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A Survey and Analysis of Regional Traditional Arts Programs and Services

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Introduction

In a survey prepared for the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF) in 1994, Betsy Peterson reported the status of traditional arts programs in six regional arts organizations. At the time of her writing, three designated traditional arts programs existed in the six agencies: New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), Southern Arts Federation (SAF), and Western State Arts Federation (WESTAF). Of those three only SAF has retained its Traditional Arts Program. However, one of the outcomes of Peterson's report was the creation of MAAF's Traditional Arts Program.

This report is intended to bring forward Peterson's account in her study, *A Survey Study of Folk and Traditional Arts for the Mid Atlantic Region, 1994* (pages 21-26). Prepared for the Southern Arts Federation through a Traditional Arts Growth Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, this current project reports the status of traditional arts programs and services being offered by Regional Arts Organizations. The final section offers a brief analysis of the report's findings which does not critique each program, but rather identifies apparent structural similarities and differences in programs and services. I hope this report allows agencies to think strategically and collectively in serving the traditional arts field in the future. The report includes seven profiles intended to provide vital information on each agency:

- mission
- states/jurisdictions served
- current traditional arts staff/positions
- traditional arts program overview
- current traditional arts programs
- timeline of traditional arts activities
- bibliography of relevant publications
- a list of current and former traditional arts staff
- current contact information

Limitations

Arts agencies everywhere have to do more with less; staffing changes in the past few years left gaps in institutional histories. Two organizations did not participate in the process that produced this report. This lack of participation should not be viewed as a boycott of the project or disinterest, but rather another sign of the taxing schedules of arts organizations' staff. I do feel, however, that this report provides an accurate and meaningful accounting of the traditional arts programs and services provided by Regional Arts Organizations. Time was the greatest limitation affecting this project. Four days is a brief amount of time to contact informants, collect and analyze data, and formulate a report.

Methodology

This report is the product of standard research methods used by folklorists. Questionnaires gathered general overviews of agencies and historical data (when available). Interviews offered personal perspectives and histories for each participating agency. Internet and manuscript research filled in the blanks created by institutional changes and lack of participation.

Jon Kay
Folklorist

Arts Midwest (AM)

Mission

Arts Midwest enables individuals and families throughout America's Heartland to share in and to enjoy the arts and cultures of our region and the world.

States Served

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Designated Position

None

Current Traditional Arts Program

Currently AM does not have a designated traditional arts program or staff. It serves traditional arts constituents through general funding and professional development programs for artists and folklorists.

Global Sounds, Heartland Beats

AM recently concluded its first major folk arts initiative, *Global Sounds, Heartland Beats* (GSHB). This project encouraged the presentation of traditional artists and assisted ensembles in finding expanded performance opportunities. It also provided professional development training and formed a network for presenters and artists ensuring ongoing participation of folk artists from the Midwest's diverse communities. GSHB included fourteen artists or ensembles selected in a juried process based on artistic excellence and compliance with other criteria. Two artists or ensembles were selected from each of the seven participating states (Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). One artist from each state was selected to be a tier-one ensemble, and one from each state was selected to be a tier-two performer. While both tiers received technical support, tier-one ensembles performed at three festivals over the course of the year. Seven of the fourteen ensembles toured the Midwest in 2000/2001 performing concerts and leading workshops. For example, Las Guitarras de Mexico of Iowa performed at festivals in Ohio, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

AM worked closely with the folk arts coordinators from participating states, helping to recruit traditional artists and presenters. Artists and ensembles received multiple opportunities for training, including workshops at the Midwest Arts Conference and additional training from the Southern Arts Federation's *American Traditions Professional Development Program for Traditional Artists and Presenters*. Through these training opportunities, artists learned about developing press packets, the necessity of a legal contract, and received access to a broader marketplace.

Ken Carlson of the Arts Midwest-Wisconsin Office served as a coordinator for the project. He supervised technical arrangements for the seven tier-one acts and assisted with the development of a comprehensive press packet that included information about GSHB, biographical, contextual, and contact information about each of the fourteen ensembles and artists. Included in the press packets was an eclectic CD sampler, *Global Sounds, Heartland Beats*, which featured selections from each of the fourteen artists, except Dallas Chief Eagle, a Lakota hoop dancer. Press packets and CDs were distributed to presenters at the Arts Midwest Conference in Austin, Texas, where tier-one ensembles performed in the conference showcase, and Ken Carlson coordinated a booth with representatives from many of the ensembles. Carlson said of future folklife related initiatives, "We certainly are going to encourage in general ways the touring and attention for folk arts, but whether we have money to put behind it in a big way remains to be seen." He also stressed that while Arts Midwest administered GSHB, the success of this program came from the hard work of the state folk arts coordinators and the essential funding provided by NEA.

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Consortium for Pacific Arts and Cultures (CPAC)

Mission

To perpetuate the traditional arts and cultures of the Pacific.

Jurisdictions Served

The Consortium for Pacific Arts and Cultures (CPAC) is located in Honolulu, Hawaii, but primarily serves the U.S. jurisdictions of American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Designated Position

Unknown

Traditional Arts Program Overview

The Consortium's primary aim is to perpetuate the traditional arts and cultures of the Pacific. Currently, it focuses on educational programming for young people about indigenous culture.

Current Traditional Arts Programs

A recent survey of CPAC's jurisdictions (American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) indicated a common concern for the loss of the indigenous language and cultures of the islands. In the face of the sweep of foreign cultures across the world, including the Pacific Islands, it is easy for young people to lose sight of the value of their indigenous arts and customs.

To help address this need, CPAC is providing a total of \$60,000 funding for projects in their jurisdictions. Projects are funded for each jurisdiction in four areas:

- Literary Arts/Oral Traditions
- Visual Arts
- Folk Arts
- Performing Arts

A major goal of this program is to entice Chamorro, Samoan, and other young people in kindergarten through high school age groups to learn more about Chamorro and Samoan arts and customs. It is hoped that while these young people are meaningfully occupied in the projects funded, they may become interested in learning more about their cultures and wish to perpetuate their heritage.

Other goals are:

- to teach the young people about the projects' art form and provide opportunities for their talents to develop
- to provide opportunities for young people to work with the artists of their islands, who could become role models
- to keep young people occupied when schools are not in session
- to share what is learned by the young people in these projects with the community

The selected projects would have Pacific indigenous cultural themes and involve at least four adults, of which three are artists or cultural specialists in the area of the project. The adults are to provide after school and weekend instruction for the young people. Each project will culminate in a public presentation and have a means of sharing with all three CPAC entities (video, chap books, etc.).

Folk Arts Publications

[Laulima: Working Together](#) (Video)

Traditional Arts Program Timeline

1988

- Festival of Pacific Arts (1988, 1992, and 1996)
- The Festival of Pacific Arts brings together people from the Pacific for several weeks of sharing songs, dances, crafts and cultures. CPAC provided funding to help the delegations of Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa participate in the Festival of Pacific Arts.

1992

- Festival of Pacific Arts

1993

- CPAC began its Regional Heritage Awards program. This award honors the people who are considered the master traditional craftspeople of each of CPAC's jurisdictions.

1996

- Festival of Pacific Arts

1998-1999

- Stated programming focus to teach young people about Pacific indigenous arts and cultures

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Special note from the consultant:

This profile is incomplete. All information obtained from agency website.

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA)

Mission

M-AAA's mission is to transform lives and build communities by uniting people with the power of art. In partnership with the six state art agencies of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas, M-AAA stretches the boundaries of the heartland to include national and international programs and arts activity.

States Served

Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas

Designated Position

None

Current Traditional Arts Programs

MAAA does not have a designated traditional arts program or staff. It serves traditional arts constituents through general programs and supporting the Heartland/Great Plains Folklorists Retreat.

Heartland/Great Plains Folklorists Retreat

The first Heartland/Great Plains Folklorists Retreat was held in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, in May of 2000. Folklorists from Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas participated in the retreat financially supported by M-AAA and NEA. The Second Heartland's/Great Plains Folklorists Retreat was held in May of 2001 at the Texas Folklife Resources in Austin, Texas. The retreat provides networking and professional development opportunities.

Folk Arts Publications

None

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Special note from the consultant:

This profile is incomplete. All information obtained from agency website and data provided by SAF.

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF)

Mission

The mission of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation is to respond dynamically to the needs of the region, build upon the artistic and organizational strengths, and work across state lines to make a difference.

Traditional Arts Program Mission

The Traditional Arts Program seeks to strengthen traditional arts resources at the local level while drawing upon those resources to build a sense of regional identity.

Jurisdictions Served

Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, and West Virginia

Designated Position

Dr. Rory Turner, Program Officer-Folk Arts

Traditional Arts Program Overview

In 1994 Betsy Peterson, former traditional arts program director for NEFA, completed a feasibility study of traditional arts resources and needs for the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. The report moved MAAF to initiate a traditional arts program in 1995 through NEA grant support. Amy Skillman directed the new program contracted through the Institute for Cultural Partnerships (ICP), making MAAF the last of four traditional arts programs to form in the Regional Arts Organizations.

In 1997 MAAF brought together resources, agencies, and constituents from Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia to develop the Delmarva Folklife Project, a sub-regional leadership/infrastructure project. Funded through an NEA Leadership Initiative grant, the agency began a two and a half year study and documentation of traditions on the peninsula. MAAF established a tri-state planning committee that meets four times a year to help design, fund, and oversee the project. The project has included fieldwork, a mentoring grant, and a regional conference. Forthcoming is a resource guide, a series of audio tape driving tours, and an upcoming series of workshops for historic theaters interested in building their presenting capacity.

The new program's first major initiative was the development of an annotated guide to folk arts resources in the Mid Atlantic region. This useful guide is maintained and updated on the agency's web page.

In 1996 MAAF initiated a traveling exhibit program that features traditional arts and culture of the Appalachian region. MAAF received funding from NEA and the Fund for Folk Culture to develop *Appalachian Views (AV)*, a project that took longer to implement than anticipated. While AV was intended to circulate existing exhibits, MAAF discovered the exhibits in the region were not ready to travel. So MAAF applied its funding toward preparing the exhibits for travel. From the construction of crates to updating photographs, the program prepped six exhibits for travel. AV began circulation in the spring of 2001, and the agency projects 36 installations its first two years.

Although the initial concept for AV was inspired by SAF's traveling exhibit program, MAAF incorporated traditional artist residencies into its program. Host sites have access to funds that support three- to five-day residencies with traditional artists that can be selected from a roster of approved artists. Residencies are intended to augment the themes of the exhibit and to help the host organization engage with an audience they might not be serving. MAAF encourages the selection of artists from outside the host site's state; this reflects the agency mission to "work across state lines to make a difference." This makes AV more than a mechanism for traveling exhibits; it helps traditional artists reach new and larger audiences.

Program Goals, as adopted by the Advisory Committee in 1995

- foster exchanges between artists and communities in a manner that encourages local participation in the traditional arts through the lens of a regional or sub-regional identity
- create linkages across state lines, especially where state arts agencies cannot
- build infrastructures to support traditional artists and arts organizations
- provide access to traditional arts within and outside the region
- gather and disseminate information about traditional arts resources in the region
- involve youth in understanding folklife and participating in programs
- encourage an atmosphere of openness and respect for our differences
- create programs that explore commonalities while promoting an understanding of the need for positive inter-group relations

Current Traditional Arts Programs

Delmarva Folklife Project

Parts of Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, and Delaware make up the Delmarva region, the land and waterways of the Chesapeake Bay area. The Delmarva Folklife Project is a sub-regional leadership/infrastructure initiative that has involved two years of fieldwork resulting in the creation of a tri-state planning team, a mentoring mini-grant program and a regional conference on folklife and tourism. Tom Walker has been the Delmarva Folklife Project's coordinator since 1997. The project has facilitated the networking of various arts organizations, museums, historical societies, heritage and preservation committees, economic development councils, and tourism commissions. Walker is writing a resource guide for local cultural organizations that will not only contain the material developed from fieldwork, but serve as a guide to best practices, ideas, and recommendations of activities for local organizations. It will provide information on funding, consulting, and artistic resources.

Appalachian Views

Appalachian Views is a traveling exhibits program modeled after SAF's *Southern Visions*, featuring six exhibits that highlight aspects of traditional arts and culture in the Appalachian Mountains. Host sites also have access to funds that support three- to five-day residencies with traditional artists. Residencies are intended to augment the themes of the exhibit and to help the host organization to engage with an audience with whom they might not be working.

- A Rural Life Drawn and Carved — The Folk Art of Lavern Kelley
- Over & Under, Around and Through — Basket Weaving in North Carolina
- Tricks of the Trade — Traditional Arts Apprenticeships in Pennsylvania
- Good Fences, Good Neighbors — Fences of the Virginia Highlands
- Extraordinary People in Ordinary Places — Performing Arts in West Virginia
- Working the Woods — Occupational Culture in Maine's Woods

Peer Assistance and Mentoring (Ended 2001)

Peer Assistance and Mentoring was a small grants program designed to support peer assistance and mentoring opportunities for constituents engaged in the practice, presentation or conservation of folk and traditional arts in the Mid Atlantic region. While this program has ended, it funded 17 consultations. A final report describing the project in detail and offering recommendations for future initiatives will be available in the near future.

Folklorist Retreat

The Mid Atlantic Folklorist Retreat is a meeting of professional folklorists from the Mid Atlantic region. At the retreat folklorists learn from sessions and workshops that develop skills and knowledge. They participate in reading discussions that introduce professionals to new scholarship and trends in the discipline. The retreat convenes approximately every two years. In 2001 the Mid Atlantic Folklorist Retreat met concurrently with the Folklorists in the South Retreat (FITS) for the first time.

Traditional Arts Program Timeline

1994

- Feasibility Study by Betsy Peterson

1995

- NEA grant to hire a staff person
- Institute for Cultural Partnerships contracted to manage Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's Regional Traditional Arts Program
- Amy Skillman served as regional folklorist
- Survey conducted to develop annotated guide to folk arts resources in the region

1996

- NEA and FFC grants to develop *Appalachian Views*
- NEA Leadership Initiative grant to develop three-year Delmarva Folklife Project

1997

- Fieldwork began on the Delmarva peninsula
- First folklorists retreat - October

1998

- Developed Peer Assistance and Mentoring Program - a two-year program
- Revised *Appalachian Views* to solicit and fund exhibit development
- Began mentoring program and workshops on the peninsula
- Presented Delmarva folk artists on *Radio From Downtown*, a regional radio program

1999

- Second folklorists retreat - January
- Peer Assistance and Mentoring Program - ongoing
- Continued fieldwork on the Delmarva Peninsula
- Continued development of exhibit roster for *Appalachian Views*
- Participated in SAF's *American Traditions* project

2000

- End of Peer Assistance and Mentoring Program
- Began scheduling installations for exhibits in *Appalachian Views*
- Began design and development of Delmarva audio tape driving tours
- Produced regional conference in Berlin, MD on cultural tourism and cultural conservation
- End of fieldwork phase on Delmarva peninsula
- Feasibility Study of continuing work on the Delmarva peninsula with recommendations to the MAAF Board

2001

- Folklorists retreat, held jointly with the Folklorists in the South Retreat
- First installation of an *Appalachian Views* exhibit
- ICP completed contract with MAAF
- Skillman left post as program officer for MAAF's traditional arts program
- MAAF created a full-time staff position for a folklorist
- Dr. Rory Turner hired to direct traditional arts program

Current and Past Folklorists Contracted to MAAF

Dr. Rory Turner, 2001 to Present

Rory Turner recently accepted the position of Program Officer for the Folk Arts Program for MAAF.

Amy Skillman

Program Officer for Traditional Arts, 1995 to 2001

Amy E. Skillman at the Institute for Cultural Partnerships in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, served as the Program Officer for MAAF's Traditional Arts Program. She initiated the Delmarva Project, *Appalachian Views*, and the Peer Assistance and Mentoring Project, as well as several other projects.

Tom Walker

Delmarva Folklife Project Coordinator, 1997 to Present

Tom Walker has been the Delmarva Folklife Project's coordinator since 1997. He managed the fieldwork, conducted fieldwork, coordinated meetings with the project team and community leaders, designed and organized the technical assistance workshops, organized the community forums, organized the conference, and wrote and reported on all grants. Presently, he is writing the Resource Guide to Folklife on the Delmarva Peninsula and organizing the planning meetings for the project team on the audio driving tours.

Publications

Peterson, Betsy, A Survey Study of Folk and Traditional Arts for the Mid Atlantic Region, 1994.

Guide to Folk Arts Resources in the Mid Atlantic Region, an annotated listing of 39 folk arts organizations in the region, maintained on the MAAF website.

Walker, Thomas, A Resource Guide to Folklife on the Delmarva Peninsula (tentative title) to be published 2001/2002.

Peer Assistance and Mentoring, A Final Report, a detailed description of the project with recommendations for future consultation programs. 2001.

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New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)

Mission

The New England Foundation for the Arts connects the people of New England with the power of art to shape our lives and improve our communities.

States Served

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Designated Position

NEFA has a history of having a folklorist on staff, but since Doug DeNatale left the agency, the agency has no staff person trained in the traditional arts. Rebecca Blunk stated, "Our whole staff has benefited from having folklorists around and training us as we worked together."

Traditional Arts Program Overview

In 1990 NEFA became the second Regional Arts Organization to create a Traditional Arts Program. Dr. Betsy Peterson was hired to direct the program which focused on professional development training for traditional artists and touring projects.

The first major initiative was the Newcomers Project (1991-1994). Funded by the Ford Foundation through NEFA, it aided immigrant artists and groups in the development of promotional materials, photographs and brochures. Also, NEFA provided fee support to presenters who wanted to book these emerging talents. The project funded three annual residencies of Cambodian musicians and dancers at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Western Massachusetts. In an effort to pass on important artistic traditions, master artists were invited from Phnom Penh to perform and teach local Cambodian musicians and dancers about their cultural heritage. The Cambodian community is one of the most significant immigrant communities in New England. Lowell, Massachusetts, has the second largest Cambodian refugee population in the U.S.

In 1992 the new traditional arts program hosted a conference and showcase featuring ten New England-based traditional artists and four panels on presenting traditional arts at a gathering called "Presenting the Folk Arts."

NEFA is the only Regional Arts Organization to have administered an apprenticeship program. The non-profit organization Refugee Arts administered a state apprenticeship program in Massachusetts. In 1994 the non-profit went out of business, and NEFA assumed the coordination of the project. NEFA revised the existing program to fit within their institutional framework. The apprenticeship program provided funds to master traditional artists to teach apprentices in Massachusetts. It also allowed for other master artists in the NEFA region to apply provided the apprentice was from another state in the region. This project ended in 1996; however, many state folk arts programs are recreating this regional apprenticeship model. Rhode Island and Connecticut partnered to produce an apprenticeship program in 2000, and in 2001 Massachusetts joined the partnership. NEFA was not part of this later regional collaboration.

Peterson left NEFA in 1993. Dr. Douglas DeNatale became the new Traditional Arts Program Director in 1994. He spent his first year at NEFA reviving and completing existing projects such as the apprenticeship program and "Island Roots and Rhythms (1994)," a tour that featured traditional Caribbean musicians based in New England and New York. He also organized a retreat for traditional arts professionals in New England in 1995.

The Traditional Arts Program ceased in 1996 when NEFA restructured into a three fund system: Creation and Presentation, Connections, and Culture in Community. The Creation and Presentation Fund supports the creation and distribution of new work in the arts. The Culture in Community Fund links culture with community development and supports art making on the community level, including amateur theater, dance and concerts, as well as the traditional arts. DeNatale became the director of the Connections Fund, the branch that supports research and technical support.

Traditional artists and programs can apply for support from each of the funds, making a greater amount of funds available to folk arts. In addition, artists can apply to be on the roster of the New England States Touring Program. However, some state folk art coordinators feel that NEFA no longer supports traditional artists and programs in the manner in which they need support.

Current and Past Folklorists on NEFA Staff

Dr. Douglas DeNatale

Traditional Arts Program Director (1994-1996)

Connections Fund Director (1996-2001)

Dr. Douglas DeNatale joined NEFA's staff in 1994 as the Traditional Arts Program Director. Under his direction, the program completed several of the initiatives started by Dr. Betsy Peterson. In 1996 when NEFA restructured, DeNatale was selected to direct the Connections Fund. He served in this capacity until 2001 when he became an Executive Officer of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Cecily D. Cook, Consultant (1994-1996)

Cecily Cook came to NEFA as a consultant when NEFA took over the Refugee Arts' apprenticeship program for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1994. Currently she is a Program Officer for the Asian Cultural Council, a small foundation that supports cultural exchange in the visual and performing arts between the countries of Asia and the United States.

Dr. Betsy Peterson, Traditional Arts Program Director (1991-1993)

Dr. Betsy Peterson joined NEFA's staff in 1991 as the first director of the Traditional Arts Program. She initiated several projects including the Newcomers Project and the Island Roots and Rhythms Tour. Prior to leaving NEFA in 1993, she organized "Presenting the Folk Arts," a conference and showcase featuring ten New England-based traditional artists and four panels on presenting traditional arts.

Traditional Arts Program Timeline

1990

- Program created and Dr. Betsy Peterson hired as first director

1991

- Began collaboration with the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival on annual basis with the presentation of Cambodian Artists Project

1992

- "Presenting the Folk Arts," a conference and showcase featuring ten New England-based traditional artists and four panels on presenting traditional arts
- Continued Cambodian Dance Residency at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

1993

- Dr. Betsy Peterson resigned
- Continued Cambodian Dance Residency at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

1994

- Island Roots and Rhythms, a tour featuring traditional Caribbean musicians based in New England and New York
- Dr. Doug DeNatale appointed as new Traditional Arts Program Director
- Apprenticeship program (through 1996)
- Continued Cambodian Dance Residency at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival
- Initiated National Fieldwork Project with the Ford Foundation

1995

- NEFA supported a retreat for traditional arts professionals in New England
- Bau Graves of the Portland Performing Arts Center curated "Call and Response," a tour of art forms of the African Diaspora sponsored by NEFA

1996

- NEFA restructured to a three fund system of support and the Traditional Arts Program was eliminated
- NEFA and World Music in Cambridge supported "First Things First" a tour of Native American Storytellers from New England based tribes coordinated and narrated by folklorist Dillon Bustin

1998

- Presented "Local Ingenuity: Engaging Cultural Traditions in Community Building," a three day regional folk arts conference in Portland, Maine.
- NEFA sponsored the Benton Project a series of workshops and training opportunities to encourage artists to learn about technology. While not specifically designed for traditional artists, some did participate.

2000

- Supported "Vocal Chords: International Festival of Folk Choirs"
- NEFA and New England Presenters sponsored the Green Mountain Consortium. The gathering brought together a pre-tour group from the Royal University from Phnom Penh and New England presenters in an effort to introduce and inform presenters of the genre. Helped prepare for the 2001 "Dance, the Spirit of Cambodia" tour.

2001

- Doug DeNatale resigned, NEFA uncertain if a folklorist position will remain as part of their staff
- NEFA and Asia Society supported "Dance, the Spirit of Cambodia," a major tour of traditional and classical Cambodian dance

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Southern Arts Federation (SAF)

Mission

The Southern Arts Federation, in partnership with nine state arts agencies, promotes and supports arts regionally, nationally and internationally; enhances the artistic excellence and professionalism of Southern arts organizations and artists; and serves the diverse population of the South.

States Served

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Designated Position

Teresa Hollingsworth, Director, Traditional Arts and ADA Programs

Traditional Arts Program Overview

SAF's first traditional arts initiative, the Folklorist in the South Retreat (FITS), is an annual gathering of folk arts administrators, folklore scholars and students from the South. Originally convened by Adrian King, former director of SAF before the folk arts program began (1987), the retreat gathered the nine state folklorists in the SAF region and Bess Lomax Hawes of NEA to discuss how SAF could best serve traditional arts in the region. The recommendation that came from the retreat was that SAF should submit a grant to NEA to hire the first regional folklorist. Dr. Peggy Bulger was hired in January 1989. Committed to enhancing the retreat concept, Bulger established FITS as an annual retreat. Soon the gathering moved beyond the nine "state folklorists" assembling with as many as 60 folklorists and traditional arts supporters.

One outcome from a FITS retreat was the creation of a mechanism to tour quality exhibits produced by state and local folklife and traditional arts programs but never circulated outside the producer's state or community. In 1993 Barbara Lau conducted the Southern Folk Arts Exhibit Survey. She identified and assessed potential exhibits and venues. In 1995 *Southern Visions: The Folk Arts & Southern Culture Traveling Exhibits Program* was established. It continues to serve as a meaningful tool for small and underserved venues. While retreats and the traveling exhibit program have remained vital parts of the SAF traditional arts program, other aspects of the program have changed.

Originally Regional Arts Organizations were established to facilitate regional touring. SAF's early years were busy producing touring projects: Cumberland Music Tour (1989); Deep South Musical Roots Tour (1991); and Bluegrass, Blues, Bembé: A Southern Musical Roots Tour (1992). In 1990 SAF contracted a second folklorist, Barbara Lau, to manage its Southern Musical Roots Tours. In the summer of 1993, Lau joined the SAF staff full-time as the Folk Arts Program Coordinator and managed two tours-Sisters of the South: Musical Roots Tour (1994) and the Sisters of the South: A Song and Story Tour (1995); however, by the mid 1990s the role of Regional Arts Organizations changed. Due to labor intensity and funding requirements, the tours were discontinued.

In response to this call for more fiscal accountability, Bulger and Lau developed an NEA grant for the training of traditional artists. Professional development and training workshops were more cost and time efficient than taking artists on tour. *American Traditions: A Professional Development Program for Traditional Artists and Presenters* has roots in two programs launched in 1996: UPTAP (Underserved Presenters Technical Assistance Project) and TATAP (Traditional Artists Technical Assistance Project). In 1997 these two programs merged as Southern Connections, and by 1998 the new expanded professional development program, *American Traditions* (AT) emerged as leading artists and presenter education and training programs. AT has not only served the SAF region but has primed artists working with AM, M-AAA, MAAF, and NEFA. In 1999, as a national initiative funded in part by the NEA, AT was expanded and delivered to 50 presenters from 37 states and 22 artists from 21 states. AT has two branches: one trains presenters in working with traditional arts; the other prepares traditional artists looking to move to larger markets. AT has a proven success record, such as, Nashville, Tennessee's jubilee gospel and folk drama troupe, the Princely Players, which was signed to professional representation (Baylan Artist Management) after receiving training from *American Traditions*.

Throughout its existence, SAF's Traditional Arts Program has periodically hosted or partnered on special initiatives and events significant to the region. In 1990 SAF hosted a conference titled, "Promoting Southern Cultural Heritage: A Conference on Impact." The conference addressed critical issues in the field of cultural representation and the politics of culture and cultural programming in the South. The conference drew more than 200 participant, including rural arts presenters, tourism officials, park service personnel, and educators. The conference papers were published the following year to allow the material to reach a wider audience.

SAF, in collaboration with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games' Cultural Olympiad and the Smithsonian Institution, produced the Southern Crossroads Festival. This event showcased Southern artists in Centennial Olympic Park during the Summer Olympic Games in 1996. During the nineteen-day event, over 200 artists were featured on the three stages and craft demonstration area, with an estimated 5 million visitors to the park during this period. The event was not totally a success. Poor media coverage and slow sales proved disappointing (it seems Olympic tourist want Olympic memorabilia as souvenirs, rather than Southern handicrafts and recordings). Nevertheless, the event provided substantial exposure and experience for many traditional performing and visual artists. The program also expanded the agency's database of traditional arts and partners, which proved necessary for their new endeavors in professional development and exhibit touring.

Since its inception in 1989, the SAF Program has identified and supported a strong network of traditional arts professionals and folk artists who work in communities throughout its region. When Dr. Peggy Bulger joined the staff, SAF became the first Regional Arts Organization to allocate a full-time position to folk arts. Several Regional Arts Organizations soon added folklorists to their staff, SAF is the only Regional Arts Organization to dedicate and maintain a full-time position to traditional arts through the 1990s. Dedicated positions enabled SAF to develop and sustain programs that have become models for other regional traditional arts programs. SAF's Traditional Arts Program receives support from the Traditional Arts Advisory Committee. This volunteer, nine-member committee is composed of leaders in the field of the traditional arts working in the South.

Current Traditional Arts Programs

Annual Folklorist in the South Retreat (FITS)

The Folklorist in the South Retreat (FITS) is an annual meeting of professional traditional arts and culture managers in SAF's region begun in 1989. FITS works to build a strong network of folk arts professionals in the region who develop cooperative programs and plan holistically for the future of folk arts in the region. The retreat takes regional issues to the national arena by working in cooperation with the American Folklore Society, the Folk Arts track of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and other national folklife organizations. FITS provides training to improve the skills of the participants, meeting needs as determined through surveys and evaluations.

American Traditions: Professional Development Training Program (AT)

A professional development program, *American Traditions* provides training to emerging and underserved performing arts presenters and traditional artists. Rooted in two programs launched in 1996, UPTAP (Underserved Presenters Technical Assistance Project) and TATAP (Traditional Artists Technical Assistance Project). AT has emerged as a leading traditional artists and presenter professional development program. Artists workshops include: How to Work with Arts Presenters; Working with Managers and Agents; Marketing Yourself as a Touring Artist; Primer for Performing Artists in Schools; Legal Issues for Performing Artists; and Performance Toolbox.

Southern Visions: The Folk Arts & Southern Culture Traveling Exhibits Program

Since 1995, *Southern Visions: The Folk Arts & Southern Culture Traveling Exhibits Program* has provided exhibits featuring the traditional arts and cultural heritage of the American South to more than 80 communities throughout the South. This program serves as a mechanism to tour quality exhibits produced by various state and local arts agencies. Prior to SV it was difficult for many agencies to expose their product to larger audiences and send them across state lines.

Traditional Arts Fellowship Program

Established in 2000, the SAF Traditional Arts Program offers an annual Traditional Arts Fellowship to a graduate or post-graduate student pursuing his or her secondary degree at a Southern university or college. Fellowships range from six to twelve weeks. Applicants must be seeking an advance degree in American Studies, Anthropology, Arts Administration, Ethnomusicology, Folk Studies, Museum Studies, Southern Studies, or a related field. The Program was designed to provide workplace experience for the next generation of arts, museum and folklife professionals.

Exhibits have included:

- African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South*
- Cajun Music and Zydeco
- Coastal Coexistence: Vietnam to Mississippi
- Crossroads Quilters: Stitching the Community Together*

- Faulkner's World: The Photographs of Martin J. Dain
- Folk Photographer: William R. "Pictureman" Mullins
- Georgia Clay: Pottery in the Folk Tradition
- Last Generation: Our Vanishing Southern Heritage*
- Mississippi Choctaws: Traditional Life in a Modern World
- Living Traditions: Folk Artists of the American South*
- The Photographs of P.H. Polk: African-American Photographer*
- Over, Under, Around and Through
- Roadside Signs: Expressions of Place*
- Sacred Space: Photographs from the Mississippi Delta

*Denotes currently touring exhibits

Folk Arts Publications

Folk Arts Notes (1989-1997)

Promoting Southern Cultural Heritage: A Conference on Impact, published papers from the conference

Musical Roots of the South, concert tour publication

Assorted Educator guides for Southern Vision exhibits

Current and Past Folklorists on SAF Staff

Teresa Hollingsworth

Traditional Arts and ADA Program Director, 1999 to present

Teresa Hollingsworth left her post as a folklorist in the Florida Department of State/ Division of Historical Resources when she replaced longtime Traditional Arts Program Director, Peggy Bulger, in 1999. Hollingsworth coordinates SAF's successful traditional art programs, such as *Southern Visions*, *American Traditions*, and the Folklorists in the South Retreat. She is also developing new initiatives, such as one to serve the South's Latino constituents by identifying Spanish-speaking artists and venues.

Lisa Higgins

Southern Visions and American Traditions Program Coordinator, 1998-1999

Lisa Higgins started at SAF part-time in the fall of 1997 as the Assistant Coordinator for Southern Visions. In 1998, Higgins was hired full-time as the Program Coordinator for *Southern Visions* and *American Traditions*. After Dr. Bulger resigned in the spring of 1999, Higgins took on additional responsibilities, including the coordination of the FITS retreat and Southern Connections. She resigned in August 1999 to take her current position as the State Folk Arts Coordinator for Missouri.

Peggy Bulger,

Traditional Arts Program Director, 1989-1999

Dr. Peggy Bulger joined SAF's staff in 1989 as the first staff folklorist to work with a Regional Arts Organization. Under her direction, SAF's Traditional Arts Program developed many programs that not only benefited the South but became models for other Regional Arts Organizations' folk art programs and services (i.e., annual folklorists retreats, traveling exhibits program, etc.). Bulger served as the director of SAF's Traditional Arts Program until 1999, when she accepted the position as Director of the American Folklife Center.

Barbara Lau

Folk Arts Program Coordinator, 1993-1995

In 1990 SAF contracted folklorist Barbara Lau to manage its Southern Musical Roots Tours. She managed the Deep South Musical Roots Tour (1991) and Bluegrass, Blues, Bembé: A Southern Musical Roots Tour (1992). In the summer of 1993, Lau joined the SAF staff full-time as the Folk Arts Program Coordinator. She managed two additional tours: Sisters of the South Musical Roots Tour (1994) and the Sisters of the South: A Song and Story Tour (1995). After conducting the Southern Folk Arts Exhibit Survey in 1993, Lau developed SAF's traveling exhibits program, Southern Visions. Barbara Lau left SAF in 1995 and now works at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies.

Traditional Arts Program Timeline

1987

- Adrian King (former SAF Executive Director) brought together Bess Lomax Hawes (former director of the NEA Folk Arts Program), Hank Willet (former Southern regional representative for NEA) and Southern state folk arts coordinators. This meeting led to SAF's successful application to NEA to fund a regional folk arts coordinator position.

1988

- Presented Cumberland Music Tour

1989

- Dr. Peggy Bulger hired as Traditional Arts Program Director
- Established Folk Arts Advisory Committee (1989 to present)
- Began publishing Folk Arts Notes a semi-annual newsletter (1989-1997)
- Annual Folklorist in the South (FITS) Retreat formally began

1990

- Presented the conference, "Promoting Southern Cultural Heritage: A Conference on Impact"
- Barbara Lau contracted to manage Southern Musical Roots tours

1991

- Deep South Musical Roots Tour: Presented regional folk ensembles that represented the music of the Deep South: The Birmingham Sunlights, Rev. Leon Pinson & Elder Roma Wilson, Lynn August & the Hot August Knights. This project also produced a companion cassette and booklet.

1992

- Bluegrass, Blues, Bembé: A Southern Musical Roots Tour: Presented a thirteen-stop tour that featured the music of bluegrass band, Pappy Sherrill & Hired Hands; blues artists, Eddie Kirkland & Neal Pattman; and Bembé duo, Florencio Baró & Eri Okan who played a distinct style of music associated with Santeria religious festivals.

1993

- Barbara Lau hired as Folk Arts Program Coordinator to manage traditional arts musical tours and establish traveling exhibits program.
- Conducted the Southern Folk Arts Exhibit Survey, a project that assessed potential exhibits & venues

1994

- Established *Southern Visions: The Folk Arts and Southern Culture Traveling Exhibits Program* (1994 to present)
- Developed two professional development programs: UPTAP (Under-Served Presenters Technical Assistance Project) and TATAP (Traditional Artists Technical Assistance Project). This program was designed to train and assist traditional performing artists to tour in the SAF region and to introduce them to mainstream arts presentation. TATAP provided an annual training institute at the Southern Arts Exchange (SAE).
- Initiated the Sisters of the South Musical Roots Tour: This tour featured the music of African American Piedmont Blueswoman, Etta Baker; ballad singer and banjo player, Sheila Kay Adams; Cherokee singer and storyteller, Edna Chekelelee; traditional harmony singers, Sophie Tipton & Louise Tomberlain; and Kentucky bluegrass band, the New Coon Creek Girls. This program included school residencies as well as an educational cassette and study guide.
- Began working on the "Festival of the American South," in conjunction with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games-Cultural Olympiad

1995

- Presented the Sisters of the South Song and Story Tour. Tour featured Cajun musicians Christine and Nelda Balfa of Balfa Toujours, Anglo-American balladeer Sheila Kay Adams, Bluegrass musicians, Betty and Tina Ray, and African American Gospel quartet D'Vine.
- Continued to develop the "Festival of the American South"
- Barbara Lau resigned position

1996

- Southern Connections: Traditional Arts Technical Assistance Project (1996 to 1998): This program combined the UPTAP and TATAP programs into a unified and holistic approach to support the performing arts in rural underserved areas while advancing the careers of traditional artists of the South
- Southern Crossroads Festival (July 19-August 4, 1996)

1997

- Lisa Higgins contracted as part-time Assistant Coordinator for *Southern Visions*
- Folk Arts Notes ceased publication

1998

- *American Traditions* emerged from previous professional development programs (1998 to Present)
- Hired Lisa Higgins as the Program Coordinator for *Southern Visions* and *American Traditions*

1999

- Dr. Peggy Bulger resigned as Director of the Traditional Arts Programs
- Lisa Higgins resigned as Program Coordinator
- Teresa Hollingsworth hired as Director of the Traditional Arts and ADA Programs

2001

- The Annual FITS retreat met in conjunction with the Mid Atlantic Folklorist Retreat

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Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF)

Mission

Strengthening the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West

States Served

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

Designated Positions and Services

Currently, WESTAF does not have a designated traditional arts program or staff position. It serves traditional arts constituents through supporting the professional development of state folk art coordinators at the Association of Western States Folklorist Conference, publishing and distributing materials relevant to the discipline and through the general program support of the Tour West Program.

Traditional Arts Program Overview

WESTAF's Folk Arts Program began with a 1991 needs-assessment for traditional arts. Elaine Thatcher surveyed state arts councils, artists, and folklorists in the region and reported the status and needs of traditional arts programs and resources in the West. Her recommendation was to develop a folklife program to provide regional assistance. Through NEA funding, the agency created a Folk Arts Program in 1993. Elaine Thatcher was appointed director of the Folk Arts Program.

In collaboration with the Western Folklife Center, the new program produced the Voices of the West: Songs and Stories of the Land Tour in 1994. This tour of regional traditional music benefited eight of WESTAF's twelve constituent states. The tour gave the Folk Arts Program a clear and successful beginning.

WESTAF's major contribution to the regional traditional arts program history is their work in artist and presenter professional development. Before SAF developed UPTAP (Underserved Presenters Technical Assistance Project) and TATAP (Traditional Artists Technical Assistance Project), WESTAF collaborated with state folk arts coordinators and other folk arts administrators to present traditional performers at various performing arts conferences, conducted professional development workshops, and provided small grants and technical assistance to folk artists needing to upgrade their promotional materials.

In 1995, WESTAF hosted a retreat for public sector folklorists. This conference formalized a gathering of folklorists that began meeting in the early 1980s in conjunction with the Fife Conferences in Utah. The gathering of folklorists is now officially titled the Association of Western States Folklorists Conference. WESTAF continues to provide financial and administrative support to this annual gathering; however, the Association of Western States Folklorists directs the content and sets the agenda for the meeting.

Similar to SAF and MAAF, WESTAF began working on a traveling exhibit program. The regional coordination of traveling exhibits allows high quality exhibits to reach a wider audience through regional marketing and administration; nevertheless, the exhibit program would never be realized. In 1996 WESTAF restructured and most of the Santa Fe-based staff was not included in the move to Denver, Colorado. The Folk Arts Program was eliminated, ending a brief but important traditional arts initiative.

Current Traditional Arts Services

Association of Western States Folklorists Conference (AWSFC)

The Association of Western States Folklorists Conference is an annual gathering of professional folklorists in the WESTAF region. AWSFC provides professional development and networking opportunities to state folk art coordinators, local and sub-regional folklife organizations, and independent folklorists from across the expansive western region. This gathering works to build a regional alliance of folk arts professionals working in the West. WESTAF supports this event through financial and administrative contribution. However, the Association of Western Folklorists maintains control of the content and structure of the conference. WESTAF provides stipends for one professional from each of the state arts agencies to attend.

Tour West

While not designated for traditional arts, Tour West is open to the performing traditional arts. This program provides subsidy to arts and community organizations for the presentation of touring performing artists. Funds are available to organizations that sponsor performances within the WESTAF region.

Relevant Publications

Trapp, Robert. Establishing Positive Value and Image for the Folk Arts: Principles of Effective Argumentation, WESTAF, 1999.

Thatcher, Elaine. Sharing Your Culture. WESTAF, 1996.

Past Folklorists on Staff at WESTAF

Elaine Thatcher

Folk Arts Program Director, 1993-1996

Elaine Thatcher began her career at WESTAF as a consultant in 1991, when she conducted a needs assessment for traditional arts in the WESTAF region. Upon completing the project, the agency moved to create a folk arts program that Thatcher was hired to direct. During her tenure at the agency, she developed a tour and training program for traditional arts and wrote Sharing Your Culture, a guide for traditional artists to help them present their traditional art form. Due to NEA budget cuts in 1996, WESTAF restructured and the Folk Arts Director Position was eliminated. Thatcher continued to work for WESTAF as a consultant for an additional three years. Today, she heads her own consulting firm.

Traditional Arts Program Timeline

1991

- WESTAF conducted a needs assessment for traditional arts in the region

1993

- Created Folk Arts Program
- Hired Elaine Thatcher as director

1994

- Produced the Voices of the West: Songs and Stories of the Land Tour, a special project that featured artists from three states in the region

1995

- Worked with state folk arts coordinators and other folk arts administrators to present traditional performers at various performing arts conferences like the Western Alliance of Arts Administrators
- Conducted eight artists technical assistance workshops
- Held first retreat based on the public sector folklorists meeting previously held at the Fife Conferences (now called the Association of Western States Folklorists Conference, 1995 to present)
- Began working on a traveling exhibit program that never came to fruition
- Provided small grants and technical assistance to folk artists needing to upgrade their promotional materials through a promotional material grant project

1996

- Restructured organization and eliminated the Folk Arts Program

1999

- Published Establishing Positive Value and Image for the Folk Arts: Principles of Effective Argumentation

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Notes from the Consultant:

Due to changes in program and staffing, some information concerning past programs may be incomplete.

Approaches to Serving Traditional Arts

Currently, regional arts organizations employ at least three approaches to serving the traditional arts. For this report, I will label these approaches as integrated programs, separate programs, and special initiatives. While all of the agencies serve traditional arts using at least one of these models, some employ a combination.

An integrated program allows an agency to serve traditional arts through its general arts programs and services. To some degree, all of the agencies serve traditional arts in this way. This approach supports traditional arts agencies, artists, and venues along side other disciplines or genres of arts. For example, WESTAF's Tour West Program can fund traditional arts performances as well as other performing arts. This approach has strengths and weaknesses. Through this approach greater funds are available to traditional arts programs than ever before. Its primary appeal is that services are generally available to all artists. For example, NEFA sponsored *Dance, the Spirit of Cambodia*, a tour presenting classical and folk dance and music from the Royal University of Fine Arts of Phnom Penh. An approximately \$1 million project, it received more funding than any previous NEFA traditional arts initiative. However, the danger in the integrated approach is that if organizations with traditional arts programs are not encouraged to apply, they could miss essential funding opportunities and support.

In contrast to integrated programs, separate programs serve traditional arts through ongoing established programs and services that address the specific interests and needs of the folk arts constituents. Two organizations employ this approach, Southern Arts Federation and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. This approach has been very successful in building a strong network of traditional arts supporters and artists. Through sustained programs, SAF has developed initiatives that have defined traditional arts programming. Separate programs also have one major problem. If the program or service is eliminated as with WESTAF and NEFA, state folk arts programs and traditional artists could lose their avenue of support.

Special initiatives and projects are usually used in conjunction with the integrated and separate programs. Structured as a one-time folk arts program, special initiatives address needs only for a defined period of time. The most current example of this approach is Arts Midwest's *Global Sounds, Heartland Beats* project. This project addressed the needs of traditional artists and ensembles through professional development training and tour facilitation.

My recommendation is a combination of the three approaches. Traditional arts should have access to general arts programs and services employed in integrated programs. Since traditional arts are often misunderstood and overlooked, Regional Arts Organizations should have someone trained in traditional arts on staff to reach and serve these constituents. Special initiatives allow Regional Arts Organizations to showcase the services they provide to specific art forms and genres. Folk and traditional arts should receive the same exposure as other types of arts.

No Two Regions Alike

It might be tempting to argue for one overarching model that would serve traditional arts that could be used by all Regional Arts Organizations. However, each region is unique, with different resources, strengths, and weaknesses. Each organization has its own mission statement and goals that serve the arts in very different ways.

Physical and political geography can create distinct difficulties from one region to the next. For example, MAAF's Delmarva project facilitates cultural work across political boundaries to better serve the natural and cultural geography of the peninsula; however, most of the WESTAF states are so large that basic regional travel and networking is difficult and costly. The needs of one region are often very different from the needs of another region.

Traditional Arts Programs and Services Chart

	AM	M-AAA	MAAF	NEFA	SAF	WESTAF
Has had a traditional arts program in the past	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Currently has a traditional arts program	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has sponsored traditional music and/or dance tours	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Serves traditional art through its general programs and services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Has designated positions for the folk arts	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Supports retreats and gatherings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sponsors traveling exhibit program *	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has published traditional resource materials	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Has provided professional development for folk artists and presenters (including that through American Traditions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Some agencies such as MAAA partner with Exhibits USA that has at least one exhibit relating to traditional arts.