

## Imagine Maryland

**Date:** July 9, 2008  
**Location:** Allegany Arts Council  
9 N Centre Street, Cumberland, MD  
**Forum:** Western Regional Forum  
**Facilitator:** Morrie Warshawski, Theresa Colvin, Christine Stewart  
**Scribe:** Janel Cohen

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### Summary of Major Themes:

- People are attracted to Maryland: because of its diversity (geography and population); proximity to culture, its focus on development and the future.
- Art does have a role in society: to enliven the human spirit and improve quality of life, as an economic engine, as an important part of a child's education.
- People get their information about the arts in a variety of ways, but not from television.
- Major issues include: fundraising, getting audiences, transportation, arts education for youth. cultural divide between north and south part of state
- This region advises that MSAC: emphasize arts education and try to work with DOE, educate county commissioners, appoint more panelists from the region, do more convening, help artists with insurance.

### Some Key Quotes:

"Diversity is incredible. Working with other arts councils I had to travel, and everywhere is amazing, like driving through 8 different states."

"It's important for young people to express themselves in art and know they have the support in the community. To grow and keep growing with arts."

"Arts are food for human spirit."

"Part of it [art] is allowing us to get into the side of ourselves that brings out the better part of ourselves. Art gets you out of the day to day humdrum and allows you to step out of that and think and feel and create"

"...what we need is arts buses and get our seniors and at risks and transport audiences to fill each other's theaters/galleries, we need to share our wonderful arts."

"Need to overcome reaching audiences that don't yet have an appreciation for art - the audience we're not reaching, to make this available to everyone regardless of economic status. The need to be exposed to the arts goes beyond just the children to the adults and parents. Children should grow up with these events."

"In five years I'd like to see that the arts would be as important as football. I have 2 children, one in the arts, and one in sports, and opportunities for sports are better; there's not enough opportunity in the arts."

“There is a misconception/perception that native Western Marylanders need someone to come in and teach us about the arts; we know what art is and what we want to project to kids about arts.”

“Help to educate and or change minds of leadership in county of commissioners. Keep them informed and train minds to realize importance of arts in education.”

“Help us find corporations willing to support our community/arts. Organizations are hurting financially. People here are tapped, need more resources.”

“Put lights on the mountains! On the serious side, consider creating a western Maryland focus group of Allegany, Frederick, Washington and Garrett counties. Individually we don’t count, but as a group we’re stronger.”

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### Raw Transcript

Councilor Bill Mandicott welcome:

Hello and good evening. I am Bill Mandicott with the Maryland State Arts Council. I am so proud to see such a great turnout and pleased to play a role in representing Western Maryland.

On behalf of Governor O’Malley and the Maryland State Arts Council I am pleased to welcome you to one of many *imagine Maryland* forums across the state. *imagine MARYLAND* is a broad-based and inclusive planning process to help guide the Maryland State Arts Council’s (MSAC) work in the coming years. The plan will be completed and published early in 2009 and you can track the process on the Maryland State Arts Council’s website [www.msac.org](http://www.msac.org) under Strategic Planning: *imagine Maryland*. Please visit the site.

I’d like to introduce you to the staff with us tonight, Executive Director Theresa Colvin, Christine Stewart, and Janel Cohen.

I would also like to acknowledge our County Arts Council partners and coordinators, Andy Vick, Allegany Arts Council, Keith Roberts, and Kevin Moriarty from Washington County Council. I would also like to recognize our Councilwoman Mary Beth Pirolozzi, and Robin Summerfield who is representing US Senator Ben Cardin.

Thank you for being here today and participating in *imagine Maryland*.

And now for a few housekeeping items: First of all, could you please fill in your name and contact information on the sign in sheet so we can keep track of who came to our meetings and also to keep you updated with the process.

We also have some printed material for you: Frequently Asked Questions, a Press Release introducing *Imagine Maryland*, a Timeline of the process (including other forums you may be interested in attending), our Annual Report which will have all the information you’ll need to

know on the Arts Council.

At this point I'd like to introduce Morrie Warshawski, our consultant for this planning process.

Morrie Warshawski

- I am from Napa California and have never been to Cumberland. I got here early walked around a few shops and found a lobby card in the basement of shop with Susannah York and Elizabeth Taylor. I started talking about movies with worker and I recommend The 36th Chamber of Shaolin, a kung fu movie made in 60s and was first of its genre.
  - ♣ In movie there's a young man in village, family is destroyed, left alone and learns king fu and the first 2 years at the kung fu school he only sweeps the floor. Finally, he gets chance to start to study. There are 36 chambers of study and the master asks which one he wants to study in, and student says #36. The master asks if he is sure he wants to start end and not the beginning. At the 36<sup>th</sup> chamber, 6 masters are sitting around a table meditating – The man asks where's the king fu? The masters ask what he is doing there, and he says learning kung fu. The master says you haven't done the rest, then holds up his hand and blows student away and student bows and says he should start at #1.
  - ♣ MSAC is starting a process. We can't start just planning so we've been going one chamber/group/city at a time before we go into 36th chamber. What's great about this meeting is we're just here to listen.

Introductions around the room.

This meeting is an opportunity to bring people together. After we're done, stick around and make one more professional connection before you leave.

***What do you value about living/working in Maryland and this region? What's here that attracts people live/stay?***

- Geographical diversity - we have mountains to the shore
- Well run state, despite whatever corruption might exist
- Value for your tax dollars
- Sense of community that you are tied to other people in town/area, feel you know them and want to help/work together and make it better
- Representative of the small town culture
- Moved to Garrett County from Bethesda. We stayed there because it's such an exciting place to live
- Challenges all the time, socio economic groups that live there, county is a cultural region of its own. Challenge and fun - no place like there
- beautiful everywhere you go around this area
- Diversity is incredible. Working with other arts councils I had to travel, and everywhere is amazing, like driving through 8 different states.
- From Chicago, small town in WV, we like the quality of life - MD small town but still have culture which we felt was important to us. we've never regretted decision to move here
- Maryland is a strong beautiful state
- Coming together of people, culture, support, fantastic place to live

- My boyfriend said you can live anywhere you want, but you live here
- Lot of people sitting in this room that weren't born here, and moved here.
- Question: How many from different states? Majority.
- I was born and raised in Bethesda and lived there until 14 years ago when I moved here - entirely different place, and I am staying here
- Grew up in this area, and love it. Love the potential and what we can create here and the resources we have.
- I grew up here and lived in DC for many years and couldn't wait to get back
- I grew up in Bethesda, wealthy part of state, and around the world, and I ended up here. Would like to see more of the people who have a lot of resources share with those with fewer resources across the state.
- Maryland life magazine is very interested in Western Maryland which attracts others outside of region.
  - ♣ Don't know who's serving on council – *Theresa Colvin mentioned councilors*
  - ♣ We could use more representation
  - ♣ Hub and focus of activity should be equitable but need to take into consideration different areas
  - ♣ Western Maryland is well represented on other aspects

#### **What should the role of arts be in society?**

- Important in education, foundation, tool for econ. dev.
- Nothing exists in a vacuum, everything has to complement and support each other. If one thing falls out, you're hustling for revitalization, etc. Everything fits together especially when low on financial resources - part of the big things.
- Just got back from Italy - I could hear the voices of Romans/gladiators there - I firmly believe it is the duty to keep culture alive.
- Last night forum of medical pros - key factor to life is arts, whether you like arts or not.
- That's a major question I ask all the time, there's the obvious population that participates in the arts, but also native population not able to go - how do we serve them?
- Physicians that come in - shortage- they don't ask about the hospitals - they ask about schools, parks, and Target.
- Arts teach passion.
- It's a collective, there isn't just a role for art - it starts off as an elitist activity (individual to object - object then moves into community and gains viewers and it expands to be what you want it to be. catalyst for econ change, etc. role can be anything you want it to be.
- What is the role of society in arts? Because art is here whether we recognize or not, it's part of society/history/heritage. The direction we take with the arts defines.
- I work with special needs and use creative movement for their poetry, and to see how empowered they were using movement was wonderful experience. Not doing enough of that in our classrooms.
- Important for young people to express themselves in art and know they have the support in the community. grow and keep growing with arts

- Work with arts bus and what I see in children's faces when they get outside validation, their entire being expands. It lights them up and that keeps a fire - creativity - the fact that this community has so much support tells kids it's the right thing to do.
- Washington County is proud home of a number of prisoners and I teach there - arts students are learning a language that serves them
- The arts are a way an individual can become be successful without having to have a lot around them, without a team, teacher... self growth/actualization. expand arts for people to come successful that way, could increase self esteem
- On individual abstract, arts are food for human spirit
- Even the caveman had paintings
- One thing that bothers me - all these dance studios for lessons and they're paying money for lessons to dance and perform and the parents are supporting and then they don't support the arts after that. need to support the arts at home
- Part of it is allowing us to get into the side of ourselves that brings out the better part of ourselves. gets you out of the day to day humdrum and allows you to step about that and think and feel and create
- Impressed at idea - what is society's role - cultural difference and values and how important to me - differs with different people. How does Maryland as a society use the arts?
- Can 'play' forge a connection to our past?
- Book: Richard Florida 'The Rise of the Creative Class' - the arts really make the work of the world easier
- Without the arts we have no society – in the movie 'The Time Machine' - everyone goes back into time where they're having a good time, no art and people are slightly above the apes.
- Re: Richard Florida - those communities that have thriving arts are thriving econ dev. communities.

#### **How where do you get arts info?**

- Arts Flash
- Allegany Magazine
- Arts Journal Daily
- Allegany County has arts page/section in the paper, Slice of Life
- Frostburg cultural events page
- Electronic media - internet emails
- Hagerstown Magazine
- Word of mouth
- Mailings from organizations
- Passing the word on
- Posters
- Billboards
- Radio
- Television
- [www.mdmountainside.com](http://www.mdmountainside.com) county tourism website and linked to MSAC
- Garrett county has one weekly newspaper and its really good

### **How do you get information about the Arts Council?**

- Internet
- Channel 4
- Arts Council email newsletter
- In Western Maryland our TV is from Pittsburgh

### **Are these means adequate?**

- Not for television
- Maryland public TV televising about fall festival but can't see it because we don't get Maryland TV
- The Arts Council does spot on public radio (Allegany)
- In spots we can get Frostburg radio
- People have to share what they have

### **Is the marketing pr good enough to get people to events?**

- In Washington County the NBC affiliate is near and pays attention
- We have local radio pushing our stuff
- Hard to get people to come to events
  - ♣ People don't realize we do variety of music
  - ♣ Trying hard to broaden appeal across generations
  - ♣ Pittsburgh symphony orchestra is going to play in Garrett and marketing tough
  - ♣ Washington, Garrett, and Allegany have unusual problems from eastern part of state.
  - ♣ Did studies of demographics and one thing Allegany and Garrett have in common - like a glass wall between our counties - because of mountains, we have large at risk and aging population. Classical music/theater audience differ in counties, we have empty theaters, etc. what we need are arts buses to get our seniors and at risks and transport audiences to fill each other's theaters/galleries, we need to share our wonderful arts.
  - ♣ Also think it's a scheduling issue - sometimes schedules are such that we have something going on all the time and can't get to everything - share schedules so we aren't running everything of the same day/night wonderful to have so much to do, but sharing would be helpful
  - ♣ Found that we're always operating on a hunch and we have got some people to pony up to do a cultural needs assessment. Need to know who's there. It's about the people in the seats and people being engaged not just in attendance.

### **What are the big issues for arts in your community and what are you doing about it?**

- Arts education - art lover's not just artists. Art can be appreciated by much larger audience and need to reach people
- Deals with social issues and bring communities together
- Large production, community based, to tackle issues, had community support but no money - got grants from different places and army of volunteers

- Worked in performing arts center as facilities manager at Frostburg - group came and did history of Maryland (for elementary school kids) – lower econ status of kids coming – no exposure to art of any type beyond drawing, their first time in a theater and one kid looks around and says to friend I wonder where you get the popcorn, friend says this is a movie theatre for the rich people. Need to overcome reaching audiences that don't yet have an appreciation for art - the audience we're not reaching, this is available to everyone regardless econ status. Need to be exposed to the arts - goes beyond just the children to the adults and parents. Children should grow up with these events.
- Validation issue- we need to be validated that we're as viable as metropolitan area or area in balto/wash court. Validate each other and each aspect of the arts and be validated by MSAC.
- Real problem is the education issue- I lived in Garrett about 6 yrs ago - not hitting much of community because lack of arts education in the past. Need background. Taking 4/5/6th grader to receive arts experience every year. All kids should go, not just good kids. This is building consumers for all arts, but we need to start at foundation to build for future.
- 2 observations - Mountain Maryland major cultural divide between metropolitan areas vs. people from Mtn. Maryland. Different culture. Survival of Appalachia people important. 2) We're out in the woods and no major corporate presence. They give money to the places where they'll be in business. We're relying on the small people.
- As a native of Cumberland, what I've seen since I came back, arts are revitalized. Native people appreciating the fact this county is being revitalized and therefore appreciating the arts... people normally not interested are interested.
- Lived here forever, not country people and they appreciate art and participate - but only small percentage of population. Used to have large corporations, now have to change focus to smaller donors. We need to realize there are people who appreciate and add on and help bring excitement and expand.
- Mildly encouraged to think about audience development. in a different way: developing an audience notion - skill to watching a performance, different than living room with popcorn - take product to audience and get them comfortable like that. Get them comfortable.
- In Garrett taking performance to 2nd graders and it's been really successful. Kids are the audience of tomorrow. If for no other reason, joy that arts brings to us. One man showroom in back for kid exhibits. Watching them with their work on wall and take picture it's a big deal. Elementary schools submit all kinds of work and intermediate/high school not the same support. Need high school and middle to submit more arts. need to go and bring experience
- There is nothing new under the sun - what's going to come from this meeting? what's this going to be used for:
  - ♣ We haven't done strategic plan from 5 years ago and need to get into community to find the challenges and goals in communities. Share same goals. Limited resources, and need to know how to best invest resources.
  - ♣ With certain state agencies, it's like pulling teeth. No communication. At this time we are moving to work together.

- ♣ From a local point of view, it's very important that we work with state, county, each other. Local officials hard to work with, but need to keep pushing. up to the people

### **What would next 5 years look like? If things could be better?**

- The arts would be as important as football
- Need someone with vision who can stand up/leadership
- Early education
- In order to get kids educated, get them on a bus and take them. Can't afford. Bring transportation to take kids to performance.
- MSAC can figure out how to move everyone around and more representation and funding for western Maryland; we're criticized for not doing the newest arts. have to educate public
- State has different perspective of what we should be doing out here.
- Front page article - how sports prepared me for the military - why not with arts?!?!?
- I have 2 children, one art, one sports, and opportunities for sports better, not enough opportunity in arts
- Misconception/perception that native Western Marylanders need someone to come in and teach about the arts, we know what art is and what we want to project to kids about arts.
- Plays at Frostburg - what's going to happen in September with the price of gas? How are trips being funded? Tickets are 6, trip costs 20 for one child. Money all out of PTA/parents pockets. Who provides the money for the bus?!?!? One small story, we had a small fed grant, tiny bus came and took kids and moms to Kaiser to see a production and they haven't ever experienced something like that again. It takes transportation to get you there.

### **What advice for Maryland State Arts Council**

- Is it a point of pride to foster kids and appreciate the arts and send them to college and send to "real world" why can't we keep them here and give opportunity to stay here
- Build opportunities/admin costs/health/etc/ for artists
- Working with BOE/doe (state) in terms of working on fostering arts education as part of curriculum and important because it builds thought process and to become successful.
- Help to educate and or change minds of leadership in county of commissioners. Keep them informed and train minds to realize importance of arts in education.
- In this county there are a lot of programs for mothers with babies. Help with that program.
- Help us find corporations willing to support our community/arts. Organizations are hurting financially. people here are tapped, need more resources
- To help educate folks who are downstate about things happening here. Closer to home activities. Lots going on here. We are Maryland's closely guarded secret and need to be marketed.
- Transportation - organize charter service for people here to go downstate and vice versa.
- Appoint more panelists from this area and other areas

- State does great job with general operating support, if state could help educate our own communities may be able to get more private funding
- Facilitate discussion of best practices between eastern/western shores to learn and how to draw people
- Make commitment - if something comes of this, I would be working harder and step forward and match funds. Maybe we're talking to the wrong people in getting funds. want to see a product
- First year Rocky Gap opened, MSAC started having retreats out here. If MSAC comes again, educate arts council and let them see.
- Potential for online portal to Maryland artists' gallery? Go to one website to see things/purchase from across the state? Come see the art in Maryland?
  - ♣ On Maryland website, what's going on click on it and all you see is Baltimore.
- Put lights on the mountains. (Joke). On the serious side, consider creating Western Maryland focus group of Allegany, Frederick, Washington and Garrett counties. individually we don't count as a group stronger
- MSAC could help with studio and health insurance
- I appreciated the richness of this conversation. I'm a paid volunteer, but I will tell you that MSAC thinks and talks consistently for what we do for the STATE and how we treat the arts for the entire state. This will help shape arts. Input does matter.

-Close of meeting-