

not believe that these requirements will discourage qualified candidates from serving on audit committees. Rather, the Commission believes that these requirements will better enable companies to identify and select qualified directors. In addition, the Commission does not believe that companies will experience undue difficulty recruiting an audit committee member that satisfies the financial expertise requirements.

Moreover, the Commission considers the Exchange's decision to exempt Small Business Filers as appropriate.<sup>48</sup> The Commission notes that relatively few companies that qualify for listing on the Exchange would also qualify as Small Business Filers under SEC Regulation S-B.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the Commission does not believe that the Exchange should be required to adopt the Amex and Nasdaq proposed definitions of financial literacy and expertise or the test to determine when a potential director has a significant business relationship with the company. The Commission notes that the proposed rule change is not inconsistent with the Act.

Moreover, the Commission has concluded that the Exchange's decision to include investment companies in the proposed rule change is warranted. While the Commission recognizes that the opportunity for some types of financial reporting abuses may be limited by the nature of fund assets,<sup>50</sup> it believes that audit committees do play an important role in overseeing the financial reporting process for investment companies.

Finally, the Commission does not view the proposed rule change as circumventing state law.<sup>51</sup> The Commission notes that the Exchange is amending its own listing standards, which is a function within the Exchange's discretion, as long as those changes are consistent with the Act.

The Commission finds good cause for approving Amendments No. 1 and No. 2 to the proposed rule change prior to the thirtieth day after publication in the **Federal Register**. The Commission notes that Amendment No. 1 revises the implementation time periods for the proposed rule change solely to provide greater clarity to issuers and to

investors. The Commission believes that Amendment No. 1 will enable issuers to determine when they must comply with the new requirements and will enable investors to determine when to reply on the protections afforded by the proposed rule change. The Commission notes that Amendment No. 2 simply codifies the Exchange's existing policy on the timing of audit committee requirements for IPO's; clarifies that the company's board must take appropriate action to satisfy itself of the outside auditor's independence, and is not intended to provide an absolute guarantee of independence; and requires the board to adopt the audit committee charter, rather than approving the charter adopted by the audit committee. The Commission believes that accelerated approval will allow the Exchange to simultaneously make all relevant modifications to its *Listed Company Manual* and will avoid potential confusion. Accordingly, the Commission finds good cause to accelerate approval of Amendments No. 1 and No. 2 to the proposed rule change, consistent with the Sections 6(b)(5)<sup>52</sup> and 19(b)<sup>53</sup> of the Act.

#### V. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20549-0609. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All submissions should refer to the File No. SR-NYSE-99-39 and should be submitted by January 11, 2000.

#### VI. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the Commission finds that the Exchange's proposal to amend its audit committee

requirements is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder.

*It Is Therefore Ordered*, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act,<sup>54</sup> that the amended proposed rule change (SR-NYSE-99-39) is approved.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>55</sup>

**Margaret H. McFarland**,  
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-33052 Filed 12-20-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

### [Public Notice 3180]

#### Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations: "Walker Evans"

**DEPARTMENT:** United States Department of State.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C. 2459), the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, and Delegation of Authority No. 236 of October 19, 1999, as amended, I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibition "Walker Evans," imported from abroad for temporary exhibition without profit within the United States, are of cultural significance. These objects are imported pursuant to loan agreements with the foreign lender. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the exhibit objects at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, from on or about January 31, 2000, to on or about May 14, 2000; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, from on or about June 2, 2000, to on or about September 12, 2000, and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, from on or about December 17, 2000, to on or about March 11, 2001, is in the national interest.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information, including a list of exhibit objects, contact Lorie J. Nierenberg, Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202/619-6084). The address is U.S. Department of State, SA-

<sup>48</sup> See NVCA and Airlease Letters.

<sup>49</sup> Small Business Filer is defined by Regulation S-B as an issuer that: (i) has revenue of less than \$25,000,000; (ii) is a U.S. or Canadian issuer; and (iii) if a majority owned subsidiary, the parent corporation is a small business issuer. 17 CFR 228.10(a)(1).

<sup>50</sup> See Keller and Rowe Letter at 5; ICI Letter at 3; MSDW Letter at 1.

<sup>51</sup> Kreider Letter at 2.

<sup>52</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

<sup>53</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b).

<sup>54</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

<sup>55</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

44; 301-4th Street, SW, Room 700,  
Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: December 15, 1999.

**William B. Bader,**

*Assistant Secretary for Educational and  
Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 99-33060 Filed 12-20-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-08-P

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3182]

### Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs NIS Secondary School Partnership Program

**NOTICE:** Request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State announces an open competition for the NIS Secondary School Partnership Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to either enhance or expand existing partnerships or develop new school partnership programs with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, or Ukraine. All proposals must have a thematic focus and feature on-going joint project activity between the schools, a student exchange component, and an educator (teacher/administrator) exchange component. The maximum grant award will be \$125,000 for single-country applications and \$200,000 for multiple country applications.

#### Program Information

The Secondary School Partnership Program is funded under the Freedom Support Act to assist young people in building an open society and developing democratic processes and institutions in the New Independent States (NIS). This program provides grants to link schools in the seven countries noted above with schools in the United States.

The U.S. recipient of the grant is responsible for recruiting, selecting, and organizing a U.S. network of a minimum of two secondary schools; strengthening an existing working relationship with an organization or agency of government in the NIS responsible for a network of at least two schools there; and linking the two networks in one-to-one school partnerships through a thematic project and substantive exchange activities.

#### Overview

The short-term goal of the school partnership program is to provide

partial funding for linkages between U.S. and NIS schools featuring collaborative substantive projects and reciprocal student and educator exchanges with strong academic content. The long-term goals are to: (1) develop lasting, sustainable institutional ties between U.S. and NIS schools and communities; (2) support democracy in the NIS; (3) advance mutual understanding between the youth and teachers of the U.S. and the NIS; and (4) promote partnerships developed through governmental, educational, and not-for-profit sector cooperation that serve the needs and interests of the schools.

The program has several defining features to help the participating schools develop their partnership:

—Each partnership has a project theme and the students and teachers in the two schools work on a joint project throughout the school year related to this theme;

—The two schools develop a relationship over the course of an academic year, through the planning process and the work on their joint project, which is highlighted by exchanges from three weeks to ten months in duration. Exchanges take place while the host school is in session.

—The student and teacher exchanges must be reciprocal.

—The program includes educators (teachers and/or administrators) in order to involve them in all aspects of the partnership and to provide them access to resources for curriculum development and educational training.

—During the exchange, participants attend class, are involved in school-based activities, work on their joint project, perform community service, visit educational and cultural sites, and reside with host families.

An applicant may, but is not required to, propose one of several optional features in its proposal. Please see these three optional features described later in this solicitation.

#### Dates

Grants may begin on or about July 15, 2000, and cover the 2000-2001 academic year. The exact starting date of the grant will be dependent on availability of funds.

#### Guidelines

A competitive proposal will present a project that builds upon previous contacts and interaction between the proposed schools to help ensure a solid foundation for the partnership. Partnerships should have an existence beyond the scope of this initiative; that

is, there should be an inherent reason for the linkage apart from the availability of grant funds. Organizers and school networks in the U.S. and NIS should collaborate in planning and preparation. Applicants must have an NIS organizational partner that has its base of operation in the partner country and not in another country. Proposals should support a working relationship that will produce something tangible and lasting in addressing the interests of both sides, beyond the confines of the funded project, such as the development of educational materials. The proposal should specify measurable goals and objectives of the program.

In general, the Bureau seeks school partnerships that target under-served countries or regions. For programs with Russia and Ukraine, priority will be given to partnerships with schools located outside of the Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev regions. Bureau funding may not be used to supplant existing private sector funding. Competitive proposals must demonstrate a solid and comprehensive follow-on plan to continue after the grant has expired.

Proposals must clearly describe and define substantive thematically-based projects for each school partnership that are the focus of the exchange for both students and educators and on-going joint project activity between the two schools. Specific activities, products, curriculum materials, and pre-planning are areas that can be addressed.

For example, what will the participants be doing and how is it relevant to the thematic focus of the program? Applicants should present a program that succeeds in linking the greater school community. All participating schools must be identified. Proposals should describe the selected theme, its importance to the schools and communities, the specific academic activities, and the expected outcome or product of the project. Possible themes include but are not limited to the following: democracy education, volunteerism or community service, conflict resolution, business management, health education, environmental issues, youth leadership training, computer technology, multicultural education, and agriculture.

Proposals must clearly present independent educator programs for teachers/administrators. These programs could include curriculum development seminars, shadowing of host peers in the classroom, university-level courses, or other substantive activities, with an emphasis on such themes as parent-teacher cooperation, model schools,