

ARTS

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other arts activists in a computer-simulated "conference room." (A "conference room" is a screen that allows users to simultaneously type in their own comments while reading the text of others.)

The potential to strengthen the arts community through instant and unlimited communication is enormous, Mixter says.

"I've been on [Arts Wire] for six months, and it's a very good mechanism for mobilizing action in terms of national lobbying. One of the things that I find in my city is Arts Wire is not only much less expensive than picking up the phone but much more effective. It's a really tremendous tool. It has tremendous potential. I don't even think we've tapped the potential yet."

About 20 groups in North Carolina subscribe to Arts Wire. Twelve of them - including the

North Carolina Arts Council in Raleigh, the Kenan Institute for the Arts in Winston-Salem and the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in Charlotte - have formed a coalition, Arts Wire/North Carolina, to extend the network to unconnected artists and arts groups across the state.

"Our state is so spread out - artists are spread from corner to corner," says Nancy Trovillian, assistant director for the North Carolina Arts Council, who is working with Arts Wire/North Carolina. "This is another way to communicate and tie us in nationally. It can combat feelings of isolation and allow us to be part of a national dialogue."

Arts Wire/North Carolina - along with arts associations across the U.S., including the New York Foundation for the Arts, which initiated Arts Wire - has applied for a \$465,000 federal grant from the Department of Commerce to expand technical assistance for Arts Wire. A chunk

of the funding would go to North Carolina.

According to David Green, director of communications for the New York Foundation for the Arts, about 60 to 70 more computer users subscribe to Arts Wire each month.

"We're tragically undercapitalized," Green says. "We're kind of bursting at the seams. We really need to raise more money."

Arts Wire began operating in 1992. But the concept of connecting artists through computers originated six years earlier on the tip of Long Island in the small town of Montauk. Artists, arts association directors and arts funders had gathered in the coastal town to discuss how to combat NEA's dwindling financial support.

"A lot of ideas and projects resulted there," Green says. "But a great feeling of so many connections had been made that there was a desire to keep it going, keep the spark of the flame going."

Anne Focke, an independent arts consultant who has worked

with Green's foundation, told Green and other conference leaders that she had heard colleagues rave about a fledgling computer technology called on-line bulletin services.

Ears pricked up. Within three years, the New York Foundation for the Arts had assembled a steering committee and selected a small computer software company - Meta Network in Alexandria, Virginia - to design Arts Wire.

Today, about 500 individuals and groups subscribe.

Steve Durland, editor-in-chief of the California-based arts magazine, *High Performance*, serves on Arts Wire's steering committee. He's also a textbook example of the computer network's potential.

Durland lives in rural Pittsboro, south of Chapel Hill. But his magazine is published in Santa Monica, Calif. With his computer, modem and \$25-a-month Arts Wire subscription, Durland can be surrounded by the trees and serenity of Chatham County while editing a cosmopolitan arts magazine based

3,000 miles away.

"Arts Wire is incredibly useful and important to me," he says.

"Having lived in Los Angeles for years, and then moving out here, I can be connected."

Mendoza, author of the scathing commentary about NEA on Arts Wire, uses words like "visionary" to describe the network. Perhaps more than any other Arts Wire subscriber, Mendoza is using the network to further his mission, which is realizing the freedom of expression.

"Many people would not know about the NEA vote to this day unless you lived in L.A. or Washington or San Francisco and read the paper," he says. "That leaves out a huge part of the country, including New York City since *The New York Times* didn't cover it. Now, we're using Arts Wire to formulate a letter of protest against the council's NEA denials."

For information on Arts Wire: call its Arizona office, (602) 829-0815; or contact it through internet, artswire@tmn.com.

YOUTH

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otherwise would have been sent to detention homes or training schools. According to Mauriello, these juvenile homes attempt to keep children close to home so they may continue their education and maintain family contact.

The Division of Youth Services' contract for running the juvenile homes is projected to be \$2.3 million for the year ending July 1995. That's the biggest contract for the Methodist Home, whose budget has more than doubled in the past year to \$8.5 million.

Now in the second year of its capital campaign, the Methodist Home has raised just over \$1 million. Bequest funding accounts for about \$700,000 of it and gifts and pledges make up about \$500,000.

Michael Milken's philanthropy

Following a high-rolling Wall Street career in junk bond trading and two years in federal prison for selling those junk bonds, Michael Milken is now making headlines for philanthropy.

In early September, The Milken Family Foundation of Santa Monica, Calif., awarded \$25,000 each - with no strings attached - to five elementary school educators in North Carolina and 145 elementary school educators in 30 other states.

The awards are presented with a touch of Milken-style extravagance: a group of state education officials trailed by TV crews descends on an elementary school and surprises a teacher or principal with the \$25,000 Milken Educators Award.

Milken and his brother Lowell created the foundation in 1982. It survived the heat of Milken's securities violation trial while Milken's company, Drexel Burnham Lambert, went under.

In North Carolina, Milken Educators Awards went to: Julia Taylor, Clyde Erwin Elementary teacher, Onslow County; Linda Turlington, Lafayette Elementary principal, Harnett County; Mary Rector, Sparta Elementary teacher, Alleghany County; Albert Winston, Hidden Valley Elementary principal, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County; and Tracy Gregory, Perquimans Central School teacher, Perquimans County.

Susan Gray



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