



NH Potters Guild members on top of Giberson's glass studio in Warner. (Photo by Joe Scannell, courtesy of *Studio Potter* magazine.)



Captain and Mrs. Alan B. Shepard, Jr. of Derry. Shepard was the first American astronaut in space. (Photo courtesy of The Union Leader.)

Signs of the Times 1965~1970

1965 Frank Sinatra wins Grammy for best album, *September of My Years*... *The Sound of Music* wins Oscar for best picture... Riots in the Watts area of Los Angeles result in the death of 34 people... Malcolm X, black nationalist, fatally shot... Astronaut Alan Shepard, Jr. of Derry, the first American in space, turns down bid to run for U.S. Senate... 50,000 people crowd into Concord, NH for the city's bicentennial parade... UNH graduates the largest class in its history... **1966** U.S. forces, whose number in South Vietnam approaches 200,000, begin firing into Cambodia and bombing Hanoi... New Interstate 89 eases east-west travel in NH... Color television ownership reaches a new high ... *Bonanza* and *The Red Skelton Show* top the tv ratings chart... **1967** The St. Louis Cardinals defeat the Boston Red Sox to win the World Series... The Beatles outsell Bing Crosby... *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*... Thurgood Marshall sworn in as first black Supreme Court Justice... Riots in black neighborhoods of Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, leave thousands homeless, injured or killed... Protests against the Vietnam War mount.. Poet Anne Sexton wins Pulitzer for *Live or Die*... **1968** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, TN... Sen. Robert F. Kennedy is shot and killed in the midst of celebrating presidential primary victory... Rep. Shirley Chisholm is the first black woman to be

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to join with private patrons and with institutions and professional organizations concerned with the arts to insure that the role of the arts in the life of our citizens will continue to grow and will play an ever more significant part in the welfare and educational experience of our citizens. It is further declared that all activities undertaken by the state in carrying out this policy shall be directed toward encouraging and assisting rather than in any ways limiting the freedom of expression that is essential for the well being of the arts.

New Hampshire Senate Bill 97

Design Work



Supreme Court Justice William R. Johnson in 1986. (Photo by Bill Finney)

William R. Johnson, born and raised in Minnesota, first came to New Hampshire in the '50s as a Dartmouth College student. At Dartmouth, he developed a taste for both politics and the arts. After becoming a lawyer, his interest in politics led him to settle in New Hampshire where he was elected to the New Hampshire General Court first as a Representative, then as the Senator for District 5. His interest in the arts led him to author Senate Bill 97 in April of 1965. As the State Chairman for Governor Nelson Rockefeller's bid for the presidency, Johnson learned about the Governor's formation of New York's state arts agency. He modeled SB-97 on New York's legislation. As Majority Leader, Senator Johnson found it easy to guide his bill through the legislative process.

Only one amendment was added to the original bill. Senator

Creely “Bucky” Buchanan spoke in favor of the bill, as amended, on the Senate floor: “Mr. President....this bill will establish a Commission on the Fine Arts in the State of New Hampshire Originally, there had been an appropriation, but the amendment withdraws that and there is no cost to the state. We feel that this is a furtherance of the culture of this fine State which takes second place to no state in recognition of the fine arts....” The bill, minus its modest \$2,000 appropriation, crossed over to the House where the only comments recorded were: “ought to pass.”

On June 28, 1965, Governor John King signed SB-97 into law, RSA19-A, establishing the New Hampshire State Commission on the Arts. Three months later, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed Public Law 89-209, the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, which created the umbrella for the twin endowments of the arts and the humanities. Soon after, Congress appropriated 2.5 million dollars to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Roger Stevens became the NEA's first Chairman. With fewer than a dozen employees, the new agency sketched out plans to “foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in the United States.” A strong federal-state partnership being integral to those plans, the NEA prepared to distribute start-up money and matching bloc grants to engage all 50 states in the process. New Hampshire's government was ready.

Between October and February, Governor King appointed the first Arts Commissioners: John Meck, Dartmouth College Treasurer, as Chairman; Jere Chase, UNH Vice President; Robert Alvin, a drama professor at Antrim's Nathaniel Hawthorne College; Former First Lady Mrs. Sherman (Rachel) Adams; A. James Bravar, Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences Director; Warner Bentley, Former Professor at Dartmouth College's Hopkins Center; George West, Concord's Tax Collector; George Kendall, Former Director of the MacDowell Colony; and William Hutton, The Currier Gallery of Art's Director.

This prestigious group was taking on an ambitious mission:

“The duties of the commission shall be: to stimulate and encourage throughout the state the study and presentation of the performing and fine arts and public interest and participation therein... and to take such steps as may be necessary and appropriate to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of our state and to expand the state's cultural resources...”

The new Commissioners identified their first tasks as raising money to match anticipated grants from the NEA, surveying arts organizations to determine priorities, and building support for a state appropriation in the next biennial budget. To raise money, they went to private foundations. Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust was the first to contribute.



The Cursing of Abraham Ribicoff, stoneware, 1969, by Gerry Williams.

elected to Congress..... 1969 Neil Armstrong is first human to set foot on the moon... Woodstock... U.S. forces in Vietnam peak at 543,300... 250,000 war protesters march on Washington D.C.... U.S press reports Mylai massacre... Howard Sackler wins Pulitzer for play, *The Great White Hope*... 1970 A federal jury finds the “Chicago 7” innocent of conspiring to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago... Millions participate in the first “Earth Day” to demonstrate against environmental pollution... Alexander Solzhenitzyn wins Nobel Prize for Literature... 4 student war protesters killed at Kent State by National Guardsmen... *Patton* wins Oscar for best picture... The Beatles go their separate ways... Simon and Garfunkel win Grammy for best album, *Bridge over Troubled Waters*....



Jerry Rubin, one of the “Chicago 7,” speaks out at UNH, Durham, in 1970. (Photo courtesy of the *Union Leader*.)

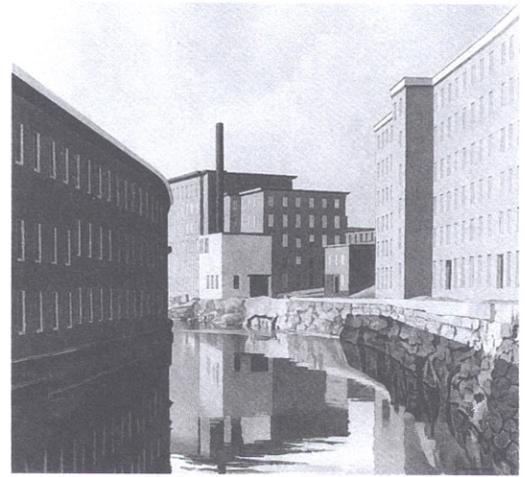
With private funds and volunteer time and services, they set up an office at 922 Elm St. in Manchester and hired the agency's first paid administrator, Sylvia Chaplain, giving her the title of Executive Secretary. James Bravar recalls that the Commission hired her for the part-time position, in part, because of her activism in the Democratic party. Governor King had appointed her to the Commission for Human Rights in 1965. She proved to be an able advocate for women's issues and the arts. From the perspective of the '90s, she wryly recalls that the other New England arts agencies who hired men in the '60s gave them the title of Executive Director.

Chaplain worked for NHCA for a year and a half. During that time, she recalls organizing advisory committees, overseeing statewide surveys, and preparing grant applications to the National Endowment for the Arts. The first NEA grant, a \$25,000 study grant, came in the spring of 1966. Each of the 50 states received the same amount. Although this first grant required no match, the second one, \$12,050 for re-granting to arts providers, did. Again, the Arts Commissioners turned to private foundations and individuals to make the match. Arts Commissioner Jere Chase recalls attending a Rotary Club meeting where Saul Sidore wrote out a check for the arts, put it in a hat, and passed it around for others to follow suit. When the hat came back, it was full of checks.

After raising the required match and receiving the re-grant money from the NEA, the nine Commissioners determined where the first grants would go. James Bravar recalls that they were very careful to choose projects that would be politically as well as artistically sound. Grants went to: The Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences, Peterborough Players, Nathaniel Hawthorne College Theater Department, Hood Museum, Nashua Center for the Arts and Sciences, NH Technical Institutes, Lincoln Opera House, and for scholarships to high school students to train at four summer theaters.

Throughout late 1966 and early 1967, the Arts Commissioners and Chaplain sought ways to build support for a state appropriation for the 67-68 fiscal biennium. Meetings were held. Mailings were sent. Frank Gardner, a member of the first theater advisory committee, recalls Chaplain asking him: "What kind of information do we need to convince the Legislature?" I said telling them about all the people who sculpt and paint is a waste of time. They see no relationship. The only relationship you are going to sell to the legislature is economic. How much money is involved. How much money is made with arts events."

Gardner set out to survey performing arts organizations to collect some specific data. After visiting every theater in the state, he gave the numbers to Chaplain who made up an economic impact chart. This type of information formed the basis for persuading the legislature to appropriate some money for agency administration. Gardner recalls:



The Currier Gallery of Art, represented by this 1948 painting of *Amoskeog Canal* by Charles Sheeler, received one of the first nine grants awarded by the new Arts Commission. (Photo courtesy of The Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH. Currier Funds, 1948.4)



Sylvia Chaplain was the first employee to be hired by the NH State Commission on the Arts.



Rachel Adams, flanked by Director-Producers Ted Davis and Bob McCarthy, discuss plans for the summer season in front of the Lincoln Opera House. (Courtesy of *The Courier*, Littleton, NH, 1969)

“The only way (the appropriation) got through was by emphasizing the economic impact the arts have on the state of New Hampshire...Just to talk about how wonderful it would be to go to an art gallery or a theater, forget it. As far as most of the legislature was concerned at that time, they just looked on this business of summer theaters as a tolerance of the summer complaint, which is what tourists are generally known as.... (Another thing) the state eventually came around to recognize is that if a business wants to locate in a place, they don't want to come to a place that is a social desert. They want a place where people can find entertainment and education that includes the arts. They don't want to feel like they've been chopped off the face of the earth.”

In May of 1967, Frank Gardner joined Commissioners James Bravar (the new Chairman), Robert Alvin and Rachel Adams to testify for the agency before the House Appropriations Committee. While stressing the statewide economic impact of the arts, they also explained the benefits of public arts funding to small communities in a rural state like New Hampshire. Adams took this approach:

“Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, this is a new experience for me, but I was glad to come down here on this dismal night out of the north woods and express my feelings in regards to what I hold very close as something that could be beneficial to our state. If you would bear with me, I should like to read just a little bit from an article by Howard Taubman, of the *New York Times*:

“‘Call it a cultural explosion, a cultural boom, or by a less flamboyant term a cultural expansion....In years gone by a few metropolitan centers were the focus of most of the nation's cultural activity. This was the year that gave impetus and courage to any number of communities... to venture forth, bravely or hesitantly, on their own. It was the year when Government — Federal, state, county, and municipal — began to assume at least partial responsibility for the extent and quality of cultural opportunities for their people. It was the year of mushrooming arts councils, of widespread new efforts to involve the young in an awareness of the arts through the schools, of a grandiose move to prove... that the finest things in music, drama, dance, and the visual arts were not only for the elite but could be the pleasure, consolation, and exaltation of Americans everywhere...’”

She continued by bringing Taubman's comments into local focus:

“Lincoln, as perhaps many of you know, is a small mill town with about 1,300 inhabitants. It took a little courage to start a theater in such a locality, but it is also the center of a very busy tourist part of the state... I am convinced that the Commission on the Arts could be of tremendous help in assisting areas of the state like ours... When we started our theater there were very few people who had ever seen a live theater show... Within the first two years we noticed a distinct difference in the village. A drama club was formed in the high school, and youngsters came to our plays, ... and some of the Lincoln youngsters who will bear watching around town for the most part came to our shows and have



The Newport Opera House is one of a handful of flourishing turn-of-the-century opera houses that fell into disuse then were revived in the 1960s and 1970s.

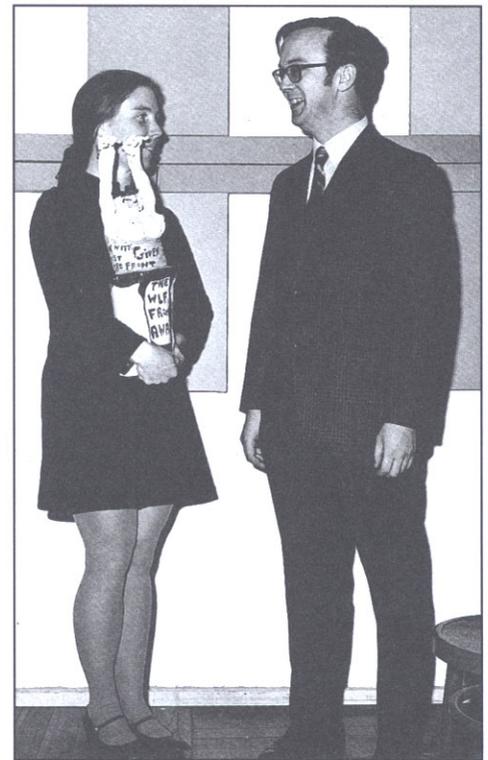
learned not to whistle through their fingers or not to hoot. They even enjoy the plays, and every year it becomes more of a blessing to the town and the area. It is my hope and that of so many other residents of the state that you will consider favorably (our budget request)...I am sure you want our state to present to the rest of the country and to the world the best image....”

Representative York then asked her: “You wouldn't be suggesting that other towns that have many young people open these theaters to help them become better citizens? Mrs. Adams responded: “Yes, I do... there is a real need for this type of entertainment, especially for our young people, because they are our future audiences, future adults....”

On July 1, 1967, the Arts Commission began the fiscal biennium with its first state appropriation, \$7,500 per year (one penny per citizen). The Commissioners quickly moved to hire their first full-time director, Marlow G. Burt. His staff consisted of one secretary, but he had help from four advisory committees (Music, Theater and Dance, Visual Arts, and Education) and, of course, the Arts Commissioners. Burt chronicled the agency's first year of operating with a combination of federal, private, and state funds in NHCA's fiscal 1968 annual report.

The report highlights the agency's early efforts: helping establish community arts councils, supporting exhibitions and performances, bringing touring artists to schools, consultation and technical assistance to arts organizations, and assisting in the restoration and preservation of historic properties. Among others, funding and technical assistance went to: Spaulding Youth Center to assess the value of the arts as therapy for emotionally disturbed children; NH Art Association to mount an exhibition on the State House lawn; WENH-TV (the state's public television station) to produce an art series; Laconia Vocational Institute to commission a collaborative artwork from Gerry Williams and Arnold Szainer; and local groups dedicated to saving historic properties in Portsmouth and Manchester.

Shortly after the report came out, Burt moved on to a new position in Minnesota, and the Commission hired John V. McKenna as the next director. In 1969, McKenna published the agency's first statewide newsletter, *New Hampshire Art News*. The May-June issue featured programs that received funds through Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Project ARISE brought 50 artists to North Country schools and paid for field trips to New Hampshire and Boston museums. The Center for Arts Exposure, partnering with the Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences, focused on infusing the arts throughout the curriculum in Manchester schools. Project TRY (Theater Resources for Youth), based at the University of New Hampshire, combined a touring program of live theater productions, dubbed the Little Red Wagon, and teacher training. Although Title III funds were phased out in 1969, these early efforts, linking professional artists with schools, built the foundation for future Commission-sponsored arts in



Mini-skirted Jane Kaufman, potter, and scientist/artist Bob Jenkins at a Portsmouth art gallery event. The city of Portsmouth blossomed economically and artistically after Theater-by-the-Sea, Strawberry Banke, and other cultural endeavors took hold in the second half of the 1960s and early '70s. (Photo by Jack Parfitt, courtesy of the NH Art Association.)



NH Art Association Director Grace Casey receives a grant check from Arts Commission Chairman Jere Chase. The award enabled the Art Association to tour exhibitions to rural areas. (Courtesy of the NH Art Association.)

education programs. And one program, Project TRY, is still going strong as an independent arts organization.

In announcing the 18 grants awarded in fiscal 1969, McKenna noted: "Although in most cases grants of the matching fund type have been necessary in order to stretch the funds available to the Commission, this type of grant has proved to be a highly effective method of stimulating and increasing local interest and participation." The value of a public-private partnership in supporting the arts was becoming clear.

On October 6, 1969, recently elected President Richard M. Nixon swore in a new Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Nancy Hanks. He said:

"It is part of the essential idea of our country that the lives of the people should be advanced in freedom and in comprehension of the tough and soaring qualities of the spirit. This is not possible without the arts. They are not a luxury. They are a necessity."

Nancy Hanks built on that sentiment and presided over tremendous growth for the NEA during the next decade.

In New Hampshire, the Arts Commission moved into the '70s quite literally with a new address, new Executive Director, and a new Chairman. James Bravar stepped down from his Chairmanship to become Director of the agency after McKenna left. Governor Walter Peterson then appointed Jere Chase as Chairman. The Arts Commission moved to 3 Capitol Street, a two-room office space in a building overlooking the State House lawn.

As the new Director, Bravar witnessed the early optimism of Theatre-by-the-Sea in Portsmouth; saw Monadnock Music, under James Bolle's leadership, take root in the Peterborough area; and worked with the 30-year-old NH Art Association, directed by Grace Casey, to place artwork in the offices of the Governor and legislators and to tour visual arts to rural areas of the state. He also approved a large matching grant to help launch the White Mountains Art and Music Festival in Jefferson. Sculptor Robert Hughes and other North Country artists and patrons organized the event which brought together NH artists and out-of-state sculptors, dancers, and musicians for demonstrations and performances at the Waumbek Hotel, owned by former Governor Hugh Gregg. The Festival continued for seven more years, growing into the major arts event of the summer.

Bravar's leadership went beyond New Hampshire, too. He contributed to bringing the six New England states closer together as a regional arts force. In the fall of 1970, New Hampshire hosted the directors and chairmen of New England's state arts agencies at the new conference center in Durham. As the conference coordinator, Bravar hoped both the volunteer commissioners and the state-paid directors would gain a clearer idea of how government and the arts could best work together.



This certificate illustrates the partnerships that the young Arts Commission relied on to carry out their enabling legislation. The four logos represent the Arts Commission, Lincoln Arts Council, NH Department of Education, and NH Arts Association.

Keynote speaker Vicky Levine, a New York Arts Council Member, suggested a working premise to connect the arts and politics:

“We have to find our place in the structure of government.... A politician is a very artistic kind of person... He works on instinct, largely as artists do. A council member is a kind of politician — a person who must work in the political field and, at the same time, work as an intermediary between the artistic world and the world of politicians.”

Closing speaker NEA Deputy Chairman Michael Straight explored the topic further:

“Whether government can be the primary source of patronage is a basic question which at some time and in some way we all face. In Europe, the state has taken the primary role of patron which was held in the past by the Court, the aristocracy, the Church. In this country, it seems inconceivable that the federal government, acting alone, will be the major patron of the arts. We do not want in this country, and cannot have the kind of centralized authority that this implies... Diversity is the heart and soul of this country and its source of cultural vitality.

“The problem of expanding our program is the problem of persuading our legislators and the people they represent, that the arts are an indispensable part of their lives... If our legislators resist additional appropriations for the arts, they are not being callous, or short sighted, or philistine. They are under great pressure ...from every group that is experienced in the ways of competing for public funds in a democracy.... and pressures ultimately reflect the way the people feel.

“We believe that the great majority of the American people are capable of being enriched by fine art.... (W)e believe the Arts themselves will be enriched by the effort to reach the great majority of the people. And... we believe that this enlargement in the role of the Arts, this revitalization of our society through the Arts, can be brought about by public support for the Arts, given at the local, state, and federal levels.”

As NHCA entered 1971, James Bravar worried about New Hampshire's contribution to that federal-state-local formula for success:

“Despite the lack of state funds that has seriously hampered our development, the Commission is endeavoring to live up to its mandate of enriching the quality of life in New Hampshire....(I)t gives me great pleasure to report that over a six-year period of the (Commission's) development, arts interest in the communities of New Hampshire has substantially increased each year.”



Sculptor Jim Locke (on right) with two students share a playful moment during the White Mountains Art and Music Festival, founded in 1970. Held on the grounds of the Waumbek Hotel, the event (funded in part with a grant from the Arts Commission) included art demonstrations and classes, concerts, and other arts activities. (Photo by Joan Vide.)