

FROM THE NEW YORK CITY ARTS COALITION: WINTER UPDATE AND ARTS DAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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From the New York City Arts Coalition: Winter Update and Arts Day Announcements

By Norma Munn

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STATE

Gov. Andrew Cuomo presented a State of State speech on Wednesday. You can locate a print copy at <http://governor.ny.gov/stateofthestate2011> if you want to read it. The speech contained many things most of us will welcome, or at least be willing to consider. Sadly, despite pointing to the proud legacy of New York State in many areas, the word "art" (or culture) was not mentioned.

It is clear from the speech that jobs and the budget deficit are priorities. Nothing unexpected in that. He also endorsed public funding for campaigns, an independent re-districting commission, reform of legislative rules on ethics, and full disclosure of outside income for legislators. And he supported approval of Gay Marriage legislation.

He is appointing a Spending in Government Efficiency Commission (SAGE) to examine the myriad of commissions, councils, authorities, institutes, etc. that exist now in the state. (If my memory is correct there are around 14,000.) They will be tasked with recommending a re-organization plan for submission to the legislature in six months.

We also do not know if there are committee changes as of this date, and will let you know when that data is available.

NYSCA and STATE BUDGET

There is no announced date for the state budget, but statute allows new governor to deliver the budget as late as Feb. 1. Until it is made public, we have no numbers, but the NYC Arts Coalition has been working with other groups around the state since late fall to provide a framework for legislative advocacy for the upcoming budget.

This new statewide effort is the Arts NYS Coalition, and we have planned the following:

- o ARTS WEEK starts Feb. 7, 2011. Many people cannot go to Albany for Arts Day, and we want to encourage everyone to designate their activities that week as part of Arts Week for New York State. Also, please invite your legislative representatives to your activities that week, and plan to see them when they are in their district on Feb. 10 and 11th.
- o Web site for centralized information is www.artsNYS.org (not 100% complete, but up and running). People will be able to use this site to send automatic email letters to elected officials.
- o Facebook and Twitter pages will be added to this effort shortly.
- o Arts Day for advocacy in Albany re NYSCA will be Feb 8. The statewide coalition will coordinate basic materials that everyone can use for the larger picture, but each locale and/or organization will be expected to supplement that overview with the specific details from their situation.

ARTS DAY and the NY CITY ARTS COALITION

We have agreed to resume our organization of the bus trip and to schedule the meetings, organize the teams, and produce the materials for the day for those in New York City who want to participate.

First, we need this day to have energy and enthusiasm. While we can probably expect a cut from Cuomo, we are not beggars. And we are not going to Albany with the attitude that "we will go out of business if you don't fund us." This is a field of professionals who work harder than anyone I know. The results are wonderful, funny, serious, transformative, crazy, beautiful, and provide (as a friend of mine puts it) food for mind and food for the soul.

Secondly, we really want artists, not only administrative staff, to join this effort. That voice is needed.

Thirdly, here is how you get signed up to go up as part of the NYC Arts Coalition and what you need to know about the day generally.

There are two buses this year. (Bus ONE from Arts Coalition and Bus TWO from Harlem Arts Alliance.)

BUS ONE:

One will leave from 33rd St and 8th Ave. Near Madison Square Garden.

It will leave – LEAVE – at 7 AM. We will do our best to start the trip back from Albany by 3 PM, so return should be about 6-6:30.

BUS TWO:

Location and fees not yet determined, but will be very shortly. You could contact Harlem Arts Alliance, but if you wait a couple of days, that information will be sent. Location will be in the Harlem area.

WHAT THE NYC ARTS COALITION WILL DO TO ORGANIZE THE DAY:

We will schedule the meetings with all 94 NYC members of the legislature. You DO NOT schedule. It will confuse folks in Albany and drive me nuts.

We will set up teams of 3-4 people with an experienced Team Captain. Each team will see between 4 and 6 legislative offices.

We will provide you with a packet of material when you get on the bus. It will give you complete information about whom you are seeing, where their office is, and the materials prepared for the day.

You will be briefed in greater detail on the bus, and have time to ask questions, get acquainted with others.

Meetings usually start at 10:30 and continue every half hour until around 1:00.

There is no hearing this year. There is a tentative plan for a press conference at 2 PM. Details still being worked out.

The NYC Arts Coalition and the Harlem Arts Alliance are working together on this, and we will coordinate scheduling, etc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: (I have done this for 15 years, so better I answer before you call or email.)

1. If you want to go up on your own via train, car, or self-levitating, you are still welcome to be part of the teams. BUT, you must be there by 10:30 and participate in all the scheduled meetings. I will do my best to provide anyone who chooses to use non-bus transportation with their schedule and materials in advance, but this is a very challenging logistical effort, so no promises. Send in a Sign up form with an explanation that you want to participate, but not use the bus, so you can be included.

2. No, you will not necessarily see the legislative person in whose district you live or work. I do my best to make that happen, and some people end up in other districts. It is still important for me to know who you know, etc. so please file out that part of the sign up form.

3. Yes, I really do need the sign up forms no later than Feb. 1. After that I turn into the wicked witch of the west and threaten rashes and skin boils for those who sign up late! Seriously, I can't figure out the teams until I know who is going, so I won't do you bodily harm, but it is difficult.

4. No, you cannot use the bus and schedule your own meetings to ask for member item money. If you do, and I find out, you will have to use other transportation home or be forever banned from receiving any emails from the Arts Coalition!

5. No, we do not use credit cards and I really, really do not want to be trying to collect money from folks while trying to get everyone on the bus and making sure we are not leaving anyone who decided to run into the coffee shop and get more caffeine at the last minute.

SPECIAL NOTE RE ARTISTS:

If your organization can persuade an eloquent self-employed artist to be part of Arts Day, we hope you can do so. We would like to have those artists compensated in the same way they would be if they were serving on a panel, which is \$150 I'm told.

I recognize that may not be possible for some organizations, and if the Arts Coalition had the funds, we would pay for this. We just can't.

Bottom line. If you can, that is great. If not, I understand. Perhaps you will be able to include an artist you know in local follow up visits that we will be asking people to make. Arts Day is a one-time situation. Good advocacy is ongoing and sustained.

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