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Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982): News Article 12

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A sad state of the arts

Since September, six new performing centers and concert halls have opened across the country. Meyerhoff Hall in Baltimore cost \$22 million, which was provided by the city, the state and a \$10 million gift from a local philanthropist. Peoria, Ill. dedicated a new \$64 million civic center, designed by architect Philip Johnson and paid for with \$20 million from the state, \$1.3 million from private donations and the rest underwritten by a city hotel, restaurant and entertainment tax.

The performing arts center in Eugene, Ore. cost \$26.7 million, which the city raised from a bond issue and private contributions. New Orleans refurbished an old Beaux-Arts movie palace, while East Lansing, Mich. and Colorado Springs dedicated spanking new facilities.

Two weeks ago, the Metropolitan Center in Boston suddenly announced it was shutting down because the management had discovered that the roof had structural problems. Luciano Pavarotti and the Boston Ballet's "Nutcracker" - the only two attractions on the Met Center's fall calendar - were hastily dispatched to makeshift performance space in

construction costs, but still peanuts in comparison to recent expenditures in Peoria and Eugene.

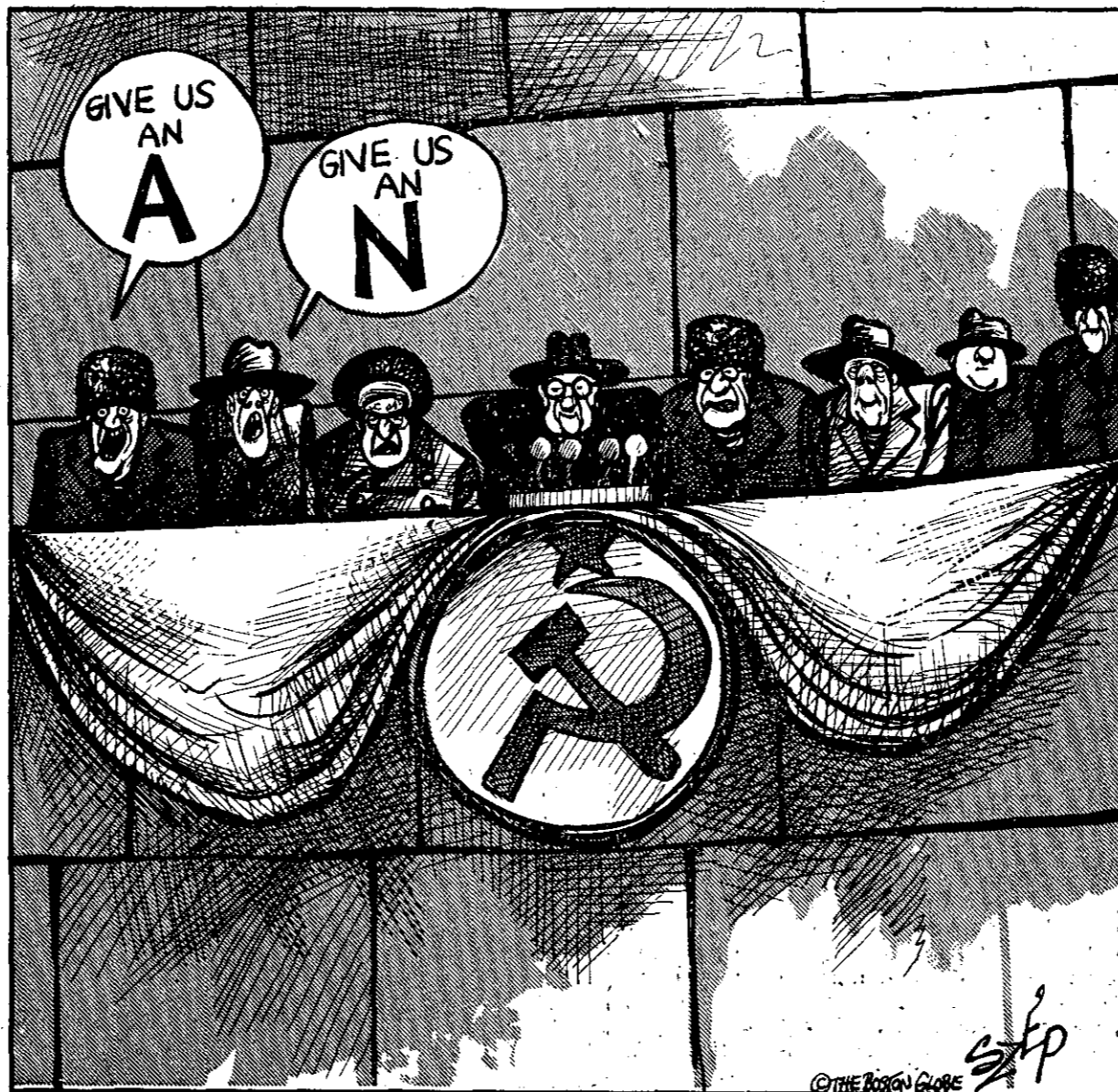
Fundraising - slightly more than \$4 million so far, just \$750,000 last year - covered only the original budget and has been unable to make a dent in outstanding debt and keep up with interest payments of approximately \$12,000 a week.

Unfortunately, the Met Center didn't have enough money to do the job right at the start. Instead, it renovated the former vaudeville house for dance, opera and Broadway musicals on a piecemeal basis. In that sense, the current crunch in the face of known structural defects was predictable. Still, it's unfortunate that the shutdown comes when hopes were high that new professional management and new leadership on the board of trustees would reverse the center's economic fortunes.

Although the Boston Symphony Orchestra managed to better its own centennial fundraising goal last year and the Museum of Fine Arts has successfully cultivated younger donors, Boston is basically a nickel and dime town in a nickel and dime state as far as the arts are concerned.

Nineteenth century patrons excluded the population at large from their board rooms and ran arts organizations like private clubs. This old-guard legacy has lingered on too long. The assumption that someone else would pick up the tab has hurt fundraising efforts and the credibility of many cultural institutions here.

Over the last decade, state government here has finally acknowledged that the arts are important to the quality of life and the economic climate of the state and increased funding levels from \$1.7 million to \$5.5 million in the past five years. The state has lost about \$10 million from Reagan Administration cutbacks at the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. But, more important, there is still precious little financial support from



Soviet leader Yuri Andropov named to Presidium

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take a break

I take strong exception to Kenneth Rossano's Nov. 20 op-ed column, "Time to end the Blue Laws." I don't believe that short-term economic gains compare to the possible long-term implications for quality of life. Repeal suggests that Sunday will come to feel like any other day, that our competitive marketplace mentalities will be kept perpetually pulsating.

While many find little meaning in traditional religious observances, Sunday has remained a day to pull back from the regular hectic pace for a day with one's family, a leisurely brunch with friends, a slow walk through the Arboretum or unclogged city streets. I wonder if we need to be

Where were blacks when Bradley ran?

David Nyhan's Nov. 7 report on Thomas Bradley's candidacy for the California governorship is the best one I have read to date. But to suggest that it was "lost ... on the day he was born" is overdoing it, overstating the impact of the racial issue. Bradley and his staff ran a highly skillful and sophisticated campaign, one that took cognizance of the racial factor - just as a female gubernatorial candidate would have to take heed of the sexist factor - and isolated it as successfully as circumstances allowed.

After all, Bradley lost to the

percent of white voters said race counted, and while a few hundred thousand anti-black votes are not insignificant, California blacks were not helpless to checkmate the damage to Bradley. They could have fully maximized their own voter clout. But, alas, "the blacks did not show up," as Mary McGrory has remarked.

And where was Carl Holmans (head of National Urban Coalition) and other Afro-American political figures who are now quick to place the bulk of the blame for Bradley's defeat on 200,000 whites whose neurotic anti-black preferences sur-

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POLITAN Grand Orchestra of 54 members.

An advertisement for opening night at the Metropolitan Theatre, now the Met Center.

the inelegant and strictly utilitarian Hynes Auditorium.

What is going on here? Is Boston about to become a cultural backwater, remembered more for past glories than it is for the vitality of its present cultural climate? Is the Athens of America a fraud?

Boston is currently experiencing a lean season in sharp contrast to last year, when dance thrived and downtown theaters were lit. Old North Church is struggling to raise \$100,000 to pay for the renovation of its historic 237-year old bells that were played by Paul Revere. Two Boston banks have begun foreclosure proceedings against the Museum of Transportation. Sarah Caldwell has stirred up controversy over a proposed cultural exchange with Imelda Marcos of the Philippines in return for a reported \$100,000 a year. The Boston Ballet, in the midst of changing administrations, faces an uphill financial fight.

Money is tight and there are real questions about the Met Center's ability to raise an estimated \$350,000 to \$1 million needed for roof repairs and the completion of the interior renovations. Will local banks come up with additional loans to protect investments already made? Will the public respond to this latest shortfall or has it had it with last-minute crises and the slapdash management of the past?

A shoestring operation from the beginning, the Met Center was disingenuously billed as Boston's answer to New York's Lincoln Center or Washington's Kennedy Center. The Met Center has always had to beg and borrow to do business. Initially it needed about \$3.5 million, a figure since doubled by inflation and

Moxie and red faces

When the editors of the Five Star Journal, the student newspaper at Eisenhower High School in Yakima, Wash., decided to do a story on how easy it was for teenagers to buy liquor illegally, they sent several students out to test the theory at local package stores.

They found that it was all easier than they had thought — no questions asked, and no check of ID cards, not even for a student described in the resulting story as "obviously not 21."

The state's Liquor Control Board was not very happy about this — not so much, it seems, about the fact that teenagers could buy liquor illegally, but at the bad light the Journal's story cast on its operations. Rather than doing a little cracking down on liquor stores — which were not named in the Journal's story — the agency demanded the names of the stu-

corporations and private individuals.

Massachusetts is the third largest arts producer in the nation. The non-profit arts industry — over 650 organizations statewide — had an overall economic impact of \$763 million last year.

A Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities' survey of the top 261 Massachusetts companies, conducted in the summer of 1981, indicated they gave \$3 million to state cultural organizations, an embarrassingly low 1.8 percent of the combined operating budgets of all the cultural groups in the commonwealth. In comparison, corporate support is four percent in San Francisco, seven percent in Houston, and 14 percent in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities is attempting to help change this through regional business committees for the arts in Boston, Worcester and the Berkshires by broadening the base of support for arts groups across the commonwealth. The national economic picture is grim. There has to be greater recognition and commitment to cultural needs and more pressure exerted on the private sector here to bear a fair share of the costs.

After all, it isn't as if the arts aren't patronized here or as if they aren't touted as one of the state's finer selling points.

It is a major embarrassment that Boston is without proper performance facilities — even if it's only a temporary situation. The Met Center roof must be repaired, its unfinished renovation — ceiling, upper balcony, carpeting, light fixtures, new marquee and so on — completed. The place has to be maintained and operated in a financially sound fashion to ensure continued support. More than any of this, attitudes and giving patterns must change radically — unless, of course, Boston is content to let Eugene, East Lansing and Peoria pass it by.

students involved for possible prosecution (purchasing liquor under 21 is a misdemeanor in Washington).

Eisenhower's principal refused to reveal the students' names, praising their "moxie" — what older reporters would call their good news-sense and their investigative zeal.

The Liquor Control Board backed off — it is now doing some undercover work of its own — and the matter never became a great First Amendment issue. The incident does provide, however, some rather pointed commentary on what it is that often prompts law enforcement agencies to chase after the reporter who exposes the wrongdoing, rather than the wrongdoers who, of course, would not be doing wrong if the law enforcement agency had been doing its job — it's called a red face.

accosted by still another day of traffic congestion, noise and franticness or whether our consumer appetites need to be further stimulated "to the max."

Unless society officially sanctions a halt to business as usual and provides an atmosphere of relative quiet to enjoy this change of pace, I fear that we will be an endlessly driven people, more calcified into rigid behavior patterns, less flexible to cope with change, more prone to burn out, less innovative overall, and robbed of those creative energies which make life worthwhile and cohesive.

STEPHEN C. FISHER

Boston

Mideast geopolitics

Jericho is not in Israel, as a seemingly innocuous article in The Globe's Nov. 14 Travel Section alleges, but rather in the Arab territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. The author's apparent ignorance of this fact is testimony to the extent to which Israel's program of illegal annexation of the West Bank has succeeded in legitimizing itself in the minds of westerners.

Of course by repeating the untruth — no matter how innocently — The Globe helps to propagate misunderstanding about a major international issue.

I also visited Jericho several years ago. What I remember most vividly about my visit was witnessing an Israeli soldier shoot out the back window of an Arab taxi (identifiable by its blue license plates) which failed to slow down at a roadblock several miles outside of town.

I too remember the jumble of abandoned houses on the outskirts of Jericho — "built when the Turks and the British ruled here," according to the author. But as my guide (an American employee of a private voluntary organization working in the Occupied Territories) explained it, these houses had been a camp for Palestinian refugees who were exiled from their homeland in 1948, and had been forced to flee a second time in one lifetime in the war of 1967.

It is perfectly appropriate for The Globe to publish articles that describe the rich history of the Mideast. But it is of service to no one for The Globe to publish articles that aid in a reconstruction of history in a manner which justifies or disguises Israel's annexation of Arab lands.

GEORGE BISHARAT

Cambridge

Republican candidate, George Deukmejian, by only 50,000 votes. Which is to say he gained nearly 3,723,000 white votes or at least non-black votes (blacks are only 8 percent of California's population).

In post-election polls some 3



Thomas Bradley

Many people in Boston are without food

We wish to thank The Boston Globe for reminding us of the increasingly critical problem of hunger and malnutrition in our affluent society. The several columns by Ian Menzies and the article by Christina Robb (May 23) are corroborated by the New York Times' current survey (Oct. 24) of hunger in that metropolitan area.

Calls from hungry people to emergency hotlines, food networks, and relief agencies throughout that city are already more than double what they were a year ago.

The situation in Boston is similar. We believe the general public does not fully realize its seriousness.

Hunger is typically regarded as

Sizing it up

The fascinating account in the Nov. 7 paper by Bill Fripp of the desert wilderness of Catron County, New Mexico, contains two unfortunate errors. First, while Catron County's 6897 sq. miles of area make it immense, it is not the largest county in the 48 continental states.

It is 24th in area, far behind such giants as San Bernardino County, California, with its 20,117 sq. miles and Coconino County, Arizona, with an area of 18,540 sq. miles.

Also, Catron County is not larger than Massachusetts. The commonwealth measures 7826 sq. miles in area.

ROBERT W. McDONNELL
Westminster

faced at the ballot box?

That the Urban Coalition, NAACP (including the affluent Hollywood branch), the Urban League, CORE, and the hundreds of middle-class black organizations around the country did not zero in on Bradley's campaign, mounting a massive voter-turnout drive, is the baffling feature of the 1982 election. It was the saddest aspect of Bradley's defeat.

Black leaders, as I see it, have themselves to blame for a good part of the disappointing defeat of Thomas Bradley. If this self-critical perspective is grappled with in the years ahead, Thomas Bradley's second bid for California's governorship might very well succeed.

MARTIN KILSON

Prof. of Government, Harvard
Cambridge University

as a global problem associated with far-off third world countries; yet it exists here in the United States and is by no means confined to the obviously destitute and homeless. The implications for the malnutrition of the more vulnerable of us — the very young, the elderly, the chronically ill, and the poor — are ominous, indeed.

Worldwide hunger seems overwhelming. The local problem of hunger on our doorstep will become more manageable if, as Mr. Menzies suggests, voluntary agencies develop a roster of already-established programs. This could provide coordination and the evidence that both private and public funding must be increased.

RUTH CHARLTON

EUNICE GILMORE

Task Force on Hunger,
Unitarian Society of Wellesley,
Hills

Wellesley Hills



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