

Journal

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News of The Cultural
Council Foundation
CETA Artists Project

CETA Funding Runs Gauntlet In Congress

By JUDD TULLY

While hundreds of New York City CETA artists nibble on their fingernails, wondering about "next year," key Congressmen are fighting out the particulars in the House-Senate Conference Committee on the first extensive rewrite of CETA legislation since it was established in 1973.

Before each house passed its own version of CETA—we're talking about authorization as opposed to appropriation—over 100 amendments were tossed to the floor for consideration. Hostility ran high on the House side with members on both aisles screaming for blood on the most controversial part of the Title VI package—the Public Service Employment (PSE) section which was christened during the dour recession of 1974-75 and under which all New York City artists are employed. Title VI has been defined as counter-cyclical employment, a non-renewable prescription aimed at wiping out the worst symptoms of recession-unemployment. When Title VI was created during the slow-poke Ford Administration, legislators considered the measure to be a temporary one.

It helps to understand the peculiar behavior of Congress in dealing with CETA when PSE is viewed as the scapegoat and sluggish target by Congressmen sick to death of local politicians, especially big city mayors, who bolster their work force with CETA employees. That disguised form of federal revenue sharing is a dead duck in the second session of the 95th Congress.

What Congressmen are proud of—because it is safe to champion the cause of the "structurally unemployed"—is Title II of the program aimed at job training, not public service. It is that reasoning which produced the Jeffords Amendment, significantly altering the formula for PSE. If this amendment survives the Conference Committee, which should release its report before Congress adjourns for the campaign trail on October 14th, 100,000 jobs under Title VI are due for the chopping block. The "trigger" is activated to provide jobs for 25 percent of the unemployment rolls once it hits 4 percent. Jeffords shaved this figure to 20 percent. If unemployment is high, the "trigger" releases more funds to create additional PSE jobs. A ceiling on PSE Title VI of \$3.2 billion—a fat one billion cut—was passed by the House August 9 by 221-181.

It is easy to panic when contemplating these enormous figures. The feeling of being a tiny tadpole in a giant Jaws-infested fish tank does not take

Continued on p. 2



Innerspace/Outerspace by Ellsworth Ausby.

Sarah Wells

New CCF Plan To Stress Longer Residencies

The new 1979 project proposal for CCF/CETA artists contains several fundamental changes that reflect the suggestions of the artists themselves, and of sponsors, government officials, and community leaders.

The largest single change in the project is a shift in the concept of community service: from short-term assignments that change every three months to long-term residencies that will last at least six months to a full year. The actual job content will be altered too from being classroom-oriented to being product-oriented. This means that, although teaching may be a small part of a community assignment for a painter, the main objective will be the production of actual art work by the artist himself.

"We sought out the advice of the artists as well as of leaders in the arts disciplines, social service agencies, and community organizations" says Sara P. Garretson, executive director of CCF. "And we realized that the short-term type of assignment was not too successful either for the artist or the sponsor. More time is needed for the artist to become acclimated in the community and establish rapport with its members. We will also be more selective about sponsoring organizations, making sure that the projects will be satisfying to the artist, will test his talents. Hopefully, there will be more emphasis on work that will increase the artist's ability to be employed. We will institute a pilot project in which

community sponsors will be selected on the basis of their commitment to employ an artist with non-CETA funds after the project is over."

This revised approach will produce other structural changes in the program. Aside from the long-term residencies, which will be supervised by the borough coordinators, multi-disciplinary teams instead of pools will be formed, and these will be supervised by what are now the pool coordinators. Artists from different disciplines will be assigned to teams for the entire year and will be placed individually or in full teams as each situation requires. Requests for services will be handled on a first-come, first-serve basis except for large public art projects which will be reviewed quarterly by a panel of art experts. Each team will function in a separate area such as public art, documentation and neighborhood awareness, exhibition services, graphics and illustrative design, literary works, the Performance Ensemble, and the New Living Newspaper.

The relative number of artists in each discipline will remain about the same except for the writers. Their number will be more than doubled to 36 from this year's 17.

The proposal, of course, is academic unless the funds are allotted first by Congress and then by the New York City Department of Employment. Action on this should be taken some time in November. □

Verse

NOTE #20

joyous when one man slips on a banana peel
another eat
an orange a field is eat up banana orange
slipping eating
it's a standard to keep up but the rate of
interchange
is changing or wavering with splits and
chromatic divisions
tonight one man reads the paper another
cleans his ear
both derive a studious pleasure from their
operations and
the world clears up hazy tomorrow with sun
breaking thru
a couple hours after dawn a daze awakens
spreads out
absorbs a lady takes her seat on the subway
closes her
eyes is perhaps playing piano in her head
another man wipes
the cigar off his face he's going somewhere
too we're
all getting off at the next stop because it's the
last then
there's the mist at the end of Manhattan
to contend with

—BARBARA BARACKS

For the Women Who Stay in the Staten Island Ferry Terminal

I see you,
One, two, three, four of you
On different benches,
Sitting, faces blank.
Staring in space.
Your sloppy shopping bags by your sides,
Mumbling words under your breath.

I wonder
What you are saying.
Would you want to tell me?

How did you come to this life
Of sitting and waiting
Sleeping here, morning and night?
In this transience
Where commuters frantically
Come and go
Laughing at you.

How did you come to this life?
I want to ask
How can I help?
But all your eyes, threatening, angry,
Keep me away.

I feel powerless.

I see one of you clutching a torn rose.

—ELYSE NASS



Cultural Commissioner Henry Geldzahler and Rochelle Slovin, CCF Artists Project director at Pleiades Gallery.

George Malave

CETA Funding ...

much imagination when you consider that there are 10,000 CETA artists nationwide but over 725,000 CETA jobs. However, the spectre of such a cut is conveniently misleading. New York City unemployment remains hideously high—8.4 percent in August 1978. The same Jeffords amendment nullifies the \$3.2 billion ceiling once nationwide unemployment creeps past 6.5 percent. It is currently pegged at 6 percent; a year ago September the figure was 6.8 percent.

One Republican Congressman from Pennsylvania—Bill Goodling—had the nerve to offer an amendment giving local governments the option *not* to pay unemployment insurance to CETA workers. Luckily this amendment failed.

CETA funding for fiscal 1979 is pegged at \$11.4 billion. Since the 1973 CETA bill died on September 30 without a new bill hammered out, a Continuing Resolution was passed to keep the funds flowing under the old criteria with a cutoff date of April 1. It is conceivable that no changes of a substantive nature will be made until then. In other words, CETA is tiptoeing past the growls of hostile Congressmen.

The individual may shrug his or her shoulders but local politicians and bureaucrats are truly in a bind. Their plans for CETA employment—after all, this is a decentralized concept springing from the jargon of the Great Society—could evaporate in a purple plume of smoke if Jefford's trigger fires its magnum force. That could be one reason why official spokesmen in both the New York City Departments of Employment and of Cultural Affairs were mum on the future of Title VI employment. The prime sponsors are going about their business. The sub-contractors are polishing up their proposals for 1979. The real action is on the Hill.

Let's assume that the House version (HR 12452) muscles its way into enactment. How could that affect the virtuoso visual or literary artist? For one thing, there would be a new limitation on public service jobs—a maximum of 18 months in a five year period (with six months of previous CETA employment waived.) Salary could be less, due to the implementation of an across-the-board cut of \$800, to an average of \$7,000. Living in New York might be an advantage because the cost of living is so high and there are annual adjustments to local

wage rules. But eligibility requirements would be much stiffer and the U.S. Department of Labor would have its own independent monitoring office to weed out corruption and abuse, two words that anti-CETA Congressmen love to use in their attacks on PSE.

The possible saving grace in this whole affair is that Congress likes projects because they have a beginning and an end. There is a product one can see at the end of this dimly lit tunnel—a painting, a mural, a new play, perhaps abstract patterns of color on a Day Care Center wall. CCF provides these much sought after results. However, the question remains—can the projects be rolled over and can these artists who were chomping on the unemployment bit a scant 12 months ago be rehired? A tentative nod of the head on both counts.

But have you ever considered the new brain-child of the 95th Congress—the hybrid named Title VII? Lo and behold, the boys on the Hill have turned their backs on the local pols and altered their gaze to a more profitable perspective—gadzoos, Private Sector Employment! □

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Michael's Fish Market in Harlem, part of Marcia Bricker's photography project.

Blaise Tobia

Cultural Center Grows in Brooklyn

By BETSY JAEGER

Brooklyn's Downtown Cultural Center, located at 111 Willoughby Street, opened its doors to the public in August with a twenty-dollar pre-dinner special. Designed for people who work in the large commercial area downtown, this unique program offers its students, for a nominal fee, a series of six-month classes and workshops in the arts conducted between the hours of 5 and 9 p.m. so that its students can drop in after work and before they go home for the routine of dinner and T.V. The pre-dinner special includes courses in painting, drawing, vocal and instrumental music, modern dance and ballet, weaving, and theatre.

The moving force behind the program is Charlene Victor, executive director of the Brooklyn Arts and Culture Association (BACA), who rounded up the crew of CETA workers and artists to not only teach the classes but also refurbish the building which was donated by the St. Boniface Church. Some of the CCF artists immediately saw an additional use for the building—as a home for their own exhibitions and performances. Since becoming involved with the center, the artists have scraped walls, painted murals and paintings, decorated rooms, and woven a huge outdoor banner.

Janice Glander-Bandyk and Dolores Lombardi are co-directors of this center which depends upon the support of local businesses for day to day operations. For example, silk used in the huge outdoor banner was donated by a Manhattan manufacturer; paint came from the New York City Housing Authority. Con Edison, New York Telephone, the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, and Abraham & Straus have all been major supporters of the project. Ms. Bandyk quotes Tennessee Williams' Blanche DuBois who said, "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers" when she describes the grass roots level on which the Downtown Cultural Center rests.

The Cultural Council Foundation CETA Artists Project has supplied about one half of the people who work at the center. Currently Kathryn Bernson is teaching ballet and modern dance, Vic

Stornant modern dance, and Richard Nicksic drawing. Each class they teach lasts for two hours.

Buist Hardison painted a mural and is now painting the wall facing it. Virginia Maksymowitz and Alice Malin have also painted murals. Glenda Stoller and Susan Horton have designed a silk banner for the building's exterior, and Hunt Slonem has donated six paintings to the Church.

As part of the refurbishing of the building, a theatre has been built on the second floor where Cynthia McPherson teaches a drama class. Downstairs, a large vinyl asbestos tiled room serves as a dance studio. One of the most intriguing spots in the building is the ladies room where Susan Share has assembled a collage of playing cards, mirror fragments, photographs, and drawings which created a place that prompted one visitor to say "You don't want to leave it once you're in it."

The only regret that co-director Bandyk feels is that she can not yet give these CETA artists better conditions in which to work. She looks forward to the time when the Downtown Cultural Center can provide space for the artists to display their theatre and art work and, in fact, a gallery directed by

Richard Nicksic will soon be affiliated with the Brooklyn Museum.

Ms. Bandyk points out that St. Boniface was a Viking, an explorer, and hopes that the Downtown Cultural Center will successfully explore new ideas in bringing the arts to the people. Right now, however, the center is involved in recruiting new students as well as finding new sources of funding. If the project succeeds, it may mean that at least a few of the city's artists can move from CETA jobs to unsubsidised employment. □

Short Takes

This feature column devoted each month to short interviews with several CCF artists from different disciplines, describes their community and individual work projects and their personal views on a variety of subjects.

Johan Sellenraad . . . After the two-week disorienting orientation at the beginning of the program, it was a relief to start work. At first I was assigned to OIA (Organization of Independent Artists) where I helped to organize an exhibit. Later, I got in touch with the Long Island Historical Society and asked them whether they needed documentation of nineteenth century buildings in Brooklyn. They did, and now it's my job to do water colors of them. I love it, and it takes discipline.

Instead of waiting for assignments, I looked around for ones that I felt would be productive. I like teaching and used to teach full time, but I feel that teaching should not be the main emphasis of this CETA project. Rather, the project would be most productive if its end result is some original art which has impact and permanence.

I see CETA driving a wedge, opening new situations. One of my jobs is to design the Christopher Street station for the Port Authority. This opened new territory for me I never dreamed I'd be involved in, and at the same time, allowed the Port Authority to experiment, using the talents of the CETA artists in order to create something dramatic and fresh.

Do I have time for my own work? This is my own work. I haven't had to compromise. And it's permanent and public. Getting paid is also lovely. Most people have jobs they don't like. Why copy that? □



Lucy Mahler (left) and Nitza Tufino working on mural for Third St. Music School.

George Malave



Cassia Berman reading her poetry.

Sarah Wells

Cassia Berman . . . My CETA job, by the kinds of work I'm doing, and the people I've met, has brought me down to earth. I was never here before. I now feel that more of the world is my turf. It's given me a much stronger base.

So far I've worked a lot with senior citizens. Besides being valuable to them, it was valuable to me. I learned how not to scare them, how to be more sensitive. Seeing people in their final forms was interesting. It taught me what not to do.

This job has taken me from before the beginning of my life up until the present in a strange way. First I worked at Co-op City in the Bronx where most of the people from my old neighborhood moved; then I worked in Washington Heights near the Jewish Memorial Hospital, where I was born. Later I taught at a Senior Citizen Center on 175th Street, right near the neighborhood I grew up in.

Recently I've been teaching poetry to senior citizens. This summer I began workshops with teenagers. Because of my job I've come into contact with more people and fantastic people. I felt very isolated as a writer before, but CETA is a wonderful context to know people in.

This is the first year I've earned more than three thousand dollars. For the first time I don't have to think twice about whether I can afford to take the subways. Not having to think about typing jobs has been great for my morale! Although I've taught in schools and workshops before, this job has given me what I want from a teaching job—a chance to be me.

Kathryn Bernson . . . My CETA placements have enabled me to learn new styles of dance, to teach, to perform, and to interact with artists from other dance companies and disciplines. A three-month residency with the New York Baroque Dance Company has taught me a great deal about the baroque style; I will be able to apply this training in the future — both as a performer and a lecturer.

At the St. Boniface Cultural Center on Willoughby Street, I teach classes to adults and participate with about twenty other CETA artists in setting up a neighborhood cultural center. Last month I taught at the Staten Island Aid for Retarded Children, an experience I found very interesting for it made me understand how other people perceive things. Along with these placements, I've given per-

formances at the Snug Harbor Festival and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. I do modern dance with the Kathryn Bernson & Stormy Mullis Dance Company. We have a more theatrical concept than just pure movement, and we perform our own choreographed works.

My reservations about the CETA program have to do with time and space. Residencies make more sense for a dancer because it's really unrealistic to teach a class once a week for an hour and expect the student to learn very much — you need daily classes and longer ones. Then there's all the time that's consumed by travel. As for space, CETA should get a building and have shows of the artists' works as well as performances. It's important to establish an interchange between the artist and the community, but rather than always teaching classes, the people should be able to come to this building to watch the artist working and to ask questions. Seeing artists in action rather than in a classroom would help sensitize people to the fact that making art is the artist's *work* and not just recreation. The need to combine professional work with the community could be satisfied if a building were available for the artists and the public. □

CCF Notes

A **symposium on the CCF** photographers entitled "Creative Photography in the CETA Artists Project" will be held at 8 p.m. on Nov. 17 at Room 404, the New School, 66 West 12 St. It will include a slide presentation and discussion.

The Beverly Brown Dancensemble: Theatre For Bodies and Voices, will give a free CETA performance at 8 p.m. on Oct. 21 at Queensborough Community College Theatre, Bayside, Queens.

Bob Holman will give a poetry reading at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Brooklyn Heights Cadman Plaza branch of the New York Public Library.

Sandra Esteves will be conducting a ten-week poetry workshop beginning Oct. 15 at 101 Ave. A. For more information, call 475-9505.

Barbara Baracks is conducting a workshop on "Basic Print Media Design and Production" at the College of Staten Island for 12 weeks through December. For more detail call 255-7029. □

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