



Consul General Beth Payne releasing a commemorative souvenir at the Chapchar Kut festival at Aizawl, Mizoram.



BULLETIN - MAY 2011



Events at a Glance

May 2

Program: Spelling Bee (Guwahati)

May 16-17

Program: U.S. speaker on Foreign Policy (Kolkata)

May 25

Program: Book Club meet (Kolkata)

May 26-27

Program: Tribute to Tagore (Kolkata)

May 27

Film Show: *The Shawshank Redemption* (Kolkata)

Holiday

May 30

Memorial Day

Your Date With U.S. History

The Memorial Day holiday celebrated by Americans on the last Monday of May represents for many the unofficial beginning of summer. Many will travel over the long holiday weekend to seek out friends and family, beaches and amusement parks. But most will pause at some point to recall the holiday's true purpose: honoring those who died defending their nation.

Memorial Day entertainments throughout the United States range from large sporting events to quintessentially small-town celebrations. The Indianapolis ("Indy") 500 motor race, by some measures the world's largest single-day sporting event, attracts an estimated global audience of more than 320 million.

Meanwhile, in Waterloo, New York - the place where Memorial Day began (at least according to Waterloo) - festivities include a parade, arts and crafts show, a strawberry festival, music, tours of the town's Civil War museum and an antique car show. Civil War buffs in period uniforms and dresses hold a two-night encampment and stand by for live cannon-fire demonstrations. Those not too full from the pizza-eating contest can compete in a five-kilometer race.

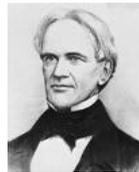
The story of Waterloo, and that of the holiday itself, is woven deeply into the nation's history. During the American Civil War of 1861-1865, which claimed the lives of more than 550,000 people, many citizens began to place flowers on the graves of the war dead. A number of northern municipalities continued these "Decoration Days" after the war ended, but the decisive event occurred in 1866 in Waterloo, 450 kilometers from New York City.

In 1865, Waterloo resident Henry C. Welles, the town's druggist, hit on the idea of formally setting aside a day to honor those killed in the war. He was supported by one of his customers, John B. Murray, who had risen to the rank of brigadier general in the Union (northern) Army, and Murray's friend, Major General John A. Logan, another retired Union commander. In 1866 Waterloo held the first formal, village-wide, annual observance of a day dedicated to honoring the war dead, and it has continued to do so for 144 years. On Memorial Day weekend, visitors inflate the town's population to several times its normal size.

Source: www.america.gov



HORACE MANN



May 4, 1796, marks the birth of Horace Mann, who initiated the reforms that would make American education a model for the world. Mann served as secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education beginning in 1837. He grew up in poor circumstances and could attend school only part time, but, with help from tutors, he attended college and then spent the rest of his life promoting a then-revolutionary educational philosophy. Mann campaigned for free, taxpayer-supported public schools that both rich and poor children would attend together. While these public schools would be managed locally, Mann advocated an encompassing system of educational improvement to apply best-teaching methods and to assess schools' performance.

Source: www.america.gov

www.facebook.com/AmericanCenter.Kolkata



American Center Kolkata steps into Social Media. Details inside.

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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

Maitreyee Trivedi Dasgupta, an advocate of the Kolkata High Court, recounts her experience at a Legal Counseling Workshop for sex workers at the American Center: *"I have rarely had such a lively audience in my years of public speaking. Interactive and spontaneous, warm and attentive, with the light of comprehension in their eyes, the women in their poised, sedate yet vibrant attire, made the laws come alive. A short drama by the women and children on the subject of women's empowerment followed the discourse. Even though the actors got a little confused with their lines, they confidently covered it all up - it was a rare treat."*



The photograph shows Maitreyee interacting with the participants at the workshop.

Spelling Bee

Guwahati: May 2



On May 2, the American Center will conduct the first Guwahati Spelling Bee in partnership with the Darwin School of Business in Guwahati. Professor O. K. Medhi, Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University, will inaugurate the event and Mr. Scott Hartmann, Deputy Director of the American Center, will be the Bee Master. Over 200 school students from local English medium schools will participate in the program.

Contact: 3984-6336 or ghoshdx@state.gov

Foreign Policy Speaker Program

Kolkata: May 16-17

Japan Foundation Scholar Michael Auslin will meet the Foreign Policy Study Circle members at the American Center and interact on a number of topics, including security in the Indo-Pacific region, U.S.-China relations, and Asian security in general. He will also interact with students of the Foreign Policy Center of Calcutta University.



Contact: 3984-6325 or ghoshsx2@state.gov

Book Club Meet

Kolkata: May 25, 4 p.m.

The American Library will organize a Book Club discussion of the literary classic *Raisin in the Sun* at the American Center. The play explores the values and purposes of dreams through the lives of the Youngers, a working-class black family struggling against economic hardship and racial prejudice in the Chicago of the 1950s.



Contact: 3984-6394 or guhasx@state.gov

Tribute to Tagore

Kolkata: May 26-27, 6.30 p.m.



On May 26, the American Center will present a program on Tagore as a traveler--through music, pictures, narration, and songs. On May 27, the American Center and Kolkata Sanved will present a creative arts program on Tagore.

Contact: 3984-6325 or ghoshsx@state.gov

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

Film Show:

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

(127 mins)
May 27, 2.30 p.m.:
Kolkata



Directed by Frank Darabont, this 1994 film features Tim Robbins, Morgan Freeman, and Bob Gunton in a story of two imprisoned men who bond over a number of years, finding solace and eventual redemption through acts of common decency. Andy Dufresne is a young and successful banker whose life changes drastically when he is convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his wife and her lover. Set in the 1940s, the film shows how Andy, with the help of his friend Red, the prison entrepreneur, turns out to be a most unconventional prisoner.

Contact: 3984-6397 or sennx@state.gov



*The Blue Planet, they used to call it.
Now it's yellow, brown and black
The emerald forests, they have all fallen
To metal saw blades and tar tracks.
The azure rivers have choked and cried,
Weeping precious, unseen tears.
So many creatures, turned and died,
Disappearing through the years.*

*.....
So join your hands with your friends
Let's show them what we're worth.
The world won't come to an end,
Because we'll save it first.
You will kiss your backyard's dirt in wonder,
When you plant a little seed.
See the sea waves, hear the thunder,
And know you helped to make them be.*

--Shrionti Maitra, The Heritage School



*Haunting winds meander forth
Whisper soft to desolate sight
Streams of mist flicker past
Through murky shades of night.
Single streetlight looms somewhere
Amber glow doth shine
Delicate strands of moonlight flow
In hues of dullest white.
Round the bend, down the road
Long abandoned local park;
Silence weaves her bewitching spell
And stillness clutches at the dark...
A time when a thousand shades
Could gleam in sunbeams
Where softest buds could be
And unfolded where dreams
danced...*

--Laxmi Mitra, Akshar School



*Let's raise our glasses,
Filled with the finest wine,
A toast to all the feats
Accomplished by mankind.*

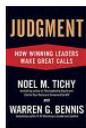
*To another industry set up,
To another project completed
To another mine excavated,
To another record defeated.*

*Every hindrance we can conquer,
Every boulder we destroy
The earth is ours to use,
And only ours to enjoy.*

*But what if we pause,
Pause for a second to observe
Look around us to see
What the Earth deserves.*

--Anmol Gupta, Modern High School for Girls

COMPELLING ADDITIONS TO THE AMERICAN LIBRARY'S COLLECTION



Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls by Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis. Portfolio, 2008. 392 pp. Leadership gurus Tichy and Bennis examine the critical role judgment plays in effective leadership. Calling judgment the essence of leadership, they identify three judgment domains that can undermine any leader's success--people, strategy and crisis-and explore such challenges as selecting the top team, CEO succession, and crisis as a leadership development opportunity.



Bulworth by Warren Beatty. Actors: Warren Beatty, Halle Berry, Sean Astin, Kirk Baltz, Ernie Lee Banks. 1999. 108 minutes. Believing his career is over, Senator Jay Bulworth (Warren Beatty) takes out an enormous insurance policy on his own life. But his impending death fills him with an outrageous desire to break the rules and tell it as it is. Suddenly the Senator is the surprise political favorite and falls hopelessly in love with Nina (Halle Berry), a beautiful, young activist from the inner city. Now that Bulworth has found a reason to live, he must also find the hit man who's out to kill him.

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



May 5, 6 p.m. (Kolkata): *Epic Poets, Lyric Poetry* - an evening of poetry at the American Center by Fulbright scholars Srabanti Basu and Jordan Mills Pleasant, featuring Bengali and American poets.

May 12 (Shillong): Seminar on "Climate Change in the 2nd Millennium & its Effects on Population in Western Central India" by Fulbright Nehru Senior Research Scholar Gwendolyn Robbins Schug, at St. Anthony's College.

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

American Center's SMS service: Dial US4U at 9243000111

In keeping with the times, we are delighted to report the successful functioning 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' Facebook Page www.facebook.com/AmericanCenter.Kolkata

In an age of social media, the American Center is delighted to report the successful functioning 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.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY: 21ST CENTURY NEW MEDIA: NEW FRONTIERS, NEW BARRIERS

May 3 marks World Press Freedom Day, which the United States will host from May 1 - May 3 in Washington, D.C. UNESCO is the only UN agency with the mandate to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

The theme for the commemoration is "21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers." The United States places technology and innovation at the forefront of its diplomatic and development efforts. New media has empowered citizens around the world to report on their circumstances, express opinions on world events, and exchange information in environments sometimes hostile to such exercises of individuals' right to freedom of expression. At the same time, there is concern about the determination of some governments to censor and silence individuals, and to restrict the free flow of information. Events such as World Press Freedom Day are commemorated in the context of the United States' enduring commitment to supporting and expanding press freedom, and the free flow of information in the digital age.

Highlighting the many events surrounding the celebration will be the awarding of the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize at the National Press Club on May 3rd. This prize, determined by an independent jury of international journalists, honors a person, organization or institution that has notably contributed to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom, especially where risks have been undertaken.

[Source: <http://www.america.gov>]

APRIL IN PICTURES



American Center Director Chad Cummins interacts with students of St. Anthony's College, Shillong.



Stagecraft thespians enact a scene from a play during an evening of American theater at the American Center.



U.S. documentary film experts Tom Shepard and Tom White conduct a workshop at the American Center.



The audience participates intensely in a women's empowerment program "Our Voice, Our Journey" at the American Center.

Published under the direction of Chad P. Cummins, Director, American Center of the U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata.

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