusivity (political, gender, race, etc.); lack of mentors; and difficult and cumbersome organizational and bureaucratic structures. Other barriers included: fear of public speaking and/or public scrutiny; a nativist mentality that dictates that leaders must only originate in this community; two year term limits; a fear of change; and the loss of jobs and young workers that result in a loss of young leadership. Also the perception that the resources are suburban and the needs urban was cited as a barrier to leadership.

Question 5: Describe three things our community should do in order to ensure we have sufficient diversity among our civic leaders.

Leadership groups should look like our community. We need to talk about issues more openly and appreciate conflict that brings about consensus and/or resolution. Perhaps we need to re-define leadership. Existing leaders need to reach out to developing leaders, and we need to target the youth, through mentoring for example. We need to increase the number of slots and money for leadership training programs and foster more understanding of minority leadership styles. Other ideas included supporting diversity training for employees, deliberately inviting minority leaders to meeting, use religious groups to recruit new leaders, and have a dialogue on the actual "Syracuse meaning" of the term diversity.

Question 6: Give three examples of civic groups, programs or projects you think illustrate civic leadership at its best in Greater Syracuse.

Those groups named most often were: 20/20, Onondaga Citizens League, Forging Our Community's United Strength (FOCUS), Leadership Greater Syracuse, Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT), Neighborhood Leadership Program (NLP), Thursday Morning Roundtable (TMR), Inter-Religious Council (IRC), Neighborhood Watch, League of Women Voters (LWV) and the Junior League. Other groups and efforts that were cited include Grass Roots Organizations as a category, Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), United Way, Partnership to Reduce Gun Violence, Onondaga Historical Association (OHA), Earth Day, Clinton Square, Lakefront, Carousel, Passage of Sales Tax and saving of Syracuse Symphony.

Question 7: Describe three ways you think the civic leadership of the future will be different from the civic leadership we have today.

The consensus among the group was that leadership would be more diverse and would use electronic technology to create more open governments. Leadership in the future will be younger, more collaborative, regional in scope, more dispersed and evidenced by more grass roots leadership. Future leadership will measure their results and increase accountability. Perhaps it will be even less partisan and more consensus building, and will reflect more difference in styles of leadership.

Question 8: When we complain about the quality of civic leadership in Greater Syracuse, we are really complaining about ourselves. Do you agree or disagree with that statement, and why?

Because the question could be interpreted differently among the members of the group, no clear consensus could be achieved. However, we are complaining about our inability to work together, and our fear of sharing the credit and the blame. We get the leadership we deserve. We could all do more—leaders have to be agents of change. Some say we are involved enough. We find it difficult to transcend existing barriers. Perhaps people don't get involved because the political process doesn't reflect them. Or perhaps we need a publicly recognized visionary leader to whom people can look.

EVENTS FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS

Mayor William Johnson of Rochester

In this address to the audience of Thursday Morning Roundtable on April 12, 2001, Mayor William Johnson of Rochester asserted that the most effective method to transform a community is to empower its citizens. Rochester experienced decline over the last thirty years, including: the demise of big industry, reduced population, suburbanization, decimated downtowns and deteriorating neighborhoods. Mayor Johnson's predecessor was embroiled in a combative relationship with the County Executive, and in a strategic move, formed the Neighborhood Outreach Project that resulted in 36 competing neighborhood organizations. This was the legacy inherited by Mayor Johnson.

The resentment and territorialism of the 36 groups needed to be overcome if there was to be significant change. In order to accomplish a redistribution of power, Mayor Johnson attended the meetings of all 36 organizations and then led a change initiative that re-divided the city into 10 sectors. Citizen reactions to the re-distribution was typical: "everything from City Hall gets shelved, there's never any follow through, nothing ever really happens, we've heard all this before." Johnson employed two significant strategies to address such reactions and reduce the resentment and territorialism.

- Each of the ten sectors chose its own leadership. Representatives from the ten formed a larger organization that represented the interests of all the sectors. That larger group also chose its own leadership. The leadership selection process resulted in a building of trust. In addition, city staff did not set agendas for the groups. Instead, the city supported "progress review parties," where everyone involved could celebrate the accomplishments of the group.
- Participants in the neighborhood organizations were challenged to identify positive aspects of each sector. Everyone was quite aware of the ravaging effects of violence and economic disinvestment; the neighborhood organizations were to focus their energy and knowledge on the positive and possible solutions to the problems.

Johnson had promised that the work of the neighborhood organizations would not be ignored and that their recommendations would be implemented. In one year, the sectors' plans had generated 1400 ideas for transforming the community of Rochester. Of those, only 950 ideas, 95 per sector, were identified as objectives that could be accomplished through the City's budget; the remaining ideas could be funded by the private sector.

Concerted outreach, collaboration and the tapping of resources overcame resistance and frustrations caused by negative citizens and territorial groups. The essential key to the tremendous success of the citizens' groups was that the sector leaders had to see that their work had value. Only the city government could give that value; the recommendations of the sectors' leaders would have to be implemented in order for citizens to be truly empowered. The re-distribution of power that consolidated 36 original neighborhood organizations into ten sectors facilitated the outreach, collaboration and resource seeking that advanced the transformation of the city.

WCNY Town Meeting facilitated by Curtis Johnson

On October 10th, WCNY-TV aired a special edition of their program Central Issues, entitled Leadership Within Us, at 8:00 p.m. The program was a televised Town Meeting coordinated by the Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee in cooperation with WCNY-TV. Over thirty civic leaders and concerned citizens representing various sectors and populations were invited to make up the studio audience. The Town Meeting was moderated by Dan Cummings, the featured guest was Curtis Johnson, and members of the studio audience were active participants in the discussion. Curtis Johnson was introduced to the viewing public as the senior writer and President of CitiStates, and co-author of *Boundary Crossers*: a collection of case studies of communities where successful transformations were achieved.

Dan Cummings set the stage for the discussion by remarking how the leadership of George W. Bush and Mayor Rudolph Guiliani has been praised since September 11th, and how crisis makes leadership visible. He then spoke how other cities, like St. Louis, Indianapolis and Charlotte, have taken on the day-to-day tasks of leadership in the absence of crisis to revitalize their communities. The Town Meeting would assess the leadership that tackles issues like the clean-up of Onondaga Lake, education, and other everyday problems that affect our lives. How do we energize ourselves to make Syracuse a better place to live? This is a critical self-examination of our community, a reality check. George Kilpatrick added that this meeting was to reflect what we've done, what we need to do, and how to form partnerships to make a difference.

The lessons of Curtis Johnson's book *Boundary Crossers* were used to help us learn about our own communities. But before some of the lessons of the book were discussed, Dan addressed a preliminary question to Curtis Johnson: "We are not in a crisis, Syracuse is doing just fine. Why should the average person care about how leadership is conducted?" Johnson's reply indicated that Syracuse is famous for "looking in the mirror," for self-examination, but more communities are "looking out the window." The new platform for economic competition is among regions, rather than nations. The smart regions look at what they have, clusters of industries and communities, and ask difficult questions: Are these the things we want? How do we nurture what we want and target our investments so that we get what we want. Livability is becoming the new standard for economic development. People refuse to go to places to work that aren't livable. Leadership matters to the average person because it is our leadership that will decide what is our strategy, how do we want to change our community and how do change talk into action.

Boundary Crossers contains ten lessons from which we can learn. The Town Meeting will cover five of those ten, hoping to elucidate some real evaluations and maybe some solutions for our community. The first lesson to be discussed was: "The only thing more challenging than a crisis may be its absence." Curtis Johnson elaborated by saying that the ten regions chosen to be included in *Boundary Crossers* were those cities where the citizens were making a real difference. The most successful stories are "comeback stories" like Cleveland and Chattanooga. But there are places like Charlotte and Portland where there is no crisis, but evidence of citizen action to "fix the roof before it leaks." This is more challenging than the crisis. Citizens in Syracuse have been working and accomplishing things year after year, but the lingering question is: "Have you made this region good enough?"

Patrick Mannion, local business leader in the studio audience responded by a proverb: "watch what you say." Crisis imbues human spirit with ability and will to overcome great obstacles. He pointed to two historical issues that exemplified crisis averted and an immanent. In the early 1990's, Onondaga County was running out of money, but the County Executive and Legislature dealt with the issue early enough to avert a financial crisis and the County has been on firm fiscal footing ever since. However, the last 8 years has not been so good for Syracuse: the educational system is

under great pressure, neighborhoods are declining, and fiscal issues are developing. The leadership needs to deal with these issues now to avert the crises on the horizon.

Johnson, “can government fix this?” We still trust our governments to solve everything. Things don’t line up on the local, state, fed levels anymore. It’s either neighborhood or global. No place has no regional arrangement to make public decisions.

Gary Wordlaw, General Manager of WTVH-5, moved to the area a couple of years ago and noticed everyone picking on Onondaga Lake. However, we found people want to be part of town, part of the lake, and part of the park. Momentum was building in the form of federal and state money and local interest. But now the sewage treatment won’t be built where they had thought, taxes will go up and the lake still doesn’t get cleaned up. We take 12 steps forward, and 14 steps back. Everyone needs to sit down at the same table, decide what the projects are and get them done.

Reverend Larry Howard identified part of the problem as being that we don’t have the right people at the table, specifically the neighborhoods. And when people are invited to the table they aren’t allowed to participate in the process. There is a crisis in Syracuse. Depending upon where you live, you live the crisis everyday. But top-down leadership does not see the crisis, they hear but don’t listen.

Reverend Howard’s remarks led the discussion to the second lesson drawn from Boundary Crossers: “The table gets larger and rounder.” Johnson remarked that this is much more complex and much harder to do than to say. It is a terrible struggle to change the behavior at the table because not everyone wants to change. Other communities will testify to the fact that we have worn out the model of just a few people getting things done for the whole community. The places where things got done have a test for inclusion. Everyone must have the same stake in the outcome. We have tendency to look for heroes, but the places that are making it are the ones that have figured out how to include everyone.

Rachael Gazdick brings a newcomer perspective to this discussion. Regarding the issue of involving young people, young people need to be asked: “who are you and what are your gifts and talents?” Young people need to receive not just an invitation, but real participation. Curtis asked if Rachael felt that there was real opportunity for the younger generation and if she felt that there is authenticity in the welcoming. Rachael responded that the invitation needs to be made. There are older leaders, governing with grace and wisdom, but young people need to follow in their footsteps. People need to listen and put the youth perspective into action.

Curtis Johnson related the following anecdote: “If you ask most people, are there a few people still making decisions for everyone else? Most people say yes. But if you ask those few people, they’ll say that that fell apart years ago, but they can’t get anybody to believe it.” Kate McKenna responded by addressing the table. She compared the committees and boards on which she serves as being the lace around the edge of the doilie but the center of the doilie is the community. The challenge is drawing people from the center to them and getting themselves invited to the center. Instead of saying “let us help you,” we need to listen to what the community needs, and offer the resources we have to help the community help themselves.

Mike Lorenz has a different view: the questions we are asking prove that we are a community that “gets it.” He feels that the question is not “do we need leadership,” but “do we need effective leadership.” Effective leadership tells people it’s O.K. to dream, and to have vision. It values inclusiveness, participation, and collaboration. People who believe they need to be invited need to insert themselves into the process. To see the future, we have to forget the past.

Curtis Johnson addressed the teenagers in the studio audience asking them if they feel invited as valued participants, or do they feel as if they have to wait patiently for twenty years for their turn? Michael Grosak, a participant of Youth Leadership Greater Syracuse and senior at Manlius Pebble Hill, said that the community has been reaching

out to him and as a result of YLGS he has had exposure to how the community works “behind the scenes.”

However, he personally feels, and also for those not involved in a program like YLGS, that there is distance between the action taken and youth’s ability to do something. He feels he can help, but he’s not present when a major decision is made nor does he feel he gets anything real done. Curtis asked him follow-up question: “Are you in a special place, or is this a good place to leave?” Michael said that among his friends the common statement is that they want to get out and probably not come back. He stated that for kids not in YLGS, we are sitting in the shadows of Boston and New York City which have more opportunities for the ambitions of youth.

The next lesson discussed was: “Collaboration is messy, frustrating and indispensable.” Curtis Johnson described our situation as being rich in collaboration, yet it reaches a certain point and it stops. We wonder why it stops. We agree to do it, but we don’t get it done. Is this true?

Brian Walton of Catholic Charities identified the major obstacle to collaboration as trust. There is a significant absence of trust in our community. As a result, we talk, and we talk, and we invite people, and yet the lack of trust means we don’t get things done. People in leadership positions do not trust the competence of the other participants seated around the table. Curtis asked if the situation could be characterized as “the leaders recognize that more people need to be included but they’re still not willing to say that we’re all in it together and your ideas are as good as mine.” Brian agreed, and a few make the decisions for the many, saying in essence, that we got it, and you don’t.

Curtis asked for an example of a time when the trust barrier was overcome and something positive did happen. David Shomar, President of the Board of the Onondaga Citizens League spoke cited Success by Six and the Economic Council as positive examples. Curtis wanted to know if the people involved actually trust each other. David responded that overcoming the trust barrier was the only way these could have worked. David described the process as first friendships, then trust, then listening, then collaboration. After September 11th, we can no longer look at ourselves as alone, we must consolidate and collaborate. We must dream, then invite everyone. But he admits that that’s where we’re weak.

Curtis Johnson picked up on the “going it alone” comment and asked: “as we attract companies, build the economy, and invest in infrastructure, do we consider Rochester, Buffalo or Albany as competitors? Do we think of collaborating with these other cities?”

Terri Cameron of the West Side of Syracuse brought the conversation back to the neighborhoods of Syracuse. In her experience, people have worked together to build collaborations and there have been some small successes. But the real challenge is that existing leaders and decision makers do not know how to work with low-income people. After the Onondaga Citizens League published their study on poverty, there was a workshop with lively discussion. But at the end, when the bottom line question was asked, “what are we going to do about it?” There was dead silence. Funding issues and turf issues are real deterrents to collaboration.

Curtis asked if the perception here was that people in low-income neighborhoods don’t care as much about the community as those in higher-income. Terri responded that hopelessness and helplessness are only symptoms, and that we have to teach low-income people how to seize their power. Curtis followed up by saying that we need a new language that will focus on the assets of our neighborhoods rather than identify certain ones as problems.

Dan Cummings raised a provocative related question: “Was there any community that was forced to leave certain neighborhoods behind as they moved forward?” Curtis Johnson answered, no, that in fact, low-income neighborhoods are full of activists that work to change the community. In Charlotte, the newspapers focused on civic leaders in

the neighborhoods rather than criminals and as a result of the turn the media attention took, philanthropy, money and resources poured into those neighborhoods.

Joe Nastri, active participant in the North Side, thinks that the political leadership is trying to work with the citizenry, even if they don't exactly know how. Reluctant civic leaders have emerged; a lot of people would like to go about their daily business, but our leadership doesn't have all the answers.

Reverend Coop, of the South Presbyterian Church, pointed to the city council vote denying a sewage treatment plant on Midland Avenue as an example of a collaboration among activists, environmentalists and others that worked in favor of a neighborhood. The city has heard it and now the county will have to hear it. This effort took three years, but the next one will not.

Lesson four: "place matters." Dan Cummings framed this lesson in terms of regionalism, and regional thinking, and pointed to our own city and county governments not being able to work together. He went on to explain how the concept of "place matters" must encompass the city, the suburbs and the surrounding regions. Curtis Johnson described it this way: "It used to be that a good place to work was a good place to live. Now it is that a good place to live is a good place to work." Place matters more than people think. It's the whole place, not just "my place" that matters. Most downtowns of America are owned by people who live in the suburbs. If the downtowns decline, it's all of our loss. We have to talk about the whole community and whether or not everyone is OK.

Chuckie Holstein, founder of FOCUS, indicated the need to define regionalism. What are we talking about? The neighborhoods with Syracuse? or the communities of Rochester and Buffalo? The city is the heart of our region, and the city and the suburbs don't see each other as part of a whole. People don't see the downtown as belonging to the people. Let's know what we're talking about when we talk about regionalism.

A simple definition was offered by Curtis Johnson. "The region is what the economy does": broadcast signals, newspaper circulation, where do people drive from to see the symphony or visit the museum or the MOST, what is the healthcare market. If we define the markets, we can define the region. Dan Cummings brought up the Mall development and voiced that the mall development would drive the regionalism. Curtis Johnson remarked that this may help us to see what the real region is. The question then becomes: "Can we make our politics and civic governance fit this new real world? Or will we continue to play the small petty games of jurisdictional combat?" Dan remarked that this private enterprise will drive the public dialogue for years to come.

David Mankiewicz of the Metropolitan Development Association has a strong interest in the Downtown. In terms of regionalism, we have no choice but to be regional, because our competition is regional. Philadelphia, Boston and New York City are large regions that can draw upon large assets. We are not there yet. We know that in order to compete we need Rochester's and Ithaca's resources. Central New York has the third largest concentration of college students, but we have not yet been able to capitalize on it or market it. Curtis mentioned how whenever positive marketing numbers are brought up, like 44 colleges and universities, 41 golf courses, they are always mentioned in terms of the whole region. Yet it seems that nothing else is lined up to capitalize on these good things. David responded by bringing up the issue of the pure physical distance and space. Sometimes it works in our favor; if people only understood the open space here they would flock to this area, on the other hand, we have to be constantly traveling to see one another.

Kathy Ruscito of St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center looking at the CitiStates website found examples of regional collaboration and problem solving that made her think that we need to abandon the ways we've done things in the past and some of the old models for decision making, and look to best practices. Curtis noted that there are examples all over the country that would serve as best practices. Syracuse is famous for identifying showcase examples, organizing to go look at them, adapting them to our own

situation and trying them out. We seem to be doing about as well as anyone could expect. Yet there is frustration and impatience because we feel there is a next step we should take but we can't figure out how to take it.

This discussion brought us to the last lesson of the program: "government always needs reforming, but all reforms need government." Curtis Johnson explained how in nearly every case of a successful city, the government was a key player in the action. We need to remember that we cannot get anything done without government as an active partner. Curtis asks: "Are we prepared for government to be an active partner? The cultural inclination is for the private sector lead. Where is government in this equation?"

Former Syracuse Mayor Tom Young stated that the key to effective decision making and effective leadership is empowerment. Citizen empowerment is the key to neighborhood improvement. The challenge is to determine the real-life priorities of people in the neighborhoods and work with them to lead them to a consensus. He asked Curtis: "Did any city thing about leaving a neighborhood behind?"

Curtis asked in response: "Do you think the public sector has become so nervous about the NIMBY factor, that it has gone into a bunker mentality, and conforms to the law about holding the proper number of hearings, giving notice before things happen, but not really going into the neighborhoods and saying, first we want to listen to you and ask what would you do? That we do not build in a participatory way a plan that makes sense from the beginning as opposed to trying to sell a pre-conceived plan? That we are so sensitive to public reaction that we avoid the participation, trust and sharing?"

Tom Young affirmed that this is happening. But that if we meet on their turf and share the information, then everyone can find the common way to make things happen. The process is more efficient and productive and takes less time and money in the long run.

You have to go to the stakeholders and work with them to find the right solution.

Van Robinson, Common Councilor, is leading the city's comprehensive planning project. Government has to involve the community before a project can become successful. The city has not had a plan since 1919, and this current plan will use a bottom-up method, going into neighborhoods in order to tackle issues like infrastructure and housing. We will be taking a regional approach and connecting with our neighbors in towns and villages because their fate is tied with ours. Curtis Johnson remarked that the comprehensive plan is a grand opportunity in a ripe moment.

Curtis Johnson in conclusion stated that everything he has seen thus far is evidence of progress not decline. This is a place of great opportunity. The challenge is to turn small successes into great impacts. We re-claim ten acres of brownfields, build 100 new housing units, immunize children in a few schools and we pat ourselves on the back as if we had done all we need to do. What we need to do is re-capture the sense of taking things to scale and be bold enough to take our best ideas into the entire community.

Curtis Johnson addresses the public at Thursday Morning Roundtable

On Thursday, October 11th, Curtis Johnson addressed Thursday Morning Roundtable following the WCNY televised Town Meeting on the previous evening. Mr. Johnson reserved a majority of his allotted time for answering questions from the audience.

To begin, Curtis Johnson characterized Syracuse as a city famous for trying out new things and for engaging in all types of processes. However, he observed that there are fundamental nagging questions:

- Our collaborations are good rituals, but are they failing to alter structures of power?
- Are there things in this culture that are not talked about?
- Is there polite dancing in the meetings and real assessments in the parking lot?
- Are we content with the warm glow of low-hanging fruit?
- What are the issues that need a collaborative effort?
- What prevents it from happening?

Referencing Robert Putnam's study on social capital, *Bowling Alone*, Johnson stated that what we need is the bridging capital, the connections that bring unlikely participants to the same table. He notes that "we are open to collaboration, but not with strangers" and that our "affinity is iconic." We "have succeeded in severe separation" and "take great lengths to avoid those not in our income class."

The measure of success is a real civic meeting where we can guarantee we will disagree but be committed to progress. There are a few surprises that arise from the "real civic meeting." The first surprise we discover is that more people care about their community than we think. The second surprise is that the more connections there are across lines that alienate, the more the improbable becomes possible. And the third surprise is that there is real wisdom in reaching out, that making the table rounded results in better answers, not just bigger meetings.

In an effort to reserve as much time as possible to respond to questions from the audience, Johnson kept his remarks brief. He closed by sharing his basic principles of collaborating with strangers:

1. Take whatever time it takes to win credibility: ask, don't tell.
2. Learn to love the NIMBY's. They are not civic nihilists, but our neighbors and friends who feel uninformed and left out. (NIMBY=Not In My Back Yard)
3. Share the information (it will leak anyway). Out of the hands of experts and into the hands of everyone, there is power in part ownership of the information.
4. Have the patience and faith to wait for the harvest. Start collaborating with those where it is uncomfortable and then hang in there.

The first question from the audience asked Johnson to address the notion of the Power Gap, that is, anyone can contribute to the idea, but who has the resources to get it done?

Speaking from experience, Curtis Johnson stated that the best successes have occurred in places where connections have been made to the resources that are there. In addition, coalitions with business leaders typically are most successful. Business leaders need to use their clout to collaborate with civic organizations to make changes; what's good for the community is good for business. Connections are what matters.

The economy was the topic of the next question from the audience. In the transition from locally owned businesses to absentee corporate ownership, there was a fundamental

change in economy from a manufacturing base to branch offices. Where do we go from here?

Curtis mentioned three emerging niches in the new economy: environmental sciences, engineering clusters, and laboratories. The emerging economy consists of a lot of knowledge workers who can operate from anywhere and companies who also can operate from anywhere and can afford to be choosy. Today the game is to make your community the place where people want to live, and then the businesses will come to you. Johnson called this concept “strategic livability”: make your community a place so attractive in which to live that that the economy takes care of itself.

On a related note, Johnson commented that the major pieces of the new economy are harder to see. With an average number of four employees, new businesses are harder to track. It is more difficult to make connections with the smaller businesses and to capture the energy of their leadership for civic causes.

The premise of the next question was that the racial divide was still an underlying factor contributing to barriers to collaboration. Could Curtis shed any new light on the issue?

Curtis Johnson observed that we Americans suffer from a lot of guilt, when in reality we work harder and do more to improve race relations than most other countries. Using the paradigm of the sports world he notes that like athletes, there are those who make progress because of contact time, face time and working together towards a goal. He also described the fans in the stadium, how connections across racial lines happen in the stadium but then dissolve once we’re outside. The question became, “which one is the real world?” The bottom line is that racial and income differences are not as important as they seem as long as issues are taken to the scale of the entire community.

A follow-up question on collaboration focused on the systematic exclusion of certain populations in this community, for example, working moms who don’t have time; the uneducated for whom meetings are a waste of time; and those with language barriers, whether it’s English, professional class, etc.

There were two issues identified by Johnson that this question raises.

1. People showing up to supposedly engage in a collaborative process with their minds made up. Collaboration is not negotiation; you can’t listen if you’re selling your agenda.
2. There is no pat answer to the difficulties raised by one’s life situation that would limit participation. He states: “too much of what we congratulate as collaboration is the practice of the leisure class.” There must be a way to get those voices heard. The problem is a design problem and we need a different civic architecture. There are too many that are willing that are shut out systematically.

The next question turned to politics and the audience member wanted to know how Civic Leaders could influence change in the relationship between city and county government.

Johnson concluded on the basis of what he had heard thus far that our political structure was lacking in harmony. If the structure is as bad as it seems, then good people are trapped in a bad system and incentives in the system are producing undesirable behaviors. What we have to do is cultivate a breed of positive politicians who are willing to sacrifice brief careers in order to do something that makes sense. We elect people on very narrow, parochial, territorial platforms and punish those who try to cross lines.

An expansion of the previous question touched on regionalism, and asked Curtis to comment on what other communities have done to effect political collaboration.

The answer was that one of two things must happen in order to achieve the kind of political collaboration of which we have been speaking:

1. Unspeakable Crisis.
2. Community group driven by vision and a well-organized coalition.

We need a broader sense of Who can do it, instead of merely electing someone and we need to build a safe enough ground for elected officials to act differently.

The final question wanted to know what could be done when private enterprise threatens to disrupt a neighborhood.

The answer reflected many themes that manifested in the previous night's town meeting, in Curtis Johnson's talk this morning and in several of the research events undertaken by the Onondaga Citizens League for their study of civic leadership. It's a simple answer but no less final in its profundity.

Ask the Neighborhood first. The real clout is there; we just don't have the right faith.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

Metropolitan Decision-Making: Further Analyses from the Syracuse Study of Local Community Leadership

Published in 1962 by University College of Syracuse University, *Metropolitan Decision-Making* was the second in a series of reports that studied our community leadership. This second report investigated three subjects: the social characteristics of leaders, different kinds of leadership and organizational participation in decision-making. The Study Committee found this study to serve as a benchmark for comparison between the past and the present.

Differences in the social characteristics of leaders were examined in terms of the issue in which they participated and the level of their entry into the decision-making process. Six social characteristics were scored (table reprinted from page 8):

Index	Characteristics Included
Social Level	Education Occupational Prestige Income Politics Father's Education
Sex Elaboration	Sex Occupational Prestige
Life Cycle	Age Marital Status Home Ownership
Ethnic Status	Religion Ethnic Background Politics
Family Social Level	Father's Education Father's Occupational Prestige Father's Activity in Community
Localism	Birthplace Father's Birthplace

The basic idea for this examination of social characteristics was that certain valued social characteristics are prerequisites for participation. The study reports that there are three routes to participation and that the route an individual takes is dependent upon his or her social characteristics.

The first route is through formal authority in government, that is, to be elected or appointed to governmental office. The study found that if a person is in his middle years and has lived in the community for some time he may be elected or appointed to office. Usually such governmental authorities do not have as high a social class standing as other leaders; often they do not have a northwestern European family background, nor is sex as critical a criterion as it is for access to positions of influence in public decisions.

The second route to participation is through authority in the private sphere and is frequently taken by persons who are technical or managerial specialists. These authorities are also usually in their middle years, but the length of their residence is not critical. In contrast with governmental authorities, relatively high social class standing and family background are evident. As in the case of governmental authorities, however, their ethnic background is not critical, nor is their sex.

The third route is through occupying a position of influence on either a public or a private decision. Typically, such positions are available to the top managers of the

largest firms and the old line aristocrats—persons who can exercise control over community resources. Such people are usually male who are high in social status, family background, and ethnic status. They are often older than formal authorities, but length of residence in the community is not critical for access to these positions (page 11).

In the first report, published in 1960, leadership was defined as active participation in the community decision-making process. The follow-up study of 1962 indicated that a more refined definition and approach was necessary in order to identify the most active participants in the decision-making process for the community. The new method attempted to capture data for four different kinds of leadership: Leadership as Decision-Making, Leadership as Social Activity, Leadership as Reputation and Leadership as Position. The results of the data identified three basic types of leaders.

First, there are those who enjoy the reputation for top leadership. These are very frequently the same individuals who are the heads of the largest and most actively participating business, industrial, governmental, political, professional, educational, and religious organizations in Syracuse. These individuals may be called the Institutional Leaders of Syracuse. These Institutional Leaders, however, are for the most part not personally active in community affairs. There is no evidence that they have any direct impact on most decisions which take place. Their role may easily be limited to that of lending prestige to or legitimizing the solutions provided by others. They might conceivably be secret decision-makers, but it is more likely that they serve to provide access to the decision-making structure for their underlings: the Effectors.

The Effectors are found by studying participation; they are the active workers in the actual process of community decision-making. Many of the most active Effectors are government personnel and professional participants, and the others are the employees of the large private corporations directed by the Institutional Leaders. It is these men who carry most of the burden of effecting or preventing community change.

The third type of leaders might be called the Activists. These people are active—and often hold office—in voluntary organizations, community service organizations, and clubs. Although they are not involved as often as the Effectors, the Activists do participate in decision-making. For the most part they seem to lack the positional stature to be Institutional Leaders. Furthermore, they often work for or direct smaller organizations in the community; they lack the power base provided by association with government or one of the major industrial or business firms. Yet, seemingly by sheer commitment of time and effort to community affairs, these Activists do help to shape the future of Syracuse (pp. 17–18).

The final part of the 1962 study was an additional category not considered by the previous report: organizational participation. The investigation into organizational participation was prompted by the fact that when Effectors become involved in community issues, they cannot separate themselves from their organizational identity. Others in the process may categorize them as agents of their organizations and the individual will probably consider the interests of the organization when participating.

The study shows that a wide range of interest groups, business, industries, finance groups, various segments of government, etc., participate in decision-making clusters. It also indicates that the individual participation on the part of managerial and technical experts not only represent their personal beliefs but also the interests of their affiliate organizations.

The section of the report also addressed the fragmentation of participating groups by saying that such fragmentation is more apparent than real. The formation of the Metropolitan Development Association was cited as “an attempt to mediate between potentially competing interests through the formation of an association for mutual self-help as well as for the promotion of community projects which meet members’ approval” (pp. 25–26).

Social Capital Presentation by Central New York Community Foundation

On June 20, 2001, Kim Scott of the Central New York Community Foundation presented the results of their Social Capital Study to the 2001 class of Leadership Greater Syracuse. What follows is the actual transcript of that presentation, reproduced here with Ms. Scott's and the Community Foundation's permission.

I. Intro

Good morning. Today, I will be talking about Social Capital – what the term means, the national study we were involved with, and some of our local results. By your participation in Leadership Greater Syracuse, I know that you care about how we are doing here in Central New York in terms of our social connectedness and social trust. Our central question is: how well do we score on social capital, meaning the network of social bonds that draw us together into a people with a common life, with a community?

II. Introduction to the broad theme of social capital

The question we are asking cuts to the very heart of American democracy and its state of well being.

Certainly, since the time of our country's founding, Americans have prized classic liberal values such as individual rights to freedom of religion, speech and expression; the right of privacy, as well as attributes these freedoms make possible: individual fortitude, the tenacity to "pull oneself up by the bootstraps," to exhibit an entrepreneurial and pioneering spirit. But American individualism is only one component of the values we hold dear in this country.

We have an equally long and often more vibrant tradition of valuing community and participation, the bonds that bring us together as one of the most diverse societies in the world, as one united people, active in governing ourselves through voluntary participation in a host of activities. We have generally regarded our vibrancy in these regards to be the essential bedrock on which our system of representative democracy rests, and without which it would crumble.

These different ideologies, the liberal individualist strand and the democratic participatory strand, are each considered critical to American life, but neither one has had a constant presence. The democratic participatory strand has certainly fluctuated in terms of its well-being throughout this last century. Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam has drawn attention to what is known as social capital, meaning the network of reciprocal social relations that bond people together, and which serves as the lifeblood of democratic participation.

Putnam found that the 1950s and 1960s were a heyday for social capital in the United States. Those decades were times of peak involvement in civic organizations of all varieties. Those high levels can be explained, in part, by the activities of the "civic generation," people who were born between 1910 and 1940, and who have participated, throughout their lives, at higher levels than their parents, or their children or grandchildren. Over the past three decades, according to Putnam, we have witnessed a steady decline of social capital. As a nation, we are participating less in organized clubs, having many fewer dinner parties, hanging out with friends less, and trusting each other less.

*Of course, the question of the causes of this broad national trend is a fascinating one, one that Putnam deals with quite thoroughly in his book *Bowling Alone*. Besides generational change, Putnam suggests some part of the changes can be attributed to pressures of time and money, especially in two-career families; another part to suburbanization, commuting and sprawl; and a still larger portion to the effect of*

electronic entertainment, namely television, which has had such an important role in privatizing our leisure time.

My purpose today, however, is not to focus on historical trends regarding social capital, but rather on how we are doing right now, in Central New York, compared to the nation as a whole.

III. Nuts & bolts about how the survey was done here and nationwide

Now let me tell you about the data that I'm going to discuss today. One year ago, three dozen community foundations from across the United States decided to work together to try to rebuild levels of connectedness in their communities. As a first step, we conducted the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, a survey that includes a national sample of 3000 respondents plus representative samples in 40 communities nationwide, totally 29,200. This is the largest scientific study of civic engagement ever conducted in America, and it allows us to analyze differences in civic engagement across place. Here in Onondaga County, a representative sample of 542 individuals were surveyed by telephone last summer. The survey team made extensive efforts to reach "hard-to-reach" individuals, calling back as many as 10 times and using their persuasive abilities, in order to avoid the bias that would result from speaking only to the most eager and willing respondents.

All of this data enables us to make various kinds of comparisons. First, it allows us to compare civic well-being in CNY to that of comparable regions nationwide, by controlling for some key demographic factors, namely: urban density, ethnicity, levels of education, and age distribution. We call these comparisons to like communities "community quotients," and I'm going to speak about those in a moment. Second, we can analyze the data simply by comparing Onondaga County to the nation as a whole, as long as we use weighted data that accounts for differences in key demographics between the CNY and national data. In my discussion, I will sometimes be speaking about our area compared to like places, and sometimes to the nation as a whole.

IV. What did we learn about our community?

In order to assess our well-being in terms of social capital, we look at several different measures or indicators of civic health. We all know that there are different kinds of intelligence—some people are high in creative thinking, others in mathematical abilities and still others in organizational aptitude. Likewise, communities also vary in how well they do on different types of social capital, such as social trust, diversity of friendships, political participation, informal socializing, associational involvement, and so forth. By looking at how our community does on these measures, we can begin to get some sense of what our strengths are, but also where we can improve by taking action to remedy our civic health.

I would like to draw your attention to the definition of Community Quotient. A score of 100 would place us right at the mean, doing exactly as well as our demographics would predict. A score above 100 indicates more social connectedness than would be expected, and a score below 100 indicates that we are doing less well than our demographics would suggest.

We can also compare how well Onondaga County does on several measures of social capital compared to other places by standardizing our population demographics. Each of these measures combines the results of several different survey questions to create a more robust measure of a type of social capital.

Overall, we scored fairly well on these indices. Most of our scores were above 100, and we had no terribly low scores.

One of our higher scores is on protest politics, where we earned a 108. This includes participating in labor unions, where CNY scores very high, with participation in

marches, demonstrations, boycotts, rallies and the like. As Peggy Ogden quickly observed, our area has a long tradition of social protest, going back to the abolitionist movement and suffrage movement of the last century, so this measure is not surprising. We scored slightly below the mean on conventional political participation. We got a boost here by high readership of the local newspaper, but strikingly low knowledge of who are Senators are: only 15 % could name both Senators, and 23% could name one Senator. Hopefully that measure has improved since the last election!

Now I want to look a bit more thoroughly at the two indicators on which CNY scored especially high: schmoozing and associational involvement.

A) Schmoozing (informal social participation): This dimension measures the degree to which residents had friends over to their home, hung out with friends in a public place, socialized with co-workers outside of work, played cards or board games with others, and visited with relatives. Here, CNY did better than comparable cities:
Syracuse/Onondaga County community quotient = 111

- In fact, nearly **every demographic** group—whether by income, educational level, sex, or ethnic group—each group here in CNY engages in significantly more schmoozing than their counterparts nationwide.

- These high levels of schmoozing are most striking among women and among those with high school education or less.

We may want to shed our identity as the “salt city” for that of the “schmooze city.”

- Is there a relationship b/w **schmoozing and length of time people have lived in the community?**

No, not a statistically significant correlation. In fact, people who’ve lived here less time were slightly more likely to report more frequent social participation. Newcomers--those who’ve lived here 5 years or less-- schmooze 9 percentage points more than their counterparts nationwide.

Some of you might be asking yourselves, so what? Does schmoozing really add up to anything in terms of civic engagement? Does it have any significance for our well-being as a community? Theoretically speaking, it should: Putnam and others have argued that informal types of social capital can help promote the more formal types of engagement through which people take active steps to improve their communities.

But the answer, here in CNY, is yes and no.

- **YES:** Schmoozing does give people **sense of community**: those who schmooze more in CNY are more likely feel that living here gives them a sense of community. This is certainly a **positive result**.

- **On the other hand, even those who score low on social trust and on civic engagement here schmooze at high levels compared to their counterparts nationwide.** Suggests that these less engaged, less trusting people here in CNY are **by no means anti-social**, but simply that their social outlets have been informal rather than formal.

- This makes me wonder if we have some **untapped reserves of social capital** here in CNY, people willing to be socially connected if the right network of organizations and activities existed to incorporate them.

B) Associational Involvement: This measure refers to joining groups, be they veterans groups, sports groups, literary groups, or new age poetry clubs.

Syracuse/Onondaga County did very well on this measure, earning a community quotient = 115

We measured associational involvement across 18 broad categories of groups (including an "other" category).

CNY residents participate at especially high levels in sports/outdoor activity clubs, youth organizations, parents' organization, seniors groups, and labor unions.

This is a very strong measure and one our community should be proud of. These kinds of groups not only bring people together in some form of social interaction and enable them to trust one another more, but moreover, they tend to get things done for the community more broadly, taking action to solve local problems. Many are part of widespread federated organizations, and they enable people here to affiliate with members in other communities, drawing us together more powerfully as a nation, and sometimes enabling groups to push for legislation or social change.

V. Putnam's Broad National Findings, and how CNY compares

A) The opportunity & challenge of faith-based civic engagement

*It is well known that Americans are highly religious compared to citizens of comparable nations. **Eighty-eight percent** of the national sample reported some religious affiliation and 84% agreed or somewhat agreed that **religion was very important** to them. Religion is known, generally, to offer opportunities for other forms of social capital:*

*•Involvement in religion is the strongest predictor of **giving and volunteering** for both religious and secular causes. ("doing for" as opposed to "doing with")*

*•Likewise, **involvement in religion tends to lead to higher levels of many other sorts of civic involvement**. Even when we control for income, education, and so forth, we find that religiously engaged people are more likely than others to be involved in civic groups of all sorts, to vote, to be active in community affairs, to give blood, to trust other people, to know the names of elected officials, to socialize with others, and to have more friends.*

*Religious involvement does, nationwide, present some **challenges**, however to social capital:*

*•Religious involvement is sometimes associated with **intolerance**: eg. favor banning unpopular books from libraries, antipathy to equal rights for immigrants, lower levels of support for racial intermarriage and lower levels of friendships with gay people.*

*•also, **less involvement in boycotts and marches**.*

We looked at the CNY data to see if these patterns held true here. I have good news for you. In Onondaga County, the positive things that are true of religious involvement elsewhere in the nation are true, but not the negative things. Those who are involved in churches and religious activities here rank significantly higher than other residents in terms of social trust, civic activity, other non-church related group involvements, and they have more diverse friends.

At the same time, when we look at measures of tolerance, there is no relationship between being a church member and people's attitudes. People in CNY score high generally on measures of social tolerance, and religious people are no exception.

We suspect that the difference between the CNY data and Putnam's generalizations about negative effects of religion nationwide may be associated with

denominational affiliations here vs. elsewhere, or regional differences and the related differences in attitudes.

In short, here in CNY, we benefit from the positive ways in which religious involvement promotes civic engagement, and do not need to worry much about the negative effects felt elsewhere.

B) The opportunity and challenge of diversity

The United States has always been, and is increasingly becoming, a diverse society. The past decade has been one of high immigration rates to the United States, and growing income disparity. Sometimes, both historically and in the present, our diversity has been a source of divisiveness and tension. Conversely, at our best, we can be a nation that values tolerance and fosters community among far more divergent groups than is common in comparable nations.

Looking at the national data, Putnam found that Americans seem to have grown much more tolerant than in the past in support of having a close relative marry someone from a different racial or ethnic group. Focusing in on communities with high levels of diversity, many of those that have seen exponential growth since the 1990 census, he found some important strengths: greater levels of tolerance; high densities of ethnic, neighborhood, and self-help groups; diverse networks of friendships with those of various races, income groups, occupations and sexual orientations.

These same communities, however, suffer from low levels of trust of others (of neighbors, clerks where they shop, people they work with, people of their own ethnic group); much lower rates of informal socializing, less sense of community, and less participation in politics. These low levels of social capital, Putnam argues, stand in the way of those who are trying to advance economically.

How do we fare in CNY on measures related to diversity?

1. Racial trust. The measure of inter-racial trust looks at the extent to which different racial groups (whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians) trust one another and is thus one proxy for the health of inter-racial relations in a community.

Syracuse/Onondaga County community quotient = 107

This is fairly positive, but needs to be put into perspective. Racial trust here is especially high in the suburbs. Those outside the center city scored 13% points higher on inter-racial trust than those in the center city. Given the homogeneity of the suburbs compared to the center city, this fact reflects more of a state of mind or sense of values than lived practice in everyday life.

This is especially important to consider given the recent census data that shows that whites continue to move away from the city in such large numbers. A challenge for us in CNY, then, is how to channel this sense of racial trust into active engagement with others different from ourselves. This becomes evident when we look at another measure:

2. Diversity of friendships: measures how diverse people's social networks are. CNY scored rather low on this, with a community quotient of 91. Since it was impractical in a 25 minute phone survey to ask each person surveyed to list all the people he/she knew and to describe each one, we asked (as a proxy) whether the respondent had a personal friend who is a: business owner, was on welfare, owned a vacation home, is gay, is a manual worker, is White, is Black, is Hispanic, is Asian, is a community leader, and was of a different faith. Then we added up how many of these 11 categories each respondent mentioned. This index thus broadly measures the degree to which people's social networks (and collectively a community's networks) are diverse.

Putnam distinguishes between "bonding" forms of social capital, where we participate with others like ourselves, and "bridging" social capital, where we participate across lines of race, class, educational background, and so forth. These "bridging ties" are especially valuable in producing community solidarity and in forging

a larger consensus on how communities need to work together to improve their surroundings. Our high rankings on schmoozing, noted earlier, probably involve mostly the “bonding” variety and little “bridging;” associational involvements tend to widen our circles somewhat, but probably not sufficiently. **This is certainly an area we need to work on.**

Inequality: There is a sort of “digital divide” in terms of social capital, Putnam finds, and this is manifest in Onondaga County in a **suburban/urban disparity** on most all levels of civic engagement. Residents of the center city score higher than those in the county **on informal social participation, but lower on all other measures.** This is not surprising—it is consistent with findings elsewhere given lower rates of education and lower incomes in the city.

But it does mean that investment in the city is especially needed. Putnam argues that social capital and the networks it promotes are essential for economic development, as well as higher levels of health, happiness, and sense of quality of life.

C) Does living in Central New York gives you a sense of community? CNY scored low on this: community quotient score of 80.

On the positive side, those in the **35-49 year age group** answered yes at much higher levels than those nationwide: 76% nationwide said yes, compared to a full 85% in CNY. We wondered if, given that these are people with young/school age children, perhaps the adage that “CNY is a good place to raise a family” might be operating here? Perhaps schools, soccer leagues, and other community activities that involve children give these people more of a sense of community? Indeed, we found that 82% of those who are married and have kids under age 18 report that yes, living here gives them a sense of community.

•**Negative:** The age group who scored **especially low** on this was **18-34 year olds.**

The differences compared to the nation are strikingly lower for this age group: 75% answered yes nationwide, compared to only 59% in CNY. These are folks who move away in large numbers. Why so disconnected here? Not merely the “bar scene,” but also challenges for new parents?

There was a fairly high **disparity among seniors, too:** 80% of those 65 year+ nationwide answered yes, versus 73% here. Suggests that some how we are not doing such a great job of giving youngest and oldest in CNY a sense of community here.

VI. Community connectedness linked to happiness and vibrant communities

Social capital and social trust matter a lot for both the quality of life in our communities and our personal happiness.

Social connectedness is a much stronger predictor of the perceived quality of life in a community than the community's income or educational level.

It is well known that we have a lot less sunshine than other parts of the nation, and less growth in population and the economy than other regions. But we are a region quite rich in social connectedness, and that does a great deal for our quality of life. Regarding quality of life in CNY: like nationwide, high levels of social trust are correlated here with believing this community to be a good or excellent place to live.

Notably, we do better than the Northeast in general on this measure: 81% of those in Northeast say their community is a good or excellent place to live, compared to 85% here.

Those who live in the suburbs are especially likely to give CNY high rankings: 94%, compared to 87% of their cohort group nationwide.

Conclusion

I would like to leave you with this last thought on the subject of today's session – volunteering. Our community results show that we are acting “as expected”. This is an opportunity. By 40 of you, here today, making a commitment to serve your community you will be building social capital. This will benefit those you serve, you, your family and our community.

Thank you for making Central New York a better place to live.

[end of transcript of Ms. Scott's presentation]

Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age
by Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson

Boundary Crossers is a report based on case studies of ten of America's metropolitan regions. The Study Committee found the ten lessons developed by Peirce and Johnson from their observations of other regions were helpful in framing our study and in assessing our area and its leadership. We have reprinted the following selections in order to share with our civic leadership the ten lessons so that we may learn from their experiences. Excerpts are reprinted here from *Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age*, by Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, published in 1997 by The Academy of Leadership Press.

Lesson 1: The table gets larger—and rounder

If there's one place in America where citizen participation is both custom and high art, it is Portland, Oregon. There is "an expectation of participation," according to Metro Executive Director Michael Burton. "It always starts with neighborhood organizations."

The pattern of citizen participation has actually expanded over 20 years. The Portland 2040 Plan, an attempt to plan regional growth to accommodate one million more people, involved extensive community workshops and thinking through of alternatives.

Questionnaires went to more than 500,000 households, asking residents about real choices: whether they wanted more development on transit lines (83 percent said yes), encouraging growth centers (77 percent yes), reducing new lot sizes (58 percent yes), and reducing commercial parking (55 percent).

The bottom line is that people know they belong to Portland, the city and region, because it's become part of the culture for them to be consulted at every step (pp. 14–15).

Lesson 2: The only thing more challenging than a crisis may be its absence

The people of the Portland region, a quarter century ago, merely saw crises looming—loss of farm and open space, the exquisite Northwest environment, and a peril of highways devouring the region's preeminent city. They responded with a regional government to match a new state law and set a serious boundary for the urban region. They reduced incentives to drive by killing the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway and replacing roaring traffic arteries with a three-mile long park along the Willamette River. Neighborhood and architects took strong exception to downtown garage-building and agitated for what became the Downtown Plan that has made Portland into one of the most attractive, vibrant cities on the North American continent.

In the 1970's Charlotte was ahead of most communities in effecting quiet but effective school integration. And in the 90's, the city government did something quite important in American life. It set out to take neighborhoods seriously without race riots or social upheavals to force the issue. Finding its traditional hierarchies and department structure could not respond to the need of a group of quite poor, crime- and welfare-plagued neighborhoods, the city government effected total reorganization. It instituted interdepartmental teams and actually placed priority for funding and special efforts on the poor neighborhoods. The change was accomplished so quietly that the local newspaper, one of the best in America, didn't even notice until it was nearly a fait accompli.

Portland and Charlotte, on opposite ends of the American continent, seem to have learned something systematic about being ahead of the crisis curve. Each demonstrates that a few committed people can lead their region to attempt something, and if it works, to build on it. That leadership needs to come both from the top and from engaged citizens, in ordinary neighborhoods, who move to take real responsibility. Such examples are rare and cry out for emulation, because most American regions remain complacent, starved for a crisis that might ignite change (pp. 20–22).

Lesson 3: The agenda gets tougher

For each city with a revived center, a set of gnawing questions remains: Has the lot of the poor been improved? Has downtown revival reduced poverty in any appreciable way? Have racial and ethnic tensions been relieved, minority entrepreneurship expanded?

The answer is almost uniformly “No.” The revival impact is simply not apparent; indeed neighborhoods of extreme poverty have increased in most U.S. cities. “There are 41,000 unemployed black males in this region,” points out Cleveland Urban League president Myron F. Robinson. “How are we going to bring them into the mainstream?”

Can civic leaders do anything to reverse these trends, the culmination of decades of inner city (and now inner-ring suburban) decline? If the answer is in simple income transfer from public treasuries, the answer is almost surely “no.” The large center cities of America, notes the University of Pennsylvania’s Anita Summers, are today the caretakers of the nation’s poor and immigrants, with significant shares of their budget already going to cover the costs of poverty—costs most suburban governments bear in dramatically lesser share. Only the national government, and to a lesser degree state governments, argues Summers, can afford to redistribute wealth.

Yet there is little sign that higher governments are willing, under the political conditions of the times to undertake any kind of redistribution. America’s metropolitan regions, by virtue of boundaries set in the 19th century and sometimes even earlier, have in effect compartmentalized their poverty—at the very time globalization is accentuating the income gulf between skilled and unskilled workers. Regions are left with a deepening social overburden that clearly increases public costs and threatens to undermine the economic competitiveness of individual regions and communities.

One can argue that the sheer necessity of finding answers more creative than traditional income redistribution is coming into focus. The new agenda goes beyond traditional downtown and waterfront renewal to recycling older industrial areas into loft districts for residences, shops, even “cyber-village” growth industries. The new agenda embraces:

- *intensive brownfields recycling;*
- *neighborhood-by-neighborhood economic development planning;*
- *successful efforts to increase public order through zero-tolerance policing and community policing;*
- *efforts to find real jobs to replace welfare dependency;*
- *community insistence on reinvention of local government, especially modernizing inefficient and patronage plagued big city governments;*
- *school reforms—more and more charter schools, and in cities such as Chicago, shifting direct control and responsibility from school boards to top elected officials.*

Not every American region may be as perplexed by race, but there's not a single American metro area where it's not, to some extent, a very real problem. Part of the solution, clearly, is in identifying non-political leaders—in business, civic groups, academia—who can start, in practical and non-confrontational ways, to bring people of varying racial backgrounds together to address problems which they confront in common (pp. 22–27).

Lesson 4: There is no magical leadership structure—just people and relationships

In Cleveland, one finds major private and community foundations taking a lead role in community development, increasingly in concert with the business community through the CEO-led Cleveland Tomorrow, and the larger local governments. “The secrets to Cleveland’s success,” says Gund Foundation executive director David Bergholz, “are the talented professionals working in intermediary roles in non-profits, foundations, community development corporations and city planning agencies.” These, he notes, are the people who take the time to build “constellations of trusting relationships” and “serve as the glue between the business and government communities.”

In Denver, despite Western traditions of fiercely defended individualism and intense local independence, it's really government that is expected to lead, because it's the only bridge between the private sector and the community groups that do so much of the work. There, as in most places, leaders of local community groups are inherently ill at ease in the corporate boardroom. And, so is the typical corporate executive in front of a grass-roots neighborhood association crowd.

The business community became deeply convinced that major new infrastructure investments were critical to the Denver region's capacity to come out of the recession of the 1980's. Money had to be spent, business leaders believed, even when lots of people had lost their jobs and many businesses were hurting for revenue. Business looked to government to gather the necessary folks around that larger, rounder table.

In contrast, much of the leadership for change in San Antonio comes from grass roots organizations. There COPS (Citizens Organized for Public Service) and the Metropolitan Alliance organize and train citizens to get the facts about decisions that affect their lives and learn the means of influencing public decisions.

Bruce Adams, our colleague on this project says: “The leadership lesson is clear—it is going to take many people from every sector working very hard to turn out communities around. At the community level, leaders are made and not born. Building relationships and crossing boundaries are the essential community leadership skills of the next century” (pp. 32–33).

Lesson 5: No one's excused

Universities could become critical actors in building the new American society—especially at today's critical juncture point when the growing income divisions between haves and have-nots, manual laborers and the professional elite, are becoming so profound and worrisome. Indeed, the growing skills and income division in American society, reflected in the interrelated crises of family disintegration, neighborhood and downtown decay, malfunctioning schools and crime and wasteful sprawl development, is arguably the central intellectual crisis of our time. As such, it's a crisis that our universities, our prime intellectual resources, ignore at their peril.

Consider the faith community—churches, synagogues, temples and mosques. Collectively, each faith represents a magnificent region-wide community. Each is in a position, through its members, through their informal networks, to exercise significant influence. In any region one will already find highly constructive ways, especially in social action, that at least a number of faith communities are involved.

Local foundations also could take an issue such as sprawl and work consciously to get multiple faith communities to recognize the serious stakes, to educate and gain involvement from congregations across the entire region. The leadership role of community foundations is enlarging rapidly as they multiply and grow—but still is only a fraction of its potential, especially in helping regions reach out to new constituencies and to think strategically.

If the faith and foundation communities are not to be excused from major regional issues, surely the media should not be either. Newspapers, television, radio may be commercial enterprises. But they enjoy First Amendment rights for a reason. They are critical link between citizenry, government, and the creation of healthy civic processes.

Commercial local television's common denominator of news programs packed with violence, scandal and the banal represents an assault on the health of the community—one that deserves criticism, in communities nationwide, by responsible civic forces (pp. 35–41).

Lesson 6: Sometimes the old ways still work

There are still occasions when a figure like NationsBank Chairman Hugh McColl of Charlotte—eager to be the first bird off the wire, flying boldly off in a new direction, expecting others to follow—does get things going, does create opportunities for many others to follow. We were talking with McColl in his top-floor office back in 1995, and remember what he said about the northside of downtown Charlotte, looking out the window. The market wasn't reaching to those neighborhoods, where run-down structures and struggling public housing filled most blocks. He said: "We have to do something about that." As it turns out, he intended to buy whole parcels and become the developer to ensure that businesses and new housing found their way to the part of Charlotte's core that the market was too slow to see. Using his influence and resources, McColl started something that many others will finish (p. 43).

Lesson 7: Collaboration is messy, frustrating and indispensable

The fact is that interesting forms of partnership and collaboration are behind a vast number of the downtown and neighborhood revitalizations, reformed social service efforts, and environmental accords reported in American regions today. The word partnership dominates descriptions of how such city regions as Cleveland, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Portland and Denver have been able to move forward.

It is important to see how camps less accustomed to collaboration—business leaders, for example—learn the game. When Richard Fleming was the head of the Denver Partnership, a new downtown organization, and on the threshold of taking over as CEO of the Denver Chamber of Commerce, he talked about a "new civics." This meant more power-sharing with new players, more consensus-based decision making, greater use of non-profit organizations, more public entrepreneurship, and shrewd market-based strategic planning. The results, as his approach gained acceptance, were stunning. But it was a language of partnership not much known when Fleming first thrust it into the open civic arena in the early 1980s.

John Gardner, at 85 a true national treasure, a man who would head any civic college of cardinals, thinks we're in a transition, welding the assets of our establishment past to a more participatory future. At a meeting in early 1997, he said:

"I think we're trying to put together a new Establishment. It took me a long time to realize this, working to found the Urban Coalition, Common Cause and the like ... I was trying to get in things of old—trust, responsibility, things that one would have found in an old town. I was trying to create a new, more diverse and inclusive group, but without losing the trust and sense of responsibility and commitment of old groups. That's what we have to keep on trying. It's long and slow to get people talking across the table with a sense of trust, not seeing that other person as a category, like 'Korean grocer' ... The transition is taking us a couple generations—to reach the further shore of cross-boundary Establishments" (pp. 46–48).

Lesson 8: Government always needs reforming, but all the reforms need government

Each American region seems to have its own mindset about government. In Kansas City, government is expected to be at the table, even if that's usually someone else's table. In Portland, it is a kind of collective consciousness—the expression of public will. In San Diego, it's the arbiter of relentless growth debates. In Chattanooga, it's proven that archaic form is no bar to civic innovation.

In Detroit, the city government has moved from political machine to racial fortress to would-be innovator in a new striving for regional collaboration. In Denver, notwithstanding the region's open and western image, government is expected to initiate and lead important projects.

*Another vital role of government in today's cities and regions is as **bridge** between other sectors that seem to have difficulty talking with one another. In such cities as Cleveland, Atlanta and Denver, one finds quite strong lines of communication connecting the business community with the city and other municipal governments.*

Yet as helpful as government may be in its alliances and communicating role, it also is subject to all of today's pressures of globalization, to prove itself more efficient, and more responsive to its citizens. Clearly, U.S. municipal governments have increased in professionalism over the past decades. Bossism and outright corruption have declined as problems.

Today's society obviously wants less bureaucratic, less intrusive and less dictating government. More than ever, reforms thought up, initiated, and pushed by communities and non-profits and civic forces are essential. Yet in one form or another, each civic effort requires government as an active, smart partner. In the final analysis, there's no other way (pp. 50–52).

Lesson 9: Place matters

Interdependence relates not just to the fact that communities across regions breathe the same air, use the same transportation systems, share the same water, and impact the same natural systems. Their workforces are thoroughly intermingled. Suburbanites use—and in fact own, through various financial institutions—major parts of center city properties. Multiple studies suggest that suburbs are far more likely to prosper when the inner cities are doing well. Leaders in the country's most aggressive regions—from

Chattanooga to Cleveland to San Diego—repeat the need to reform faltering inner city schools for the entire region to develop a competitive 21st century workforce.

Are metropolitan areas different in their recognition of region as a vital place? The answer is clearly yes. But the precise degree of regional consciousness appears to relate, in a loose way, to the degree regional leaders have begun serious debate on the components of a healthy region—education (including workforce preparedness), the problems posed by sprawl and unwise land uses that drive up regional costs for everyone, the disparity between poor and rich, and the importance laid on the health of the downtown for the whole citistate.

*Neighborhoods rarely have found a need or a way to connect with regional agendas. Yet the neighborhood-region connection is becoming ever-more-important, argue four Southern California academics (Manuel Pastor, Eugene Grigsby, Peter Dreier and Marta Lopez-Garza) in a 1997 report, *Growing Together*. With Hayes Foundation funding, the team examined the Los Angeles economy and the painfully slow progress of many low-income minorities since the bruising 1992 riots. Then, for comparison, it did an economic study of 73 other regions.*

The conclusion: Across the U.S., reductions in center city poverty lead to more rapid income increases spread across the whole region. It's smart business for regional business and political leaders to try to deal with poor people and neighborhoods, through job training and connections, into emerging economic projects. "Doing good and doing well go hand in hand."

Two other points of common neighborhood-regional interest are emerging. One is a growing understanding that sprawl can destroy regions' environment and social order. A second is the welfare reform legislation passed in 1996. Its work requirement makes a regional approach to job location and placement critically important.

Finally, every region needs a heart—a downtown that works, a living room for everybody, a shared space where people of differing backgrounds can rub shoulders, a cultural and sports mecca, a place people can take pride in (pp. 53–57).

Lesson 10: It's never over

The hard truth—just as it is for playing sports, repositioning a business for international competition, or sustaining a good marriage—is that everyone who cares about keeping success alive has to pay attention to the fundamentals, today and tomorrow.

Every successful place is a serial story, not a one-time splash. Denver is graduating from airports, convention centers, and libraries, to the tougher stuff of region-wide transportation strategies, and preserving air clean enough to see the mountains.

Charlotte's made the big map. It's a major league place now. But sustaining its quality of life will be more difficult than banks acquiring more banks.

Kansas City, while less hard-pressed than many more industrial older cities, still has to find a formula for expanding the civic club, enhancing neighborhoods, reclaiming a barren downtown, and curbing destructive sprawl.

Cleveland is moving from its miraculous-enough downtown reconstruction (who a generation ago would ever have dreamed of a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on the lake?)

to such daunting tasks as fixing one of America's most dysfunctional school systems and rebuilding confidence in neighborhoods long ravaged by poverty and disinvestment.

Portland's success is now its very problem. Growth is squeezing, indeed threatening Portland's successes. On the one hand, there's the challenge of achieving enough added density to resist major inroads on the urban growth boundary. On the other, there are right-wing forces out to destroy the entire Metro governance plan. You won't find any civic activists in the Portland area who think the work's done.

Chattanooga has set up an Institute for Sustainability—aiming at every strategy it takes to be a completely sustaining economy and society.

After listening to a range of Chattanoogaans talk about their approach, our colleague in this project, John Parr, compiled a list from their own words. The list might (though the Chattanoogaans don't) be called "The Chattanooga Process." We'd endorse it for any American community.

- 1. Any idea is worth exploring. At the beginning, all possibilities get a respectful hearing.*
- 2. Success will occur if we all sit down and put our heads together; that way, we can reach a common agenda.*
- 3. There must always be a specific, but open-ended, agenda for public participation.*
- 4. The collective good is always the goal, and that means the good of all citizens.*
- 5. Preventing future problems and creating systemic change are always priorities in the process.*
- 6. We always bring the best people in the country here to speak, advise and participate.*
- 7. When necessary, we visit other communities that have been successful to find out the nuances of how and why a solution worked there, and what to avoid (pp. 59–62).*

[end of excerpts from *Boundary Crossers*]

APPENDIX: PREVIOUS OCL STUDIES

- 1979 Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment
- 1980 Young People in Trouble: Can Our Services be Organized and Delivered More Effectively?
- 1981 The County Legislature: Its Function, Size and Structure
- 1982 Declining School Enrollments: Opportunities for Cooperative Adaptations
- 1983 Onondaga County Public Works Infrastructure: Status, Funding and Responsibilities
- 1984 Police Services in Onondaga County: A Review and Recommendations
- 1985 The City and County Charters: Time for Revision?
- 1987 Blueprints for the Future: Recommendations for the Year 2000
- 1988 The Role of the Food Industry in the Economy of Onondaga County
- 1989 Poverty and its Social Costs: Are There Long-term Solutions?
- 1990 Syracuse Area Workforce of the Future: How Do We Prepare?
- 1991 Schools that Work: Models in Education that Can be Used in Onondaga County
- 1992 Town and Village Governments: Opportunities for Cost-effective Changes
- 1993 The Criminal Justice System in Onondaga County: How Well is it Working?
- 1994 The Delivery of Human Services: Opportunities for Improvement
- 1995 Reinvesting in the Community: Opportunities for Economic Development
- 1996 Building a Non-Violent Community: Successful Strategies for Youth
- 1997 Security Check: Public Perceptions of Safety and Security
- 1998 Onondaga County School Systems: Challenges, Goals, and Visions for the Future
- 1999 Economic Development: Models for Success
- 2000 Housing and Neighborhoods: Tools for Change