



Ambassador Timothy Roemer takes a walk through a village in the Sunderbans.



BULLETIN - MARCH 2011



Events at a Glance

March 31

Film Show: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Kolkata)

Your Date With U.S. History

THE PEACE CORPS

March 1, 2011, is the 50th anniversary of the well-known program called "Peace Corps." Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in 139 countries worldwide. Currently, over 8,500 Americans are serving in 77 countries. Peace Corps Volunteers work with foreign populations across a wide variety of programs. From education programs to health initiatives to food security, the Peace

Corps continues to have a positive lasting impact on individuals and entire communities. The Peace Corps' focus on helping people through personal relationships and direct engagement contributes to a better understanding both for the population served and for Americans. Highlighting the human impact and successes of Peace Corps projects contributes to a positive narrative that represents the best of America in all of its breadth and depth.

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Today's Peace Corps is more vital than ever, working in emerging and essential areas such as information technology and business development, and contributing to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

The Peace Corps' mission has three simple goals: helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women, helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



[Source: <http://www.infocentral.state.gov>; <http://www.peacecorps.gov>]

SAM HOUSTON



Houston, Texas, gets its name from Sam Houston, who was born in Virginia on March 2, 1793. In the mountains of Tennessee, he met people of the Cherokee tribe, and spent a good deal of his time with them. Later, he enlisted in the army, rose to the rank of first lieutenant, and resigned in 1818 to study law. Running for public office, he was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1823 and again in 1825. In 1827, Houston was elected Governor of Tennessee by a large majority. Later, he returned to live with his longtime friends, the Cherokees. He remained there until 1832 when he moved to Texas along with a few friends. In 1836, as commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas, he secured the independence of Texas from Mexico.

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**American Center
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Offices are open from 8 am - 5 pm; Monday - Friday
The American Library is open from 10 am - 6 pm, Monday - Saturday

YOUR TURN

The Bulletin wants to hear from you ... your thoughts, your opinions, your feedback. Write in with
 --a report of an American Center event you attended
 --your experiences in cross-cultural encounters
 --a photo that brings out the joys and sorrows of human life
 --a human interest anecdote.



Only email submissions will be considered for publication. The Bulletin reserves the right of submission selection, editing and publication.

Send your submissions by email to kolkatapas@state.gov by the 10th of each month.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Sonali Chakraborty, an English teacher at MRC Vidyapith, Kalikapur, has this to say on her return from Arizona and Texas on an exchange program: *I was amazed when a student of Class 7 asked me: "What's that black circular small thing you have on your forehead?" I answered smilingly, "That's called bindi and ladies wear them to make themselves look beautiful." The boy fired me another question, "Does that grow?" "Oh my God, that would be disastrous then!" I replied. He gave me his last blow, "Then what's the use of putting on something if it does not grow?" I had no answer and kept mum. But that was the turning point in my life.*



The photograph shows Sonali monitoring her class at Kealing Middle School, Texas.

35TH INTERNATIONAL KOLKATA BOOK FAIR IN PICTURES: AMERICAN THEME



Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Book Fair inaugurator Richard Ford share some thoughts.



Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Ford delivers the inaugural address while U.S. Ambassador Timothy Roemer looks on.



The American Pavilion looms in the evening sky.



Ambassador Roemer exchanges words with visitors to the Fair.



A laser show on Americana lights up the night.



Award-winning National Geographic photographer Annie Griffiths Belt explains a point at a workshop.



U.S. urban planner Kristina Ford conducts a seminar at Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake.



Students listen intently to opportunities for higher studies in the U.S.



Visitors check out the computers in the American Pavilion.



PEN/Hemingway award winner Akhil Sharma chats with American Library Book Club members.



Visitors at the American Pavilion get acquainted with SPAN magazine.



A member of hip-hop group Havikoro entertains the audience at the closing of the Fair.

All programs are subject to change. Please confirm closer to the date of the event.

Film Show:

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

(131 mins)

March 31, 2.30 p.m.: Kolkata



Directed by Richard Brooks and James Poe, and produced by MGM, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* features Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, and Burl Ives in a powerful, highly-charged, moving story of a neurotic, dysfunctional Southern family with its rivalries, tensions, and avarice. Its provocative screenplay was adapted from the Pulitzer Prize-winning play of the same name by Tennessee Williams.

Contact: 3984-6399 or mukhotymx@state.gov

**FOCUS:****KRISTINA FORD, URBAN PLANNING EXPERT**

Kristina Ford, one of America's best known urban planners, and former Director of City Planning in New Orleans, was in Kolkata recently accompanying her husband Richard Ford who inaugurated the Kolkata Book Fair. She reflects on her India visit thus: "Because I'd traveled to other foreign places, I also assumed that what I'd see in India would resolve into fond and exotic memories. That assumption turned out to be wrong. My point-of-entry expectations evaporated upon meeting the fulminate life that the cities in India present on their streets: so many honking cars and so many exotically-dressed people walking alongside dogs and monkeys.



Cattle, pigs and goats loose in the streets, nosing out edible finds in curbside garbage. Boys washing themselves in water provided by common cisterns. Women sorting into saleable bundles the vegetables delivered to the sidewalk by drivers of mule-drawn carriages; men stringing marigolds into long garlands sold to anyone celebrating a guest's arrival. Cars, camel-driven carts, and motorized rickshaws appear everywhere and at all hours. Mendicants wander among stopped cars, seeking a sympathetic audience that will pass a few rupees through the taxi window for what is displayed: a de-fanged cobra hidden in a covered basket, a pretty baby held in the folds of a destitute woman's sari. You could say that streets in India accommodate many of its citizens' activities.

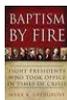
Leaving India, what I've missed is what has made New Orleans seem empty. I miss the life on display on India's streets. City planner that I am, I want to replicate the thrilling vibrancy of those streets, even though I know that the contributing components found in Indian cities can't survive in, say, New Orleans. We don't have camels; our street-dogs don't know to stay close to the curb, and we don't allow commerce on the sidewalk. Nonetheless, figuring out how to achieve accommodation on American city streets will occupy my mind long after my trip to India.

The experience, in other words, is something more than the fond exotic memories I had expected."

Above: Kristina conducting a seminar at Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake.

COMPELLING ADDITIONS TO THE AMERICAN LIBRARY'S BOOK COLLECTION

Daniel X: Watch the Skies by James Patterson and Ned Rust. Little Brown & Company, 2009. 251 pp. Bestselling mystery author James Patterson and "Rolling Stone" magazine writer Ned Rust team up to present this unabridged audiobook adventure pitting Daniel X against a virtually demonic television personality. A thrill ride from start to finish.



Baptism by Fire: Eight Presidents who Took Office in Times of Crisis by Mark K. Updegrove. Thomas Dunne Books, 2009. 292 pp. Updegrove weaves an engaging narrative that looks at eight presidents who took office at critical moments in U.S. history and shaped American notions of presidential authority and purview.

PROGRAMS ORGANIZED BY THE UNITED STATES - INDIA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (USIEF)

March 3: American Fulbright Scholar Robin Sukhadia presents a performance *Tabla & Healing: Empowering Youth Through Music*: at the American Center.



March 15: American Fulbright Scholars Robin Sukhadia and Eric Fraser present a workshop on Music Therapy titled "Music & Wellness" at the American Center.

March 30: U.S. based writer, editor and teacher Neelanjana Banerjee conducts a story-telling/creative writing workshop followed by a competition for high school students at the American Center.

Contact: 3984-6309 or shevanti@usief.org.in

American Center's launches its SMS service:

Dial US4U at 9243000111

In keeping with the times, we are delighted to announce the introduction of a new service-- *Tunespray*. The best feature of this service is SMS notification to you about our upcoming programs. Apart from standard SMS notifications, this feature comes with some other useful tools:



- ✿ SMS your participation in American Center events.
- ✿ Give us feedback on events or policies.
- ✿ Interact live with us regarding events through Text 2 Poll and Message Boards.
- ✿ Voice your opinion through SMS.

To avail yourself of information on American Library membership, reference services, and programs, type: "US4U<space>LIBRARY 9243000111".

American Center launches its Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/AmericanCenter.Kolkata

In an age of social media, the American Center is delighted to announce the launch of its Facebook Page. This Page is designed not only to promote upcoming events, programs, interactive sessions, and releases of new books and articles at the American Center, but also to get feedback from our audiences through their active participation in online conversations and opinion polls.

To avail yourself of information about upcoming events or to interact with us, please visit our Facebook Page at the above-mentioned link and "Like" us to get yourself added to our page.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - OUR HISTORY IS OUR STRENGTH

"Our history is our strength" is the theme of the 2011 Women's History Month, celebrated in March each year in the United States. As recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration for 1978. The week of March 8th, International Women's Day, was chosen as the focal point of the observance. In February 1980 President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week.



As word spread rapidly across the nation, state departments of education encouraged celebrations of National Women's History Week as an effective means to achieving equity goals within classrooms. By 1986, 14 states had already declared March as Women's History Month. This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale to lobby Congress to declare the entire month of March 1987 as National Women's History Month. In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women.

Although women's history is intertwined with the history shared with men, several factors - social, religious, economic, and biological - have worked to create a unique sphere of women's history. The stories of women's achievements are integral to the fabric of our history. Learning about women's tenacity, courage, and creativity throughout the centuries is a tremendous source of strength. Women's History Month 2011 celebrates the history of women's achievements.

FEBRUARY IN PICTURES



Consul General Beth Payne visits with village citizens at Bhalki, Burdwan.



American Center Director Chad Cummins greets children at the Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre, Bhubaneswar.



American Fulbright Scholar Eric Fraser gives a flute performance at the American Center.



American Center Director Chad Cummins hands out a certificate to a recipient of the English Access Microscholarship Program at the Sir Syed Group of Schools, Kolkata.