

the less-than-powerful, they have to be continually regained. The notion of an Affiliate's Day was initiated under Feldman's presidency. In the transition to the next NAEA president, the idea got lost. Too much changing leadership among the scattered affiliates; too little history to hold the idea alive in the collective imagination. The concept had to be re-defined, re-rationalized, re-organized anew. And then too, the freedom to generate programs with conceptual depth and collective continuity means little if we fail to exercise it. Always this demands of us an enormous supply of strategy, flexibility and endurance. Maintaining values vivid and formative within a society where bureaucracy is the essential mode for ordering our occupational personae requires nothing less. And it goes to the heart of holding our activities at a National Convention in touch with that larger social purpose. As someone said: "Real revolution is invisible."

1990

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(Note: this article is the Coordinator's report to the national Art Education Association Executive Board, April 1990, Kansas City)

Because this is our tenth anniversary year or because we are prescient or because we are in a perpetual state of healthy doubt, the Caucus began the task of self-definition at the last conference. Our newsletter, published three times this year, has featured a chain of letters in which eight of our 122 members have reflected upon what the term "social" in Social Theory means. Two of the sessions on this year's (conference) program continue that dialogue.

How could I possibly sum up or characterize the contents of that correspondence? The authors are all active and long standing members of the Caucus representing its great diversity of orientation and style. Does this mean the center has fallen away? I think not, for what endures long after the letters have been set aside are the traces and echoes of individuals with familiar faces, gestures, and ideas — friends in art education. These are not polished articles but private musings for an audience of thoughtful, committed, and passionate people — an audience which is also engaged in the struggle to forge personal and social meaning out of the work of art education. It is a mixed audience of teachers, professors, and administrators seeking to broaden the definition of the profession for it seems as if so much has been left out. They adjust easily to the different narrative styles of our correspondents — a good yarn about a violent taxi cab driver and his passengers in NYC, a lengthy monologue woven of feminist theory and Lacanian notions, a passionate utterance putting politics on center stage. The Caucus accommodates them all.

And in a balloon over all our spoken and written words, there is the omnipresent specter of theory. Are we scholars on the cutting edge of theoretical thinking lost forever to the stains, joys, and pain of the classroom? Or are we practitioners caught up in the explorations of a child artist and bureaucratic impediments and blind to the theoretical ramifications of our actions? Yesterday my friend in Social Theory and I decided we are activist-theorists, thinking and hypothesizing in motion the same way as painters and sculptors are conceptualizing and making at the same time. One theorist, who is not yet a member of the caucus has called this qualitative problem solving.

One cannot define one's relation to the profession through membership in the NAEA; as a large organization it assumes the voice of the majority of its members. It may even be characterized by many of the same political machinations and bureaucratic tendencies found in the educational systems we serve. It cannot represent the subversives, activists, and critics in its midst and may even, if the occasion arises, work to rid itself of these renegades.

I remember the feeling of confusion and isolation I had at my first Conference. Over the years, the sea of people and the hundreds of presentations coalesced into a group of like-minded individuals in sympathy with my professional values and goals. By a strange coincidence, many were members of the Women's Caucus and the Caucus on Social Theory. I began going to their Business Meetings, their award ceremonies, and their parties. This was where the context for all those hundreds of sessions really was. It is altogether natural and fitting that smaller communities of kindred spirits have developed their own bylaws, agendas, in-house debates, journals and newsletters. After all, we have causes to support, theories to dissect, battles to wage, and jokes to tell. Naturally, all this costs money, which is why we charge dues. If the NAEA would fund our activities, we would not have to collect a tithe.

The NAEA can help make its Affiliates more visible within the organization just as it has disseminated printed matter of well-funded enterprises. It can allow us space for our newsletters and journals in its publications area at the National Confer-

ence. It can support special publications which may not be covered by Affiliate dues; it can give us the Affiliate schedules of our sessions prior to the conference so that we can photocopy programs for our members. It can give us more latitude in planning the sequence, timing, and scope of our sessions so we can rise above the lock-step of the 50 minute hour and the traditional presentation format. We, the Affiliates have members from all the other Divisions of the organization — Higher Education, Museum Education, Elementary, Southern, etc. We are the subterranean content of the NAEA.

And finally, we have an important function for the larger organization — we are its mirror. Last year's Journal actually included an analysis, in the form of several related papers, on "The Conference as Ritual: The Sacred Journey of the Art Educator." We even invited a non-participant observer (a folklorist) to watch over our shoulders in Los Angeles. We reflect the thinking of an identifiable part of the constituency of the NAEA. We are small. We do not contain multitudes. We are your conscience.