

Congress is proposing to eat away at the limited programs we do have, what will we design to replace them?

In a world so rich in resources, logic dictates that the most basic life sustaining options should be available to those who so desperately need them. In this context, of what value are design and the arts?

Maslow's hierarchy of needs places the arts and education at the top of the ladder, with food, shelter, and the more "basic" necessities at the bottom. But as a society we are just now beginning to recognize that the effective delivery of reasonable services and products to those with few means can be achieved through good design.

Right now a small team of RISD students, faculty and alumni are working to develop portable, low-cost housing for the world's refugee population in conjunction with the UN High Commission for Refugees and the Red Cross.

RISD is also working with Habitat for Humanity to develop new designs for affordable housing, and designers in a number of our urban centers are creating low-cost shelters for the homeless. In addition, we are looking to designers to work with engineers in developing electric cars and other more energy-efficient forms of personal and mass transportation to replace outmoded gas guzzlers of the past.

In order to enable artists and designers to lead in their chosen fields, those of us charged with guiding the country's art and design institutions need to work with schools to recreate curricula, reallocate resources, and expand experiences for students that teach appreciation and respect for human creativity and invention as well for limited resources.

The future into which these students will be launched is already at hand in many respects. We know that it will be technology-driven for communications, visualization, and information. We know that resources will be ever more scarce, and the options for using them constrained by the long-term effects of manufacture. We know that our nation, indeed the world, is filled with the tensions of boundaries that are ever more sharply dividing people by color, language, religion, and region. We know that the need to create educated, creative, and tolerant citizens is even more important than at any other time in history—and that our nation's willingness to invest now in the education of these citizens of the future is still in question.

Why? Because art and design, by their very nature, represent change. They may help us adapt to change, to express that change and create chances for it, but to many people this is more threatening than comforting.

"The artist and society have a tentative relationship," says Jane Alexander, chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts. "The artist is often the sentinel on the precipice, heralding change as it peaks over the horizon. Artists challenge, ask difficult questions, and rattle our cages. They can make our skin itch, or souls bristle, and touch us to the heart's deep core."

What this conference aims to do and we need to do as a nation is to recognize the values and thought-systems inherent in design-related fields. We need to help our neighbors understand the vital importance of the arts and design in creating strategies to rebuild and enhance our communities.

When former Apple CEO John Sculley spoke at RISD's Commencement last June, he challenged our graduates to be either a mirror of society and reflect what's going on, giving their interpretation or perspective, or to be a lens that shows what can happen, what the possibilities are.

Throughout history, of course, artists and designers have held a mirror up to society,

producing work that chronicles where we are or suggests where we might go. Rosanne Somerson, head of RISD's new Furniture Design Department, reminded me of the other day that furniture, like clothing, speaks volumes about a society at any given point in history. When else but during the Sixties, for instance, would we have invented the bean bag chair and mini skirts? Next fall, to illustrate the symbiosis between design and society, RISD's Museum will host the first of a two-part exhibition on Dress, Art & Society, curated by Lorraine Howes, head of our Apparel Design Department.

Design and the manufacture of products not only captures the pulse-beat of society at any given time, but sends important signals about what we value. Urban planning also affects our lives, creating social strategies out of our living spaces.

Who had ever even heard of workstations a mere 10 years ago or considered the concept of phone books, encyclopedias or the entire collection of our National Gallery on CD? More importantly, how would any of these innovations have been developed without the critical input of designers?

What we are witnessing in the latter years of this century is the pivotal turning point when technology is being handed by the engineers who created it to us to use. It's artists and designers, however, who will help us make the most of it. Designers are creating the visual language of software, influencing not only what we see on screen, but how we explore and process information. Here again, as Sculley points out, it is not the technology that is important, it is the consequences of the technology—how artists, designers and others make use of it.

One hundred and eighteen years ago RISD was founded by women with foresight and commitment to the improvement of society. These 19th-century visionaries realized that the arts and design are an essential ingredient in the vitality of a community, of an economy and of a nation.

And they weren't alone. An intelligent appreciation of art and design has always been part of the American democratic promise. Our Founding Fathers recognized this and upheld it.

"I must study politics and war," John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail, "that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study . . . navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, and architecture."

At times it is difficult to fathom that as a nation we seem to have strayed so far from the underlying sentiments that made this country strong. When our government spends less that 5/100ths of one percent of the national budget on all forms of cultural subsidies, how can Speaker Gingrich continue the pretense that the proposed elimination of federal funding for the arts has anything to do with the national deficit?

The politicians of the day somehow ignore the fact that art and design are serious business and that without a minimum federal investment as an incentive there will be a far smaller return. You have all heard the figures—that for every dollar of federal support, the NEA and NEH help leverage \$16 in private funding. Yet our Speaker of the House still fails to acknowledge that the not-for-profit arts—organizations such as the ones many of you in this room work with and support—employ 1.3 million people, generate \$37 billion a year in economic activity and most importantly for those concerned with the bottom line, return \$3.4 billion a year to the federal treasury through taxes. This return is 20 times the dwindling budget of the NEA.

During its 30-year history, the overwhelming majority of NEA grants have supported

projects that include such laudable design innovations as architect Bill Warner's plan for the Providence river front. If you haven't already had an opportunity, while you're here you should take a walk along the completed portion at the foot of the hill, just south of the train station. It was thanks to a small NEA grant that Warner originally proposed a major waterfront revitalization project in the city that is having enormous repercussions for business, industry and the state's economy. For Rhode Island, the vision of this one designer has definitely made a difference.

"Great artists and designers have always been discriminating people," says painter Alfred DeCredico, a RISD graduate and one of our associate professors of Foundation Studies. "The life work of great artists and designers constitutes a commitment to humanity and to what they believe is true. What is often perceived as arrogance and an insistence on control is in reality an adherence to an ethical stance," DeCredico goes on to point out.

This ethical stance can help illuminate and define the progress artists, designers, art educators and advocates make as a creative community. In a wider sense, the arts and design also help shape or mirror the values of society. In my view, artists and designers are central to each level of human existence, from the basic provision of food and shelter, to the sustenance of community, manufacturing and governance.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that in this age of high-speed information and economic uncertainty, the need to recognize the value of good design has taken on great urgency. Either by plan or default, we are designing how we wish to be remembered as a society.

To maximize the potential impact of good design on solving the challenges facing our communities, designers need to be adequately educated, properly nurtured and competitively compensated. In short, they need to be recognized as invaluable contributors to the future health and well-being of society. Once that happens, the possibilities will be staggering.

#### CHINA'S ARREST OF DISSIDENT WEI JINGSHENG

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, last week, while the world's attention was focused on new hopes for peace in Bosnia, the Chinese Government formally arrested and charged its most famous dissident with sedition. Wei Jingsheng, who has been imprisoned without charge for the last 20 months, is known as the father of China's still-fragile democracy movement. Wei's formal arrest signals a renewed hardline approach on the part of the Chinese leadership to internal criticism of the Government.

The timing of Wei's arrest is telling. It comes alongside China's push for entry into the World Trade Organization as a developing economy. The United States, joined by the European Union, Japan, and Canada, insists that China has a strong exporting economy that can meet the open-trade standards demanded of other member economies. China continues to reject this standard and argues that it is being excluded from the organization and isolated by the United States and the West.

I strongly believe that we need to engage China and my reading of current

United States policy is that we are doing so. The United States has no containment policy and we are not isolating China in any way. But if China wants the benefits of being an active member of the international community, it must accept the standards and play by the rules of that community. On human rights or on trade, China cannot expect to flagrantly violate international norms with impunity. United States criticism is not an attempt to isolate China, but the opposite; China's willingness to abide by international standards will make its acceptance into the international community all the easier.

On trade, I commend the administration for continuing to insist that China meet the standards which are commensurate with its economic status. On human rights, I urge the administration to lead the West by working for a resolution censuring China's human rights abuses at the next annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. There has been growing world support for such a resolution in recent years as China's treatment of its own citizens and of Tibetans continues to fall far short of the criterion of the international community. Now is not the time to reduce our efforts to pass this resolution; Wei Jingsheng's arrest shows the necessity for continued international focus on China's behavior.

China has urged the United States to overlook its human rights abuses and forgo working for a U.N. resolution, just as it has urged the United States to ignore its growing economy and allow its entry into the World Trade Organization using lower standards. In both cases, the U.S. response must be the same. If China wants to be respected as an important international actor, it must meet the expected behavior of one. If it wants the United States to stop criticizing its human rights practices, it must stop giving us reason to do so. Releasing Wei Jingsheng and other political prisoners would be an important first step.

#### HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER USE IN VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spent a great deal of my time in the U.S. Senate working on telecommunications issues, and studying how changing technology is having an impact on our Nation. In particular, I have been interested and concerned about the effect of the so-called information superhighway on rural States like Vermont.

With this in mind, I asked a young student at Champlain Valley Union High School to take a broad survey on computer use in his high school. What I will include in the RECORD is the report that this student, Steve Waltien, sent to me recently.

I find his results fascinating and encouraging. You will see the vast majority of high school freshmen and seniors

are familiar with computers, and use computers whether in school, at home, or both. Now, I realize that Champlain Valley Union High School is not necessarily indicative of the rest of Vermont or the Nation. It is no doubt on the cutting edge of new technologies, and is led by one of the finest principals in the country, Val Gardner.

But Mr. President, this study shows just how dramatically our lives are changing; in particular, it shows how dramatically our children's lives are changing. The decisions we make on issues affecting access to telecommunications issues will have a direct impact on our children, especially in rural areas like Vermont.

I am grateful to Steve Waltien for his well-written and thorough study. He and I have e-mailed each other on this subject, and am delighted to share his work with my fellow Senators.

I ask that a study on high school computer use be printed in the RECORD.

The study follows:

COMPUTER USE SURVEY  
(By Stevenson H. Waltien III)

#### INTRODUCTION

The Internet and other rapidly expanding components of the so-called "information super-highway" are becoming more and more popular with all age groups. As of now, there is little government regulation of the "menu" available on the Internet. This presents an interesting issue for our law-makers: is use of these systems of great enough significance for the government to take some kind of role in their existence? The environment of a high school seemed to be of interest because of the growing technology being offered there. It was decided at an early point that it would be extremely difficult to survey the entire school, and therefore might be more beneficial and reliable to survey only the Freshmen and Senior classes to see computer use at both ends of the age spectrum at Champlain Valley Union High School. The intent was that the survey would provide Senator Patrick LEAHY with some statistics about rural high school use of computers and the Internet. These results could be used to indicate the extent students in a rural school use computers regularly and how they use them. The survey was conducted between September and November of 1995.

#### THE SCHOOL

Champlain Valley Union High School is located in Hinesburg, Vt. and is the public high school for the towns of Hinesburg, Charlotte, Shelburne, and Williston. The school is comprised of over 950 students. The communities that make up the school are mostly middle class. The school prides itself on having extremely high standards of technology. There are approximately 250 computers at CVU, the majority of which are Apple Macintoshes. The school has a computer lab which is open to all students during their free time. It is comprised of both IBM and Macintoshes. The Physics program has approximately 20 Power Macintoshes that make up the Physics lab. The school also has a foreign language lab and a business lab, with roughly 30 units each. The majority of computers in the lab are connected to the school's 128-kbps Internet connection. Students have access to most of what is available on the net, including the World Wide Web and other popular net services.

#### RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey was distributed to the Freshmen through the Freshmen core program at CVU and there was an almost immediate result with 96% of the Freshmen responding. The seniors were harder to reach in that there is no single class which all seniors take. The surveys were distributed through the advisory program in which all students participate. Due to the difficulty of student and faculty schedules however, there was only a 70% response to the senior surveys. Although this number may be low, the data is statistically valid due to the similarities in answers for all seniors and the fact that those who responded do not leave out any particular group or type of student. The advisories that responded show a random group of students, therefore it is a good sampling of the class as a whole. Two hundred and seventeen Freshmen and one hundred forty Seniors responded. The results are as follows:

Percent of those surveyed owning a home computer:

Freshmen—90%; Seniors—91%

Percent of those owning a home computer that use it:

Freshmen—97%; Seniors—98.5%

Percent of those owning a home computer with family members who use it:

Freshmen—86.5%; Seniors—96%

Amount of computer use per week by percentage (home computer owners):

Less than 1 hr.—Freshmen: 6%; Seniors: 5%

1-3 hrs—Freshmen: 20%; Seniors: 16%

4-6 hrs—Freshmen: 74%; Seniors: 79%

Primary uses of home computer:

Word Processing/Homework—Freshmen: 95%; Seniors: 97%

Internet/E-mail—Freshmen: 20%; Seniors: 20%

World Wide Web—Freshmen: 11%; Seniors: 9%

Games—Freshmen: 39%; Seniors: 30%

Percent of students who use school computers:

Freshmen—68%; Seniors—93%

Primary uses of the school computer:

Word Processing/Homework—Freshmen: 80%; Seniors: 82%

Internet/E-mail—Freshmen: 34%; Seniors: 70%

World Wide Web—Freshmen: 20%; Seniors: 27%

Games—Freshmen: 4%; Seniors: 6%

Degree of influence school computer usage has had on overall computer use:

High—Freshmen: 24%; Seniors: 47%

Moderate—Freshmen: 41%; Seniors: 40%

Little or none—Freshmen: 35%; Seniors: 13%

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is shown that usage of school computers is much higher for seniors even though home computer ownership is almost equal. According to the results, 25% more seniors use school computers than freshmen. The majority of seniors say that access to computers in the school has greatly influenced their overall computer usage. It would appear that computer education earlier in a student's career enhances additional use. The key seems to lie not in computer ownership, but rather with computer knowledge. The earlier students become fully computer literate, the earlier they utilize the tools they possess more effectively. There are possible reasons to account for the large discrepancy in the percentage of freshmen and seniors using computers in school. The freshmen have not been exposed to the computers as long, and the courses they take are not as challenging to require as much computer usage. Yet it is clear that seniors use computers for more