

Federal Design Matters

Issue no. 12
November 1977



Nancy Hanks: Some parting words about good design

On September 30, Nancy Hanks stepped down as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts after serving two four-year terms. During her tenure, the Arts Endowment initiated the Federal Design Improvement Program to raise design quality throughout the Federal government.

In counseling Presidents—three in eight years—or in trying to keep Federal offices free of plastic plants, Nancy Hanks was a consummate promoter of the arts and good design in the Federal government and in the nation.

In the eyes of the entire art world, she was eminently successful in the first role; in the latter she confesses total failure.

Reminiscing during an interview on her last day on the job, Miss Hanks recalled a vain attempt to thwart building maintenance men who had adorned an Endowment conference room with pots of plastic plants. She removed the plants and, in a ploy designed to remove suspicion from herself, hid them in the men's room. The maintenance staff, knowing her aversion to plastic plants, quickly found the culprit.

She related this episode from the past while reflecting on the future of design quality in the Federal government. The future, she suggested, with no thought of disparaging the work of talented designers, may be in the hands of janitors. Then she made it clear she was speaking in the broadest terms about the need for maintenance.

(Continued on page 5.)

An exchange of information and ideas related to federal design



GPO shifting most of workload to electronic photo process

Within five years, 80 percent of the documents printed by the 117-year-old Government Printing Office will be set into type by GPO's highly automated electronic photocomposition systems.

In slightly more than a decade GPO has installed what it believes to be one of the most advanced electronic typesetting systems in the world. The agency is in the process of shifting most of its massive flow of work for Congress and executive agencies to that system. It is already geared up to start photocomposition on the daily *Federal Register*, the large collection of Presidential proclamations, executive orders and regulations published five times weekly. The photocomposition process will also be used for the *Code of Federal Regulations*, 139 volumes of approximately 300 pages each, which contains the regulations in codified form.

Meanwhile, Elmo L. Wood, superintendent of the electronic photocomposition division, directs a staff that is fine-tuning the system by turning out Congressional bills, reports, hearings, and other documents. Last year the system processed more than a million pages.

Implications for Federal designers are great. The equipment dramatically shortens typesetting time and can store data for later retrieval. Furthermore, it suggests the future possibility for handling many procedures remotely through terminals in agencies. Already, some agencies have equipment for creating magnetic tapes that can be used to

(Continued on page 2.)

National Endowment for the Arts



George James, NYT Photo

Biddle named chairman of Arts Endowment

On October 31, President Carter nominated Livingston L. Biddle, Jr., as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on November 4.

Mr. Biddle becomes the third chairman of the Arts Endowment. His predecessors were Roger Stevens and Nancy Hanks.

A veteran staff member of the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts & the Humanities, chaired by Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell, Biddle was instrumental in drafting the 1965 legislation to establish the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities of which the Arts Endowment is a part.

Having served as both Deputy Chairman and director of Congressional Liaison for the Arts Endowment, he has long been familiar with its programs.

From 1967 to 1970, Mr. Biddle was chairman of the division of the arts at Fordham University. He established the arts curriculum at a new liberal arts college at New York's Lincoln Center where he also taught creative writing.

A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Biddle is the author of several best-selling novels; one, *The Village Beyond*, which had a World War II theme, sold 300,000 copies and received the Athenaeum Best Novel Award.

As chairman of the Pennsylvania Ballet for two years, he was credited with having cleared up deficits of a half million dollars that company had accumulated.



Each of GPO's computers is capable of handling output from up to 20 video terminals such as these. The terminals—75 in all—are connected by cable with the computers in a separate room.



The computers transmit signals to a photocomposer, a machine that produces a negative image of a page of type, such as the one being proofed here, or a positive image.



The keyboard of this video terminal is wired to computers that can convert this operator's composition into type or store it for later retrieval.

activate the computerized typesetting equipment or for storing data on its memory disks for retrieval later.

Each of GPO's nine computers, called text processors, can simultaneously handle the flow of data from up to 20 video-display terminals. The terminals are located in a separate room and connected to the text processors by cable. The text, composed by operators on typewriter-style keyboards, appears on a video screen. The operator can make additions and deletions of characters, words, sentences, paragraphs, or passages of any length and can transpose words or lines by manipulating keys.

Fortunately, however, there are ways of activating the system with less expensive equipment. This can be done, in fact, with an electric typewriter equipped with what is called an OCR-A typing element. GPO's Optical Character Readers scan manuscripts typed with such elements and convert the characters to digital form for storage and subsequent photocomposition. Stenotypists, for example, now transcribe the proceedings of Congressional committee hearings using typewriters with OCR-A elements and send the pages directly to GPO for scanning and typesetting. This process eliminates what Mr. Wood calls "double keyboarding," thus cut-



Computers such as these (enclosed in cabinets on the righthand wall) are the nerve centers of the GPO photocomposition system. The computer on the rear wall can perform page make-up.

ting costs substantially. The new equipment, he estimates, is "saving" 60 to 80 percent of the original keystrokes.

Still not fully operational, GPO's interactive page makeup system will prove to be particularly valuable to designers. A page-make-up operator can call up a galley on one of this machine's two video screens and display it on a layout on the other.

DOT first agency to adopt total design and arts policy

The Department of Transportation will consistently encourage good design, art, and architecture, DOT Secretary Brock Adams announced in the preface to the report of a Task Force on Design, Art and Architecture in Transportation.

Adams proclaimed a major goal of the Department to be "development of a unified transportation policy that coordinates improvements in transportation systems with increments in the quality of life."

"The environmental design arts shall be combined with other technical skills in an interdisciplinary approach to planning, constructing, and operating transportation systems," Adams declared, adding that the Department would provide appropriate works of art for departmental facilities and encourage the use of art by its grant recipients.

Adams endorsed the recommendations of the task force, including proposals that DOT:

- require that consideration of design quality be reflected in environmental impact statements where relevant
- establish a comprehensive graphics improvement program and endorse a uniform set of symbols and signs
- conduct research, development, and demonstration projects to improve knowledge of design in transportation
- establish an awards program in conjunction with an annual conference on transportation design.

Joan Mondale, wife of the Vice President, called DOT's design task force "a prototype that other Federal agencies will be encouraged to adapt to their own needs."

The Task Force was composed of representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the Urban Mass Transit Administration. It was chaired by Marty Convisser, acting Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety, and Consumer Affairs, and White House fellow Charles Ansbacher. Arts Endowment representatives participated in the working group sessions, and Liz Reid from the Endowment's Federal Architecture Project acted as the design adviser and coordinator of the Task Force report.

Copies of the report are available from Robert Thurber, Office of Environmental Affairs, DOT, Washington, D.C. 20590, but the supply is limited.

I HAVE VISITED THE NATIONAL



CROWNED CRANE

CRANE

FLAMINGO

EAGLE

KIWI



PARROT

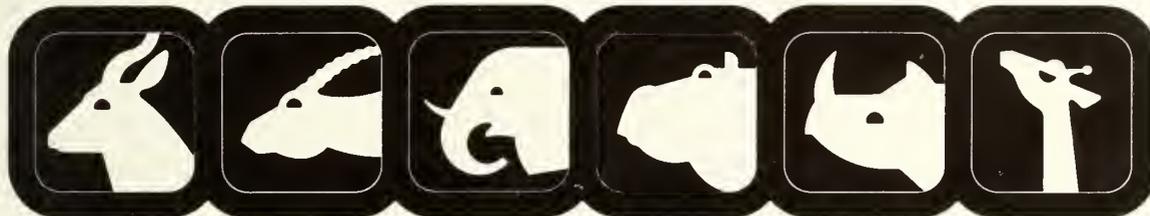
DEER

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GNU



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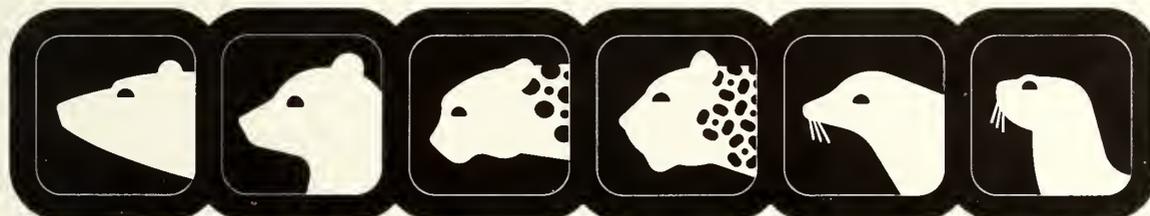
GAZELLE

ELEPHANT

HIPPOPOTAMUS

RHINOCEROS

GIRAFFE



POLAR BEAR

BEAR

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SEA LION

SEA OTTER



WOLF

LION

TIGER

LYNX

GORILLA

MONKEY



SNAKE

CROCODILE

DUCK

WOOD DUCK

GOOSE

SWAN

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Nobody liked the tax forms for 1976—not even IRS

Few taxpayers who find Forms 1040 and 1040 A in their mail January 2 will be aware of the painstaking process used by a publications team of Internal Revenue Service officials to bring about the first major redesign of the forms since 1968.

The process began in March when members of the team started a series of meetings to review tax forms used by more than half a dozen national governments and some provincial governments. The group consisted of Hugh Kent, Chief of the Publishing Services Branch; Forms Manager Leonard Caracciolo, and Donald C. Lynn, IRS's Design Manager.

A critique of the 1976 Form 1040 by Ron Sterkel, professor of graphic design at the University of Illinois, provided valuable guidance. The group also took into consideration the views of taxpayers, accountants, and others who assist taxpayers as expressed in public hearings held in representative cities around the country.

The mission of the publications team was limited to design. Meanwhile, another IRS group, the Tax Forms Committee, was drafting language for the forms and making sure they contained all Congressionally mandated information.

The chief determinant of the design of the 1977 form, however, was a decision by Commissioner of Internal Revenue Jerome Kurtz calling for linear organization. The forms designers responded to this directive by providing a form in which taxpayers will begin at Line 1 on Page 1 and work their way to Line 66 on Page 2, just above the space for their signature.

Except for the linear order, differences between Form 1040 for 1977 and its 1976 coun-

terpart are primarily those of detail. In the design of the new form, care was taken to avoid color and shading combinations that would have increased reading difficulty for color-blind taxpayers. The 1977 forms will appear in black ink (instead of blue) on a blue (brighter than last year's) background with dropouts that will provide white space for taxpayer information. Red, used until last year to highlight certain instructions, has been eliminated entirely.

The more simplified Form 1040 A, which displays all of its data on a single side of one sheet, has instructions printed in black on a screened-red background. The 1040 A for 1976, printed in green ink, had data on both sides of a half sheet of paper.

As its early-October deadline for printing approached—the publication team's equivalent of April 15—the process accelerated. Proofs shuttled rapidly back and forth between the IRS's offices in Federal Triangle and the Government Printing Office. Often a proof would be delivered to IRS early in the day, revised and returned to GPO at the close of business. GPO would make revisions overnight and deliver a new proof to IRS. In this last-minute "pressure cooker," some specifications were garbled. A line might be centered that had been designed as flush left, for example. This was a minute detail, perhaps, but the cumulative effect of several such details was to erode some of the provisions incorporated into the design in response to Professor Sterkel's proposals.

Although not the esthetic triumph that the French government sends its taxpayers, the new forms are the result of an orderly process in which, presumably, representatives of the whole universe of users had an opportunity to exert their influence. And despite the exhaustive system of sign-offs involved in the process, the IRS made its printing deadline.

Designers have key role in metric conversion

"Metrication will lead to an information explosion," declares an Australian government official whose country has made the change in recent years from conventional measurement to the metric system.

Hans J. Milton, who, as Australia's Assistant Secretary for Housing Research, was heavily involved in that change, made this prediction in a paper urging graphic designers in this country to prepare for the major role they must play in helping Americans understand and accept the metric system.

Milton noted that only the United States and four small Third World countries have not yet made the conversion to the metric system, now an almost universal standard. Since Congress passed the U.S. Metric Act of 1975, however, major changes in the way we determine and express dimensions and capacities are inevitable. In a paper he wrote while on loan from his government to the National Bureau of Standards, Milton said:

"Early awareness of lead times is required to schedule graphics, typesetting, proofing, and printing during the metric change because demands for each of these services is likely to escalate."

With the approach of actual usage in the United States, Milton predicts, there will be increasing demand for three principal types of metric information:

1. *General advisory or instructive material.* This will include basic literature to explain the correct use of the international system of units—the formal term to describe the system that was adopted by a 1960 treaty signed by most major nations.

2. *Detailed metric technical material.* Reference material in metric units for use during the transitional period and after the economy becomes fully metric will include handbooks, codes, standards, specifications, product literature, and price lists. Although in many instances the structure and layout of existing publications may be retained, diagrams, charts, tables, and other graphic material may need to be revised and redesigned.

3. *Visual information and aids.* Metric posters, charts, maps, special aids, and metric identification symbols can facilitate the change to the metric system.

The experiences of designers in Great Britain and Australia contain some pitfalls American designers should try to avoid, Milton says. One common failing is to try to provide too much information so that the visual impact and education value is negated. As an excellent example of a "single impact" poster, he cites a design for the British Construction Industry Training Board showing the bottom of a foot. The caption reads: "This is not a foot it's 300 mm." By contrast, an Australian poster describing metric measurement for the real estate industry suffered from what Milton called "visual indigestion" by displaying enough

This is a scan of the 1976 Form 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return. The form is densely packed with text and boxes, organized into sections for various types of income and deductions. It includes fields for personal exemptions, adjusted gross income, and tax liability. The layout is somewhat cluttered, with many small boxes and lines of text.

This is a scan of the 1977 Form 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, labeled as a 'PROOF' dated 1/1/77. The form is more organized and spacious than the 1976 version. It features a clear linear layout with distinct sections for different types of income and deductions. The text is larger and more legible, and the overall design is cleaner and more modern.

Metric—continued

material for four posters.

Most of the countries that have preceded the United States in the change have established a national metric symbol. Canada, which combines a stylized "M" with the outline of its traditional maple leaf, has issued a manual with explicit instructions for using this symbol. An "M" appears in the center of a map of Australia in that country's symbol. Britain uses a key with an "M" in the blade of the key.

Milton suggested that an annual metric poster competition be held to assist in educational activities during the transitional period. These would be judged for content, visual impact, and accuracy.

He suggested that as one of its first actions, the National Metric Board, which Congress established to coordinate the conversion, initiate a national graphic design competition for development of a U.S. metric symbol. Countries that have preceded the United States in metrication, he said, have found such symbols highly useful for quick identification of metric items and for providing a national theme for the creation of metric awareness.

Nancy Hanks—continued

"I don't care how good the design is, be it graphic, be it interiors, be it a building. If you don't have the commitment to maintain it you might as well not have designed it in the first place."

But no menials need apply for the maintenance positions she envisions for, she added, "it takes a creative mind mixed with a mind that pays attention to detail and also has a very human soul because you have to care about people. So you just can't go in and tell them to do this or do that. You walk around these government buildings and corridors and, you know, they don't have anybody there in charge of caring."

With her hearty approval, the Endowment's first seminar for interior designers, to be held in January, will be open to building managers, space managers, and building maintenance men.

While unable to stamp out plastic plants, Miss Hanks was able to eliminate a practice that graphics designers considered grossly unfair—the requirement that they be selected on the basis of regular government personnel forms, a procedure that provided them no opportunity to demonstrate the skills for which they were being hired. The Chairman of the Endowment persuaded the Civil Service Commission to authorize agencies to select designers on the basis of portfolios of their work and appointed panels to help review the portfolios.

Despite the entrance requirements, the Federal government had attracted many of the country's outstanding graphics designers, Nancy Hanks discovered. But she sensed another serious problem.

"There seemed to be antagonism between designers working in government and the

Government Printing Office. The designers seemed to think they were always going to have to fight their way to excellence. On the other hand, GPO felt that the designers were not seeking the best ways to achieve good work."

The Endowment's solution: bring designers and representatives of GPO together in workshops, seminars, and mini-assemblies—sessions designed to meet the particular needs of groups and individuals.

The Endowment's concern for design extends beyond the Federal level. "To the best of my knowledge," the retiring chairman said, "we are the only national arts agency in the world that has architecture and environmental arts included in its mandate. Congress, in effect, asked us to look at the spaces of our cities. Our latest program is Livable Cities. That phrase, although not new with us, sums up in shorthand what the Arts Endowment's total purpose is, because certainly without the arts a community or city, large or small, would be inhuman." Livable Cities, carried out by the Endowment's Architecture + Environmental Arts Program, is the culmination of earlier programs in which cities were given grants to develop imaginative methods for improving certain aspects of their communities. In a program called City Scale, for example, cities were challenged to devise imaginative schemes for park benches and lighting systems.

Miss Hanks leaves the Endowment concerned about "the almost total lack of recognition of the importance of the individual architect, designer, painter, dancer, sculptor, or musician. We put every roadblock we can in the way of someone who is aiming to be creative. But that is changing. I think five years from now you'll see a great change in that."

Finally, there was the inevitable question: "Have you accomplished your goals?"

"Well," she replied, "we have an ever-moving set of goals. . . . All of our victories have been small steps. For some reason there has been enough interest in the press and the country to herald what indeed are small steps in my judgment and refer to them as victories."

It was clear from tributes expressed in the wake of her departure that much of the rest of the nation measured those steps by a far more generous standard.

Design briefs

Boyle named public printer . . . President Carter has nominated John J. Boyle, a 25-year veteran of the Government Printing Office, to be Public Printer. He succeeds Thomas F. McCormick, whose resignation became effective November 1. Boyle came to GPO as a proofreader in April 1952, after serving an apprenticeship and working in the printing industry in his native Pennsylvania. He established GPO's Electronic Photocomposition Division and was responsible for the smooth introduction of this new technology to the Government

Printing Office. He had been deputy to McCormick since June 1973. In accepting McCormick's resignation, submitted in June, President Carter praised the departing Public Printer's dedication, energy, and purpose. McCormick became the 16th Public Printer in 1973 after almost 20 years with General Electric Corporation.

Simply by design

Simply by design. The Federal Government can create buildings and interiors that both visitors and employees can enjoy.

Simply by design. Federal managers can use their resources more efficiently and wisely.

Simply by design. The Government can strengthen communication with the public and produce printed materials that are readable, informative, and cost effective.

Simply by design. The Federal Design Improvement Program, a project of the National Endowment for the Arts, has been helping Federal agencies find solutions for the effective design of buildings, interiors, graphics, and visual communications.

For further information call the Federal Design Improvement Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 202-634-4286.

New poster . . . "Simply by design, the Government can strengthen communication with the public and produce printed materials that are readable, informative, and cost effective." This is one of the messages conveyed by a poster recently issued by the Arts Endowment. It was designed by Nicholas Chaparos, Coordinator of Federal Design Information and Education for the Arts Endowment. Copies (24" x 36") are available by calling (202) 797-7770 or 634-4286.

Graphics & Interiors studio seminars . . . The schedule for Studio Seminars to be presented during 1977-78 by the Arts Endowment's Federal Design Improvement Program is as follows:

Fourth Graphic Design Studio Seminar, Parsons School of Design, New York, November 27 through December 3: New York graphic designer Daniel Friedman will lead a teaching team that will include Christopher Pullman, design manager, WGBH, Boston; Keith Godard, New York teacher and designer; Jean DuVoisin, a design management consultant, and James Uehling, Siegel & Gale, New York. Demonstration workshops on producing images in the typical government design shop will emphasize problem-solving methodology.

The First Interior Design Studio Seminar, tentatively scheduled for January 10 and 11, in Washington, D.C., is open to interior de-

signers, building managers, space managers, building maintenance supervisors and interior specialists. The theme for the seminar is "Creating and Procuring Motivating Work Interiors." Discussion leaders will include Kenneth Walker, Walker Group, Inc., New York; Rick Hendricks, Chief, Space Standards & Research Bureau, GSA; and Charles Blumberg, Special Assistant for Interior Design, NIH. The seminar will include presentations on policy, procurement and masterplanning of work environments and interior space and furnishings. Participants will tour buildings with interiors furnished with items available under the GSA/FSS schedules.

The Fifth Graphic Design Studio Seminar will be held February 5 through 11 at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Illustrators, photographers, editors, writers, design supervisors, and printing officers, as well as graphic designers may attend.

The Sixth Graphic Design Studio Seminar is scheduled for June 4 through 10 at the Yale College of Art and Design, New Haven, Conn.

Northeast corridor project . . . Design work is under way on a complete identity program for passenger rail service in the Northeast Corridor, between Boston and Washington, D.C. It will include all graphics and signage for station facilities, vehicles, and public information activities; all signage for gate and area identification, train arrivals, and standards for tenant and concessions graphics. Design guidelines will be established for billboards, posters, kiosks, historical and civic displays, tickets, maps and schedules.

New art-in-architecture policy . . . Under a new federal art-in-architecture policy, the General Services Administration will provide funding for art work in rehabilitated Federal buildings. Heretofore, the program was limited to new construction. The new policy increases the funding from three-eighths to one-half of one percent of a building's construction cost or repair and alteration cost. The program, announced by GSA Administrator Jay Solomon, makes possible the use of art in historic landmarks such as the Old Post Office in Washington, D.C., which is undergoing an \$18 million renovation.

Arkansas graphics . . . The Office of Arkansas State Arts and Humanities has begun a statewide graphic design improvement program. Governor David Pryor opened a two-day graphic panel review session September 7 by issuing a proclamation in which he stated that the "**Arkansas Design** is a program to educate Arkansans to appreciate, use and demand good design and improved communications."

The panel review looked at printed communications from all departments of the state government. Recommendations from the panel will determine future activity in Arkansas in the area of graphics improvement.

Arkansas plans to follow up with several components, including a state design assembly.



Some of the printed communications from all departments of Arkansas state government reviewed during an **Arkansas Design** program

Federal Design Assembly—If current plans work out, the Fourth Federal Design Assembly scheduled for fall 1978 will be a "moving" experience. Planners hope to take the assembly to several different sites in Washington so that participants can see and feel the results of good Federal design in architecture, graphics, interiors, and landscapes. They will hear from agency teams how the projects were carried out.

Assisting the Arts Endowment in developing ideas for the program are Mickey Friedman, *Design Quarterly*; Bill Marlin, *Architectural Record*; Alan Marra, Federal Prison Industries, Inc.; Gerald Patten, National Park Service; Mack Rowe, Federal Reserve Board; Grant Smith, graphics consultant; Peter Smith, communications consultant; and Erma Striner, General Services Administration. Endowment representatives are Jerry Perlmutter, coordinator; Nicholas Chaparos, Lois Craig, Lani Lattin Duke, Catherine F. George, Roy F. Knight, Robert Peck, and Joan Shantz.

Design Response Exhibition . . . Some 70 winning entries, judged as the best graphic work designed and executed for the Federal government, will be shown at the Federal Design Response Exhibition 1975-1977, which will open in New York City November 29.

The biennial exhibition, sponsored by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) in

National Endowment
for the Arts
Washington, D.C.
20506

Official Business



Saul Bass, with back to camera, talks with, from left, Paul Rand and Bill Lacy, fellow Design Response show jurors. Looking on are show chairman Dick Lopez and his assistant Allan Stolz.

cooperation with the Federal Design Council, an association of Federal designers, will run through January 6 at the AIGA Gallery, 1059 Third Avenue, near 63rd Street.

The jury, composed of Paul Rand and Saul Bass, both graphics designers, and Bill N. Lacy, president of the American Academy of Rome, evaluated more than 500 entries by designers in 33 Federal agencies. Winners were chosen on the basis of graphic excellence and effectiveness in communication.

The designs will be discussed at an idea exchange at 5:30 PM, Wednesday, November 30, at the AIGA Gallery. A four-member panel moderated by Stu Johnson, curator for architecture and design for the Museum of Modern Art, will begin the discussion. The other panelists are Bass, Ivan Chermayeff, AIGA president Dick Danne, and Bob Salpeter. Reservations for the idea exchange may be made by writing AIGA at the above address (zip code 10021) or by phone (212-PL-2-0813).

Acknowledgments:
Coordinator, Design Information and Education:
Nick Chaparos
Ass't Coordinator, Federal Graphics:
Catherine F. George
Editor/Writer: Simpson Lawson
Research: Tom Bay, Joan Shantz
Photos: Nick Chaparos, Michael Bruce

Postage and Fees Paid
National Foundation on the Arts
and the Humanities



Notice: Use of funds for printing this publication approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402—
Price 75 cents (single copy) Subscription Price: \$3.00 per year, 75 cents additional for foreign mailing.