



*“The State of the Arts”*

2002

*Report No. 23*

*Onondaga Citizens League*

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Dennis Lerner, *Chair*

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## Preface

For nearly 25 years, the Onondaga Citizens League has represented an outstanding example of citizen participation in public affairs in Central New York. Founded in 1978 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.

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.

This year's study topic, *The State of the Arts*, grew out of an acknowledgment of the importance of arts and culture to the quality of life in our community. Quality of life factors are recognized as increasingly important determinants of the health and attractiveness of a region, and related to its economic viability. The 1992 County-commissioned Partnership for the Arts study took an in depth look at the financial side of the arts and public funding mechanisms. The OCL study committee used the 1992 report as a resource, but looked beyond funding to focus on other issues as well.

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

This report on *The State of the Arts* would not have been possible without the voluntary participation and contributions of many conscientious individuals and caring institutions.

The individual and collective insights of the members of the Study Steering Committee, whose names are listed elsewhere, and the spirited group discussions along the way sustained and informed this study and honed its conclusions and recommendations. My particular thanks go to the dedicated team that conducted a comprehensive survey of Central New York cultural institutions.

Thanks also to the dozens of participants, named at the start of each study session transcript, whose expertise and dedication to a thriving arts community gave substance to our study. I appreciate the generosity of hosts who provided facilities for the study sessions at no cost: Syracuse Stage, Drumlins, The Onondaga Public Library, Southside Presbyterian Church, Le Moyne College and *The Post-Standard*. Thanks also to the Welch-Allyn Conference Center, host of this year's fascinating Community Leadership Conference, and to the artists whose presence enriched that memorable day. Artist Wendy Harris's pastel creation helped to publicize our study sessions, and became a wonderful visual emblem of our project.

Special thanks to Sandra Barrett, executive vice president of the Onondaga Citizens League, whose resourceful and ever-present support kept us all on track.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this report to the memory of Rose Bernthal. With her husband Murray, Rose spent a half-century enriching the theatrical and musical arts scene in Central New York. She was an unwavering supporter of the Onondaga Citizens League and a treasured colleague on the OCL board. While we missed her during this year's adventure, the example of her benevolent, encouraging and infectious spirit was ever-present.

Fred Fiske  
*Study Chair*

*“A cultural district is a good thing for improving the cultural lives of the citizens it serves.”*

**Arthur Brooks, cultural economist, Syracuse University**

*“The critical challenge for increasing all aspects of the supply of the arts (quantity, quality and access) is stimulating greater demand for the arts.”*

**Arthur Brooks, co-author, “The Performing Arts in a New Era”**

*“(The arts help us) to feel the reality of what has happened, to find each other as we are, for better or worse, and to celebrate our frail connections with each other and the world.”*

**Brooks Haxton, poet and SU professor**

*“Ten years after our report, it’s time to rethink it. Is an entertainment tax still viable? Should we raise the sales tax from 7 percent and dedicate the extra funds to schools and the arts? Would 1 percent more deter visitors? How about a special taxing district, for example for Destiny USA?”*

**Eric Mower, chair, 1992 Partnership for the Arts study**

*“The arts have taken more than their fair share of brutal funding cuts. What’s the yardstick for measuring support for the arts? How to make culture thrive? Cherish it. Focus on institutions, the grass roots and individuals. Fill what is lacking in diversity, ethnically and programmatically.”*

**Leo Crandall, Cultural Resources Council**

*“I don’t see a vision for the arts community articulated in Syracuse. I’m not sure we can afford all the arts organizations we have. We may need some pruning.”*

**Patrick Mannion, trustee, The Gifford Foundation**

*“We suffered through the 1990s, the arts struggled. A lot of people still believe we are in the doldrums. Actually, we have recovered dramatically. We’re poised.”*

**Ed Kochian, Onondaga County Executive’s Office**

*“We got it all wrong on how to finance the arts. They’re never going to make it by begging politicians and foundations. The mayor’s office is looking at how to raise money, day-in and day-out.”*

**Vito Sciscioli, Syracuse Mayor’s Office**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Mission and Methodology

The Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee of 2002 sought to discover and characterize the state of the arts in the city of Syracuse and the surrounding community. The committee surveyed arts and cultural organizations, asking the leadership of those organizations to characterize their audience base, the state of their venues and finances, their public relations efforts and other topics. Public financial information from the Attorney General's Office was obtained and analyzed. Six panel discussions were held over the course of three months in different venues throughout the city in which participation by the community was encouraged. Topics covered by the panels were: 1) The State of our Major Cultural Institutions; 2) Destiny USA; 3) Diversity, 4) Education, 5) Innovation; and 6) The Media. Guest speakers included State Sen. John DeFrancisco, who addressed the audience at Thursday Morning Roundtable, and Frank Malfitano, who spoke at the Onondaga Citizens League Community Leadership Conference. The conference, also open to the general public, featured panel discussions featuring both local and out-of-town speakers to share regional and local visions for a vibrant arts scene. Previous studies were re-visited, and articles and experts were consulted. In addition, the perceptions of the general community were recorded throughout the process.

## Findings

We collected overwhelming evidence that the arts and cultural scene is populated by energetic, visionary and creative people who make arts and culture flourish and thrive in our community. We also confronted the realities and challenges faced by our arts and cultural community. We found that the welfare of the arts of the greater Syracuse community depends upon the following basic factors:

- **Money.** From the major institutions to the smaller arts and cultural organizations, the obstacle that must first be overcome is the lack of funding for capital improvements, personnel, programming, infrastructure and future planning. Individual artists must be supported financially as well.

- **Leadership.** Dynamic and visible leadership serves the best interest of the arts and cultural community. There was concern that the decision made more than a decade ago to split the cultural council from cultural facilities programming has diminished this visibility. The Study Committee found the Cultural Resources Council pursuing its mission faithfully, skillfully gathering and deploying its limited resources and even expanding into innovative areas. However, the continuing challenges faced by artists and arts organizations, as well as the prospect of the DestinyUSA project, offer the opportunity and the need to take cultural leadership to a new level, both in advocacy for the arts and promoting cultural tourism.

- **Cultivating new audiences.** Attracting younger and more diverse participants to the arts is a major challenge faced by our community. For arts and cultural institutions, the challenge is to identify and offer meaningful arts and cultural experiences that will overcome the gaps in economic, social and cultural realities. Opportunities exist within the educational system; however, resources are not always available to capitalize on those opportunities. Lastly, the media underestimates its role in cultivating an audience for arts and culture.

## Recommendations

We hope this report stimulates conversation, deliberation and action to support and promote the value of arts and culture and ensure and even enhance this community's vitality. A public debate would be welcome. The following are our abridged recommendations:

- Establish a dedicated funding source that is tax-based, generating revenue from a reliable source that encompasses city and county residents as well as visitors.
- Use the dedicated funding stream to enhance the ability of the cultural council to support the arts and cultural community financially and to expand its ability to advocate and create a buzz.

- Establish a private arts fund that would enable individuals, corporate and business entities and other private-sector entities to provide generalized support toward the operating expenses of arts and cultural institutions.
- Designate a cultural district downtown that would encompass a cultural corridor (Montgomery Street), increase the visibility of the arts in the designated area and provide an easy answer for residents and visitors looking for an artistic experience.
- Establish a public arts facility downtown that will also house a middle school dedicated to the arts. The public arts facility would be a central, dedicated site within the cultural campus downtown. It should also serve as a year-long, seven-day-a-week educational and performance center that also provides academic and after-school opportunities for youth, as well as artistic and cultural resources and activities for the general public of all ages.

- Create a transportation infrastructure to link all cultural destinations in the area that is free or low cost, safe, and easy to use. The transportation links could include DestinyUSA and cultural destinations downtown and in the surrounding area. Increase the availability of well-lit nighttime parking downtown.
- Market cultural tourism to attract more visitors to the area. Incorporate arts and culture issues in promoting and developing DestinyUSA and other attractions.

### **Conclusion**

The state of the arts in the greater Syracuse area reflects a vibrant regional culture that faces very real challenges. We are fortunate that our arts and cultural community is supported by dedicated and highly creative individuals who work collaboratively to make the most of limited resources. It is up to all of us to make sure the future of our arts and cultural life grows ever richer.



## 2002 Study Session Topics and Speakers

### **State of the Arts: The Health of our Major Institutions, April 8**

Jim Clark, Syracuse Stage  
 Trey Devey, Syracuse Symphony  
 Steve Karon, Museum of Science and Technology  
 Christine Lozner, Onondaga Historical Association  
 Sandy Trop, Everson Museum  
 Catherine Wolff, Syracuse Opera  
 Ed Green, Moderator

### **State Funding for the Arts, April 18**

New York State Senator John A. DeFrancisco

### **The Impact of DestinyUSA on Arts and Cultural Institutions, April 18**

Trey Devey, Syracuse Symphony  
 Mike Lorenz, Pyramid Company of Onondaga  
 Stephanie Miner, Syracuse Common Council  
 Martha Mulroy, Onondaga County Legislature  
 Sandy Trop, Everson Museum  
 Dennis Connors, Moderator

### **Diversity in the Arts, April 30**

Trey Devey, Syracuse Symphony  
 Bob Moss, Syracuse Stage  
 Dr. Gregory Threatte, SUNY Upstate  
 Sam Velasquez, Moderator

### **Arts Education and Cultural Literacy, May 6**

Len Fonte, Nottingham High School  
 Peter Hedrick, New York State Early Music Association  
 Hope Irvine, Syracuse University School of Education  
 Laura Reeder, Partners for Arts Education  
 Roberta Ripberger, H.W. Smith School  
 John Frantz, Moderator

### **On the Edge: Innovation in the Arts, May 20**

Leslie Noble, Gams on the Lam  
 Neva Pilgrim, Society for New Music  
 Jacob Roberts, The Institution of a Now Culture  
 Kim Waale, Installation Artist  
 Bill Morris, Moderator

### **The Media and Cultural Coverage, May 29**

Sherry Chayat, The Zen Center  
 Michael Fields, WCNY TV and FM  
 Heidi Holtz, SU Performing Arts  
 Walt Shepperd, Syracuse New Times  
 Frank Herron, Moderator

### **Community Leadership Conference, June 13**

*The State of the Arts in Central New York*  
 Frank Malfitano, Syracuse Jazz Fest

### *Regional Cultural Initiatives*

Richard Driscoll, Ithaca Community Arts Partnership  
 Celeste Lawson, Arts Council of Buffalo  
 Sarah Lentini, Arts & Cultural Council of Rochester  
 Leo Crandall, Moderator

### *Private Sector Support for the Arts and Culture*

Patrick Mannion, Gifford Foundation Board of Trustees  
 Ellen Mitchell, Lockheed Martin  
 Meg O'Connell, The Allyn Foundation  
 Tom Owens, Verizon NY  
 Pam Brunet, Bristol-Myers Squibb

### *A Brief Cultural History*

Dennis Connors, Onondaga Historical Association

### *A Vision for the Future—Yours, Mine, and Ours*

Dennis Lerner, Onondaga Citizens League  
 Dennis Connors, Onondaga Historical Association  
 Leo Crandall, Cultural Resources Council  
 Bob Herz, Developer  
 Chuckie Holstein, FOCUS Greater Syracuse  
 Ed Kochian, Onondaga County  
 Vito Sciscioli, City of Syracuse  
 Deb Warner, Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce

## Introduction

Our mission was to ask and seek answers to the following three questions: What will it take to make sure the arts in Central New York continue to thrive? What challenges and opportunities are raised by current trends? What is the audience for the arts, and how can it be expanded?

This was no barren landscape we set out to explore. Far from it! Central New York has enjoyed a robust and varied menu of arts and cultural offerings since the first settlements grew into villages, towns and cities—and the Iroquois were doing just fine before that.

Today, anyone with a taste for the arts can find something to suit her or his taste—from a gallery opening to a hip-hop happening; from professional, amateur and youth theater to a symphony orchestra of the first rank; opera, ballet, a stunning art museum; a children's chorus, gay and lesbian chorus, choirs both classical and contemporary, and a community choir for people of all abilities; groups devoted to chamber music, new music, James Joyce, Shakespeare, puppetry and storytelling. The venues for these artistic endeavors include the glittering Landmark Theatre, the contemporary Civic Center, the distinctive Syracuse Stage and unique Everson Museum. More intimate settings range from the old firehouse converted into the Westcott Community Center to school auditoriums, a downtown pub or somebody's living room.

During the summer, hardly a day goes by without a cultural happening downtown—the Wednesday Party in the Plaza, music at Clinton or Hanover Square, or one of a dozen or so festivals celebrating the rainbow of Central New York cultural and ethnic diversity.

Clearly, Central New York is a hub of thriving cultural activity—an economic engine valued at nearly \$30 million per year, generating at least an equal amount in related spending. It quickly became clear that the focus of our study must not be on how to change this environment, but how to

support and enrich it. This region may never replicate the cultural kaleidoscope of New York City, but Central New York has a critical mass of its own, and that independent artistic identity is testimony to the creativity and inspiration of its people.

There can be no doubt that this region's culture deserves support: from all of us, as well as state and federal government. The conservative culture critic Michael Medved has noted that the nation's resilience in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 was in large part due to cultural richness. "Its true strength derives not from its concentration in one great center, but its dispersion across a wide variety of regional capitals of startling vitality," he wrote. "Decentralized competition will continue to bring great benefits to America—cultural as well as economic and political—if we properly acknowledge the importance of local endeavors, and keep them flourishing."

In his new book, "The Performing Arts in a New Era," cultural economist Arthur Brooks of Syracuse University's Maxwell School notes three essential functions the arts perform in a community's life: "1) The arts serve as a source of entertainment, enrichment and fulfillment for individuals; 2) The arts serve as a vehicle for the preservation and transmission of culture; 3) The arts provide a variety of instrumental benefits for society. These benefits exist at the individual, community and national level."

One aim of our study was to examine the support system for the arts in Central New York. Of particular interest was the nonprofit Cultural Resources Council. Once a well-financed, well-staffed engine driving a wide-ranging arts agenda, the CRC in the past couple of decades has lost much of its funding, its staff and its mandate. While others have taken on tasks formerly performed by the CRC—for example, a separate entity now ably manages the OnCenter, the Civic Center complex and the War Memorial—there was room for concern over the CRC's role in Central New York's cultural leadership.

What we found was both heartening and challenging. We are happy to report the CRC is alive and well, pursuing with increasing momentum its mission to channel resources to individual artists and support other cultural endeavors. It fulfills its mission through re-granting of funds from New York State and Onondaga County, and a regular convening of the Cultural Coalition, an advisory group linking dozens of nonprofit groups. During the past year, the CRC has expanded its staff, upgraded its web site and convened the first meeting of the leaders of board of cultural organizations.

Other elements of a support network for culture and the arts also are in place. The Downtown Committee and the Metropolitan Development Association are hard at work with FOCUS Greater Syracuse, developing plans for a designated cultural corridor linking and expanding Syracuse's arts identity. The Landmark Theatre board keeps its peerless downtown facility in productive use. Arts education flourishes in Syracuse's public schools, with a boost from the nonprofit Partners in Arts Education, as well as arts-oriented PTOs. Each summer, the Syracuse JazzFest lures legendary jazz greats, major current talents and up-and-coming youngsters to the annual Syracuse JazzFest. And although the city has not seen fit to fund arts organizations for more than a decade, Onondaga County, representing both city and non-city taxpayers, provides yearly grants to key cultural assets, including the CRC.

All of these elements are necessary to provide a fulfilling and satisfying cultural life for Central New Yorkers. But are they sufficient? We think not. As the results of our survey of 32 arts and cultural organizations made abundantly clear, even our most prized cultural institutions struggle to make ends meet. Stark evidence of that vulnerability is the Onondaga County Legislature's decision this year to shutter the Ste. Marie Among the Iroquois Cultural Center for budgetary reasons.

Despite ingenious fund-raising schemes and hard work building firm financial foundations, cultural groups find themselves deferring maintenance and even cutting back on programming—and that's in the good years. Their dreams and visions remain largely on hold. They suffer from a lack of sustained investment and support, inadequate promotion and marketing.

In our findings and in our recommendations, we lay out a strategy to take advantage of the existing support network and build a stronger foundation to support the arts, to increase resources, expand opportunities, give greater voice and range to artists of all ages and hues in our midst. When it comes to the arts, we must unite on behalf of the rich diversity of our cultural life. Strong, visible leadership is needed to advocate for the arts, both in the daily life of our broader community and in planning for the community's future.

The stakes, after all, are high. As Don Lovoie and Emily Chamlee-Wright of the Cato Institute have observed, the arts play a key role in the economic as well as the social and cultural life of a community. "If you want to find out whether a community is apt to grow wealthier, find out what stories they tell, what myths they believe, what heroes they admire, what metaphors they use," they write. "Economic development is, at its heart, a cultural process."

Let us take bold steps to make sure that in Central New York, the stories of our unfolding culture grow ever richer.

Fred Fiske  
*Study Chair*

## Findings

The Onondaga Citizens League study, *“The State of the Arts”* sought to determine what would be required for our arts and cultural community to flourish and to reflect the diversity and richness of Syracuse and Central New York. This area is home to a multitude of artists, musicians, and performers who contribute to a vibrant arts and cultural scene. The study affirms that there is much positive energy and enthusiasm surrounding the arts in our community. The study committee also acknowledges the passion and fervor of those who promote the artistic and cultural life of our community by attending events, supporting arts institutions, or advocating for the interests of individual artists. That said, it was the purpose of this study to assess the condition of arts and culture in our community, and determine what was lacking, or what needs to be done, to improve the health of our resources and to raise the cultural quotient of our community. We found that the conditions faced by our arts and culture resources require investment of attention and dollars. We identified what we believe to be the most pressing obstacles and challenges for the health of our arts and cultural organizations and offer recommendations for action.

After conducting a survey of cultural organizations, hosting a series of panel discussions with stakeholders, observing the practices of other communities, and examining other proposals, studies and concepts, we found the following to be true:

- Because they are required to focus all time and resources on the present, our major cultural institutions are unable to build dreams for the future. They expend most, if not all, of their resources managing day-to-day operations and programming. As a result, the major institutions are forced to maintain a focus on today’s survival and are unable to entice new audiences with more high-profile or innovative

productions, seminars and exhibits. Arts organizations, as a consequence of declining populations and limited financial resources, become expert in managing to survive and thrive under difficult conditions. Innovation and creativity are abundant but bridled by their effect on the bottom line.

- Many smaller arts and cultural organizations do not have the visibility or the audience to compete for funding. Organizations based on preserving cultural identities and traditions must compete for dollars from the same funding sources as those institutions that present the “classics.” Grassroots arts organizations that represent a younger generation or more progressive art forms do not have the same attention in the media, nor do they have equal opportunities for funding.
- Twenty-two of the larger arts and cultural organizations reported their financial activities to the New York State Attorney General’s Office. Of the total revenue received by these twenty-two, non-governmental support was approximately 82% in 2000 and 85% in 2001. In other words, 15% to 18% of the total revenue of our arts and cultural organizations came from governmental sources in 2000 and 2001. Total expenditures for the twenty-two reporting arts and cultural organizations for the years 1999 and 2000 was in the range of \$27 million per year (\$27.225 million for 2000 and 26.313 million for 1999). Over half (53%) plan or are in the midst of a capital fundraising drive, which in some cases is a measure of their growth potential. Thirty-eight percent need larger renovated space; 38% also find parking inadequate, particularly downtown.

- The Cultural Resources Council is a principal source of public funding for individual artists, and also provides funding and support for projects of arts and cultural organizations. The CRC disburses funds received from New York State's Decentralization for the Arts Grants Program and from Onondaga County. There is always far more demand than money available. A lack of venues, entry fees, and a general lack of local opportunities are also obstacles for aspiring artists. As one local artist put it: "we do everything but our art."
- The need for galvanizing leadership to promote the vibrant arts and cultural life of Central New York becomes more urgent in the context of the proposed DestinyUSA project. The Cultural Coalition, under the auspices of the Cultural Resources Council, provides the opportunity for arts and cultural organizations to create a united front for collaboration, joint programming, fundraising and strategic planning.
- Cultivating younger and more diverse audiences for the arts is a major challenge faced by our community. Cultural differences and tastes that manifest early in life continue into adulthood and contribute to the fragmentation of the arts and cultural scene. Schools need resources to provide quality and consistent art programming for their students to encourage active participation in the arts as opposed to merely passive viewing. Schools receive some help from Parent Teacher Organizations, and Partners for Arts Education provides professional development for teachers and artists in the schools and hosts an annual conference of educational partnerships to increase the arts in education. However, the challenge remains to identify and offer meaningful arts and cultural experiences that will overcome the gaps in economic, social and cultural differences.

## Recommendations

Recognizing that the arts play a crucial role in making communities livable, we recommend that the following steps be undertaken in order to raise the cultural quotient of our community and to nurture an arts and cultural scene that reflects the diversity and richness of Syracuse and Central New York.

### *1. Establish a Dedicated Funding Stream for the Support of Arts and Culture*

- There should be a stable, dedicated public fund for the support of arts and culture in Onondaga County, with a stable revenue source that includes city and county residents as well as visitors. The case for this funding source was made a decade ago in a Task Force Study commissioned by Onondaga County Executive Nicholas Pirro, and is more compelling than ever as plans move forward for Destiny USA. Recommendations include:
  - 1) an entertainment tax on the sale of tickets to art and entertainment events, sports events, and video rentals,
  - 2) a percentage of the tourism-based room and occupancy tax,
  - 3) a percentage of sales tax, and/or
  - 4) a “percent for the arts” in any public and/or private capital improvement projects.
- A portion of public funding should be designated to assist cultural organizations with capital fundraising drives. Our survey uncovered a long list of needed improvements, including theater and lobby renovations, an elevator, parking lots, expansions, a new auditorium/concert hall and creation of a permanent performance space. Since these capital improvements will have a direct bearing on the economic health of the community, this mechanism might be linked to one-time state and federal tourism promotion dollars as well as a local bond issue retired via increased dedicated funds. It could be used to help with the capital needs of existing cultural entities as well as seed money to jump start projects such as the Cultural District.

- Additionally, a private Arts Fund should be considered to enable individuals, corporate and business entities, and other private sector entities to provide generalized support toward the operating expenses of our arts and cultural institutions. Corporate “adoptions” of arts organizations and institutions should be encouraged and recognized by the media. (A model for this private Arts Fund could be the Artist Trust, a not-for-profit organization founded to support and encourage individual artists working in all disciplines to enrich community life.)

### *2. Support Galvanizing Leadership*

- Use the dedicated funding stream to expand the capacity of the CRC to assist the arts and cultural community financially and to enhance its capacity for coordination, advocacy and public relations. The enhanced cultural organization would administer the additional funding and serve as a powerful advocate for the arts and cultural community.

For example, the cultural council could: encourage more public art; devise standards or guidelines for design excellence in the built environment; seek ways to increase coverage of arts and cultural issues in the local media; provide more support for individual artists, multi-cultural programming and art; and foster additional public and private funding sources for cultural activity throughout Onondaga County. The council would oversee an ongoing public arts program for downtown and city neighborhoods; insure that public support for the Destiny project encourages connections with downtown and other existing sites of cultural importance; and develop municipal design guidelines for downtown and other vital districts within Syracuse.

To accomplish the above goals, the council must have direct links to elected officials, and represent the interests of the Cultural Coalition, individual artists and a citizens advisory group. The council’s functions could include (Note: some of these are now being put into practice by the CRC):

- Collaborate with the city, the county, the Downtown Committee, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse and the Cultural Coalition in the planning and development of a defined Cultural Corridor along Montgomery Street within the Cultural District as a project that integrates all related issues including physical rehabilitation, housing, artist spaces, galleries, parking, transportation, financing, tax incentives, supportive retail, identification, promotion and marketing.
- Spearhead development of a “Cultural Master Plan” for the area, with active involvement of arts and cultural groups, to identify and prioritize needs and goals for the community. The plan should be part of the city’s comprehensive plan. Its purpose would be to engage the community in an effort to expand the public availability, recognition, utilization and interest in the arts at the same level as the public involvement in economic development. The Cultural Master Plan should also strive to enhance awareness of cultural activity as a vital part of the economic success and livability of 21st century communities, especially our own.
- Develop and maintain a web site that serves as cultural guide, media directory, and ticketing agent for all of Central New York.
- Nourish young, innovative and talented artists and performers through subsidizing loft studios and downtown apartments and through increasing the monies available for individual artists in the grants programs already administered by the Cultural Resources Council.
- Facilitate more collaborative activities between cultural organizations such as joint marketing, promotions, ticket sales, event planning, and fund raising.
- Underscore the need to invest in the idea of art, especially for new artists. Designate more funding dollars for innovative, nontraditional arts.
- Report annually on the “state of the arts” in Onondaga County, including activities, finances, assets, the status of endowment and capital campaigns and other pertinent information for public dissemination.

### 3. *Cultivate an Audience*

From the major arts and cultural institutions to the small, progressive galleries and spaces, from the Jazz and Blues Festivals to the many ethnic and cultural festivals, all exist in a mutually dependent relationship with their audience. Without an audience, arts and cultural experiences and events lose their purpose and their primary source of support. Without arts and culture, the people of a community risk the loss of shared history and artistic experiences that enrich their lives, as well as the loss of unique and various cultural and historical identities. Without arts and culture, our community would risk losing \$30 million per year in economic activity. The arts and cultural community, from the largest institution to the smallest organizations, already engages thousands of participants, volunteers, supporters and audience members. However, we must cultivate the next generation of season ticket holders, attract visitors to the greater Syracuse area, and promote appreciation of the diverse artistic and cultural experiences across racial, economic, social, religious and geographical lines. In order to foster larger and more diverse audiences for all of the artistic and cultural experiences available in our community, we recommend the following:

- Establish a public arts facility downtown that will also house a middle school dedicated to the arts. The facility would be a central, dedicated site within the cultural campus downtown—possibly the old Carnegie Library—and should serve as a year-round, seven-day-a-week, arts and cultural educational facility that meets the need for after-school and consistent arts educational opportunities for youth, as well as providing artistic and cultural resources and activities for the general public. The Study Committee recognizes the value of providing a regular arts track for the interested and talented youth in our community and recommends the creation of a middle school dedicated to the Arts to fill the gap between Franklin Elementary and Henninger and Nottingham High Schools.

- Increase the availability, quality and diversity of artistic and cultural experiences within the schools. Arts education can be an effective tool not only for learning but also for violence reduction. Arts institutions and cultural organizations can provide workshops and information to help teachers prepare students for cultural experiences and enable follow-up discussions. We recommend that Parent Teacher Organizations create their own committees on the arts to advocate and fundraise for quality arts education for their children's schools. We recommend that Partners for Arts Education receive more resources from their supporters and that the annual conference held to nurture educational partnerships between schools and arts and cultural organizations be a part of an annual report on the State of the Arts compiled by the Cultural Resources Council.
- Don't forget about the parents. In order to transition from a school event to a family (or even community) event, arts and cultural organizations and school personnel can work together to discover the kind of cultural events and artistic experiences that the whole family would enjoy. Arts and cultural groups can select offerings that represent our diverse population, and provide "breaks" on tickets to families. A good example of community-wide collaboration was the "If All of CNY Read the Same Book" effort in conjunction with Syracuse Stage's production of "A Lesson Before Dying."
- Make it easy to get there and stay there. We need a transportation infrastructure linking all cultural destinations in the area; it should be free or low cost, safe and easy to use. The transportation links should include Destiny and cultural destinations downtown and in the surrounding area. Parking should be improved, especially at night. Well-lit parking lots and garages should remain open: this will provide more spaces for the different venues when many events occur at the same time.
- Get the Word Out. Newspapers, radio, and television are effective means to involve the community in its cultural activities, and *The Post-Standard*, the *Syracuse New Times* and

WCNY especially are to be commended for recent arts coverage. The media can make the arts accessible by providing "what to know before you go" features on a consistent basis, paying attention to the local rhythm and blues scene, for instance, as well as the symphony. The media can support "seedbeds of culture": grass-roots, innovative, non-traditional, progressive or ethnic events and experiences. The newspapers are in a particularly good position to provide maps to the artistic and cultural experiences that are "off the beaten path." Arts and cultural groups must take more initiative to get more attention from the media outlets, as well as think creatively about reaching audiences through web sites and alternative venues within the community. Attract more visitors to the area by promoting the greater Syracuse area as an arts and culture destination.

#### *4. Intensify Cultural Tourism Efforts*

An increasing number of visitors are becoming special interest travelers who rank the arts, heritage and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for traveling (NEA Fact Sheet: Cultural Tourism). In order to promote Syracuse and Central New York as a Cultural Destination we recommend the following:

- Designate a Cultural District downtown that would encompass a cultural corridor (Montgomery Street). The geographic area would be identified by banners containing a distinct logo, flags, way-finding signs or a combination of these markers. Many successful cities have a centralized location for their arts that increases the visibility of the arts and provides an easy answer for visitors looking for an artistic experience. The Cultural District can also serve as a central hub in which residents and visitors can find out about other artistic and cultural events in the region and where they can gain easy directions and/or transportation to locations outside the corridor. F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse has already created a proposal for the creation of such a District; this Study Committee calls for its implementation and expansion as described above. (See Appendices for text of the proposal.)



- Market cultural tourism to attract more visitors to the area, This calls for even more collaborations between the Cultural Resources Council, the Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau, NYS Council on the Arts and the NYS Tourism Committee to ensure that arts and culture are represented in all Central New York tourism promotion;
- Expand internet services and tools that make it easier for travelers to choose Central New York as a cultural destination and to customize their itineraries based on their cultural interests;
- Define downtown as a concentrated area for cultural experiences; and
- Conduct a month-long Festival of the Arts that would coincide with the grand opening of Destiny USA and would have the capacity to attract visitors from all over the state, the nation and the world to view world class performances, premiers, exhibits and concerts as well as to enjoy the rich arts and culture, attractions, history, and educational opportunities our city has to offer.

Section I:  
**State of the Arts**

*"It's been a very, very difficult year—declining sales across the country since 9/11/01."*

**Jim Clark, Syracuse Stage**

*"After 9/11 we changed the last play of the season from seven characters to one character and saved \$30,000."*

**Robert Moss, Syracuse Stage**

*"We seek to cooperate with other organizations for a dedicated revenue stream from the county, city and state."*

**Christine Lozner, Onondaga Historical Association**

*"If we could eliminate the interest on our mortgage we would be on a solid financial footing."*

**Steve Karon, The MOST**

*"I'd love to bring in the Maxfield Parrish exhibit, but it costs \$170,000 and we have \$40,000 in our exhibit budget."*

**Sandra Trop, The Everson Museum of Art**

*"A deficit has been in existence since the inception of the Opera."*

**Catherine Wolff, Syracuse Opera**

**SNAPSHOT: The Syracuse Alternative Media Network**

Since 1984, Syracuse Alternative Media Network has been creating and distributing video documentaries, training students and community groups in video production, and producing educational videos for community groups. SAMN productions examine various social and political issues. The most recently completed documentary, *If I Had a Hammer: Pete Seeger and the American Quest for Justice*, uses folksinger Pete Seeger's life and music to present a concise historical overview of the struggles for increased democracy and social justice in the United States over the last sixty years. The program was for PBS. SAMN also offers video production services to community groups and individuals. Some of the organizations we have worked with are Syracuse University Center on Human Policy, Thornden Park Association, and Laubach Literacy. SAMN operates a Media Education Program which teaches youth to produce video programs. We are currently teaching video production classes at two schools and with one neighborhood organization.

## State of the Arts: The Health of our Major Institutions Panel Discussion

On April 8th, 2002, Syracuse Stage hosted a panel discussion that explored the health of the major cultural institutions of Syracuse. Catherine Wolff of the Syracuse Opera, Sandy Trop of the Everson Museum, Steve Karon of the Museum of Science and Technology, Christine Lozner of the Onondaga Historical Association, Trey Devey of the Syracuse Symphony and Jim Clark of Syracuse Stage participated as panelists. Ed Green served as moderator.

### *Jim Clark*

Currently, Syracuse Stage does not have an operating deficit and has been "in the black" for the last three years (fiscal year is 7/1 through 6/30). The Stage does not anticipate a deficit for this year, and still maintains a \$1 million endowment. Operating deficits of the past were offset by the selling of stocks. The forecast for the next 2 to 3 years for Syracuse Stage consists of an operating budget of \$3.5 million; half of which is typically funded by the box office through the sale of season, "6-pack," and individual tickets. Educational programs provide discounted tickets to students and families. The need is to increase the number of subscribers: in the 80's the number of subscribers was 10,000; currently there are 7,000 subscribers. However, Mr. Clark anticipates a slight growth in the number of subscribers and ticket buyers over the next few years. Syracuse Stage expects no major income increase from government, corporate or foundation income. The Mather Foundation provides general operating support, and the Central New York Community Foundation and The Rosamond Gifford Foundation provide support for special projects. County funding has not shown any increase in funding over the last 10 years, and city funding stopped 12 years ago. Federal dollars via the National Endowment for the Arts is only available for special projects, not for general operating support.

The primary needs of Syracuse stage are renovations to the lobby and theaters, increases in salaries for full-time employees, increases in salaries for performers and an increase in the endowment.

### *Trey Devey*

The Syracuse Symphony has a \$5.3 million operating budget. The Symphony has a 38-week season that includes 115 full orchestra performances and 100 ensemble performances. The Symphony has 100 employees, including 76 full-time professional musicians. Although it primarily serves Onondaga County, the Symphony performs for a 20 county area.

The past decade had significant ups and downs for the Symphony. In March of 1992, the Symphony was shut down due to debts in the amount of \$1.1 million. The Symphony also found itself on the brink of collapse in the 1997-1998 season due to a loss of \$1.2 million in government funding, a short-lived strike with musicians, and an accumulated debt of \$1,060,000. Since this era, the Symphony has seen increases in ticket sales, contributed income, endowments and investments, and has managed a balanced budget in all three seasons. Government funding has remained flat, which has had a positive impact. The Symphony has reduced its debt by \$500,000 but the remaining debt continues to threaten cash flow.

This year has been a difficult one. Since 9/11, ticket sales declined significantly and subscription sales stopped. The usual last-minute push for subscription purchases never happened. As a result, there was an \$80,000 shortfall in subscriptions and a \$70,000 shortfall in single ticket sales for the 1st quarter. Contributed income remained flat and ticket sales of the last several months made up the shortfall in single ticket sales. However, government funding decreased by 22%. A revenue recovery plan has been created by the management team that resulted in a 15-20% cut in the expense budget and 3.5 staff positions that remain unfilled. The Symphony is as lean as possible and as lean as they have been in 7-8 years.

The future looks positive due to a contract settlement with musicians that occurred six months early; a contract settlement with Daniel Hege until 2004; an invitation to perform at Carnegie Hall for the first time in years; and the ability to sell recordings of Syracuse Symphony performances. The challenges are to eke out modest gains in contributed and earned incomes as there are no other significant sources of income for the Symphony. In addition, the Endowment Campaign needs to reach its goal of \$6 million: \$3.5 million has been raised thus far. The Endowment has a tri-fold purpose:

- A. To improve quality of guest artists;
- B. To deliver on a five-year agreement with musicians; and
- C. To provide educational programs for children.

### *Christine Lozner*

The vision for 2003 and beyond is to increase services to the community. Increased revenue is necessary for services, facilities and archival capability. The Onondaga Historical Association is housed in a 1906 building that has had no renovations to date: significantly, no improvements to the electrical and climate control systems. These needs define all other needs. The Association has an operating budget of \$650,000 and employs nine full-time and three part-time employees. Earned income was down in 2001, however, there were increases in revenues from school groups as a

result of improved and quality programming. Significant opportunities for growth include memberships and the gift shop. However, with insufficient funds to do the desired work for the Underground Railroad project, the new exhibit may not prove to be profitable.

There has been a short-term, moderate increase in contributed income, but the long-term capital campaign funds are to be determined. For the immediate future, the most significant need is for matching funds that will enable the Association to be more competitive for grants. There is a temporary need to increase corporate funding to complete the Underground Railroad project. The Association does not anticipate any major increases in foundation funding, although small increases for programming are expected. The significant need is for the care of the extraordinary archival collections that were begun in 1863. The challenge is to sustain the programming without maintaining the collections that are the source for the programming. No major growth in government funding is anticipated, however, there is an opportunity to cooperate with other cultural organizations to press the issue at the City, County and State levels of government. Funding is more readily available for capital needs than general operating revenue, which is what is really needed. The Association's primary needs are: more operating income to provide staffing for education and development and staffing and supplies for the adequate cataloguing of the research center; funding for a comprehensive vision process; and funding for facility renovations that will move the research center to the third floor, create a permanent exhibit space, and install climate controls.

From 1998 to 2000, the Association has been operating "in the black" due to several larger grants, and 2001 has been the "break-even" point. Past grants will expire next year, and will need to be replaced. The Association anticipates a \$200,000 deficit due to a down-turn in market gains, endowment depreciation and a lack of state funding. In 2002, the Association will receive a federal grant through Congressman Walsh for capital expenses.

*Steve Karon*

The MOST is the largest hands-on science center in Upstate New York and contains a planetarium and an IMAX theater as well. The MOST receives over 200,000 visitors per year, 23% of whom come from outside a 50-mile radius. The MOST is one of seven magnet attractions in Central New York, and 89% of the tourists who visit the MOST have come to Syracuse specifically to visit the MOST.

The MOST is in a tight financial situation, and has applied to Onondaga County for help. The MOST is in the second year of a 5-year plan to stabilize the financial situation, and is currently on track. In 2001, the deficit was \$6,000, and in 2002, the MOST will break even. Even though the MOST took a big hit after 9/11,

they are still maintaining slight increases in attendance.

The most significant need is for general operating support. The MOST is well below its peers in governmental support, despite being even with its peers in everything else. There are also needs for increases in special project grants and direct contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. Half of the originally planned hands-on exhibits and three major renovation projects are on hold. The unfortunate reality is that the MOST cannot entice new and repeat audiences without new projects. Plans for the future are to maintain a traveling exhibit program; reduce long-term debt, specifically the mortgage; increase attendance and fundraising; and most importantly, convince the City to invest in the MOST and other cultural institutions.

*Sandy Trop*

The Everson Museum expects to "break even" in earned income: they can charge for art classes, but not for admission and the gift shop does not make money. The museum's future health depends on the health of their endowment. They must build the endowment in order to anticipate and plan on the income, and they have a spending plan. Not much can be expected of contributed income—individuals are tapped out, government has reached the saturation point, corporate home offices aren't in town. As the foundations grow, the museum does anticipate growth in the funding received.

Admission to the museum is free of charge, but the suggested donation has increased from \$2 to \$4. As long as the City and County give dollars, the museum cannot charge for admission. The Everson does not want to charge because they are part of an urban renewal location and because they serve as a community resource.

All the Everson needs is money: we could do amazing things if we just had the funds. It costs \$170,000 to bring in a Maxfield Parrish exhibit, a known favorite that would draw visitors. Significant expenses include personnel salaries, the Niagara Mohawk bill that totals \$140,000 per year, security that costs \$110,000 per year, and the costs to repair the sidewalks, which are a liability. The Everson was the first and last museum designed by architect I.M. Pei, who is willing to design an expansion project for the Everson. The project's estimated costs total \$19 million, and not even half of the money has been raised. All that has been promised remain pledges only. However, the Everson is encouraged by the responses of individuals and state and federal governments. The Everson has been operating "in the black" for the past six years, but at great cost.

*Catherine Wolff*

This is the 27th season for the Syracuse Opera. The Opera has a \$1 million budget, and each production costs \$200,000. The Opera stages two performances for each of three operas per season. The middle opera of the season is performed by a touring company because it costs half as much to bring in a company as to put own their own production. However, audiences have been pulling away from the middle performance because the Syracuse Opera is an acting opera company while the touring companies are non-acting performances. They have seen an increase in new subscribers, ticket buyers and donors, but they also have been impacted by 9/11. Losing ticket sales for one performance has a huge impact. A deficit has been in existence since the inception of the Opera. The most significant needs are the third opera production, an increase in artist fees, the creation of a resident ensemble cast for outreach and educational programming and the creation of an endowment.

Following the presentations by the panelists, audience members were invited to participate in a question and answer session.

*Question for the Symphony: How to increase the family and elderly audience?*

*Trey Devey:* Scheduling is determined by looking at trends in attendance, however, the Symphony developed two solutions to the above issue:

- a. Stained Glass Series was developed for Sunday afternoon performances and
- b. The CNYCF Family Series was scheduled on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. five times a year.

Both series are good opportunities for families and elderly audiences. When we look at the Classical Series, we have to schedule to be financially productive. Friday and Saturday night performances produce the greatest revenues. If the Symphony did expand the schedule, then Sunday afternoon performances would be logical additions.

*Question: What makes the people of the Syracuse Area such a group of "tightwads?" Why do none of the major institutions have an "angel?"*

*Catherine Wolff:* I grew up in Wilmington, DE. The wealth of DuPont stayed there and DuPont set the standard very high for investing in the community.

*Sandy Trop:* If the City stops funding, the citizens do too, and the county lets it happen.

*Steve Karon:* The City sets the example. Surveys of 69 other cities with similar projects to the MOST demonstrated that 68 out of 69 projects had substantial investments on the part of the city; only the MOST was lacking an investment on the part of its city, that is, Syracuse.

*Question: Two part question, one for the Everson, one for the entire panel: a) One outstanding production of the Everson was the Yoko Ono exhibit. Can the Everson bring something that big again? b) Taxpayers are already supporting the panelists. If we are all complaining about the city then we need to go to the Common Council.*

*Sandy Trop:* The Hotel Tax associated with Destiny will be revenue directed toward the arts. The City does not tax us, yet the threat to do so was part of the recent election. I'll provide a little history. Max Sullivan was the executive director of the museum when the building was built. However, people weren't welcome because the building was too precious. So enter Jim Harathis. His mission was to bring in the people, and he did, but nobody liked it. He did it even though they couldn't afford it and they're still paying for it, that is, still paying for the Yoko Ono Exhibit. The Maxfield Parrish could have great potential.

*Question: Is this an unusual opportunity, or do the panelists meet regularly to discuss the issues?*

*Trey Devey:* Yes, there is a regular forum. The Cultural Coalition meets every month under the auspices of the Cultural Resources Council and Leo Crandall. A lot of good heads are brought around the table.

*Question: Regarding funding for the Cultural Corridor: If we need an authority to create funds, but the city has a \$15 million deficit, then there isn't much hope. Other cities put a surcharge on ticket sales and percent for the arts. Could these be potential funding sources for us?*

*Jim Clark:* Surcharges are best for movies and sports where there are a mass of sales and a small amount of surcharge. We must balance the increase of prices with not preventing people from coming. The surcharge is already in the ticket. On the positive side, we have a Mayor and County Executive talking about it. Budgeting is living on the edge: one week of snow can mean a \$60,000 loss.

*Question: All of the institutions here have been existence from 27 to 100 years. We're all still here. What kind of provisions have we made in anticipation of another 9/11 or similar crisis?*

*Sandy Trop:* The Everson has to pay the NIMO and security bills; the first priority is protecting the contents of the museum. In a drastic situation, there could potentially be no programming at all.

*Catherine Wolff:* If we don't produce opera, we don't exist. 70% of the cost is people. We'd have to go to concert opera, because we can't put the symphony out of business by not contracting with them.

*Trey Devey:* There are two keys to success: a. market and b. execution and leadership. Execution is how we

operate our businesses, and there is not an upside potential. We are already pushing the limits of how well we can do things with the people we have. In terms of market conditions, there is only so much execution you can do to make up for it, therefore we would have to cut stuff. What happens if there is another 9/11? There is no more room for improvement in execution; we must build infrastructure, get rid of debt and build endowments.

*Steve Karon:* Three years ago, we reduced the number of staff. We already have 25% less staff and pay incredibly less than peers. Then we laid off 17% more of the staff. The question of existence: What if we didn't receive county funding? We would have to eliminate programming and maintain the IMAX and a very limited museum schedule.

*Christine Lozner:* The Onondaga Historical Association was founded to collect and preserve. In today's world, preservation is only significant if relevant, and therefore programming is necessary. Yet, in times of crisis, there would be no programming and consequently a deterioration of our community's heritage.

**Comment:** We need General Public Support for the Arts. In the mid-60's the sales tax was originally established with support from the MDA, Chamber of Commerce, etc. The Civic Center was sold politically. Joe Golden sold culture to the community by conducting a survey that showed community support of cultural activities. We need the big guys (the panelists) to take the lead, but also the involvement of all the other little organizations. We don't need another United Way, but we need to push bravely for general public support.

*Steve Karon:* The most likely opportunity will be the new streams of money from the hotel taxes: \$8 million is the projection. The discussion has already been in progress for 10-12 years, but now we must take the opportunity quickly before the money goes somewhere else.

*Sandy Trop:* The Arts organizations meet at the Cultural Resources Council every month. We need a ground swell of community leaders behind us to support us, like the MDA, or the Chamber of Commerce.

## Onondaga Citizen's League Arts and Cultural Organizations Survey Key Findings

A survey sponsored by the Onondaga Citizen's League was mailed to 52 arts and cultural organizations on March 19, 2002. A total of 32 surveys (62%) were returned. The survey was comprised of 23 questions ranging from staffing and membership in the organization to logistics (parking and venues) to long-range planning and funding. A summary of their responses follows. A complete listing of the 32 arts and cultural organizations that responded to the survey is in the Appendices to this report.

- 97% (31) of the arts and cultural organizations have a Board of Directors. The number of directors ranged from 4 to 60; the average number of directors is 20.
- 75% (18 of the 24 arts and cultural organizations) have small paid staffs of 12 or less; 25% (6 of the 24 organizations) have paid staffs ranging from 16 to 77. Those organizations with volunteer staffs (23 in all) ranged from volunteer staff sizes of 1 to over 1,000.
- 38% (12) of the current arts and cultural organizations' venues are not satisfactory. Most cite facility renovations; 3 require a new facility.
- 38% (12) of the organizations are not satisfied with their parking. Many cite downtown parking issues (the need for more spaces and longer garage hours).
- 78% (25) of the arts and cultural organizations conduct outreach programs, mainly at schools (elementary through high school). A few also offer workshops for teachers.
- 94% (30) of the arts and cultural organizations are attempting to expand and/or diversify their audiences by collaborating and partnering with other organizations, advertising and marketing, diversifying audience offerings and conducting community outreach.
- The most frequent ways the majority of arts and cultural organizations publicize their organizations or events are through community calendars (94%), newspaper advertising (88%), direct mail (88%), flyers (84%), and radio advertising (75%).

- The arts and cultural organizations receive most of their funding from the following sources: private donations (88%), local government support (78%), New York State support (78%), ticket sales (75%), corporate donations and grants (72%), and foundation grants (69%).
- 78% (25) of the organizations do not have an auxiliary/guild/foundation. Of the 22% (7) who do, 4 of them sponsor fundraising activities and 3 do not.
- 50% (16) of the arts and cultural organizations have increased non-governmental funding mainly through increased fundraising and sponsorship activities
- The arts and cultural organization have experienced a range of trends in governmental funding over the past three years: 44% experienced increased funding, 28% saw a decrease, and 28% remained the same.
- Fundraising for the majority of arts and cultural organizations has either increased (47% or 15) or remained the same (31% or 10) over the past three years. 9% (3) of the organizations have seen a decrease.
- The arts and cultural organizations are undertaking a variety of methods to address their funding needs in the next 3 to 5 years through diversifying and increasing grants, better long-range planning, fundraising, and marketing.
- The arts and cultural organizations have many projects and initiatives focusing on programming, funding, facilities and marketing. 53% (17) require capital fundraising drives; some of which are currently in process.
- 88% (28) of the arts and cultural organizations collaborate with other organizations, primarily through programming but also through marketing, fundraising, venue sharing, and education.
- 69% (22) of the arts and cultural organizations believe the Destiny USA project will present them with potential challenges and/or opportunities. Many believe opportunity will come in the form of increased visitors translating into potential new audiences; challenges will come in the form of not losing audiences to Destiny and creating a transportation infrastructure between Destiny and downtown. Several groups have no opinion yet.

## Onondaga Citizen's League Arts and Cultural Organizations Survey Key Financial Findings

The following findings were based on the financial information (support and revenue, expenses, balance sheet showing summary of assets, liabilities and fund balance) as reported to the New York State Attorney General's Office for twenty-two arts and cultural organizations for the fiscal years ending in 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. Please note that the information for 2001 is incomplete, as the information was provided during the 2001 reporting cycle.

1. Total expenditures for the twenty-two reporting arts and cultural organizations for the two years for which we have complete information (2000 and 1999) was in the range of \$27 million per year (\$27.225 million for 2000 and \$26.313 for 1999). This level of spending, when taken into account with an appropriate multiplier, makes a significant contribution to the Central New York economy.
2. The aggregate fund balance of the twenty-two arts and cultural organizations reporting exceeds \$22 million. It should be noted that the fund balance is merely the excess of all assets over liabilities of the organizations as set forth for financial reporting purposes. Assets are stated at book value and not at fair market value. It is reasonable to conclude that the net fair market value of the assets of our arts and cultural organizations far exceeds \$22 million.
3. Of the total support and revenue, non-governmental support was approximately 82% in 2000 and 85% in 2001. In other words, only 15% to 18% of the total revenue of our arts and cultural organizations came from governmental sources in 2000 and 2001.

It should be noted that the reported figures combine capital revenues and expenditures with operating revenues and expenditures. A more accurate picture of the health of our arts and cultural organizations could be gleaned if this information was separated.

We recommend that the financial information for all arts and cultural organizations be collected and reported upon annually by an organization such as the Cultural Resources Council. The overall information would provide a financial barometer of the health of our arts and cultural organizations and information on capital campaigns would assist donors and the organizations themselves in long-term planning.

*Section II:*  
**Developing an Audience**

**ART AND EDUCATION**

*“The Cultural Resources Council makes smaller and smaller grants every year to art teachers, artists and organizations. There are more appeals and less money.”*

**Laura Reeder, Partners for Arts Education**

*“Over the last five or six years we have had a booth at the Westcott Street Cultural Fair. People from all walks of life pass our booth where we have listening stations. We are mistaken if we judge listeners by appearance.”*

**Peter Hedrick, New York State Early Music Association**

*“My concern is that there are teachers who find the arts absolutely superfluous. Every subject is enhanced by the arts and communication media, so we need to educate the educators.”*

**Len Fonte, English and drama teacher, Nottingham High School**

*“The ideal situation would be when more parents get involved because it would create more of an audience and enable a bridge from just a school event to an adult event.”*

**Roberta Ripberger, art teacher, H.W. Smith Elementary School**

*“Our major challenge is money: We can’t just drop an arts program on a school without pre-planning.”*

**Peter Hedrick, NYS Early Music Association**

*“Art is a visual language, but not all visual language is art... Visual learning is not art, and enjoying it is not what counts: Learning is the point.”*

**Hope Irvine, Syracuse University School of Education**

*“We need preparation time: Workshops for the teachers to prepare students for the experience and the follow-up.”*

**Laura Reeder, Partners for Arts Education**

**SNAPSHOT: The Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Chorus**

“The Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Chorus (SGLC) provides an opportunity to strengthen both the gay and straight communities by offering a chance to sing and be social with other gay and lesbian persons. The chorus meets every week to rehearse at Plymouth Congregational Church in downtown Syracuse. The SGLC holds two concerts per year, our pride concert in June and our Holiday concert the first weekend of December. We also do many fundraising and social event throughout the year. The chorus accepts new members in February and September.”



## Arts Education Panel Discussion

On May 6th, 2002, a group of educators and concerned citizens met in the Onondaga Public Library on South Salina Street to discuss the state of Arts Education. Panelists were Roberta Ripberger of H.W. Smith School, Peter Hedrick of the New York State Early Music Association, Len Fonte of Nottingham High School, Laura Reeder of Partners for Arts Education and Hope Irvine of Syracuse University's School of Education. John Frantz served as moderator for the discussion.

### *Hope Irvine*

I grew up in New York City, was educated at Hunter College, and received a Ph.D. from New York University. I taught art in a junior high school in northern Manhattan and was a community arts activist. I brought a different perspective to Syracuse. For example we had sculpture in the schoolyard in 1970 that featured works by Philip Yenewin in a mobile trailer that went to different communities. We staged a bicentennial re-enactment of Battle of Fort Washington that was moving and interactive and a Learning to Read program through the Arts Medieval Festival at Cloisters. Cooperative community arts groups did this because the schools didn't care. The festival was covered in the New York Times, which was great, but 100,000 people showed up so we had to stop.

New York City had density and transportation. In 1982, I moved to Syracuse which had transportation issues and a lack of density. Then, there were nine students in the Arts Education Program, now there are 104.

From 1986 to 1992, I was part of Imagination Celebration. The Celebration received \$25,000 in legislative money that was given to community groups like the Onondaga Historical Association, the Symphony and Open Hand Theater. Albany wanted numbers, but numbers don't tell the quality of experience.

New York State Council and Commissioners developed the State Curriculum for the Arts and applied standards to four arts: art, music, theater and dance. Not just anyone can teach this; you need to be a creator, evaluator, historian, and aesthetician. However, these standards do not ensure the delivery of those standards: in other words, no one asked the educators "do you have what you need?" There is no proof that paper tests improve education.

Art is a visual language, but not all visual language is art. Just because you're using art supplies, doesn't mean it's art. Visual learning is not art, and enjoying it is not what counts: learning is the point.

### *Laura Reeder*

We began our organization to increase cultural diversity in the arts. Learning happens through the arts, not just arts activities. We want to re-define arts as everywhere, in the community and the classroom. Without arts in education, learning doesn't happen.

Our organization rewards those who bring arts, artists, and experiences to the students by awarding grants to teachers who create partnerships with arts organizations and artists. The point is not to simply "expose" kids to the arts, but to build relationships and nourish arts in the learning experience.

We provide professional development for teachers and artists in the schools. We train artists to share their passion with kids in schools and train teachers how to best integrate artists into the curriculum. We also provide an Annual Conference of Educational Partnerships where we present to the community, especially the City Schools and assist other cultural organizations in developing educational programs.

Studies show that students who spend hours in the arts have better chances in college, the workforce and other aspects of life. The best link is the Standards for Arts in learning because they teach people that the arts are serious and provide skills for critical thinking. Artists who get into the schools as "teaching artists" become richer artists themselves and teaching artists earn a living in Central New York.

Developing "exposure" experiences for kids doesn't help our mission or the kids, yet so much money goes there. We have to teach those who give to give what's needed: to ask the educators what it is they need instead of just giving art supplies that may go unused. Teachers are asked to test and measure learning, which sometimes results in teachers teaching to tests instead of teaching. Parents shouldn't ask their kids about their test scores, parents should ask their children what they did, and what they learned about the world.

### *Len Fonte*

I'm an English Teacher, and Theater and Film are considered English so I teach those as well. I also run the Drama Club where I'm really teaching. There are exchanges among the arts and a totally different point of view. Arts are the tools with which to see the big picture and are an integral part of the learning process.

My expectations for students are: 1) they are artists in their personal lives and can use the arts for expressing themselves and 2) they can use Art History and self expression to explore themes in human life. Students use art in all other aspects of education (math science social studies, etc). My concern is that there are teachers who find the arts absolutely superfluous. Every subject is enhanced by the arts and communication media so we need to educate the educators.

I'm more of a teacher from 3 to 7 p.m., than from 8 to 3, when we're trying to integrate all of the arts into one production, an organic whole that becomes one expression of the author, myself, and the students. The students want to be there, they have pride in their work, and they also want discipline to weed out the "slackers." There is tension between day life and afternoon life. Students during the day are not prepared to take on their own education, yet after school kids are more open.

Over the years in teaching Film, I've discovered many students come in with an understanding of the medium. They have a visual language at their fingertips, and they have questions about directors and other aspects of the medium. Yet there are others who only have television as a cultural teacher, and know a lot about the medium if not about an aesthetic sense. The trick is to integrate both groups and teach the appreciation of film as art.

What do we need? We need structured activities and not "activities dumped on us" from the outside. Grants dried up for the Syracuse Stage partnership with the Syracuse City School District so now we get tickets to a show with only one day to prepare. We need preparation time: workshops for the teachers to prepare students for the experience and the follow up.

*Peter Hedrick*

Our organization is behind the New York State Baroque that performs with period instruments and gives concerts in Syracuse regularly. Our focus on 17th and 18th centuries corresponds to our colonial period. In this period art for art's sake did not exist: artists were servants and music played a role to support the church, the theater, the military, etc.

Our main goal is to bring history alive through music. The early music movement puts music in social context. In our concert series we bring in other disciplines and make connections, for example, utilizing a library of visuals from the period for program notes, advertising, etc. We also publish a newsletter entitled the *Spectator* based on the format of Addison and Steele's original newsletter and bring in literary elements to enhance the musical experience.

Our efforts in arts education are more recent. We are currently working through Seneca-Tioga BOCES to get into the schools. We offer a multi-disciplined approach to the period for use in teaching. For example, to present the music of Purcell, we used Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Shakespeare's plays were routinely re-written, revived and represented and not held in such reverence as today; John Dryden routinely re-wrote plays to appeal to the audience of his time. The program for the school was literary and musical and combined English and Social Studies classes. The students did their own re-writing of Shakespeare and presented their scenes to Elementary Schools. We only had funds to do one school in Ithaca but we trying to expand into the Syracuse City School District.

Our major challenge is money: we can't just drop an arts program on a school without pre-planning. We would like to present workshops for teachers and want to open it to a far wider area than just BOCES. A sample workshop includes: an introduction to the Baroque Period's music, arts, and literature; a singer to talk about gesture and theatricality; someone to talk about everyday dress and costume; a scholar to talk about Pope's *Iliad*; and then a performance of the work. After a lunch break, we then work with teachers on planning their sessions.

*Roberta Ripberger*

I have been an Art Teacher in the Syracuse City School District for 25 years. We are grossly underfunded: the money we have pays for the teacher but not for the materials. We have a supportive administrator and Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO Committee for the Arts funds different groups who come in: the Opera, Open Hand Theater, the Symphony, In-house Residents, Authors, and Illustrators. They may be local or from out of town and cost typically \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year. The PTO gives more money to the Arts and Music program and for art and music supplies than the School District.

The ideal situation would be when more parents get involved because it would create more of an audience and enable a bridge from just a school event to an adult event. Additionally, there would more funding in City Schools and more equity in the City Schools: every city school kid should have the same experiences and opportunities.

*Question: Can the panelists speak to the oppression of artistic students by the School District, and the Regents in Albany?*

*Len Fonte:* There are standards for everything, not just the arts. Standards are oppressive and result in "teaching to a test." We must make it clear to teachers and administrators that the arts are a means to good test scores. Not only artistic students are oppressed. Students in all disciplines are oppressed by a combination of personality, resources and age.

*Hope Irvine:* The claims that art makes everything wonderful are not true. Research doesn't offer proof. There are many kinds of intelligences, but schools don't pay attention. Every kid should have individualized educational programs. There is not enough attention for the "gifted." The arts are not the answer to everything in schools.

*Laura Reeder:* Society teaches that we caution students to major in something "practical." We all do it.

*Hope Irvine:* Guidance Counselors must be reached and educated. We need to get to counselors and psychologists who only focus on the "feel good" aspects of art and not the cognitive and serious aspects.

*Question: Money is a recurring topic. Fractured appeals for dollars get fractured responses. Is there a coordinated effort? Is the Cultural Resources Council or another organization providing mechanisms for coordination?*

*Hope Irvine:* The United States Marine Band gets more money than the National Endowment for the Arts. Coordinated Effort? There's only a tiny bit of money to begin with!

*Roberta Ripberger:* I just want more funding for my classroom. My job is worrying about the next set of magic markers and paints.

*Hope Irvine:* The State did not even want to include the arts in their Standards and dropped the humanities. It's a turf issue: Language Arts versus the four other arts. There are similar issues in Social Studies: history and geography versus social responsibility. Everybody has been fighting the same battles in their groups for many years. We had to get the Standards through fast and insist on assessment. Other disciplines should have to learn from the Arts: they understand performance assessments. We can imagine portfolios in Math: a compilation of student work for all kids. The irony is that arts people are now doing paper tests because they're "more objective."

*Question: How do we do in providing "Arts for Youth?"*

*Mick Mather, Cultural Resources Council:* The Central New York Community Foundation performed an educational impact assessment, and a full report is available. It is a quantitative assessment of numbers served and shows that 1 million hours of programming was provided to kids in schools. It provides a census of what goes on within the 501(c)3 groups who meet once a month as the Cultural Coalition.

*Question: How does our culture value arts?*

*Len Fonte:* America does not value arts, that's clear. We find arts on our own.

*Hope Irvine:* We assume that Americans don't value the arts, yet we don't know that for sure. There are elitist notions about audience, and closet supporters that oppose elitist notions in this country. There are mixed groups in New York City, not so in Syracuse. Are people who love duck stamps art supporters?

*Len Fonte:* It has to happen from the Top Down.

*Hope Irvine:* Bottom up. People make culture, culture makes people.

*Question: The last session was on diversity and expanding participation.*

*Laura Reeder:* Exposure is important. There are too many things to choose from: not just high, European forms, we have other things that are very rich. We are a European based panel and audience. We have the conversation among ourselves. Folks out there who live it don't need us.

*Hope Irvine:* We need to think Art as a Foreign Language. We should be encouraged to "check it out."

*Len Fonte:* There are pressures on students to stay in their own spheres of experiences. It's hard to get kids of different backgrounds speaking together. There may be a real sense of enjoyment until their friends walk by. There are practical problems after school. Students with European backgrounds are used to dance lessons, music lessons, etc. There are different wavelengths in terms of rehearsals: some students value rehearsal and repetition while others are better at improvisation. There is a process for a theatrical show and a process for growth. I lose a lot of diverse actors by the second week of rehearsals. There are freshmen with little to no lines who feel they're not valued. There are kids who have to work after school or who have to baby sit. Making concessions is wrong: we have to teach kids dependability.

*Question: How can we tell the individual stories? In the newspapers?*

*Laura Reeder:* It's a real problem. Newspapers give dates, times, events, photos, etc., but the stuff that's important doesn't have a photo or an event. We need editorial space for the things that come out of a cultural event.

## DIVERSITY AND THE ARTS

*“The stage explores diversity—representing the world we live in, understanding the ‘other.’”*

**Robert Moss, Syracuse Stage**

*“We need to target kids before cultural tastes are set in stone. Bring them to a more diverse set of cultural values. For the kid on the street, culture is not ‘cool’ yet. You have to create a community where having broad horizons is ‘cool.’”*

**Dr. Gregory Threatte, SUNY Upstate**

*“If you want a diverse audience, you need a diverse art scene.”*

**Linda Hall, Human Rights Commission**

*“There was an increase in single-ticket sales to the Jewish community for *The Dybbuk*, and there are increases in single-ticket sales to the African-American community for plays directed toward them. However, there is no crossover, which results in a Balkanization of the arts: We see only the plays that directly pertain to us.”*

**Robert Moss, Syracuse Stage**

## Diversity in the Arts Panel Discussion

On April 30th, 2002 the Southside Presbyterian Church on Salina Street was the site for a panel discussion on Diversity in the Arts. Panelists included **Trey Devey of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra**, **Bob Moss of Syracuse Stage** and **Dr. Gregory Threatte of SUNY Upstate**. Absent were panelists Carol Perry of the Southside Newsstand, Bill Rowland of the Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, Irving Lyons of the Native American Services Agency and Juan Cruz of the Community Folk Art Gallery. **Sam Velasquez** served as moderator for the panel.

*Trey Devey*

If it's a question of diversity on the stage, then we are not unlike other orchestras around the country. We are not very diverse. The process for recruiting new musicians is: 1) advertise auditions; 2) receive resumes; and 3) hold auditions. The audition is standardized to be as blind as possible: there is a rug on stage so the reviewers can't hear the shoes on the floor, and a screen goes up so that the performers can't be seen. Fifty to sixty finalists are narrowed down to two or three during the audition process. But when the screen comes down, there is no diversity among the finalists. Latino and African American performers are highly sought out by every symphony. Salary levels and competitiveness makes it challenging for mid-size professional orchestras like ours to recruit diverse performers.

The first solution is education programs to get young people engaged in music and encourage them to take it up as a career. Young Persons Concerts and Symphony kids engage thousands of kids, half of which are from the City of Syracuse. It's free so there's no financial obstacle, although transportation may be an issue. Our Adopt-A-School program consists of ensembles that play concerts and house a resident music director. Kids can bring Mom and Dad for free to a night performance. However, it needs to be more than a one-shot deal; education needs to be comprehensive and over time

The second solution is Youth Orchestra in which 6-10 Latino and African American youth participate, so it bodes well for the future.

*Robert Moss*

I try to represent the world we live in through the selection of plays for the Syracuse Stage and strive to provide encounters with the “other:” for example, *The Dybbuk*, *Death and the King's Horses*, *A Lesson Before Dying*. Syracuse Stage collaborated with CNY Reads which was instrumental in bringing Ernest Gaines in to speak about *A Lesson Before Dying*. Five thousand school children were brought in to see the play. Syracuse Stage also connected with community wide dialogues and offered dress rehearsals to them.

Color-blind casting is part of the director's vision for Syracuse Stage. The casting director is responsible for recruiting diverse actors for auditions and Syracuse Stage employs diverse designers and staff. Two plays in the upcoming season feature African American actors.

There was an increase in single ticket sales to the Jewish community for the *Dybbuk* and there are increases in single ticket sales to the African American community for plays directed toward them. However, there is no cross-over which results in a balkanization of the arts: "we only see the plays that directly pertain to us."

Syracuse Stage represents "World" plays that encourage people to think that every play is about them. If I can't identify with the play, then I don't produce it and I want everyone to come to everything. If we can inspire a habit of theater going, then the audience can begin to see a world view expressed which has as its purpose to inspire acceptance.

*Dr. Gregory Threatte*

There are obstacles to creating diverse audiences and diverse cultural climates. There is a historical basis for balkanization. In the early 20th century, ragtime, jazz, blues were being born, yet the most popular form of entertainment was the minstrel show. Parallel cultures existed where nobody crossed the lines. The 1940's was the first time black and white people played together and strict balkanization continued until the 1960's. This is the legacy we're fighting. We can't ignore it.

The older you get, the more your cultural tastes are set. To create more diversity, you have to target kids before their tastes are set and bring them into a more diverse set of cultural values. Is it important to do this? Standardized tests are culturally biased and if kids are not exposed, they pay for it in test scores. Targeting kids is a win-win situation: cultural institutions and individual academic futures depend on it.

Syracuse has tremendous opportunities and venues, but we must get kids over the hurdles to get involved. We have to make a community wide effort to encourage kids: the community needs to say it's OK. We have to get over the legacy, for example, the Native American legacy that has to choose between preserving their own culture versus accepting a new culture. To break down 150 years of balkanization, you have to do it one person at a time, one kid at a time.

*Question: A few years ago, children were brought in from an urban housing project and played with the Syracuse Symphony; can we do something like that here?*

*Trey Devey:* We need good ideas like that brought to the table. Another director had the idea of a "super orchestra" which would include community members playing with the orchestra.

*Question: One of the ways to advertise plays and the broad content is to have local people do reviews for different communities. I have seen reviews for A Lesson Before Dying, but why not the same exposure for all plays?*

*Bob Moss:* That's a good idea.

*Question: Why didn't you mention that there are and were people of African descent involved in cultural production: Dumas, Joplin, Quincy Jones, and other African musicians who have used classical musicians in their work? Kids need to know that.*

*Greg Threatte:* To a kid on the street: it's not cool. It's got to be cool for them to do it. We have to create a community where having broad horizons is cool. Parents have to work on expanding tastes. It's hard to expand the tastes of kids when adults are so balkanized. It's hard to convince kids to get involved and excel despite the lack of appreciation of peers. Reverse balkanization needs to be celebrated.

*Leo Crandal (CRC):* There are two issues at work: measurement and spirit. The Cultural Resources Council deals with the measurable: getting money to the grass-roots arts organizations and into the hands of individual artists. The make-up of the organizations will tell where you are in respect to diversity. These issues are addressed with a commitment: all artists get served and all grass-roots organizations get served. At the heart of this is the culture; cultural organizations are in the best position to make bridges that can connect us.

*Question: What do you do to promote sharing among really young and their parents, and make it easy and not threatening to reach across socio-economic levels?*

*Trey Devey:* Syracuse newspapers did a piece once on what to know before you go and the writer did a fantastic job about what to expect. Getting the message out there is a nice first step: the media could do this sort of thing all the time. The New Times make the arts accessible. We have a strong relationship with PRIDE, mention PRIDE and Pratt and get 2 for 1 seats for \$10. But we have to address the Hip Factor.

*Greg Threatte:* There is constant denial about the bias of standardized test scores. The first solution is to drop them. The second solution is to make culture an integral part of education. The community has to step up— institutions can't do it alone. There has to be community action to match institutional efforts. Syracuse is small enough to solve its problems. Perhaps an analysis in the news on the impact of culture on academic achievement and careers would be possible.

*Bob Moss:* A 45-minute play to K-3 children will not connect kids to the theater because it's in the gym. We used to do full productions for schools, but it's economically expensive. A couple of years ago, whole families came to see *Peter Pan*. The December show is always family oriented and not on the subscription ticket.

*Question:* People go to their own to get their "cultural" food. Have we looked at a real "feeder" system?

*A structured system: 5-10 groups to partner with?*

*To create a real strong partnership versus a one-shot deal (e.g., group tickets)?*

*Bob Moss:* Syracuse Stage asks teachers what plays are being taught that year and study guides are provided to the schools on the plays the Stage is performing.

*Question:* Schools may not be the place because parents don't participate. What about something smaller, like theater in the church for example?

*Question:* I'm confused by the word "culture": institutions that are perpetuators and celebrators of "genius" versus groups outside the institutions that draw a community concerned with preservation and perpetuation of their own culture. Can non-members find access to and celebrate the second? Are there cross-fertilizations? How do we tie those outside groups to the institutions?

*Greg Threatte:* There is tension between preservation and cross-cultural enjoyment. The strain exists because it's been so rigid for so long. We need to break that. There is a legacy of assimilation. The "cool" part of it has to be part of the recruitment: young people need to be recruiters of young people.

*Bob Moss:* There's a huge theater in Los Angeles and the director, who was an anthropologist, drew a circle around the theater and found 30 nationalities. He began programs to reach out to different groups. How do we do it?

*Question:* To recruit children, adults need to be more adventurous in their choices.

*Greg Threatte:* One kid, one adult at a time.

*Trey Devey:* Cross fertilization is evident in the single ticket buyers.

*Comment:* Since I'm close to New York City, I can go there to see as many black plays as I want. Here, I only get to see one a year so I go to other places to see what I want. I appreciate the efforts of the Stage, and I'm not presenting a negative, I only want to shed light on what I do and what others do. If kids are exposed during the school day, then tickets needs to be provided for the rest of the family. Something "in" or "hot" that a lot of

young people like, perhaps we have to bring in something loud and bangy.

*Question:* I took diversity in the arts a little more literally and thought about Stevie Wonder using orchestral arrangements, combinations of hip hop and jazz, theater and the spoken word, etc. Are any of our institutions actually diversifying their programming to reflect the diversity of the community?

*Trey Devey:* The challenge is finding artists who can do this, and the problem is logistical. Fee ranges are extraordinary and local groups don't have the arrangements, and we don't have arrangers.

*Sam Velasquez:* Perhaps commissioned works could be supported by the Foundations. We mentioned a sense of "habit-forming." How do we generate habit?

*Comment:* I'm the youngest one here. I have a suggestion for the symphony: Alicia Keyes is a Rhythm and Blues singer who is classically trained who would do it. I work as a teacher at a modeling school and I have students who like to act. If they were to even get one line, I'm sure that once they're involved, they would come more often.

*Question:* There used to be rich opportunities for youth theater through the Cultural Resources Council. How did we lose this richness?

*Bob Moss:* We sent tickets home with kids and no one came. Susie Lorie Parks won a Pulitzer Prize and lives in New York. We have a \$3.5 million budget based on ticket sales. If I brought her play here, I'd lose my shirt: it's an economic concern. We put on "plays," meaningful experiences. It's a delicate balance: we can't sell our souls to sell a ticket. Foundations have been sensational in helping us with our efforts.

*Comment:* The Open Hand Theater works with very young children in multiple venues and we understood the importance of the arts to kids. It has to be more than once a year and not just dealing with schools. We need to get the word out to adults. Parents bring children to children's shows. We need to educate the adults about different plays, concerts, etc., so they will get into the habit. We have to work through community organizations and churches to provide transportation, etc.

*Comment:* I don't want my kids to get something for free. My kids need to have ownership in order to participate. Teenagers are a confused generation: they can earn a ticket by doing work for theater, etc. My kids are city kids and have a survival mentality: they are not interested. Parents and community are not taking

responsibility. There must be opportunities for the young to serve. Are you open to something like that?

*Trey Devey/Bob Moss: Yes.*

*Question: Part of the education issue is passive and viewing versus physically doing something. Those who are physically engaged become the patrons. We need places where kids can get involved, not just schools. The community needs to promote a sense of doing.*

*Walt Sheppard (The Media Unit): 73% of the graduates of the Media Unit are working in the industry. While doing six performances in four days in New York City, we met other similar organizations who were not as successful. The secret is discipline. If someone is late, they get thrown out, because in the industry, if you're late, somebody else gets the job. This needs to be a consideration for the youth. We have to confront our own orientation to our own youth. It's a matter of discipline and work ethic: until we confront that, it's not a cultural issue, and then it's twice as hard to get them involved.*

What is the question? Is it a matter of the institutions selling tickets to make audiences more diverse, or "do you all want to come to my neighborhood?" Are we just interested in getting a black violinist on stage and more black people in the audience? Or are we validating the kaleidoscope and each other's culture? Do we buy tickets for the Robeson and La Liga? If we buy tickets there, maybe they'll buy more tickets at the major institutions.

## INNOVATION IN THE ARTS

*"Nurturing an artist takes a whole community, and we want to give our young people an opportunity to express their creativity and develop their talents."*

**Neva Pilgrim, Society for New Music**

*"The unfortunate reality right now is we have to be everything else but an artist to survive."*

**Jacob Roberts, ThINC (The Institution of a Now Culture)**

*"We made the decision to be a touring company shortly after we formed in 1993 because we realized our specific type of theater wouldn't sustain us as a company in Syracuse."*

**Leslie Noble, Gams on the Lam**

*"Installation work is collaborative, and it's a little-known fact that four women in Syracuse are also doing installations."*

**Kim Waale, installation artist and professor, Cazenovia College**

*"People are in staircases that look like the M.C. Escher drawing. There's little interaction between groups, outside of the small, protective circles."*

**Geoffrey Navias, Puppet Museum**

## On the Edge: Innovation in the Arts Panel Discussion

On May 20th, 2002, local artists and art activists met at LeMoyne College to participate in a panel discussion to address how well Syracuse supports and appreciates its artists. The panelists were Leslie Noble of Gams on the Lam, Neva Pilgrim of Society for New Music, Jacob Roberts of The Institution of a Now Culture, and Kim Waale of Cazenovia College. Bill Morris of LeMoyne College's Theater Department served as moderator.

*Neva Pilgrim* (reprint of her prepared presentation):

The Society for New Music, one of a handful of community-based new music organizations in this country, promotes new music, especially the music of regional composers as performed by regional performers. We do this through concerts, run-out concerts, new music in the schools, commissioning a new work each year, and awarding the Brian Israel prize to a young NYS composer. Community education and outreach is extended on paper with Society News, a newsletter circulated to 5,200 people twice each season that includes a calendar of all new music concerts in CNY from Buffalo to Oneonta to Binghamton; and on air with Fresh Ink, a weekly new music program for WCNY-FM and its Watertown and Utica affiliates. That program also includes a new music calendar for all of upstate. CDs and DAT tapes are regularly submitted for inclusion on this program from around the world, and we know we have loyal listeners, even on the internet from as far away as South Africa, New York City, and western Canada.

The Society provides a format for living composers in the same way that art galleries provide a format for visual artists. The Society was the only music group honored with a NYS Governor's Arts Award in 2001, along with such organizations as the Museum of Modern Art. We may not be well known by everyone in CNY, but composers who performed while grad students have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize in music. We helped them hone their talents and skills as they developed. The same for our Brian Israel prize winners, who receive a \$500 prize and performance. Some past winners have already become quite famous, getting features in *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*.

We consider ourselves a regional research and development department for the world of music, since all fields need change. Former President John F. Kennedy said: "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." We definitely don't want to miss the future! Each culture produces art and music that's representative of itself; it's a vehicle to help people understand themselves and the world they live in better. We want to do our part in supporting regional artists because we

know nurturing an artist takes a whole community, and we want to give our young people an opportunity to express their creativity and develop their talents.

*What opportunities and venues do you have for your work?*

We have made our opportunities by offering a winter series and a summer series. Our varied programs are designed to both challenge and entertain our audience. We also offer workshops by guest composers and performers. We arrange and find funding for three composers-in-residence at three Syracuse Elementary schools, something we've done for 14 years. This is a project that groups in other states are now replicating. We perform at the Everson, Syracuse University, May Memorial, sometimes in churches, and at libraries. For Cazenovia Counterpoint, where our original three concert series has grown into an arts festival, all of it new, we try to link with Cazenovia's history by performing in historic homes and at Lorenzo, and connect with the other arts by performing at Stone Quarry Hill Art Park. Actually, we try to connect with the community wherever we perform.

*How often do you do what you do out of town?*

We do 6-10 run-outs a season, including NYC, but we've also performed in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Sandra Trop, director of the Everson, said in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter that the art shows with a cutting-edge vision that travel to other cities give Syracuse national exposure. The same is true of the Society's commissioned works and Israel Prize winners that carry the Society's and Syracuse's name with them as they are performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. Then there is the Society News that goes to readers nationally, plus the Society's recordings that are broadcast throughout the U.S. and in Europe, and loyal Fresh Ink listeners on the web.

*What kind of support do you have, both in terms of audience & funding?*

We have an eclectic audience, from young students to those over 80. The audience size varies from concert to concert, from 60-350. Our total audience last year for all events was over 20,000, and in general it's a younger audience. Many of our concerts and all of our workshops and residency activities are free to the public.

We get more financial support from foundations outside of Syracuse than inside. Funders here tend to more narrowly define "educational" programs, whereas funders outside understand that we're always being educated, especially when dealing with the "new," and that we all benefit from it. The "new" is educational because audience members hear sound worlds they've never heard before, plus new or updated ideas; performers have to stretch their techniques and learn new ones, but can then share them with their students and use them in other performances, for example with the



Symphony; and composers learn by getting feedback from performers and audience, and how to more clearly note what they wish to convey. The Society could do even better with outside funders if we had more local support, which is what most state and national grants are based on, but we have had regular support from a couple of local foundations, for which we're grateful.

It's no doubt our fault, however, that we haven't done a better job of convincing our politicians and philanthropists about the absolute essentialness of the arts for our society. Other cities have philanthropists who contribute to the arts specifically in their region, and especially for the new in all disciplines. The Pew Charitable Trust, for example, budgets a certain percentage of their annual giving (\$3.4 million this year) and awards it to all sizes of organizations for commissioning funds, new productions and new choreography. Arts organizations in Philadelphia can count on this from year to year. It keeps the arts alive and vibrant. The McKnight Foundation, and other similar ones, funds the experimental arts for Minnesota where philanthropy is a civic duty. The Mary Cary Flagler Trust does this for NYC so new works are created, recorded and published. And there are others, just as there is one in Cleveland for that region.

If we want to leave a cultural legacy from CNY, we have to capitalize on what we have here and nurture it, that means funding the creation and performance of new works. Otherwise future generations will think we were a cultural black hole, which isn't true. This region has produced and/or educated prizewinners in almost all mediums. The arts, in terms of amount, diversity, and quality, are the most distinctive thing about Syracuse and CNY. Every guest composer/performer the Society has had is amazed by all the activity here. Could the rich cultural heritage we have in CNY be the focus the CitiStates committee was searching for?

*What kinds of resources are available to you to promote your work?*

We have an excellent working relationship with most other cultural organizations in Syracuse, and we've cooperated in sponsoring programs with many of them, partly as a way of getting others to try something contemporary or to commission a work, especially by regional composers. The Everson has been our main home since our founding 30 years ago, and they encouraged our existence by serving as our umbrella until we had tax exempt status. We're a small organization that's governed and administered by a 50-member board of volunteers, all professionals, but volunteer. Therefore, we try to get the most mileage for a small amount of money, which requires being creative on that front as well. We have a very good track record with NYSCA, the NEA, the Copland fund and other such state/national funding organizations.

*How do you balance what you want to do with what the audience demands?*

The "new" in any field is sometimes difficult, because we don't fully understand it. We had to study Shakespeare, Chaucer and Dante to appreciate them. Bach, Beethoven, even Mozart, were not as popular as some of their contemporaries, yet their profundity has enabled their music and reputations to grow over the centuries, while the fame of their contemporaries has waned. Today, the general public finds Beethoven, once considered difficult music, listener-friendly, because they've heard it so many times. The same will be true of the best new works created today. More complicated scores need to be performed many times, until the performers and audience really grasp them. That's why the Society for New Music always gives second and third performances of commissioned works, and then records them. Education is the key and personal involvement is the most effective way of dealing with the "new."

Those involved with anything "new" need to lead, whether it's in science or in the arts. We wouldn't want NASA, for example, to decide how to build rockets or plan the next space station based on what the polls say, or how large the audience was. Syracuse won't be remembered for how many attended Ragtime or Phantom, or how often Beethoven was performed here, although those are worthy in and of themselves. We will be remembered for the new productions and premieres that take place here, and for the Pulitzer Prizes and other award winners the region produces.

When we moved here, I made it a point to read about the area, as well as books by people here. One particular book by Ernst Bacon, the former Director of the Music School and longtime composer-in-residence, rang true to me. He believed that every city should grow and nurture its own culture; that a city shouldn't be just a stop on the line for a touring company where the money, or a good deal of it, leaves town the day after the performance. His idea of nurturing local talent, giving young people the chance to perform and compose so that they felt fulfilled instead of frustrated, made a lot of sense. How else will we keep young, talented people here, or attract others to the area? Gifted and talented people should have the opportunity to live in a beautiful part of the country and still be able to make a living at what they do. Syracuse shouldn't want to lag behind in the arts, because having creative, energetic people here enriches the entire community.

As human beings we're grateful we have literature, music, art, and architecture through which we can empathize with what life was like in various places at a specific historical time. We can even appreciate the images that inspired spiritual devotion in centuries past in different cultures and on other continents. What images will we leave future generations? Let's hope some of those images are created right here in CNY by artists like Dorothy Riestler, Dan Godfrey, Mary Karr, Liu Zhuang, Rodger Mack, Howard Boatwright, George Saunders, and Ping Jin, to name but a few.

In closing, let me say that celebrating new music through supporting its creation and distribution is the Society for New Music's mission. We don't want to live in the shadow of someone else's ideas about our culture. We want the cultural life here to be every bit as abundant, rich and diverse as the natural beauty of CNY.

*Jacob Roberts* (reprint of his prepared presentation):

*What do you do?*

First and foremost, I am an artist. However, I do spend most of my waking hours creating opportunities for young emerging artists of all media to showcase, manufacture, record, film, perform and collaborate on their work. I am also a spokesperson and an advocate for free public arts expression and the development of a unified effort to enhance the quality of life for all of Syracuse and its future generations through artistic and cultural enterprise.

*What opportunities and venues do you have for your work?*

In the five years that I've worked as a professional artist in Syracuse, ThINC has been the organization from which opportunities and venues have been made available to the young creative class. In our first year of programming we initiated Project '01: Gallery without Walls. A series of vacant property conversion projects in which we opened five venues and hosted over 45 shows, highlighting over 250 local artists (all on a \$3,000 budget).

This year we embark on Project '02: Public Access, a venture that is working on using the public realm as the gallery and workspace. Through this project we will be showcasing works of contemporary art on downtown billboards, in public parks, on vacant walls on the train trestle and 690 overpasses, in the streets of Armory Square and Hanover Square, and more. The unfortunate reality right now is we have to be everything else but an artist to survive here and now.

*How often do you do what you do out of town?*

On my trips out of town, I spend a good deal of time trumpeting Syracuse and its potential, as well as that of my own organization and the artists that we represent. So in a sense, I network and market for Syracuse and its art scene, yes. Speaking for my peers, most HAVE to perform or show out of town to move forward as professional artists.

*What kind of support do you have in terms of audience and funding?*

Our ability to constantly pull an audience surprises even me. We open doors to a packed house, no matter who, what, where, why or how. Folks like what we do. However, not too many can pay out of pocket to sustain us, considering that 75% of our constituency is young emerging artists themselves, not moneyed artists.

And considering that the CRC is the only funding source for unaffiliated, independent artists in the region and that our major granting foundations are extremely competitive (especially for that of a new upstart arts organization), and state and federal aid has been drastically cut over the years, and so far local developers and municipal leaders see dollar signs in everything but a true commitment to arts and culture, true support has been hard to come by.

We get many congratulations and keep up the good work, but funding is scarce at best.

*What kind of resources are available to promote your work?*

We have a nice relationship with local media, so that is always a great vehicle. Other than that we use word of mouth, flyer distribution and are trying our best to get a web site off the ground.

But the best promotion is a great product, so we aren't too worried about getting the word out. It happens.

*How do you balance what you want to do with what the audience demands?*

Our audience demands what we want to do. It's just balancing that with being able to execute in this economic, political and cultural climate. We are in tune with our audience. We just need to tune everyone else in to what we are set out to accomplish.

*Leslie Noble* (reprint of her prepared presentation):

*What do you do?*

I'm a freelance actor and director, and one of the founding members of Gams on the Lam. Gams is a three-woman clown/movement theater company. Influenced by silent film clowns, epic drama and animated cartoons, we create hi-amp physical comedies that aim to explore what makes us human in a hostile world. We are particularly interested in exploring this from a woman's perspective in a way that our audiences will find hilarious and compelling.

(Shared a video clip from a recent performance)

*Opportunities and venues? How often do you do what you do out of town?*

We are mostly a touring company and have performed at Arts Festivals and theater venues in the US, Canada, Mexico and Europe. We have also performed at several colleges and universities in New York State. We typically play Syracuse once or twice a year here at LeMoyne or sometimes at Cazenovia College because we have nepotistic connections. We made the decision to be a touring company shortly after we formed in 1993 because we realized our specific type of theater wouldn't sustain us as a company in Syracuse. I think the reasons are:

1. The money and audiences to sustain a small off-beat theater group that doesn't produce plays or even familiar theatrical genres just wasn't there.
2. We need a long gestation period for creating our shows. (It took us three years before we felt we had really hit the mark with our first show.) We felt we'd have the added difficulty of keeping up with audience demand for something new.
3. We were young and we wanted to travel and get our work into a national arena.

#### *Support? Resources?*

That being said, we have an incredibly devoted fan-base here of about 500 people that we've built up over the years through mailing lists, word of mouth and a kind of shameless self-promotion style we learned at the Canadian Fringe Festivals. Both the *Syracuse New Times* and the *Post Standard* have done feature stories on us and given us Pick of the Week status and reviewed us. God bless Joan Vadeboncoeur and James Scherzi. We've received funding from NYFA, NYSCA, Arts International, NPN and were commissioned by CTS to develop our second show 'Get Lost.'

#### *Balance of artistic vision with audience demand?*

Some themes of Gams shows include:

1. frantic pace of modern life
2. constant interruptions; not being able to get one thing done
3. American obsession with moving around, expansion, traveling, cars
4. myth of self-reliance
5. ways women compete for power and autonomy
6. our relationship as modern women with chaos.

We assume our audience is intelligent. We believe that audiences want to be surprised, engaged and entertained. But sometimes they don't know what they want until they experience it. Try to explain what we do and people just stare at us, but get them to see the show and they get it. We feel it's a bit presumptuous to want to challenge our audiences or make them think. Our shows challenge us and make us think, and if it does the same for them that's great, that's a bonus. But our first job is to entertain. And to create a safe space for them to become a small community. We enjoy the challenge of combining our ideas, however offbeat, with a satisfying audience experience.

#### *Kim Waale*

I'm not representing any organizations or company, just myself as an installation artist. I'm going to share slides and objects from several installations that I have done in Utica, Albany and New York City that explore themes of adolescent experiences as remembered and written by adults. I have not had any shows in Syracuse. The most important gift to get is to have someone say "you have 400 square feet," but it does not happen often in Syracuse. I encountered censorship at the Albany

Museum. Installation work is collaborative and it's a little known fact that four women in Syracuse are also doing installations.

*Question: How does an outsider break in to the arts scene in Syracuse?*

*Jacob Roberts:* ThINC works with property owners and we convince them to let us in to re-vitalize the space, work in lieu or rent. In five years, we have renovated seven spaces. But it is an unstable system. We have one or two exhibits and then the property owners ask us to leave. All seven properties have renting tenants to this day.

*Leslie Noble:* Artists as mobile urban renewal units.

*Jacob Roberts:* However, we encounter prejudice: the typical sentiment we hear is you just want to party.

*Neva Pilgrim:* One reason we started is to get composers talking to each other and to commission works from newcomers. We all benefit from the vitality.

*Question: What other venues are there besides Happy Endings?*

*Leslie Noble:* There are unused spaces downtown, but free space requires a lot of work to be made usable. More and more, multimedia and technical capabilities are a consideration. Nurturing means making spaces available under legal contract to artists.

*Jacob Roberts:* To have a strong cultural community, we need to identify that community: who we are and what we want to accomplish. We need to focus. Syracuse is the most compartmentalized place I've encountered, but creative individuals can break down compartmentalization.

*Kim Waale:* Put pressure on institutions that already exist to do more for people in the community. If artists do it, then it's seen as merely self-serving.

*Comment:* Onondaga Citizens League is on the mark: the arts has a central and distinctive function. The only way to have an answer is to make ourselves cool and attractive. Downtown has to come back to life with sustained government commitment and a public relations campaign.

*Jacob Roberts:* We're searching for one thing, one switch. We have all the elements, but what is going on? Labor unions speak for their constituency and have the people behind them. The Cultural Resources Council is the closest thing we have to that. A useful mandate would be that vacant property over a certain amount of time be turned over for use by the arts. I don't want your money, I want opportunities. Creative individuals can think of other ways.

*Jacob Roberts:* We have to be careful when we look to other cities. We have the creativity and intellect to solve our problems that are unique to our own city.

*Kim Waale:* When my work was censored in Albany, there was a panel discussion. What government needs to do is not invest in individuals, but invest in the idea of art.

*Jacob Roberts:* There has to be a change in perspective among downtown owners who continue to wait for something bigger than us. I've seen many go, yet many inspirational people continue to stick around. Syracuse is like boot camp, it prepares us for anything. Yet in one afternoon in Holyoke, MA, so many people welcomed us, offered us a finished space that same day and offered to subsidize our use of the space. The motive was: I need you, you need me. I have such a drive to break through in Syracuse; it's the reason I'm here, and ThINC is here: to provide opportunities for my peers. I want to break out myself. Syracuse does attract new artists. ThINC attracts them with hope and the fact that it's cheap to produce work here and live here.

*Section III:*  
**Visibility**

THE MEDIA AND CULTURAL COVERAGE

*“Arts organizations will need to come together as a united voice to share their perspectives with the media and let them know what they want.”*

**Heidi Holtz, Syracuse Stage, SU Drama Department**

*“Media is big business and the bottom line rules.”*

**Walt Shepperd, Syracuse New Times**

*“It’s a mutual burden: Arts groups must have more initiative and knowledge to ask for attention, and the media need to treat the arts as an obligation and not just filler.”*

**Michael Fields, WCNY**

*“If the media are content to simply wait for what is generated by public relations departments, then how sad for us.”*

**Sherry Chayat, Zen Center (arts critic)**

*“What do you cover? Inclusion is a key word. We experiment. People want more or less. Every page is an opportunity to do something great, sometimes it works, or doesn’t. There is so much going on, the calendar alone is hard to keep up on.”*

**Frank Herron, The Post-Standard**

SNAPSHOT: Open Hand Theater and Puppet Museum

Open Hand Theater’s International Mask and Puppet Museum is a museum and performance center offering puppet theater for children and adults, art classes, school programs, and exhibits of masks and puppets from around the world. The theater offers three series: “World of Puppets,” for children; “Classics,” theater for adults; and “Well Aged Words,” award winning story telling for adults.

## Cultural Coverage in the Media Panel Discussion

On May 29th, 2002, the concluding panel discussion of the Onondaga Citizens League study, held in a conference room at the *Post-Standard*, focused on media coverage of the arts. Panelists included Walt Sheppard of the *Syracuse New Times*, Heidi Holtz of Syracuse Stage and Syracuse University's Drama Department, Michael Fields of WCNY TV and FM radio, and Sherry Chayat of The Zen Center. Frank Herron, editor of *Stars* magazine served as moderator.

### *Sherry Chayat*

From 1978 to 1998, I wrote for the *Syracuse Newspapers* and *Stars*, and I continue to write for magazines. Most of my time I spend curating exhibitions. My opinion is that coverage is not as good as it used to be. I worked on the establishment of the Urban Arts Commission that became defunct after the end of Mayor Young's term.

### *Michael Fields*

I have been in Syracuse for about one year and I have extensive background knowledge of the media's vital role in the well-being of an arts scene. We have built the ground work at WCNY TV for a major arts initiative. We're planning with the "Crown Jewels" (that is, Stage, Symphony, Opera, Everson) a weekly TV series entitled "For Art's Sake." We're also planning with the Cultural Resources Council and other visual arts groups an annual event that will consist of an evening speaking with visual artists about process and featuring their work hung in the building. We're also nominating youth who excel in music and performance in our Bravo for Youth programming.

### *Heidi Holtz*

I primarily work in communications for Syracuse Stage and public relations for Syracuse University Drama. Previously I ran a service organization for theaters in New Jersey where there was not a lot of sharing or cooperation among the theaters. It is incumbent upon arts organizations themselves to partner and not view each other as competitors. Arts organizations will need to come together as a united voice to share their perspective with the media and let them know what they want.

I'm pleased with the coverage I get from the *Post-Standard* and the *New Times*. Radio is more restricted in its programming, but the TV stations are culturally and community oriented. There is potential for improvement: I have been a CNY resident for eleven years and I think we diminish ourselves. We should establish the arts as the core of our identity.

### *Walt Shepperd*

From 1967 to 1971 I edited and published the *Nickel Review*, an underground paper with a classical music section. Since 1973, I have been the senior editor of the *New Times* and since 1976 I have been the Executive Director of the Media Unit, which gives more perspective on today's discussion.

In the wake of the events at Columbine, I sent letters to twenty corporations asking: where are the scholarships and affirmations for photographers, dancers, etc.—all of the students who are not athletes? I asked for \$5,000 to start a fund, but never received any responses.

We have no regular dance coverage, but we have a big scene. We have no regular independent film coverage, but we have many independent film makers. The *New Times* calls itself alternative, yet the Crown Jewels are the Crown Jewels.

Media is a business and the Bottom Line rules. There may be six openings in one week, and we may want to find room for the students from LeMoyne, but familiarity is a real issue. Earlier, reviews would indicate if something was good or bad; now, reviews just tell the story. There is an Arts Section in the *Wall Street Journal!*

*Question: Is there anyplace other than newspaper where people get information?*

*Sherry Chayat:* The Cultural Resources Council is attempting to construct a web site and has a newsletter. There are calendars in the papers, but things don't always make the calendar. Some organizations may send press releases two to three weeks in advance, but things don't always get in, and releases never show up.  
*Michael Fields:* In New Jersey, a Cable Arts Service was established that costs \$1 million per year to the Public TV Station, that televised six hours a day during the week and twelve hours a day on the weekend. There are staffing issues; for example, compare the staff of the Syracuse Symphony versus the Metropolitan Opera, or the staff of the Everson Museum versus the Whitney Museum. Our biggest problem was getting arts groups to provide us with the information. The largest single problem was not just picking the good release, but actually getting a call from someone to say "we would be good for your show." It's a mutual burden: arts groups must have more initiative and knowledge to ask for attention, and the media need to treat the arts as an obligation and not just filler.

*Heidi Holtz:* There are two issues: 1) timeliness—we can't get coverage beyond the week of its happening and 2) it may be incumbent upon us to provide information, but consider the Sport Section. Does every high school sports program have the same burden?

*Walt Shepperd:* There is a rich rhythm and blues scene on the Southside, but it's not in the media. It's dependent upon newspaper personnel: do we have people on

staff who know where the Southside is or that the Nation exists? The question may be: Who is the Media?  
*Sherry Chayat:* As an arts writer, I try to ferret out stories about underrepresented artists and cultures. There are many opportunities, yet if the media is content to simply wait for what is generated by public relations departments, then how sad for us.

*Question: Do any of you have strategies for employing the internet as a means for improving cultural coverage?*

*Heidi Holtz:* There are several web sites existing on the Internet already. I don't know the best way to get information on Syracuse.com. There is also Syracusevoice.com. We can't get the print media to print our web site address. If possible, we would put links of other groups' web sites on our web site. As far as the Crown Jewels versus Seedbed issue, I believe that information and press about any one organization increases awareness and exposure for all; any story on any small organization benefits all.

*Question: What about the idea of "loaned" art for businesses, residences, hospital rooms and public places?*

*Sherry Chayat:* Programs like that have met with varying success. Downtown, there was art in abandoned warehouses during the Urban Arts Commission. There are people doing that right now. We should have more of it.

*Question: Either STARS magazine has started "dumbing down" its content or I'm a "cultural snob." Important exhibits are passed over for exhibits of "Ladies Auxiliary Watercolors." Where does the decision come from? Will it change?*

*Frank Herron:* It's a balancing act: What do you cover? Inclusion is a key word. We experiment. People want more or less, and we appreciate all our staff and interns do. Every page is an opportunity to do something great, sometimes it works or doesn't. There is so much going on, the calendar alone is hard to keep up on. We haven't eliminated art pages: but a "big museum show" versus a "kids art show" is a not a given. And there are financial constraints.

*Sherry Chayat:* Light Work is renown internationally, ignored locally. A review at Light Work demands someone who knows something about art. To write about photography at Light Work, you must know a little art history. Any reviewer needs to go beyond the superficial; you need to educate. You have to assume a cultural literacy that has been ignored.

*Michael Fields:* You don't want to send a cultural illiterate to the Opera, but that's what happens. There are staffing concerns, and you need to make opportunities for young journalists. It's easier to send junior people to arts events than to the City Council; it's how junior writers learn their craft. "People in the know" exclude the interests of other people in the arts. Classical music and the appropriate commentary is for the elite; it's intimidating and exclusive. The Symphony must balance, and it is always at a dilemma and crossroads: how do you make it interesting for those in the know, and not exclude others? How do you be "experimental" and not alienate "gray-haired" backbone supporters?

*Comment:* Arts and Culture should be local news. The arts should be given the same attention as everything else: it should be essential to the fabric of the news.

*Michael Fields:* I agree with you in principle, and Public Television and Radio is relieved of the Bottom Line because we're not for profit. But you can't make those same calls in the *New Times* and *Post-Standard*—survival is different. Public Television makes money to deliver programs. For-profit television delivers programs to make money. The bottom line is "How do I use space to be productive for shareholders?"

*Sherry Chayat:* Bottom line thinking is sad, we need to be more independent.

*Heidi Holtz:* I would like to come back to teaching. If kids came out of high school, college, etc., and if the arts were important to them, then they would say they wanted it.

We need to have more ways to get the word out to people. *Stars* wouldn't have the burden they have if there were more daily coverage.

*Frank Herron:* Things fall through the cracks. There's a lot at stake. We try and get a sense of what needs to be done. A sense of vision: how do we keep it flourishing? What will encourage great flourishing?

*Question: How do we manage that collaboration: cultural institutions with each other and with the media? How do we raise the visibility of all and include all cultural organizations in the broadest definition?*

*Heidi Holtz:* That's what happened in New Jersey, from six to thirty theaters. The "Majors" adopted developing theaters and helped them grow. It was a remarkable partnership. We need to tell our audiences how important it is, through the media and back to the media.

*Comment:* There was a FOCUS initiative to get arts in public places. The big obstacle is insurance. Through a collaborative organization like the Cultural Resources Council, perhaps we can develop our own insurance.

*Question: Could we lose information about the movies in the daily pages to make room for the arts? We can get movie information anywhere and everywhere, but not local arts information.*

*Michael Fields:* I appreciate the idea, but it's folly. Jerry Springer did not come out of a vacuum. This is a business. The core of the problem is that the Arts Community doesn't get it. His [newspaper editor/publisher] job is to print what people want to see, what the public want. We have to try to make people want what we want. The media and the arts community must acknowledge what people want.

*Michael Fields:* Charlotte, NC has a horrible arts scene, but lots of jobs. Yet the arts are important, and we've inherited an arts heritage that sounds like: "we need to support arts institutions so they can't go under." Public television and radio go to the government, but nobody has an obligation to support the arts. People need to support the arts out of enlightened self-interest. The media can help, but arts organizations have to be asking, "How can I get my story out?" Blanket releases don't do it.

*Frank Herron:* Any proposal to cover the community better will be listened to.

*Sherry Chayat:* We need more local coverage of local organizations and more space for what's happening here by those who live here.

*Heidi Holtz:* But the media must be responsible to the Bottom Line. The papers must deliver to their readers what they want. Does the paper have a responsibility to lead?



*Section IV:*  
**Ideas from Other Upstate Cities**

**SNAPSHOT: Light Work/Community Darkrooms**

Light Work/Community Darkrooms is a public access photography facility designed to provide people in Central New York with the equipment and materials needed to produce black and white photographs, color photographs, experiment with multi-media, web design, and digital photography, or learn new skills through a variety of workshops and classes. LW/CD also hosts a variety of exhibitions and lectures by contemporary photographers, publishes CONTACT SHEET, a journal of contemporary photography, runs an internationally renowned Artist-in-Residence program and annually offers the Light Work Grant, the longest running photography fellowship in the country. Light Work is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Syracuse University, among others.

**Regional Cultural Initiatives Panel**

*The State of the Arts: Past, Present and Future*  
 2002 Community Leadership Conference

At the OCL conference on June 13th, 2002, the Regional Cultural Initiatives Panel featured representatives from the cultural councils of the cities of Ithaca, Buffalo and Rochester. The panelists were Richard Driscoll of the Ithaca Community Arts Partnership, Celeste Lawson of the Arts Council of Buffalo and Sarah Lentini of the Arts and Cultural Council of Rochester. Leo Crandall, Executive Director of the Onondaga Cultural Resources Council served as moderator to the panel.

*Richard Driscoll, Ithaca Community Arts Partnership*

If we are going to be an effective arts council, then we must be responsive to our community. Our primary constituent is the art maker and the recipient of those arts, the community. It must be place-based, no one council or region is like the other.

We are service-oriented; we offer no programming of our own. We serve 50 arts organizations and a fluid number of artists, anywhere between 400 to 800 artists. We function similarly to a Chamber of Commerce, but we have the interests of the arts community at heart. The challenge is knowing when to take the lead and knowing when to follow.

Our mission includes re-granting NYSCA and de-centralization grants and education, that is, building local arts capacity in the schools. We're funded by NYSCA, Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, and through the Room Occupancy Tax. We also have an Arts Fund that is supported by local individuals and businesses.

We're 12 years old and we are currently undertaking a 12-month assessment, partially funded by the National Endowment of the Arts, of where we are. There is a difference between the art makers' perception of their importance versus the community's perception of their importance. Part of the assessment is an evaluation of the community's perceptions and opinions of art in Tompkins County. What we're finding out is that the arts are one little tick on a long list of options of how people spend their leisure time. It's not true that the audience for the arts is everyone. One result of the assessment is that we've decided that we need to know how to better assess and identify our audience: Do we care if an audience is not coming? If so, how do we get them?

The focus of our efforts over the last 10 years has been on cultural tourism and developing our own profile. We have a community box office that acts as a ticket agent for arts organizations and a web site that works in conjunction with the box office. We also have internet ticketing that works in conjunction with the Downtown Visitors Center and we are in the process of making arts and cultural packages with the hospitality industry and creating partnerships with the convention bureaus.

*Celeste Lawson, The Arts Council of Buffalo*

Syracuse is not alone: the entire State is sharing the struggle, except New York City, and sharing the same desire for moving forward and moving the arts to the top of the list.

Our mission is a mission of service and we serve: 200 registered 501(c)3 Arts organizations; 27 Theater groups with 12 venues; and 1500 individual artists. The Council has been in existence since 1973, and I've been with the Council since 1997. We have a board of directors and 10 staff.

Our big issue is Cultural Tourism. Buffalo is a border city and we consider Southern Ontario to be our partner. The City of Buffalo is in terrible financial condition. The arts and cultural community suffers from New York State's inability to pass a timely budget for the past 17 years and the events of 9/11. The city government zeroed cultural funding and forfeited on grants and funding already awarded to arts organizations. We are driven by passion, and go forward regardless. The quality is not diminished but the toll on people is substantial.

In 1999, we launched a local capacity initiative. We received lead funding from NYSCA and local private funding. We looked for models in other cities. We distributed \$400,000 over four years of operating support to organizations with budgets of less than \$500,000 per year. We invested over \$3 million into arts groups over four years; it's the best thing we ever did. Philanthropic and private leaders in funding the arts need to discuss similar initiatives. The promotional materials our council produces outline this and other initiatives, including both Heritage and Cultural Tourism.

It's very important to package your community. One example was our 1999 Summer of Monet/Summer of Love which was a collaborative effort in tourism. In six weeks, there was an \$11.3 million positive impact on our community. Even if you don't like art, you must respond to the numbers. Arts deliver a 9- to-1 return on investment. However, when turning a small town into a destination, there is a conflict between preservation and tourism.

*Sarah Lentini, The Arts and Cultural Council of Rochester*

The Arts and Cultural Council of Greater Rochester was formed by the Monroe County Legislature in May of 1980. We serve a 10 county area and over 1,000 members. Our biggest challenges are geography and logistics. Our mission is to strengthen and promote cultural industry for the greater Rochester area and business is very integral to our initiatives.

One of our greatest challenges is focus: meeting and responding to the needs of a diverse community. We have a membership association that provides member-focused selective services: health insurance, with access to eight medical plans; a web site which is a partnership with corporate partners; and a brochure and newsletter. Other services include technical assistance, a Cultural CEO Roundtable, artists' issues and higher education forums, workshops and conferences.

We receive our largest chunk of funding from NYSCA (about \$750,000-\$1 million), individual and corporate support, and membership dues. We are the major funders of the arts and provide project grants for artists and organizations, career stipends for artists, capacity building grants (in partnership with the Rochester Community Foundation) and grants to schools and neighborhoods.

Western New York is on the cutting edge of integrating arts into our schools. The result is improved academic performance, which is important to the larger community, and makes a case for continued support for the arts in the schools.

We've just finished our second five-year plan for the community, and now the challenge is in the implementation. We've identified many big projects, such as a fast ferry-Toronto link in one hour; a performing arts center; a downtown soccer stadium; and a zoo expansion. Our community's challenge is that we can't get together and prioritize and have a unified voice to get even one project done.

Our council provides primarily services; however, we do provide direct arts programming if there is a gap. We create short-term initiatives to fill the gap, for example, youth development, or employment training. We give grants to neighborhood organizations to select an artist and project that will have a lasting impact on their neighborhood. For example, one neighborhood commissioned a statue of Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony having tea and it has become a tourist attraction. We have focused on partnerships and regional marketing to identify key cultural assets of each region and deliver marketing packages.

The economic community doesn't know the depth of the cultural community. Arts councils sometimes don't know the depth of the cultural community. The biggest challenge: unearth who we have, communicate to money and resources and keep the message fresh.

Marketing efforts always use the same four to eight major organizations, but there are others that aren't visible to funding and promotion radar screens.

*Leo Crandall, Onondaga County Cultural Resources Council*

Our Cultural Resources Council is service-based. The money we distribute to artists and groups has increased by four times. We grant to institutions, grass roots groups and individuals. We form long-term relationships through our granting programs and contract with artists for the benefit of the public, and we connect with communities. Check out our web site at [www.cspot.org](http://www.cspot.org).

We took our biggest funding hits in 1989-1990.

We have seen increases in funding over the last decade; however, we haven't reached the level we had in 1989.

*Question: How does the city and county share the funding for the arts in general and your councils specifically?*

*Richard Driscoll:* We're very fortunate to have 5% of the Room Occupancy tax which affords us \$140,000 yearly and continues to grow and which provides development grant funds to arts institutions. The City of Ithaca portion has dwindled to \$9,000. There has also been a 20% decrease from the general fund in Tompkins County.

*Celeste Lawson:* Erie County gives \$5 million to all of the Arts. My organization receives \$75,000 toward Cultural Tourism efforts, \$155,000 in operating support, which includes \$45,000 for re-granting. The City of Buffalo used to be very supportive and gave as much as \$1.3 million to the arts and cultural community. Last year we received only \$36,000 from the City and as of this year, we received nothing from the City.

*Sarah Lentini:* There is no tradition of City funding in Rochester, but the City does give project specific funds to the Council. The county gives approximately \$2 million to the arts: one organization gets \$1 million, and a few select get the rest, just under \$100,000 each to a few. We used to receive operating support, but not anymore.

*Question: There are 62 Arts Councils. How much interaction is there with each other? Do you function locally and competitively or are there opportunities for collaboration beyond the local region to broader regions?*

*Richard Driscoll:* We're rurally based and 27 councils participate in our Partnership. There is also the National Endowment for the Arts and Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative which has a New York State delegation to North Carolina to build economies through place-based cultural development

*Celeste Lawson:* We have a multi-county service area, and within the framework of our granting system, we support smaller local arts providers and councils. We are also part of a regional task force for capacity building. We are compelled to think regionally because of our efforts in cultural tourism.

*Sarah Lentini:* We communicate with each other through the New York State Council of the Arts, the Decentralization Leadership Conference, the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations, the Alliance of New York State Arts in Education and the national group Americans for the Arts. However, we don't talk enough.

*Question: Can you describe the impact of the universities and colleges on the arts scene.*

*Celeste Lawson:* There are 23 universities and colleges in a consortium, but we don't have a strong partnership with them. We are just beginning to get university personnel on the boards of arts organizations. We're not where we should be with higher education.

*Sarah Lentini:* We have a strong relationship with higher education and we do have their representation on our Board.

*Richard Driscoll:* The universities and colleges have been strong supporters, but this has been a recent attitude in the last five to seven years. Both Cornell and Ithaca College have cooperated and kicked in to the ticketing system. The impetus is recruitment and retention: Ithaca is centrally isolated, so it's a quality of life issue.

*Question: Please comment on the cooperation of Arts Groups: there are three regions represented here today and each region has its own empire, but there is no cultural corridor from Albany to Buffalo.*

*Richard Driscoll:* The lack of cooperation is rampant through the arts community. We're underfunded and understaffed. We're challenged to keep our focus, and to make a stronger case for more support.

*Celeste Lawson:* We used to convene a meeting of the executive directors of the councils once or twice a year. With a staff of ten, we became focused on local constituents. Not that we don't believe, or want to, but getting to it is hard. New York City is globally recognized; now we need to package the entire state. Buffalo is the #9 destination for the arts, but we're always in the cultural shadow of New York City which is #1.

*Question: What work do you do specifically with schools?*

*Celeste Lawson:* The Coalition of Arts Providers for Children consists of 21 arts groups who select the schools they want to work with and establish residencies and programs funded by NYSCA. Our Arts in Education Program funds arts programs for schools who match the funds we give. We will be working with TOPS grocery stores to increase our efforts.

A comprehensive study by Americans for the Arts on the front page of *USA Today* demonstrated that arts education is good for children, especially poor kids.

*Sarah Lentini:* We fund artists' residencies in schools, but we require a match from the school. We also try to work with the head of arts programming at schools in order to get meetings with administrators to advocate for more arts programming.

## Section V:

**DestinyUSA and the Changing Cultural Climate****DESTINY USA AND THE CHANGING CULTURAL CLIMATE**

*“Link Destiny to a corridor – not just a building project like the ‘Avenue of the Arts,’ but something to sell that directly relates to the arts.”*

**New York State Sen. John DeFrancisco**

*“Our goal is to link Destiny, downtown, the lakefront as gateways to Onondaga County and create a better visitor experience.”*

**Mike Lorenz, The Pyramid Companies**

*“We’re ecstatic about Destiny’s projected visitors—and nervous wrecks about how to get them out of Destiny and into downtown.”*

**Sandra Trop, Everson Museum of Art**

*“I hope as Destiny comes in, as more people are paying in, there will be arts funding... But the arts comes after school children.”*

**Stephanie Miner, Syracuse Common Council**

*“The benchmark of a community is its support for the arts. I believe in a dedicated revenue stream.”*

**Martha Mulroy, Onondaga County Legislature**

**SNAPSHOT: The MOST**

The Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology is where kids of all ages explore the world of science through hands-on exhibits, planetarium shows and lively science demonstrations. Home to the Bristol Omnitheater, the only IMAX® Dome theater in Upstate New York, our educators also provide hands-on science workshops and educational outreach programming including leadership of the Greater Syracuse Scholastic Science Fair. Open 6 days a week, Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., with extended IMAX movie schedule on Fridays and Saturdays till 9 p.m.

## State Funding for the Arts— Senator John A. DeFrancisco

On April 18th, 2002, as part of the OCL study, Senator John A. DeFrancisco addressed the audience of Thursday Morning Roundtable on the topic of State Funding for the Arts. Tom Dydyk of the Friends of the Central Library introduced the Senator.

*Senator John DeFrancisco*

I currently serve as the Tourism Committee Chairman. The primary industries of New York State are agriculture and tourism. After 9/11, tourism dollars declined significantly and there was a need to invest more dollars into promoting Tourism with the support of Governor Pataki.

Arts and culture are an important component to the tourism industry. The Cultural Tourism Initiative is a \$600,000 program to tie cultural institutions more directly to tourism. An Inter-Agency Task Force for Tourism was also established to intensify cultural tourism. For example, why isn't there substantial signage on the Thruway? Brochures are ineffective at stops, why not live video? The Task Force was established to address these questions. However, there needs to be more coordination between the New York State Council for the Arts and the State Tourism Committee.

Business is the engine of a community. Culture is the heart of a community and draws businesses to it. It's our quality of life that brings business here, not just the bottom line, but also the diversity of activities. For cities of this size, no city has more cultural activities than Syracuse. The work that FOCUS is doing on the Cultural Corridor is to be commended.

The New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) is the primary organization for distributing funds. In the 1980s, there were substantial dollars dedicated to the arts. In the early 90's, the state fell on tough times, and dollars for the arts declined. This year, between \$42 and \$43 million was earmarked for the arts. NYSCA distributes these dollars equitably throughout the state and Upstate is represented in the membership of NYSCA.

Onondaga County's share steadily rose from 1992-1997, and its share remained steady from 1997-2001. This year the county receives just short of \$1 million from NYSCA. There is a public conception of "pork" in the budget and arts organizations are perceived as the "tenderloin."

There is a process that yields success. For example, the Jazz Fest got some grants and seed money, and started the Jazz Fest downtown. Now there's a line item in the budget for the Jazz Fest for a pre-determined amount of money. However, smaller organizations do not have access to these funds. But rather than having specific funds available for events or organizations,

there will be a Tourism Mini-Grant Fund that will serve to enhance the overall cultural tourism profile of our community. This year, there will be another Jazz Fest downtown combined with Jazz in the City.

The Cultural Resources Council also receives State funds to support "starving artists." De-Centralization grants that rely on NYSCA and discretionary funds are matched by the county enabling the Cultural Resources Council to provide \$20,000 in grant monies to individual artists.

The state of arts funding is continually improving. The history of funding is poor; there are no great patrons so the government must step in. Roy Goodman of New York City has recently retired as chair of the Arts Oversight Committee in the Senate. This is an important position as it advocates in the Senate for funding for the arts. Both Assemblymen Magnarelli and Morelli work for arts funding in the Assembly.

We need more dollars for the arts, we know it. You must press upon elected representatives the importance of funding for the arts. There are very limited funds: we must organize priorities.

*Question: What is the State's responsibility in regards to arts and tourism and Destiny?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* There are seventeen contingencies before we get to spend any money. We are formulating a dedicated stream of income to tourism and the arts: a percentage of every dollar diverted from the general fund to tourism. Pyramid is looking for a similar concept. The State's share is 4% of the sales tax. The contingency: if you say 3.2 million square feet, then you're required to build it in order to generate income. If it in fact happens, then the Tourism Advisory Group is required to build a Tourism Center which will represent destinations all over Upstate New York. It's a great concept. The Cultural organizations will get a piece. The Tourism Advisory Committee distributes the funds and there are strong representatives from upstate on the committee: it will not be solely New York City money.

*Question: What is the 9/11 effect on future state budgets?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* This year, we hold the line. Next year will be a disaster. It will depend upon how much money comes from the federal government, and how quickly New York City rebuilds. It will be a couple of years until numbers increase to levels of the past. To promote New York State, the state earmarks \$15 million in the budget: NY/NJ Transit spends \$15 million.

*Question: Can you address the Impact of Destiny on the Arts?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* Not until it happens. We can't plan until we see it happening. We are critical of documents that state that Pyramid is "only legally required to build 800,000 square feet." The focus is better directed on what's present at the moment: for example making sure that upstate New York has representation on the Tourism Committee, and the efforts of FOCUS to promote the Cultural Corridor.

*Question: What is being done to get tourists from outside New York?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* Now we have to talk politics. New York City has more population and therefore more representation in the Senate than Syracuse, which is exactly why we need an Upstate Tourism Fund and a dedicated funding stream. The worst case scenario is that Destiny doesn't happen, yet the structure is there for funding Upstate Tourism. The critical piece is: where will the dedicated stream come from if not Destiny? New York City is the cultural capital of the world.

*Question: Can you comment on avant garde and controversial art and censorship and funding?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* It's not a consideration for state government. I haven't heard a complaint in my tenure about NYSCA not funding on the basis of controversial art.

*Question: About Destiny, is it too early to devise creative strategies to raise the cultural profile?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* It's never too early to plan. The FOCUS concept: have that in place so that there is a place to go. The Cultural Corridor is something to sell directly related to the arts at the Tourism Center. Our first priority to get our fair share of the dollars generated is to lobby for disbursement. We should develop philanthropy and the major donors. Community investment becomes the incentive to bring dollars back to the community.

*Question: Do you feel Syracuse and Onondaga County support their own cultural institutions adequately? If they did more, would it jeopardize or encourage state monies?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* There would be no effect on NYSCA.

*Question: The County funds the arts in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The City doesn't fund the arts at all. Ten years ago, a study done for the County recommended a dedicated revenue stream from a surcharges on sport tickets, entertainment tickets and video rentals. Is that more palatable than a sales tax?*

*Senator DeFrancisco:* Unless there is a dedicated funding stream, there will not be enough funding. The county legislature will need to debate the issue in public.

## The Impact of DestinyUSA on Arts and Cultural Institutions Panel Discussion

Immediately following Senator DeFrancisco's address on April 18th, a panel discussed the impact of the proposed Destiny Project on the arts and cultural institutions of Syracuse. The panelists included **Stephanie Miner** of the Syracuse Common Council, **Sandy Trop** of the Everson Museum, **Trey Devey** of the Syracuse Symphony, **Martha Mulroy** of the Onondaga County Legislature and **Mike Lorenz** of the Pyramid Company of Onondaga. **Dennis Connors** served as moderator.

### *Mike Lorenz*

This is a great topic to discuss from a community perspective. We need to focus on the community, not on Destiny. Citizens should be responsible and learn how to work together to improve their community; they should not rely on Destiny. Destiny started a great dialogue and can serve as catalyst to initiate further dialogue toward progress.

Our goal is to instill pride and optimism in our area of state by fighting mediocrity in economic development and deficient revenue. But it first starts with an attitude adjustment toward the city, county and region on the part of its residents.

Our first product is optimism and attitude. The second product is marketing. We need an influx of capital and intellect. We migrate 65% of our young adults out of state and bring in 40% from outside the state to our schools. We need to bring money and people into the state and keep them here.

We're pushing the envelope of what's possible. We participated in an Environmental Summit that set International Standards for Excellence. Destiny is an initiative that brings attention to the community. Destiny will bring people in, but we must link project with region because we cannot trap people in the walls of Destiny. We have to provide a better experience that will compel people to come back and compel young people to stay.

### *Trey Devey*

The Symphony sees primarily positive implications in the proposed Destiny project in the increase of new employees and visitors. For example, graduation weekend at Syracuse University provides tremendous opportunities for the Symphony. Our concern is our ability to capitalize on the potential Destiny affords. Compared to other symphonies this size, most of our resources go into artistic initiatives and the least of our resources go into administration, infrastructure and marketing. This makes it hard to react to new opportunities or new threats.

Are we able to act in the most proactive way? The community needs balance; without thinking about the issues, we'll lose balance. How prepared are we to deal? There exist tactical issues like transportation and comprehensive information flow at every point of entry. We're afraid that there is a disconnect between tactical issues and execution.

The management of institutions is strong and our execution level is high for what we work with, but we do not have the resources to tap into opportunities.

### *Sandy Trop*

Outside of New York City, Syracuse has the strongest cultural quality of life in New York State. We're ecstatic about the influx of people but afraid no one will leave Destiny to come downtown. The exodus of corporate headquarters, the losses in the stock market and the events of 9/11 have all contributed to very tight finances for the Everson Museum. However, the upside may be the percentage of hotel tax that will become a dedicated funding stream dedicated to supporting the cultural organizations. The Everson currently has a \$40,000 exhibit budget; one Maxfield Parrish exhibit costs \$170,000. Our community could be the recipient of amazing artistic programming and we're lucky to have foundations to provide the programming we do. But the Maxfield Parrish is a prime example of not having enough money to meet audience demand. We would love to bring \$1 million exhibits to Syracuse, but we can't afford it.

Governments support us well, except the city which gives nothing. Everybody goes to the governments, but we need funding for great programming.

The new additions to the Museum could help Destiny reciprocally. No one knew about Bilboa, Spain, or went there, until the new Guggenheim Museum was built there. Not just funding is needed, but also information and free/easy transportation between Destiny and Downtown. We do have a concern, however: will the Performing Arts Center at Destiny be competition for the Landmark, Symphony, and Opera, or will it serve as a collaborative space?

### *Stephanie Miner*

We have a new vision for the city and we do not want to sacrifice our history: it is our best asset. We can give the corporate community a quality of life, not a Widewaters Parkway. The city is prepared for Destiny. Destiny will be a partner with the city, neighborhoods and institutions will be protected and the city will hold our neighbors, that is, Destiny, accountable.

There is a fallacy that the city doesn't give money to arts. The truth is that the city does not give money to major arts institutions; however, the city does support grass roots arts organizations and artists. The fiscal situation limits us, but the arts are a priority, yet below the schools. As far as the architectural heritage, the city is undertaking the construction of a comprehensive plan.



The city's and Destiny's timing will not match but the goal is to enhance quality of life, not sacrifice it for Destiny.

*Martha Mulroy*

A crucial benchmark in the health of a community is measured by its commitment to the arts. I don't believe in "private sector" funding, I want a dedicated funding stream. A study was undertaken 10 years ago that recommended, among other things, a surcharge on entertainment tickets and video rentals. Why didn't the surcharge idea take off? We should take another look at this study. Funding for the arts should not be a city vs. county issue or a partisan issue, or it won't work,

The county's budget totals \$8 million of which \$1 million goes to arts and culture, half of what it was 15 years ago. I would like to see a small commitment from the city with the county as a symbolic gesture.

Destiny is not a one-man show: it's a partnership and it will take the whole community to make it happen. The Tourism Council and Center is to serve as a conduit between Destiny and city. The vision is that Destiny brings people to the city, the city brings people to Destiny and to the entire region. Attracting economic development must include marketing Destiny and marketing arts, culture and quality of life.

*Mike Lorenz*

We are clearly suffering from an inferiority complex and we're fighting over crumbs. Do we have too many arts organizations? We can't support what we have.

We need confidence. We don't have confidence to bring people. Destiny is a destination project in a destination region. There will be a shift in marketing from those who live here, to those who visit for a few days.

The aquarium will be a for-profit operation and will not be reliant on government funding. It will be self-reliant and integrated into Destiny. No component of Destiny will require subsidies. We will need to link downtown to Destiny: it is in Destiny's self interest to link to downtown and the region because we want visitors to have a great experience so that they come back.

Free transportation, not just to downtown, but everywhere there is a positive experience of the Central New York region, may be part of the success of this project. Destiny will bring worldwide attention to this region and we forecast 15 million visitors a year. We must have confidence as a city, community and region that we have something to offer.

*Stephanie Miner*

If Destiny is built, there will be lots of disposable income to compete for. My advice to the arts organizations is to offer the people the best product you can. There may need to be a shift in the thinking of arts organizations from fund raising to product development in order to partner with Destiny. There is great potential for excellence not just survival.

*Question: Has any consideration been given to a monorail between Syracuse University and Destiny with stops downtown?*

*Mike Lorenz:* Yes, it's a fantasy idea. The company with the technology that's affordable and feasible can build an 8.5 mile route from the airport, to SU, to downtown and to the State Fairgrounds. It's a good idea, but we need resources.

*Question: There is county interest as much as city interest in preserving the arts and cultural heritage, but it cost the city more. How can city/county funding continue to be discussed separately? City taxpayers pay county taxes.*

*Stephanie Miner:* Thank you. County and city have begun partnering.

*Comment:* For the institutions, what would you do if you had the money? Destiny had an idea and went out to get the money. The lesson is that we're challenged to find things to draw the people, and then the search for resources will follow. We have to have imagination first.

*Question: For Mike regarding the Tourism Center and the projected revenue. The arts assumption is that funds will be available for general operating expenses, but is that true?*

*Mike Lorenz:* The legislation is all about promotion, not operating support. How should the Center look and operate? We need confidence that we can promote. The Tourism Legislation is a marketing fund to promote the region. The Tourism Center will be operated by a Council that is representative of upstate New York and whose purpose is to promote upstate New York.

*Question: There is excitement about each new vision for Destiny; however, not all of the visions are revenue producers. There are projections of \$30 million and increasing square footage.*

*Mike Lorenz:* We will generate revenues out of the park environment and performing amphitheater. Part of the revenue generating model includes public space: amenities to entice people to come and spend money.

*Martha Mulroy:* Denver funds their arts through a percentage of the sales tax. If we are to pursue the sales tax idea, then we need to get general community support. We have to dedicate it to the arts, not to a municipality.

*Question: Is Syracuse supportive of its artists? Should local government set-up an endowment for more reliable funding?*

*Martha Mulroy:* The county would be interested in an arts endowment idea. There are potentially many donors from county residents who reside in Fayetteville, Manlius, and other communities.

*Question: The Symphony has other venues, why not go to Destiny to expose visitors?*

*Trey Devey:* In Chicago, people go to the symphony. In Syracuse, the symphony goes to the people; we have a 20 county service area. We would be thrilled to do things at Destiny, and take the symphony where it needs to be in order to be in front of the most people possible.

*Sandy Trop:* The Everson is trying to get exhibit space at Destiny.

*Question: What is Carousel's current track record with community?*

*Mike Lorenz:* We gave \$300 million to Inner Harbor and Lakefront and we are active with the resources we have to sponsor events.

*Question: For example, the Post Standard sponsors a lecture series. What major cultural activities does the Carousel sponsor?*

*Mike Lorenz:* Can't speak to that.

## The State of the Arts in Central New York—Frank Malfitano

Frank Malfitano, founder and executive producer of Jazz Fest, was the first speaker of the 2002 Community Leadership Conference devoted to the State of the Arts: Past, Present and Future. What follows is a record of his remarks and the subsequent discussion.

*Frank Malfitano, Founder and Executive Producer of Jazz Fest*

I consider myself an agent of social/cultural/political change and function as an architect of change. Once at a family gathering, I was told: “You want to make Syracuse a big city, we want to keep it a small town.” In 1986, the celebration of the anniversary of the Civic Center featured an all-star cast, including Tony Bennett. And Tony Bennett said to me: “Nobody remembers the mayors and other political figures of great civilizations and empires—the art is what endures.” He also said that “America measures in decades, Europe measures in centuries.”

There is a fundamental need for the arts. Look at the problems our society faces: spousal/elderly abuse, youth violence, sexual abuse and predators. We need arts that are healthy and nurturing.

This country invented great musical forms that are celebrated and studied around the world, yet we are the most politically/culturally/socially ignorant country and people in the world. We don’t know anything about our own music. Why? Could it be Institutional Racism? A failing of the media, especially radio? Could it be because we provide no health care for indigent musicians? The reason for the SAMMY’s is that artists never get their due in their hometown; they don’t get paid in their own back yard. It’s an opportunity to reconnect with those artists who have left the community. Local artists keep music alive, yet they’re treated horribly and with disdain. I was also instrumental in reforming laws for Jazz Clubs that supported the musicians: no smoking, and no clanking by the waiters/waitresses during performances.

I hope for a Call to Action: that this study group becomes an action group. Your obligation to the community doesn’t end because you came to this conference. Forums and opportunities to speak are important. I love this community, but I’m frustrated by it. The reason there is no change is because we don’t want change. Why do we want to keep Syracuse a small town? The city is manageable, it is not beyond our control. Residents have control over their life and their environment. This attitude will kill us: it is parochial and provincial. We do business in the 1950’s, not in the new millennium. Arts institutions have been fighting the same battles for decades, they should be funded so that new directions and innovations can happen.

But, it’s an incestuous pool at the top and nobody wants to ruffle any feathers.

I learned through Civil Rights activism that you’ve got to be in the system to effect change. I chose arts activism to effect positive change. Artists have historically been silenced, imprisoned and/or killed because they’re a threat to the powers that be and the status quo.

We first must accept that there is a need for change before we can change. All we want to do is stress the positive and the good attributes of Syracuse. Until we work together, collectively, to solve problems, we will not progress. Major institutions are threatened by other organizations needing funding. We must progress or die. Quoting Heraclitus: “the only constant is change.”

The Jazz Fest, when it left Clinton Square to go to Onondaga Community College, received criticism. I pioneered the use of the square and revolutionized the square into a public site. The Jazz Fest drew sponsorship and audience, a synergy developed and the Jazz Fest needed to grow. It outgrew the Square. Now the square has been re-designed to be even smaller, to the point that it’s too small and acoustically inferior. So I moved the Jazz Fest.

There is a Russian named Akeva Talmi who exported Russian culture out of Moscow for twenty years during the Cold War. He had real courage, risking his life for arts and culture. The Russian Symphony and Ballet were brought to Syracuse to perform the Nutcracker, but the local reaction was that the performance was Anti-Syracuse, Anti-American and Anti-Syracuse Symphony.

The biggest problem we have is an identity crisis and an inferiority complex. We must define a product and decide how to put Syracuse on the map. We must decide collectively what the product is and we need a well-financed public relations campaign to send a message to the rest of the country. We must be progressive.

We’re always playing catch up, that’s why I leave. Change is not happening fast enough. Indianapolis had a decaying center and affluent suburbs. They de-corporatized the city, and created Uni-Gov. Now the county is responsible for the city and the city has been rebuilt from the center out.

Syracuse has a lot of potential but we’re our own worst enemy. We have to focus on the retention of resources, businesses, people: the best and the brightest. It’s a wonderful place, I love it, but I’m frustrated by it. We need to change, now more than ever.

*Question: How do we change our collective self-esteem?*

*Frank Malfitano:* It won’t happen overnight. We have to stop resting on our laurels. If people feel good about where they live, work and play, people treat each other better. People invite family, clients, and others to Syracuse during the Jazz Fest because they know something good is going on that weekend. Both coasts are

saturated, so the “New West” is exploding. Detroit is rebuilding their stadiums and theater districts. The Politicians work for us.

*Question: Please comment on Destiny.*

*Frank Malfitano:* It’s a great idea; it’s worth doing and funding. It’s a step in the right direction, but it’s not the end-all and be-all. We need a mix. It could be the anchor that magnetizes the community. If Destiny creates a new downtown that destroys the old downtown, so be it. That’s progress.

Section VI:  
**What's Next?**

*"We got it all wrong on how to finance the arts. They're never going to make it by begging politicians and foundations. The mayor's office is looking at how to raise money, day-in and day-out."*

**Vito Sciscioli, Syracuse Mayor's Office**

*Ten years after our report, it's time to rethink it. Is an entertainment tax still viable? Should we raise the sales tax from 7 percent and dedicate the extra funds to schools and the arts? Would 1 percent more deter visitors? How about a special taxing district, for example for DestinyUSA?*

**Eric Mower, Chair, 1992 Partnership for the Arts**

*We suffered through the 1990s, the arts struggled. A lot of people believe we are in the doldrums. Actually, we have recovered dramatically.... We're poised ...*

**Ed Kochian, Onondaga County Executive's Office**

*I don't see a vision for the arts community articulated in Syracuse ... I'm not sure we can afford all the arts organizations we have. We may need some pruning.*

**Patrick Mannion, Unity Mutual**

*The critical challenge for increasing all aspects of the supply of the arts (quantity, quality and access) is stimulating greater demand for the arts.*

**Arthur Brooks, co-author, "The Performing Arts in a New Era"**

SNAPSHOT: The Syracuse Children's Chorus

The internationally acclaimed Syracuse Children's Chorus teaches artistry and excellence through the study and performance of outstanding choral music. Founded in 1981, the Chorus includes approximately 200 children, ages 8-17, from throughout Central New York. The Syracuse Children's Chorus presents several major concerts annually, performs with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and has toured in Canada, England, Wales, Holland and China.

## Dreams for the Future

*The following vignettes are the product of the committee's collective imaginations. We have attempted to breathe life into the study by populating our recommendations with people, and providing a picture of what we believe the results of the implementation of this study may look like. This list is neither all-inclusive nor a guarantee. We merely share with our readers our optimistic visions for the future as inspiration.*

Imagine an artists' studio/residential/learning center in the old Jewish War Veterans Home on the corner of Westcott and Genesee Streets—the sprawling, venerable old landmark building restored to productive use, teeming with artists living and working and teaching under its roof, exhibiting their works in the nearby Westcott Street galleries as well as downtown and elsewhere, enlivening the neighborhood with their presence, their patronage, their skills and inspiration, and their vision.

Imagine the venerable Carnegie downtown library, now situated in the middle of a vibrant “cultural district,” transformed into a multicultural arts education facility—a middle school for the arts by day, and after-hours and on weekends the site of exhibitions and continuing art education classes, dance performances, demonstrations and concerts of everything from classical music to hip-hop, family cultural entertainment and hands-on workshops and seminars.

Imagine Syracuse Stage with a lobby area that is both interesting and welcoming, including professional prints of previous performances adorning the walls. The theater has new carpeting and the seats are more comfortable for audience members of all sizes and shapes. The new sound equipment improves the acoustics and enhances the theater performance for everyone.

Imagine a new wing on the Everson Museum of Art designed by world-renowned architect I.M. Pei, who would come out of retirement to contribute to his original design. The wing would be dedicated to local talent and non-traditional forms and would open with a high-profile exhibit, such as the HUGO Boss international awards for installation art. The promotion would reach beyond Central New York to attract visitors from all over New York State.

Imagine a Cultural District that was never empty: people on the sidewalks, enjoying coffee at one of the many cafés while taking a break from visiting the plethora of museums, galleries and artists' spaces. Later that night those same sidewalks would be teeming with concert goers and music lovers, completing their evening with dinner at one of the many restaurants in the District. Children would always be present; engaging their creativity and expressing their imaginations at the facility that would welcome them in and show their work to the world in the big windows.

Imagine a downtown where art was everywhere: as murals on brick walls or as displays in store front windows. Imagine a downtown where buildings that remained vacant for too long were turned over to artists for their use as lofts and exhibit spaces. Imagine a downtown where the artists were visible, recognizable and contributing the daily energy that makes a downtown vibrant.

Imagine the rebirth of the Festival of Nations, promoting an atmosphere of celebration and respect for all of the cultures that constitute our city and region. As one former attendee remarked: “It was at the festival that I first tasted rice pudding, ate hot dosai off the grill, heard *Amazing Grace* on the Scottish pipes and was thrilled by a young woman from Taiwan who played a stringed instrument so beautifully that tears came to my eyes.”

Imagine an African Dance program sold out one week and a symphony sold out the next and a traditional Indian music concert sold out the next: and in large venues that seat thousands, not merely hundreds.

Imagine a free public art space in the middle of town, a big white cube, where anyone with a paintbrush or a spray can, a camera or a pencil, can post their expression for a limited time where they can be seen.

Imagine that university and college art students discover that downtown Syracuse and the Cultural District are prime locations to display their work and find a community of artists that will nurture their development and their craft. Imagine that university and college art departments recruit local talent to fill their exhibit spaces.

Imagine visitors from all over Central New York coming to the Cultural District knowing that there is so much there they could stay all day. Imagine residents of the city coming to the Cultural District to find out what they're missing in the surrounding region and finding out how to get there.

Imagine that all of our arts and cultural organizations do not have to spend all of their time worrying about the utility bills, the paychecks for their performers or where they might find an affordable space to do what they do. Imagine instead that our arts and cultural organizations will have the freedom to take risks, expose their audiences to the different, the exciting and the innovative, and not only raise the bar for themselves but also for their audiences.

Imagine an Onondaga Historical Association with off-shoots in historic buildings in each of the city's neighborhoods with materials and exhibits focused on the past, present, and future of that neighborhood, staffed by volunteers and professionals and serving as a research place, study place and meeting place for that community.

Imagine coordinated programming by our cultural institutions and expanded hours permitting patrons to see a performance, art related to the period, and exhibits of history and technology related to that performance.

Imagine a cultural day pass that would allow individuals and families unlimited access to all of our cultural institutions for a day or a weekend.

*Many of these imaginings have already been imagined, and are within our reach if we but recognize the value that an active, vibrant and economically secure arts and cultural community can add to our quality of life, our attractiveness to business and families, our reputation in the field of communities competing for growth, and our valuation of ourselves as a community.*

## OCL Study List

*Onondaga Citizens League Studies: 1979–2002*

Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment

Young People in Trouble: Can Our Services be Organized and Delivered More Effectively?

The County Legislature: Its Function, Size, and Structure

Declining School Enrollments: Opportunities for Cooperative Adaptations

Onondaga County Public Works Infrastructure: Status, Funding, and Responsibilities

Police Services in Onondaga County: A Review and Recommendations

The City and County Charters: Time for Revision?

Blueprints for the Future: Recommendations for the Year 2000

The Role of the Food Industry in the Economy of Onondaga County

Poverty and its Social Costs: Are There Long-term Solutions?

Syracuse Area Workforce of the Future: How Do We Prepare

Schools that Work: Models in Education that can be used in Onondaga County

Town and Village Governments: Opportunities for Cost-effective Changes

The Criminal Justice System in Onondaga County: How Well is it Working?

The Delivery of Human Services: Opportunities for Improvement

Reinvesting in the Community: Opportunities for Economic Development

Building a Non-Violent Community: Successful Strategies for Youth

Security Check: Public Perceptions of Safety and Security

Onondaga County School Systems: Challenges, Goals, and Visions for the Future

Economic Development: Models for Success

Housing and Neighborhoods: Tools for Change

Civic Leadership for Community Transformation

The State of the Arts





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