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MEMORANDUM

June 29, 1982

TO: Senator
FROM: ADC
RE: Rhode Island State Council on the Arts

Finally a new Director has been selected for the State Arts Council. It was finalized last week at a council meeting but created almost no fanfare and was noted by the Providence Journal in an obscure piece on the obituary page in Saturday's paper.

The person selected is Christina White, currently the director of a small struggling arts organization known as Inner City Arts. She is familiar with the local arts scene - having also worked at the Arts Council as a grants officer for 3 years. But she is not a dynamic person who could be considered in the same league with most state council directors. She won out over 3 or 4 other contenders who all had more drive and ability in my estimation.

But the Rhode Island arts picture is now very much dominated by the Council chairman, Dan Lecht. My guess is that he chose White because she will not threaten him in any way. He can continue to call all the shots without being undercut or outsmarted by his director. Diane Disney, I suspect was, among other things, too intelligent to coexist with him.

Rudy Nashan, the outgoing Arts Endowment representative for New England, claims he was assured by Lecht that he was to be the choice. He also says he turned down two jobs because of Lecht's assurances. He is furious now and will undoubtedly join the swelling ranks of people who are out to get Lecht. Rudy may not be a ball of fire but he would have at least brought some broader experience to the job.

The Journal is going to look into the selection process that was used here. There is some evidence that the council members who are not Lecht allies were kept in the dark about the whole thing. They were simply told at last week's meeting that Christina White was the new director. She starts in mid-July.