

## DESIGNING POLICY FOR ARTS DEVELOPMENT THE 2005 SURVEY

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### Overall Findings

Throughout this report you will find evidence that, we hope, demonstrates to you that:

- There's a “demographic effect” that is a “fact of life” in arts development work. Women and better-educated people tend to be more responsive to the arts (at least, to the arts presented by arts organizations) than do men and less-well-educated people.
- Demand for the arts may be slightly higher than it was 32 years ago
- Regardless of their own interests, people want more arts in the schools; men want arts in schools as much as women do.
- Demand for the arts seems to be higher in places where there is already an arts program – having more arts doesn't “quench” interest in the arts
- Outside exposure to the arts, by itself, probably does not create receptivity to the arts; it must be coupled with an intentional program of local arts development
- Attendance at arts events while in school predicts greater receptivity to the arts later in life
- While the demographic effect is real, intentional policy with a clear vision can chip away at demographic differences, moving communities towards a more democratic ideal
- Even in places that are “underserved,” people want the arts.

### Background

I'd like to say that our 1973 study rocked the world of arts policy. It did lead to my getting my first “real” job in arts administration, when Winnie Scott, who ran a community arts council, read it, tracked me down, and offered me a job as her assistant; and I've spent all my life in community arts work ever since. But did it really affect anyone's arts development planning? I suspect not.

Still, the ideas were out there. And they were still percolating in my head for nearly 30 years. So when the Wisconsin Arts Board said, “Why not replicate that study, now that 30 years have passed?” I jumped at the chance.

### Purpose of Replicating the Survey

There were three reasons to replicate the study:

- To see what people in each of these communities are interested in now. This would be helpful in helping local activists design programs for their towns.
- To see whether any of the demographic differences – between women's and men's perceptions of the importance of the arts, for example – have changed over time. This would be interesting as we see whether we are succeeding in the general goal to reach more people, and more types of people, through the arts; and it would be especially interesting to funders and state- and federal-level arts administrators.
- To see whether there remain any differences between the five original test communities and other communities. If there were any, it would suggest that we *can* affect the long-

run culture of a community. This would be interesting to local activists, funders, and broader policy-makers alike. In the unlikely event that we could detect some lasting effect, it might shed light on the hypothesis about stepwise development that we made in 1973.

## Process

The key team included: Dr. Peter Ewell, now an evaluation leader in higher education (whose life path separated from mine many years ago); Miranda McClenaghan of the Office of Liberal Studies and the Arts at UW-Madison, which is a descendent of the Office of Community Arts Development; and her student assistant Sarah Ebel. Greg Barker, a data specialist at Northern Illinois University agreed, as an objective outsider, to verify whether the replies we got represented a statistically usable sample.

We recognized, and had to take into account, some important things:

- The world of “rural America” is just not the same world as it was in 1973. Then, rural America meant “isolated America.” Now, with interstate highway access to just about anywhere, social mobility, television, cable television, the internet, and a remarkable network of educational centers and community colleges, few people are truly “isolated” if they do not wish to be. Furthermore, federal and state arts agencies emphasize “underserved” communities in their funding and programming, and make it clear that “underserved” includes isolated small communities (indeed, in Wisconsin, there was not a state arts agency at all in 1967).
- This means that some of the questions that indicated a hunger for arts experiences in 1973 (for example, willingness to travel out of town for arts access) may no longer be especially useful to look at. For consistency's sake, however, we left such questions in.
- Similarly, today many community festivals, trade shows, and farmers markets include arts-and-crafts activity and music; this and the large number of bands in bars and other venues made questions like “have you gone to an arts-and-crafts event” or “a live concert?” not very useful for this study. We completely applaud this movement of integrating the arts into other experiences but, since our 1973 study was aimed at learning whether people sought out the arts for their own sake, these questions are not helpful now. Looking at people's interest in drama, however, *is* useful because drama is much less frequently attached to other events. Again, however, for consistency's sake, we left the questions in.
- We had to swallow hard and realize that some of the questions we'd asked in 1973 just weren't worded as well as they should have been. Again, however, for consistency's sake, we asked them in the same way.
- And today, people are “surveyed to death.” We knew it would be much harder to get a reliable sample.

With the help of Miranda's department and the indefatigable energy and flying fingers of Sarah Ebel, the “replication” began to take shape.

First, there was the questionnaire. It needed to be the same as before (although we added a question about television-watching habits). It is attached as Appendix A, and it assessed several things:

- Whether people were aware of arts activity in town
- Which local groups provide activity
- Whether they think the arts *are* important in town now, and whether they think the arts *should be* important
- Whether they think the arts *are* important in K-12 education now, and whether they think the arts *should be* important in education

- Whether they participate in the arts
- Whether there is a difference in their participation in “local” and “out of town” arts events
- What the demographics of the respondent are

Then we had to decide which towns to use. The original five project towns, of course, and the four “control” towns. But with technology, highways and population shifts, the four control towns were hardly “isolated” in the 1973 sense of the word. So, with suggestions from the Wisconsin Arts Board, we added an additional three towns which were, as far as the WAB knew, lacking in arts infrastructure, and geographically isolated. These towns were Florence, Medford, and Grantsburg, whose populations per the 2000 census were 2,319, 4,350, and 1,369 respectively.

Then we had to deal with the recognition that a mailed questionnaire is no longer something novel, as it was then. We hoped that a well-crafted cover letter, and a questionnaire that referred to their town by name (“How important are the arts in Portage?”) would help some. Then, we identified 150 names from the phone book – as we had done then – and these people received the hand-addressed mailed questionnaire with stamped reply envelope; and we did a second mailing to people who had not returned the first. (And, yes, we are aware of the drawbacks of using the phone book; however we could not find an affordable alternative.) Then, we hired 4-H students and non-profit clubs in each town to hand-deliver an additional 100 questionnaires to addresses we selected from the phone book; they left the questionnaire in the hands of the person who answered the door, and picked up completed questionnaires an hour or two later.

#### Response Rate

We ended up with 1,085 usable surveys. After adjusting for questionnaires returned with bad addresses, this represented a combined response rate of 40.8% (low of 28%, high of 47.2%, but most were clustered around the 40.8% rate). The first question that had to be answered was, can we put the replies from the three groups together, achieving a large enough sample to perform statistical tests? Or are the people from Mailing #1, Mailing #2, and Hand-Delivery fundamentally different kinds of people? To answer this question, we hired Greg Barker, an independent data analyst from DeKalb, Illinois, to make a judgment. We were as surprised – and delighted – as he was when he declared that “there was very little different in the response patterns between the administration methods.”

Information from any given town might be useful for current arts activists in those towns, but because the numbers for each town are relatively small, Peter found it more useful to cluster towns where possible – the five original towns, for instance (compared to non-project towns); or towns with high, medium, low levels of arts activity, believing that this would be more useful in crafting state-level policy.

#### Terminology

When we refer to the perceived “importance” of the arts, we are referring to people's responses to the question, “How important should the arts be in your town?” with four possible choices (very important, moderately important, not very important, completely unimportant). However, it is also useful to look at the “gap” between how important people say the arts *are* now, and how important they say the arts *should be* – this gives an inkling of what we could identify as “hunger” for the arts. And finally, it is useful to look at the number of people who believe that there is “too little” (compared to “too much” and “just right”) arts activity in town now.

Looking at “attitudes” towards the arts, Peter used these pieces of information (importance now, importance should be, gap, and “too little” arts). Looking at “participation” in the arts, he used replies

reply to the questions about attendance at events (whether the events were by local or visiting groups), and willingness to travel to attend arts events.

Peter created an “Arts Exposure Index” for the 12 towns, as we wanted to see what the relationship between existing level of arts activity, and the demand for more (or less) activity might be. To do this, he looked at 3 possible ways of classifying the towns. The first was to look at the Wisconsin Arts Board's perception of the level of activity, based on a combination of staff observation and number of entries in the WAB data base for that town. The second was to look at towns' own perceptions of the amount of activity offered (a combination of respondents' reports that there was an arts council in town, and their report of activity by local or by out-of-town organizations). The third was to use the Creative Industries census for the town, as provided by Americans for the Arts using Dun & Bradstreet classifications. Peter determined that the correlation among these was fairly strong so, for analysis purposes, he used the Creative Industries census only – since it is based on numbers rather than perceptions – to classify towns of high, medium, and low activity.

Finally, he created an index for “Local Arts Activity.” He grouped towns into “high” and “low” activity based on people's reports of how visible the arts are in the community. The four towns where the arts are “high” (66%+ of people reporting local performances are available) are Spring Green (with remarkable number of galleries and performances), Baraboo (with Extension-sponsored studio tours, museums and a UW campus with strong arts programs), Adams-Friendship (with Sand County Players' highly visible, non-traditional performances taking place in a restaurant and supporting other nonprofits in town, probably attracting a greater cross-section of people than might a traditional arts nonprofit in a stand-alone arts facility), and Portage (with a visible arts center downtown).

### Who Provides Arts Activity in Town?

For arts development purposes at the state level, it may be interesting to know who is providing arts activity. Typically, arts administrators are aware of nonprofit arts organizations doing this, but there are others, and anyone designing statewide arts policy should acknowledge and work with these groups. Replying to the question “Who provides arts activity in your community?” we got this list, listed according to which organization was ranked #1 by the respondent:

Schools, 498  
Clubs (local arts or other nonprofits), 206  
Don't know, 133  
College, 93  
Church, 88  
Touring groups, 43  
UW Extension, 27  
Other, 19

### Summary of Interesting Data, All Towns

Looking at all 12 towns together, we found:

- a gender difference for both the questions of importance of the arts in the community, and for arts in the schools. Women also perceive “too little” arts in the community more than men:

	#	639	333
<b>Q1a Arts in Community Important (Top 2 of 4 choices)</b>	552	70.9%	59.8%
<b>Q1b Arts in Community Should Be (Top 2)</b>	870	93.6%	81.2%
<b>Community Gap</b>		22.7%	21.4%
<b>Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)</b>	498	54.5%	44.3%
<b>Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)</b>	841	89.5%	79.1%
<b>Kids Gap</b>		35.0%	34.8%
<b>Q3 Arts Activity Too Little</b>	505	60.0%	46.3%

Interestingly, however, the “gap” is about the same for women as for men.

- a gender difference in participation, beginning when they were in school:

	#	Female	Male
<b>Q6a Seen Drama</b>	466	50.9%	41.4%
<b>Q6b Seen Concert</b>	536	57.5%	50.0%
<b>Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts</b>	622	69.8%	51.5%
<b>Q6e Gone Out of Town for These</b>	496	52.4%	47.8%
<b>Q6f Would Go Out of Town for These</b>	732	79.1%	67.9%
<b>Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company</b>	346	51.6%	37.3%
<b>Q12a Would Attend</b>	460	61.2%	45.5%
<b>Q15 Interested in Local Company</b>	288	48.7%	33.1%
<b>Q16a Would Attend Local</b>	398	59.5%	43.9%
<b>Q25a Participate in School</b>	590	65.7%	56.7%
<b>Q26a Attend in School</b>	751	82.4%	71.4%

- a difference among people with different levels of education in their belief about the importance of arts in the community, as well as their own participation; but it is interesting that this difference *disappears* when it comes to people's desires for their children:

	Educational Background		
	K-12 Only	Voc Sch	CollegePlus
#	380	258	366
Q1a Important Arts in Community (Top 2)	62.2%	64.8%	74.4%
Q1b Arts in Community Should Be (Top 2)	83.8%	88.6%	95.0%
Community Gap	21.6%	23.8%	20.6%
Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)	69.4%	67.9%	70.4%
Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)	86.6%	92.7%	95.7%
Kids Gap	17.2%	24.8%	25.3%
Q3 Arts Activity Too Little	47.6%	57.9%	61.3%
Q6a Seen Drama	36.4%	42.4%	62.4%
Q6b Seen Concert	43.5%	49.8%	69.3%
Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts	51.9%	64.3%	76.0%
Q6e Gone Out of Town for These	39.8%	48.2%	65.1%
Q6f Would Go Out of Town for These	62.7%	76.0%	86.8%
Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company	32.6%	47.7%	61.9%
Q12a Would Attend	44.4%	50.9%	71.8%
Q15 Interested in Local Company	30.9%	41.7%	58.5%
Q16a Would Attend Local	38.9%	52.2%	72.7%

- If we look at school background, those people who report having “attended performances when they were in school” attended the arts last year at a startlingly different rate than people who said that they did not attend performances in school. (People who participated in the arts in school, however, feel about the same about the amount of art available in the community as people who simply attended events in school, and they attend events at about the same rate):

### Attend performances in School?

		YES		NO	
		#	%	#	%
<i>How do you feel about the amount of arts activities available?</i>	Too much	11	1.5%	13	6.9%
	Just right	275	37.8%	106	56.4%
	Too little	441	60.7%	69	36.7%
<i>Seen a live drama performance in past year?</i>	Yes	413	53.8%	58	27.8%
	No	355	46.2%	151	72.2%
<i>Seen a live concert?</i>	Yes	470	61.4%	67	32.2%
	No	296	38.6%	141	67.8%
<i>Been to arts-crafts event?</i>	Yes	540	70.4%	92	43.8%
	No	227	29.6%	118	56.2%

- Occupation (white collar/professionals vs non-white collar/professionals) shows the same general pattern as education – hardly surprising, since white collar-professionals tend to be college graduates
- Of length of residence, the only noteworthy observation is that newcomers (having lived in town 1-5 years) are more “cosmopolitan,” having gone out of town to attend arts events more than others, and having a greater interest in doing so (88% newcomers, about 72% in each of the other length-of-residence groups)

- Looking at age, people under 45 have a much larger “gap” between how important the arts are and should be in town than others. Whether this is attributable to youth culture, higher expectations, the likelihood that this group is looking for activities for their children, or just higher energy level is unknown, but it’s an interesting observation. The gap is even more dramatic when it comes to their children. The three age groups have gone to a play at about the same rate in the past year; not surprisingly, seniors are not especially interested in traveling to see a show.

	Age		
	Up to 45	46-65	65
#	342	408	213
<b>Q1a Arts in Community Important(Top 2)</b>	62.0%	69.1%	70.9%
<b>Q1b Arts in Community Should Be (Top 2)</b>	91.0%	88.9%	88.8%
<b>Community Gap</b>	29.0%	19.8%	17.9%
<b>Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)</b>	64.9%	71.3%	79.3%
<b>Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)</b>	93.4%	91.3%	89.5%
<b>Kids Gap</b>	28.5%	20.0%	10.2%
<b>Q3 Arts Activity Too Little</b>	63.8%	56.0%	36.0%
<b>Q6a Seen Drama</b>	49.7%	49.5%	42.3%
<b>Q6b Seen Concert</b>	65.0%	57.0%	44.8%
<b>Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts</b>	64.6%	67.2%	55.3%
<b>Q6e Gone Out of Town for These</b>	50.9%	55.1%	41.9%
<b>Q6f Would Go Out of Town for These</b>	81.6%	86.4%	62.2%
<b>Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company</b>	58.1%	44.4%	30.6%
<b>Q12a Would Attend</b>	62.1%	55.8%	45.5%
<b>Q15 Interested in Local Company</b>	53.1%	45.8%	26.1%
<b>Q16a Would Attend Local</b>	60.2%	56.6%	39.7%
<b>Q25a Participate in School</b>	65.6%	63.5%	56.4%
<b>Q26a Attend in School</b>	84.3%	80.2%	67.3%

### Observations About Underserved Towns

The Wisconsin Arts Board has a particular interest in “underserved communities.” Therefore we wanted to make a few observations about “underserved communities,” even though this was not the



point of the study. Grantsburg, Medford and Florence were identified by the WAB as “underserved” because they are geographically isolated from population centers, and because they have no “arts infrastructure” to the best of the WAB’s knowledge.

Are they any different from the other communities? We can make three types of observations.

- The first item of interest is that 284 of the 1,085 respondents are from these three very small towns – perhaps an indication that they are hungry to be asked for their opinion!
- The demographics of the respondents in these towns are not really any different from respondents in other towns – there are about the same percentage of K-12 and college-educated people, for example.
- People in these communities hold opinions similar to people in “not underserved” communities. They participate less because there is less to do, but their aspirations for their children are no different from the aspirations of people in “not underserved” places.

	<b>Underserved?</b>	
	<b>No (#=801)</b>	<b>Yes(#=284)</b>
<b>Q1a Arts in Community Important (Top 2)</b>	71.3%	66.1%
<b>Q1b Arts in Community Should be (Top 2)</b>	90.8%	84.5%
<b>Community Gap</b>	19.5%	18.4%
<b>Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)</b>	50.8%	52.0%
<b>Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)</b>	86.9%	82.5%
<b>Kids Gap</b>	36.1%	30.5%
<b>Q3 Arts Activitiy Too Little</b>	53.3%	61.2%
<b>Q6a Seen Drama</b>	51.8%	35.5%
<b>Q6b Seen Concert</b>	56.7%	48.5%
<b>Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts</b>	66.4%	57.4%
<b>Q6e Gone Out of Town for These</b>	50.3%	52.7%
<b>Q6f Would go Out Of Town for These</b>	75.7%	73.3%
<b>Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company</b>	46.0%	46.6%
<b>Q12a Would Attend</b>	56.9%	52.0%
<b>Q15 Interested in Local Company</b>	42.5%	42.5%
<b>Q16a Would Attend Local</b>	53.3%	53.9%
<b>Q25a Participate in School</b>	63.8%	57.7%
<b>Q26a Attend in School</b>	79.4%	76.0%

- A second way of looking at “underserved” places is to use an “Arts Exposure” index as described earlier and compare towns where the Arts Exposure varies. In communities where the exposure is low, people are “hungry” for more; and even where it is high, people say it should be even higher. Aspirations for their children are about the same, however.

## Arts Exposure

#	Low 371	Mod. 349	High 365
Q1a Arts in Community Important (Top 2)	50.9%	70.1%	80.0%
Q1b Arts in Community Should be (Top 2)	84.8%	90.9%	91.8%
Community Gap	33.9%	20.8%	11.8%
Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)	48.2%	50.1%	54.8%
Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)	82.7%	86.4%	88.2%
Kids Gap	34.5%	36.3%	33.4%
Q3 Arts Activitiy Too Little	62.7%	58.1%	45.8%
Q6a Seen Drama	40.3%	48.3%	53.8%
Q6b Seen Concert	50.6%	55.5%	57.5%
Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts	54.7%	66.2%	71.2%
Q6e Gone Out of Town for These	53.7%	53.6%	45.6%
Q6f Would go Out Of Town for These	74.9%	75.3%	75.0%
Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company	48.3%	46.6%	42.8%
Q12a Would Attend	56.9%	55.6%	53.9%
Q15 Interested in Local Company	42.6%	41.0%	44.0%
Q16a Would Attend Local	54.7%	51.3%	54.0%
Q25a Participate in School	62.5%	59.9%	64.1%
Q26a Attend in School	78.0%	76.8%	80.6%

- Finally, we can look at communities with a relatively high degree of “Arts Activity” (Portage, Spring Green, Adams-Friendship, Baraboo) compared to communities with lower degrees of “Arts Activity.”

### Arts Activity

#	Low 745	High 340
Q1a Arts in Community Important (Top 2)	60.4%	71.8%
Q1b Arts in Community Should be (Top 2)	87.6%	92.6%
Community Gap	27.2%	20.8%
Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)	51.6%	50.0%
Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)	84.4%	88.8%
Kids Gap	32.8%	38.8%
Q3 Arts Activitiy Too Little	58.2%	49.2%
Q6a Seen Drama	42.6%	58.2%
Q6b Seen Concert	51.9%	60.2%
Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts	57.7%	77.8%
Q6e Gone Out of Town for These	50.0%	52.9%
Q6f Would go Out Of Town for These	74.3%	76.7%
Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company	45.7%	47.4%
Q12a Would Attend	53.5%	60.4%
Q15 Interested in Local Company	40.7%	48.0%
Q16a Would Attend Local	51.7%	58.3%
Q25a Participate in School	61.4%	63.9%
Q26a Attend in School	77.6%	80.4%

All of this suggests that:

- People who are interested in the arts have the opportunity for access
- People's aspirations for richness of experience in schools doesn't vary much, regardless of where they live
- In places that have considerable arts activity, people still want *more* activity. One could argue that having tasted the arts, people develop an appetite for more.

What General Comparisons Are There Between 1973 and 2005?

Before moving on to the particular types of towns, is there anything we can say in comparing the information from 1973 to the information from 2005? We are again hampered by having no tables in the 1973 study and no raw data, but there are a couple of things to note:

- The difference in participation in the arts between people who have attended college and not attended college hasn't changed much. In 1973 we said that "attendance rates for college-educated people are 15-30% (depending on art form) higher than others," and in 2005, we see college-educated people going to plays much more than K-12-educated people (62.4% vs 36.4% have attended a play in the last year) .
- In the one table that we do have – because it was used as an example in the 1973 technical appendix – we can compare the men and women in the project towns who say that there is "too little art" in town:

	1973	2005
women	50.4%	57.3%
men	39.5%	45.7%

This could suggest that the dramatically increased presence of the arts on cable television, the Wisconsin Arts Board's attention to "underserved" communities, the mobility of artists in search of inspiring and affordable workplaces, is also increasing demand – that more arts in the general environment is stimulating more demand. The increase is small, but this might be suggestive for a next study.

- Also striking is that where in both 1968 and 1973 we found that communities with no arts activity and infrastructure were "friendly" to the arts regardless of demographics, here we found that all communities – regardless of the presence of the arts in their towns – showed the "demographic effect" that had previously only shown up in the "arts exposed" towns – there is already a split between women and men, better and less well-educated people. If our original hypothesis is true (that people are initially receptive to the arts but exposure begins to fragment them), then perhaps the presence of the arts on television and the internet have served as "fragmenter."

#### Comparisons by Town, 1973 and 2005

What are people saying in these towns, and can we discern anything different in the last 30 years?

If we use "seen a drama in the past year" as the primary indicator of attendance at a stand-alone arts event it is interesting to note that there is not much variation among communities. Florence is a low at 28.6%, and Spring Green is a high at 68.4%, but the others cluster between 40-55%. Once again this is an indicator of how much is available now compared to 1973. People who want the arts will travel; of the people who attended an arts event last year, between a 43%- 62.6% traveled out of town to attend it.

#### What About the Project Towns?

Taken together, the original project towns are somewhat higher in their perception of the importance of the arts in town and they are more likely to have attended a play in the past year, but project town status has no impact on people's perception of the importance of the arts in schools. (Before anyone observes that the original project town list includes Spring Green, whose economy now significantly includes the arts, we must note that it also includes Adams-Friendship and Waupun, towns with little

discernable arts activity except for the Sand County Players in Adams.)

**Original Project Town?**

#	No 671	Yes 414
Q1a Arts in Community Important (Top 2)	63.5	73.3
Q1b Arts in Community Should be (Top 2)	86.7	92.8
Community Gap	23.2	19.5
Q2a Kids Important Arts (Top 2)	52.8	57.3
Q2b Kids Important Arts Should Be (Top 2)	85.2	86.6
Kids Gap	32.4	29.3
Q3 Arts Activitiy Too Little	56.9	52.9
Q6a Seen Drama	43.4	54.0
Q6b Seen Concert	53.8	55.7
Q6c Been to Arts/Crafts	59.7	71.0
Q6e Gone Out of Town for These	49.7	52.9
Q6f Would go Out Of Town for These	73.9	77.0
Q11 Interested in Out of Town Company	46.9	49.1
Q12a Would Attend	54.7	56.9
Q15 Interested in Local Company	41.9	43.7
Q16a Would Attend Local	52.8	54.6
Q25a Participate in School	58.9	67.4
Q26a Attend in School	76.3	82.0

Now let's see what has changed in the various towns since 1973, if anything.

First, four of the five project towns retain or have added significant arts activity. In Adams-Friendship, the Sand County Players have been established and dynamic young teachers are stressing the arts in school; indeed there is some talk of the school and community working together on an outstanding auditorium in the high school. In Portage, the Portage Center for the Arts is a flourishing operation, and there's an annual Zona Gale festival to honor an important local playwright. In Rhinelander, the School of the Arts – begun in 1966 – continues, the Northern Arts Council continues, and there's a strong arts program on the Nicolet College campus. In Spring Green, the American Players Theater presents an extraordinary summer-long series of professional drama, the Spring Green Arts Coalition is flourishing, the Frank Lloyd Wright legacy has become an economic force in town, there are scores of galleries and individual artists, the Gard Theater shows films and hosts performances, and the River Valley Community Theater is still flourishing. In Waupun, despite the slogan that it's the “City of Sculpture” because of many fine works in town, there is little arts activity.

Let's look at how the arts are perceived in these communities as well as the comparison towns. (Remember that our 1973 data is gone, but we used numbers to describe their perceptions in the narrative report.)

**2005: % people saying:**

	arts ARE very or moderately important in town life	arts SHOULD BE very or moderately important in town life	“too little art”	1973 comparison
<b>Adams-Friendship - P</b>	73.1	94.4	78.0	87% had said “too little.” They are still one of the top two towns in their likelihood of traveling to attend an arts event
<b>Antigo</b>	63.7	87.9	59.8	63.0% had said “too little”
<b>Baraboo</b>	83.1	92.1	46.7	28.0% had said “too little”
<b>Florence - U</b>	44.9	86.7	68.9	
<b>Grantsburg - U</b>	56.8	77.8	59.5	
<b>Highland</b>	50.6	87.9	61.5	70.0% had said “too little”
<b>Medford - U</b>	67.3	88.0	54.9	
<b>Portage - P</b>	80.5	94.6	48.3	“about 40%” had said “too little”
<b>Rhineland - P</b>	71.8	94.6	53.9	“about 40%” had said “too little”
<b>Spring Green - P</b>	87.3	89.8	34.2	13% had said “too little”
<b>Waupun - P</b>	52.6	85.9	59.7	“about 40%” had said “too little”
<b>Wautoma</b>	78.0	90.2	46.7	“about 40%” had said “too little”

P = project town    U=WAB “underserved” town

Interestingly, in Portage, Rhineland, Spring Green and Waupun – all project towns – more people are saying that there is “too little art.” Adams-Friendship, a project town, is still the highest in saying that there is “too little art,” although their dissatisfaction has dropped since 1973, perhaps as a result of the Sand County Players and a strong arts education program in the schools.

Baraboo is still behaving “like” a project town, perhaps because of the long-term presence of the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County campus there, with a strong arts program; in addition, Sauk County, of which Baraboo is the County Seat, has a vigorous program of arts grant-making, and the Sauk County Extension has been emphasizing arts and economic development.

In all of the other towns, hunger for the arts has been somewhat quenched, presumably because of easier access to arts events as a result of easier travel, cable television, touring arts activity, and more.

It is also interesting that, when towns are ranked according to how important they think the arts “should be,” project towns are #1, 2, and #3. #4, Baraboo, has behaved “like” a project town since 1973, again perhaps because of the long-term presence of a strong arts program on campus.

Finally it is interesting to note that the last three in this ranking – Florence, Grantsburg, and Waupun – are also the three towns where, on all three dimensions (Is there an arts council in town? Is there

availability of out-of-town performance? Availability of local performance?) a third or fewer of the respondents answered positively.

All of this taken together is suggestive. It suggests that the long run matters – arts programs with longevity do change people's perceptions – not only of what is available, but of what *should* be available. And, on the other end of the scale, communities where there is little or no arts infrastructure (Florence, Grantsburg, Waupun) people are least likely to feel that the arts *should* be important.

Infrastructure matters. The passage of time matters. The presence of arts seems to stimulate an interest in more.

### Did The Project Matter?

Let's turn to our final question. Thirty-five years have passed since “The Arts in the Small Community” project was completed. We can think of situational reasons to “explain” the numbers for all 12 of our study towns. This one is close to an interstate, that one has a community theater, this one is the most isolated, that one has a UW campus. (We have attached a comparison of information from 1973 – as best we can reconstruct it from our narrative report – and 2005. This is Appendix B.)

The key test in this entire study was a “regression analysis.” As Peter explains in Appendix C, regression analysis is a technique that allows us to assess “the effects of several factors on a particular outcome...at the same time.” It lets us “sort out” the interrelationships between factors; for example, it can eliminate the “education effect” in towns where the population of college-educated people may be high.

In the material above, we have looked at the distinctions between the perceptions and interests of women and men, level of education, attendance at arts events in school, the relative number of “creative industries” to the population of the town, and whether the town was an original project town.

We have also returned to certain key “outcomes” that seem to reflect interest in the arts as we've looked at the data; these have been the degree to which people attend drama, and other arts events; levels of attendance at both out-of-town and local arts events; the degree to which people think that sufficient arts activity is available; and finally, the gap between people's observation of the importance of the arts in town now compared to how important they *should* be.

When a regression analysis is performed, we see some interesting patterns:

- Attending concerts: no independent relationship (“concerts” is also a very vague term now, given the prevalence of bands everywhere) with project town status, though education level and school experience had an effect.
- Attending performances from out of town: Being from a project town has no independent relationship to this behavior, although education, experience in school, and town activity level had strong associations.
- Attitude towards amount of available activity: Being from a project town has no impact here, although the other factors do strongly relate to attitudes.
- Gap between perceived and desired importance of the arts. Education and town activity level are strong and significantly related to how important people think the arts should be, compared to how they are. Gender and school exposure do not relate. *But being from a project town relates modestly at the 90% confidence level.*
- Attending plays: Although gender, education, exposure in school and level of activity in town had “strong, statistically, and independent explanatory contributions to this, *being from one of*

*the original project towns ALSO had a modest independent relationship to whether people attended plays, at the 88% confidence level.*

- Attending Arts & Crafts shows: While the other four factors had “highly significant” relationships to this variable, *being from a project town is statistically significant at the 92% confidence level* as a predictor of attendance at these shows.
- Attending performances created locally: “All four initial background factors – gender, educational level, exposure in school, and level of arts activity in town – show strong, independent, and statistically significant associations with this outcome. *BUT being from an original project town in this case ALSO showed a strong, statistically significant, and independent associate – at the 99% confidence level – with attendance at local performances.*”

Think back on the early assertion that the purpose of the original “Arts in the Small Community” project was to build local friendliness to the arts, and to enable local art-making. These figures – most importantly, the finding about local drama – suggest that the project did, indeed, have an effect over the long term – even if people locally may not even know about, or remember, the project.

A final look at the data corroborates this conclusion. If indeed the intent of the original project was to “democratize” the arts we would expect to see acceptance of, and participation in, the arts more equally between men and women (ie the “gender effect” is lessened) and more equally among people of differing education levels and differing occupational status. We see this in the project towns, taken together.

Note that in the project towns the difference between men and women is much less than the difference between men and women in non-project towns – *there is only an 8% difference between men and women who say there is “too little” art in town in the project towns where there is a 17% difference in non-project towns, and behavior is similar:*

		PROJECT				NON-PROJECT			
		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>How do you feel about the amount of activities available?</b>	Too much	4	3.4%	3	1.3%	13	6.7%	5	1.4%
	Just right	59	49.6%	100	43.1%	92	47.4%	132	35.9%
	Too little	56	47.1%	129	55.6%	89	45.9%	231	62.8%
<b>Seen live drama performance?</b>	Yes	68	53.1%	132	54.5%	72	34.3%	194	48.6%
	No	60	46.9%	110	45.5%	138	65.7%	205	51.4%
<b>Seen live concert?</b>	Yes	69	53.9%	141	58.5%	100	47.6%	226	56.9%
	No	59	46.1%	100	41.5%	110	52.4%	171	43.1%
<b>Been to arts/crafts event?</b>	Yes	81	63.8%	179	73.7%	92	44.0%	270	67.5%
	No	46	36.2%	64	26.3%	117	56.0%	130	32.5%

Similarly, notice that although there is a similar difference in perceptions between project and non-project towns, when it comes to education level, there are dramatic differences when it comes to behavior. The “education effect” is still there, but less in the project towns. In the project towns, there's a 19% gap between less- and better-educated people who report having gone to a play where



the gap is 29% in non-project towns; a 21% gap in live concert attendance in project towns compared to a 29% gap in non-project towns; and a 14% gap in arts-and-crafts fair attendance in project towns, compared to an a 30% gap in non-project towns.

College		PROJECT						NON-PROJECT					
		K-12		Vocational		College		K-12		Vocational		College	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>How do you feel about the amount of activity?</i>	Too much	5	4.1%	2	2.0%	0	0%	13	6.0%	3	2.1%	3	1.5%
	Just right	63	51.2%	45	45.0%	57	40.1%	97	44.7%	52	36.6%	73	36.1%
	Too little	55	44.7%	53	53.0%	85	59.9%	107	49.3%	87	61.3%	126	62.4%
<b>Live drama?</b>	Yes	63	47.7%	45	43.7%	100	67.1%	74	30.3%	64	41.6%	127	59.1%
	No	69	52.3%	58	56.3%	49	32.9%	170	69.7%	90	58.4%	88	40.9%
<b>Live concert?</b>	Yes	63	47.7%	51	49.5%	102	68.9%	100	41.2%	77	50.0%	149	69.6%
	No	69	52.3%	52	50.5%	46	31.1%	143	58.8%	77	50.0%	65	30.4%
<b>Arts-crafts?</b>	Yes	83	62.9%	74	71.2%	114	77.0%	112	45.9%	92	59.7%	161	75.2%
	No	49	37.1%	30	28.8%	34	23.0%	132	54.1%	62	40.3%	53	24.8%

The project towns are moving closer to the “democratic ideal.”

### Conclusion

Causality is hard to attribute in the best of circumstances, and 35 years makes much attribution of causality nearly impossible.

But it would appear that the longevity of arts exposure matters to the culture of a town, both in terms of its attitudes and what people do. It would appear that the presence of an arts infrastructure – an arts council, activities to attend – do raise people's interest in the arts. It would appear that if people have a taste, they want more.

And it would appear that a project with a mission of the democratization of the arts experience for all people can make a difference. And indeed, being from a project town strongly correlates with the likelihood that people will be change their behavior about the arts, especially as the arts are locally-produced.

We can't really test our 1973 hypothesis that places with no exposure to the arts are initially friendly to the arts across-the-board, fragmenting with exposure to the arts from the outside – a fragmentation that can be “healed” by deliberate, strategic, locally-produced arts activity, bringing about greater friendliness to the arts than was there prior to “outside exposure.” However, nothing that we have found suggests that this hypothesis is not true, either. In America now, there is constant exposure to the arts via television and the internet, touring to schools, movie rentals and more – so we would

expect to find demographic fragmentation. But as we look at our original project towns, and we look at their significant friendliness to locally-produced drama, we continue to hypothesize that fragmentation can be overcome by an intentional local effort to enhance participation in the arts.

“If you try, you can indeed alter the face and the heart of America.” These visionaries in 1967 may indeed have begun that process.