

Caucus presents city its revisions

by Gilbert Bouchard & Dean Bennett

Edmonton's arts community will not accept the city's proposed policy on the arts as it stands says Edmonton Professional Arts Caucus Chair Peter Carter.

According to Carter, the cultural policy has too many grey areas and needs revision before it will get the approval of Edmonton's artistic community. "We can't live with the original policy," he said.

The cultural policy, released last April, is a product of the mayor's task force on the arts. Among other recommendations, it called for a permanent standing committee structure that would administer funds to both the city's artistic and ethnic organizations. This committee would be an arms length body with membership drawn from city council, the arts community, and ethnic organizations.

"We recognize that a cultural policy is required, but revisions have to be made," said Carter. "We're not out to change the original intent of the proposal; just out to dot the i's and cross the t's."

The caucus is presenting a host of "essential" revisions to city council next week.

"We have suggested changes to the funding category of the arts policy. The present policy makes no mention of funding at all. What we have done is come up with a criteria of how funds should be allocated," said



Peter Carter: Caucus Chairman

Carter. "Also, we have proposed changes to the structure of the committee, streamlining it, and we have worked on defining some of the objectives and goals of the committee and we will even make some suggestions on how the commission should be administered."

Protecting proportional levels of funding is also a priority of the caucus. "At present 91½% of grants go out to the arts with 8½% going to the ethnic organizations. The concern with the proposed policy is that since the make up of the funding allocating com-

mission is a 50-50 split between the arts and the ethnic representatives, the funds will ultimately be split 50-50 as well," said Carter. "But even the ethnic organizations recognize the need for a grandfather clause protecting the present level of funding. If there has to be a marriage between the arts and the ethnic organizations, we want a marriage contract."

Carter lays blame for the arts community's negative reaction to the policy with the task force and not with the mayor or city council. "I feel that city hall has been supportive."

Carter added that the task force was misinformed as to what the arts community actually wanted. "I think the mark of a successful task force is that they talk to as many people as possible, while this task force did not set up any public hearings at all; hearings where people could have come out and voiced their feelings. The task force felt that they had a good idea of what the arts organizations wanted but didn't do it in any organized way. Nor did they try to enlighten anyone."

Carter charges that even after the policy had been written and distributed to the public, the task force remained elusive and closed mouthed. "Even after the fact they refused to answer any direct questions. They did a lot of sidestepping."

While the task force was less than helpful,

Carter has nothing but praise for both Mayor Decore and the rest of city council. "The mayor (who supports the task force's recommendations) was surprised that the arts community was not pleased with the policy and set up a meeting between himself, Alderman Percy Wickman, and the city's arts organizations to discuss the policy."

Out of that meeting arose the Edmonton Professional Arts Caucus and the present lobby effort. "At that original meeting with the mayor I offered the art gallery's facilities for the arts group to get together and meet," said Carter, the Administrative Director of the Edmonton Art Gallery. "The week after the city hall meeting the caucus first met, and I was asked to be chair."

The reaction from the arts community was excellent, with 46 people from 27 arts organizations stepping forward to work in the caucus.

"Our caucus is not something on a whim," said Carter.

While the caucus' original mandate was only to study and make recommendations on the city's policy, Carter believes that it may be the springboard for a more permanent coalition of arts organizations. "There is some talk of continuing the association, but not as a caucus. What the caucus taught us is that the city's arts organizations can work together."

Tips for tipping: a guide for uncertain diners

by Gilbert Bouchard

Tipping: probably the thorniest part of eating out, particularly for the student with a tight entertainment/food budget.

We all tip (or should at least), but how much is fair? Should it be a percentage of the bill, or dependent on the level of service? And how exactly do we judge the performance of the serving staff in any particular restaurant?

Garry Henderson, manager of Albert's Deli, says that "a lot of westerners don't know how to tip."

"Most eastern provinces have an automatic 10 per cent added on to your bill, and 15 per cent added on for tables over seven," said Henderson. "Most eastern provinces get away with it but it's not a good idea because you're already judging the service before it's been given. In the east, waiters will even refuse extra service to people who won't properly tip. This attitude wouldn't work in the west."

Henderson stressed that while tipping is a

"gratuity given by customers for good service — a thank you in person," the tip itself is only a small part of the customer's feedback to the staff of the restaurant on the quality of his meal.

"A lot of people are too quiet and don't open up," he said. Tell the waiter why you thought the service was bad and why the tip was small.

"You should always tip something. People tend not to tip at all if the service was bad, but sometimes it wasn't the server's fault. An example would be that the food wasn't good because the kitchen staff was negligent."

Henderson says many people never mention that the service was bad till they're on their way out of the restaurant. "This is a lack of communication on the part of the public. If the public were to tell the server the problems with the meal, these problems could be rectified, but if the person bottles it up and leaves angry, nothing can be done to make the situation better. Comments on the quality of the food should be made when

you receive the food, not when you're walking out the door."

Henderson mentioned that things can be done to smooth over problem meals; dishes can be re-cooked, promotions and discounts offered or dishes substituted or added.

As for the tip itself, Henderson believes that services and not the size of the bill should be the determining factor. The following are a rough set of guidelines that Henderson puts forward to use to evaluate the performance of a serving crew.

- **Acknowledgement of customer.** Does the server promptly greet the customer and quickly seat them, or if she is busy does she at least tell them that she'll be with them soon?
- **Prompt attention in the serving of drinks**
- **Selective timing in ordering.** Does the server rush the customer or let them have proper amount of time to make their

selections?

- **Knowledge and helpfulness in reading the menu.** Does the server make useful recommendations and give adequate descriptions of items on the menu, including wines?
- **Food order timing.** Does the server properly time the appearance of the various courses?
- **Quality check at the start of the meal.** Does the server ask if the meal is up to the customers' satisfaction, and if it isn't, does the server seem receptive to correcting any problems?
- **Pick up of finished plates directly after eating.** This includes the acknowledgement of further service. Does the server ask if dessert or added dishes are desired?
- **If no further service is desired, prompt presentation of bill.**

According to Henderson, if all the above are present, a reasonable tip should be left. Services that would demand extra tip money include singing on birthdays, special occasions, and acknowledgement of regular customers.

With a bit of thought, tipping can be more than an odious chore. Knowledge of why you're tipping coupled with a bit of a dialogue with the management cannot only increase the satisfaction of that particular meal, but all further meals in that restaurant.

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