

Beacon Hill Byline by Mary Rogeness

September 8, 1995

Massachusetts Cultural Council Grants

One of the first letters to come across my desk after Labor Day was a notice from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The notice announced a new round of grants from the state's cultural program. Each year local public programs in the arts, humanities and sciences receive grants that will go to area individuals, organizations and towns to strengthen the cultural life of our communities. The grants will also increase the role of cultural development in both education reform and economic development.

Longmeadow's grant is administered by the Longmeadow Cultural Council, and I am pleased to join with Chairperson Sally Johnson to announce that the town has received \$6,663 as this year's allocation.

Now that the allocation has been made to our town, the next step in making use of the state grant will be a process of application for funding of projects. Notices of the grants have been distributed throughout the town. The Council has scheduled an informational meeting at the Community House tonight (September 14) for first-time applicants or anyone else who wants information about the program. Applications are available from the selectmen's office. Sally can be reached at 567-7114 to answer any questions you may have, although she will be spending much of the next two weeks at the Big E.

Six thousand dollars might not seem like a large amount of money for an entire town to use, but when you add to that amount the number of volunteer hours and the creativity of individual participants, this local grant plays a major role in the cultural and economic vitality of our community by providing financial support for townspeople to develop projects and programs.

Towns have wide leeway in allocating funds. Money can go to a single large endeavor or it can be divided among many "points of light." Some applicants are regular participants, and some will be trying for the first time. The Cultural Council has increased its role in our community as I have become less active as a town volunteer. And as I write this column, my mind has gone back to the organizations I once worked with. I wonder if my successors at the PTO, the Longmeadow Historical Society and Storrs Library are sharpening their pencils for this year's competition.

My best wishes for successful applications and exciting programming for 1996. I will be watching for the results.