



Visitors throng the American Library booth at Golpo Mela (Story Festival) in the Mohar Kunj grounds at Kolkata.



BULLETIN - DECEMBER 2012



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Your Date With U.S. History

THE PHI BETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY

On December 5, 1776, Phi Beta Kappa, America's most prestigious undergraduate honor society, was founded. Organized by five students at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, Phi Beta Kappa was the nation's first Greek letter society. From 1776 to 1780, members met regularly at William and Mary to write, debate, and socialize. They planned the organization's expansion and established the characteristics typical of American fraternities and sororities: an oath of secrecy, a code of laws, mottoes in Greek and Latin, a badge and a seal, a special handclasp, and an elaborate initiation ritual.



When the Revolutionary War forced William and Mary to close in 1780, newly formed chapters at Harvard and Yale directed Phi Beta Kappa's growth and development. By the time that the William and Mary chapter was revived in 1851, Phi Beta Kappa was represented at colleges throughout New England. By the end of the nineteenth century, the once secretive, exclusively male social group had dropped its oath of secrecy, opened its doors to women, and transformed itself into a national honor society dedicated to fostering and recognizing excellence in the liberal arts and sciences.

In 1988 the organization changed its name to The Phi Beta Kappa Society, which today has over 270 chapters. Membership in the national organization is based on outstanding achievement in the liberal arts and sciences. Approximately ten percent of the nation's institutions of high learning have Phi Beta Kappa chapters--typically limited to students in the upper tenth of their graduating class. Phi Beta Kappa sponsors campus and community activities, fellowships, and service and literary awards.

Source: <http://memory.loc.gov>

CLEVELAND ABBE



"Father of the Weather Bureau" Cleveland Abbe was born in New York on December 3, 1838. He was assistant at the U.S. Naval Observatory, and Director of the Cincinnati Observatory. His success there in forecasting the weather from meteorological observations telegraphed from various points led to his being called to the U.S. Signal Service in 1871. The weather bureau was formally established in 1891 under the Department of Agriculture, and Abbe remained its head until his death October 28, 1916. To his initiative is largely due the introduction of the system of standardized time.

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Web site: <http://kolkata.usconsulate.gov>

Offices are open 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.

Documentary Films on Trafficking in Persons

(Entry on first-come first-served basis, until capacity is reached.)

December 7, 3 p.m.

Venue: American Center
"Transforming Steps" by
Kolkata Sanved

"Selling of Innocents" by
Apne Aap Women Worldwide

December 13, 6 p.m.

Venue: American Center
"Not My Life"

December 22, 6.30 p.m.

Venue: Mohar Kunj,
(opposite Academy of Fine
Arts)

"Half the Sky" by Nicholas
Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn
(Kolkata portion only)

December 27, 6 p.m.

Venue: American Center
"Half the Sky" - Part 1

December 28, 6 p.m.

Venue: American Center
"Half the Sky" - Part 2

Contact:

dassx@state.gov/3984-6392
Ghoshsx2@state.gov/3984-6325

CALENDAR OF EVENTS**Robert Verchik: Speaker on Environment**

December 5: American Center, 5 p.m.

The American Center hosts Robert Verchick who holds the Gauthier-St. Martin Chair in Environmental Law at Loyola University New Orleans, where he is also Faculty Director of the Center for Environmental Law and Land Use. His work focuses on the environment, with a business entrepreneurial focus as well as a regional responsibility role. On December 5 he will speak on "Government Policies and Land Use for Public Parks and Gardens in Big Cities." All are welcome.

Contact: 3984-6326 or dayalss@state.gov

Experience America

December 13-15: Guwahati

The American Center presents a three-day festival of America at Guwahati. Follow us on Facebook to get updates on events during those dates. If you happen to be in Guwahati at that time, and are interested in meeting with us, just write to us at the email below. We look forward to seeing you in Guwahati!

Contact: 3984-6324 or mullicksx@state.gov

Trafficking in Persons Conclave

December 22: Mohar Kunj (opposite Academy of Fine Arts), 2 p.m. onwards

The U.S. Consulate General partners with several city NGOs, youth organizations and educational institutions to host the second edition of the Trafficking in Person Conclave built around the theme of youth awareness. The event includes workshops, panel discussions, theater and dance performances, a poster walk, a crafts exhibition, and a screening of a portion of a documentary "Half the Sky" by Nicholas Kristoff, which was shot in Kolkata. The film screens at 6 p.m.

Contact: dassx@state.gov/39846392

Expressions through Rhythm

December 23: Spine area, City Centre, New Town, 6.30 p.m.

American social activist Laura Price and several city NGOs join hands with the American Center for an evening of music, theater, and dance to celebrate the fight against Human Trafficking. All are welcome.

Contact: dassx@state.gov/3984-6392

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

Platform Beats**December 24: American Center, 2 p.m.**

The American Center hosts "Platform Beats," a Kolkata Sanved-IFA initiative, in partnership with CINI Asha and Prajak, that explores the creative spirit in railway platform kids. This performance, directed by Sumon Mukhopadhyay, is a grand finale of their residential workshop. All are welcome.

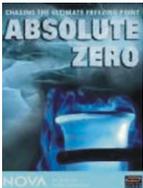
Contact: dassx@state.gov/3984-6392

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COMPELLING ADDITIONS TO THE AMERICAN LIBRARY'S DVD COLLECTION



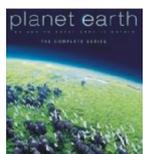
ABSOLUTE ZERO: CHASING THE ULTIMATE FREEZING POINT. Produced and directed by David Dugan. NOVA, 2007. 109 mins. This two-part NOVA special brings the history of this frosty fascination to life with brilliant dramatic recreations of high moments in low-temperature research and the quest for ever-lower notches on the thermometer.



TSUNAMI: THE WAVE THAT SHOOK THE WORLD. Written and produced by Martin Williams. NOVA, 2005. 60 mins. Responsible for over 250,000 deaths, the 2004 tsunami that struck the island of Sumatra before hitting Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India, is chronicled in this detailed "Nova" documentary. This gripping account of the tragedy follows the devastation minute by minute, and reveals the work of scientists exploring the possibilities of a similar event wreaking havoc on the United States. Soundtracks: English Dolby Digital stereo, DVS Dolby Digital stereo.



OCTOBER SKY. Directed by Joe Johnston, produced by Charles Gordon. Universal Pictures, 2005. 108 mins. *October Sky* is a family film for all ages, encouraging the highest potential of the human spirit while giving viewers a clear view of a bygone era when "the final frontier" beckoned to the explorer in all of us.



PLANET EARTH: AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE. Series producer Alastair Fothergill. 2007. 150 mins. This film looks at what the future may hold for endangered animals, habitats and--ultimately--ourselves. Following the environmental issues raised by *Planet Earth*, it asks why so many species are threatened and how they can be protected in future.

American Center Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/kolkata.usconsulate

In an age of social media, the American Center is delighted to draw your attention to 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 join our over 20,000 fans by following the above-mentioned link and "Like" us!

Surf On Our Turf

The American Library invites you to blog at:



<http://blogs.usembassy.gov/kolkata/>

Join our online discussion forum to share your thoughts on what you have read, recommend books to read, and get information on the library's recent additions and events.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION DAY

December 4 is Wildlife Conservation Day, designed to highlight the efforts of the U.S. Government to curb wildlife trafficking which poses greater and greater risks in every region of the world. In addition to the negative economic, political, environmental, and ethical dimensions of this illicit activity, the criminal activity associated with trafficking in wildlife poses ever-increasing threats to our security. At the Partnership Meeting on Wildlife Trafficking held at the State Department on November 8, 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on private and government organizations everywhere to join the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking, a global partnership for sharing information on poachers and illicit traders. The networks provided by the coalition, she said, are critical to strengthening protection efforts and enhancing cooperation among key countries.



NOVEMBER IN PICTURES



English Language Fellow Joseph Dwaileebe conducts a class for English teachers of madrassahs at Kolkata.



School students listen intently to a storytelling session during Children's Day at the American Center.



Election watchers observe the course of the 2012 U.S. election at the American Center.