Excerpt from “Economic stimulus or just more pork?” by Zachary Coile, Chronicle Washington Bureau.

...As Congress rushes toward what leaders of both parties predict will be a speedy passage of an $825 billion economic stimulus package, critics from GOP lawmakers to government watchdog groups are questioning whether key parts of the bill will spur economic growth or whether they’re wasteful pork.

House Republican Conference Chairman Mike Pence of Indiana pointed to a $50 million outlay for the National Endowment for the Arts—an agency that conservatives have long criticized—to help arts groups hit by a drop-off in philanthropy.

“This is stimulus?” Pence asked...

Uh, yes. People work in the arts, then spend money, thereby helping the economy. A stimulus, as you know, will help out these people even more because we all know working in the arts is, for the most part, a penniless existence.

I particularly need this to go through so, A) people will continue to work, and 2) other people will pay money to participate in that work. If those people don’t work, I can’t work. If all the theatres in New York close, things in my office will get a little iffy. Why pay that contract associate when there aren’t any theatres open? Seems like these three or four employees are expendable....

So hey, here’s an idea: write to your congressman or woman and tell him/her how much arts organizations will affect (not effect) the economy where you are if they go under. How many jobs would be lost not only in that organization, but in the businesses nearby. If a theater or movie theater closes, the restaurants next door will lose business too. The coffee shop will take a hit. The hotels’ numbers will drop.

Sadly, during tough times, entertainment goes by the wayside, but it’s also one of the best ways to survive during a rough go. “I’ve got ten bucks; I’ll go be entertained for an hour or so. Oh wait, can’t do that; my movie theatre closed or the museum isn’t open anymore.”

I know what you’re thinking. “Since when does Lincoln advocate this kind of stuff?” Since he started working for Actors Equity Association and depends on other actors to keep working in order for him to have a paycheck, and with that paycheck, pay for the plays he’s putting on with his new theatre company.

Anyway, I’m getting down from my soap box now. Just something to think about.
Lincoln L. Hayes