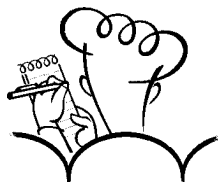


IF YOU'RE READING THIS: RUN!

BY THOMAS TRESSER



GOT CREATIVITY?

If you're reading this, no doubt you do and you've been a leader in the creative industries for some time. Are you an artist, manager, producer, cultural activist, owner of an architectural practice, band

manager, theater director or board member of a cultural organization?

If you're in this camp of creative industry workers and doers, then you are a leader in a field that is at the heart of the American heritage and spirit: creativity. And where better to use your skills than in public service?

After all, the establishment of our country was a creative act. The Declaration of Independence was a profoundly innovative document that sparked the public imagination and gave life to a revolutionary idea. Readings of the declaration across the 13 colonies in 1776 were civic *performances* that formed the colonies into the United States of America in the minds of the listeners.

Creativity and the passion to pursue the dreams released by creativity lie at the heart of America's success as a nation and as a people.

Collectively, our creative industries are leading the world in new products, entertainment and scientific advancement. America's creative class of artists, cultural workers, writers, software developers, inventors, change agents, community organizers and others live to generate new visions, products and solutions.

This Creative Economy produced some \$960 billion in revenue in America in 1999. Included in this are the "core copyright industries." Additionally, more than 38 million Americans work in creative industries.

This Creative Economy is where the action is for post-Industrial, post-Service and post-Modern societies. This is where the most value will be created and the highest-

paying jobs are found. It's also where the fun is. And it's projected to grow by a 6.6 percent compound annual growth rate through 2010.

I imagine the logic chain like this: You can't have a prosperous and successful America unless you have an innovative America. You need a creative America to have an innovative America. And you need a literate, tolerant and inquisitive America to have a creative America.

In a sense, creativity is an energy source inside every individual, renewable and endless like sunlight.

In fact, creativity is one energy source that is non-polluting, available everywhere in inexhaustible abundance.

As creative professionals, we live these truths every day. And as creatives, we are already in positions of leadership. So why not run for public office and formalize your commitment to creativity?

Here's how I see your experience and talents as creative

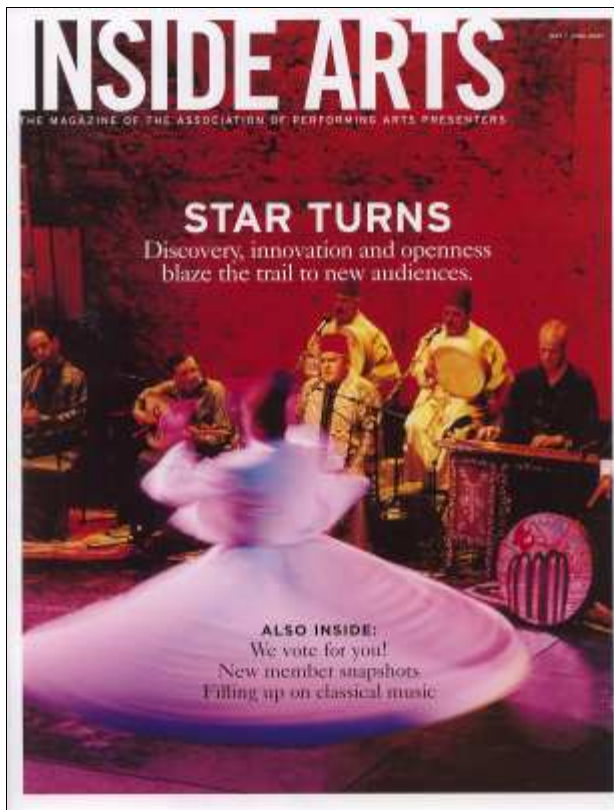
professionals benefiting the public arena:

- You know how to think outside the box and how to challenge assumptions.
- You know how to create ensembles and high-performance teams.
- You know how to use resources wisely, creatively and effectively.
- You know how to assume diverse perspectives and to emphasize outsider viewpoints.
- You know how to create beauty and new things.
- You are essentially an optimist and idealist.
- You are passionate, compassionate and relentless in your pursuit of excellence.

To me, that looks like a list of "must haves" for any civic leader today. What do you say? Will you stand up for a Creative America? If so, consider running for local office in 2008. **IA**

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For the last 11 years, **TERRENCE D. JONES** has been president and CEO of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Va., where he created the national Center for Education at Wolf Trap and has introduced arts-based education programs to more than 450 preschool classes. In 2005, Arts Presenters awarded Jones the Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service to the field of professional presenting. Prior to joining Wolf Trap, Jones was artistic director and CEO of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Earlier this year, Jones was named Washingtonian of the Year by *Washingtonian* magazine.

TOM TRESSER is the lead organizer for the Creative America Project, a volunteer effort to involve more creativity in politics and policies. He started exploring the intersection of arts, creativity and politics in 1990, when he organized Greater Chicago Citizens for the Arts. In April 2004, Tresser was elected to a two-year term for the Local School Council for the Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. He teaches classes on arts and civic engagement at DePaul University and Loyola University.



After studying art at Dartmouth College, **JENNA RUSSELL** lived in Maine for several years while writing for the *Bangor Daily News* and the *Portland Phoenix*. She now lives in Plymouth, Mass., and roves around New England as a regional reporter for *The Boston Globe*. She recently made her first trip to London, where she saw two olives and toured the reconstructed Globe Theater.

