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Salute to a Small Federal Agency

By CARL BODE

TODAY I stand at tall attention to a very small agency, the National Endowment for the Arts. With such a heavy title I'd expect to see in its beige cubicles and corridors: flow charts, memos in sextuplicate, each with its own color; photos of the President, adorned with laurel leaves; and throngs of functionaries in their dark suits or dun dresses, crowding the water coolers. Instead the NEA swings, as do its jazzed-up offices.

What it's done for the arts in the few years of its existence is so salutary that I yearn to protect it. I yearn to shelter it from the combed congressman whose culture consists of watching reruns of reruns of "Bonanza." The National Endowment for the Arts was founded to give a home to theatrical workers and even to his Naked Theater, and better yet to the living to theatrical workers. It's done, as do the NEA, in its beige cubicles and corridors: flow charts, memos in sextuplicate, each with its own color; photos of the President, adorned with laurel leaves; and throngs of functionaries in their dark suits or dun dresses, crowding the water coolers. Instead the NEA swings, as do its jazzed-up offices.

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