

# From Executive Director Terence McFarland

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## My see-thru life as a ~~COVERGIRL~~ Accidental Administrator.

**B**ENEDICT CAREY'S *NEW YORK TIMES* ARTICLE "This is Your Life (and How You Tell It)" described scientific research conducted on human's "natural affinity for narrative construction" and identifying the factors that contribute to the framing of our "life story." The article closes with a quote from Joan Didion, speaking of her recent play *The Year of Magical Thinking* adapted from her memoir of the same name, "The idea that whoever appeared onstage would play not me but a character was central to imagining how to make the narrative: I would need to see myself from the outside."

Similarly, David Henry Hwang's autobiographical play *Yellow Face* confronted this issue with a lead character whose name is David Henry Hwang. If reality TV has learned anything from playwrights, it's that power lies in the story editor's hands, revealing not one but many truths. This self-reflexivity powers performance and our desire to tell "our stories."

Technology has provided us with new sets of accountability and "tale-telling" tools. Ubiquitous cameras and the internet make life as we know it immediately transparent.

July 30 marks the fifth anniversary of Sarbanes-Oxley. Five years of forced transparency... the delicious schadenfreunde of watching this one trip or that one slip and fall on the public stage be it corporate, governmental or personal. We can't help but be drawn to these narratives.

On a recent episode of *Inferno*, the MTV reality show (Thanks TIVO), a challenge involved contestants suspended in the air in a harness surrounded by three layers of glass cubes that had to be smashed to win the competition. The metaphor wasn't lost on me. People in glass houses should shatter said houses to shards.

In an effort toward real time transparency, accountability and telling it like it is, for reals, yo... non-profits' two-way mirror is Guidestar.org.

Our tax return and financial information

appears in full public view. The financial equivalent of getting caught in public in your underwear.

Americans for the Arts tells us that the average arts non profit has 43% contributed income.

Here's our story. We have 7.8% contributed income. Nowhere near enough!

We've done a tremendous job, if I do say so myself, considering.

The reality? We're looking at ending the 2006-2007 fiscal year with a \$57,000 deficit. Not bad considering our \$1.4 million budget, but not great either. We'll get through it and into the black next year.

This fiscal year saw many new LASA programs and contracts for service with no new staff. I'm not bragging, well, maybe a little, but we did it. We expanded services to the community and stretched beyond our limit. Bottom line proves it. That's a benefit of non-profit status, you needn't make a profit but too many years of deficit spending and, well, you get crushed under the weight of accumulated debt. Sound familiar?

My story?

I'm an accidental administrator. Fell into it. Love it, am good at it, seek to be better.

In my day to day reality as an accidental administrator I find there's credence to Daniel Pink's assertion that the MFA is the new MBA as I apply my artistic training to running an arts service organization and its unique challenges requiring innovation of thought and action.

Here's another reality.

This magazine operates at a loss. Has since its inception.

We stand by it because it fills a need in the community for information about shows and artists that might not otherwise get coverage.

If you like what you're reading, join us as a member, send a tax deductible donation, help us identify an angel donor or place an ad and reach our incredible readers. (A good performer knows his audience!) With additional funding, we've got quite a list of new programs yet to launch. Help may be coming in the form of a proposed increase in NEA funding or AB1365 which would dedicate a percentage of sales tax generated by the sale of art, but none of this would kick in until next fiscal year at the earliest. (If you're inclined to learn more, visit [Californiaartsadvocates.org](http://Californiaartsadvocates.org).)

Help may be coming, but we need more help from the private sector.

That's you, your friends, your companies.

We need more Windex and a broom, I guess, to clean up all this glass. ■