



MUMBAI

American Center
Выллетин

MARCH
2008



International Women’s Day is celebrated annually on March 8. It pays homage to both the ongoing struggles and accomplishments of women around the world. This day originated from the early years of the women’s equality movement; it draws inspiration from the pacifist and socialist forces that were pushing for equality across gender boundaries at the turn of the 20th century. From its roots in the international socialist movement to its current status as an internationally recognized and celebrated holiday for women from all walks of life, this day provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of notable women. In celebration of this date, let us pay tribute to women who have accomplished a great deal when confronted with challenges. We are highlighting some here and we urge all our readers to recognize those women who are making a difference in their communities.

Helen Keller was born in Alabama in 1880 in an environment that most would describe as quite well off; her father was a retired officer of the Confederate Army, and her mother a cousin of the famous Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Her childhood would have been quite normal had she not fallen ill at the age of 19 months with a fever that left her both blind and deaf. At this point, were it not for the support of her family, Helen would have had virtually no chance to lead a normal life. Helen’s only communication partner was the young daughter of the family cook, with whom she had created a number of signs to convey basic ideas. Scientists later noted that this early human contact made the difference in Helen’s development. When she was six, her mother met with a scientist by the name of Alexander Graham Bell who worked with deaf people. Bell advised her mother to contact the Perkins Institute for the Blind, a well-known school for the blind.

The school deputed Anne Sullivan, a former student at Perkins, to instruct Helen. Sullivan taught Helen methods of spelling words on hands, and then moved on to lipreading and the Braille alphabet. She eventually learned how to read not only English but Latin, French and German. In 1900, Helen was admitted to Radcliffe College, and graduated magna cum laude in 1904. She was the first deaf/blind person to graduate from university. After graduating, she became a renowned author and political activist, advocating women’s suffrage, pacifism, and birth control. Her struggles and

her achievements have been immortalized both in

cinema and in writing around the world.

In a far different vein, but certainly no less significant, let us consider the achievements of one of America’s most prominent and controversial political philosophers. Ayn Rand was born in pre-Revolution St. Petersburg to a middle-class family in 1905, but her life was disrupted and transformed by the revolution of 1917. The Bolshevik revolution uprooted Ayn Rand’s family, forcing them to the Crimea in an attempt to recuperate what they had lost in the revolution. After returning to Petrograd for her studies, Ayn Rand obtained a visa to the United States nine years later to visit relatives, and vowed never to return to the Soviet Union. Perhaps due to the traumatic experiences of her childhood, Ayn Rand developed a fiercely independent and individualistic philosophy known as “objectivism,” and wrote several novels espousing this new school of thought. Of these novels, both *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* joined the ranks of the most influential novels of the past 100 years. Her focus on the power of the individual and the preeminence of market-based capitalism crystallized the basic principles of American economic and political conservatism in the 20th century. Her ideas profoundly influenced some of the most prominent thinkers of the 20th and 21st centuries, including former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan. In short, she rose from the shambles of a life shattered by revolution and Soviet repression to become one of the best-known and most inflammatory political thinkers of her generation.

From these accomplishments of Helen Keller and Ayn Rand during the 20th century, let us jump forward to the 21st century. Even in democracies, the political equation firmly upheld the dominance of men. Viewed from this perspective then, the entire political landscape would have been nearly unbelievable to somebody like Helen Keller. The thought that one of the leading candidates for the Presidency of the United States would be a woman, would have seemed like a dream, and the thought that the Speaker of the House of Representatives would also be a woman would have added to that surreal seemingly-fantasy world. In Liberia, the rule of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has raised the hopes of that war-torn nation, helping to raise her country from the ashes of a decades-long conflict marked by atrocities. Likewise, the prominence of

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(Monday through Friday)

HOLIDAYS
March 20: Id-e-Milad
March 21: Good Friday

We dedicate this month's bulletin to women around the world, and the ongoing need to perpetually raise awareness on the importance of gender equity at all levels of society. The article in this issue, featuring accomplishments of women, has been contributed by Eric Jordan who works at the American Consulate. Prior to his arrival in Mumbai, Eric served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Republic of Guinea, where he worked as a business advisor. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and is originally from Overland Park, Kansas.

We have also featured a timeline of the struggle for women's suffrage in the United States – a significant movement in the history of the United States.

Please also see the listings of our upcoming events. More details can be found at <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>.

Happy reading!

Sanjay Mehta
Editor

(Continued from page 1)

formidable female elected national leaders like Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Benazir Bhutto would have been virtually unthinkable a century ago. Even when viewed within the British tradition of female monarchs, the strength of Margaret Thatcher was without compare, and the striking changes she effected in her country were groundbreaking. Without endorsing the political views, personal issues, or agendas of these leaders, it is essential to recognize the important role that all three have played in increasing the role of women on the world stage. All three were elected by their people in democratic elections. They were unafraid of the consequences of their decisions, even in the face of widespread upheaval or threat to their own lives. While the outcomes of their decisions are certainly up for debate, the images of all three leaders are permanently ingrained into the consciousness of their nations, and will certainly continue to challenge both the men and women of their respective nations.

As we look to the future, perhaps we can draw upon the example of Sunita Williams, the first Indian-American woman in space. Born Sunita Pandya, she is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy. She served first as a naval aviator before being selected by NASA for the astronaut candidate training program in 1998. She had the opportunity to serve aboard the International Space Station and to run the first full marathon in space, and now holds the current record for the longest space flight for a woman. Her remarks for *Nirali* magazine in October 2004 sum up quite nicely an ideal to be achieved. When asked about the difficulties of being South Asian or a woman in her particular career, she said "it's been pretty transparent – maybe I've been lucky or avoided acknowledging that I'm different. If you don't acknowledge there's a difference the people around you won't acknowledge there's a difference, and I think that's beneficial." Her accomplishments have breached every frontier, and her example continues to inspire men and women of all backgrounds.

1776: Abigail Adams writes to her husband John, who is attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, asking that he and the other men – who were at work on the Declaration of Independence – "Remember the ladies." John responds with humor. The Declaration's wording specifies that "all men are created equal"

1821: Emma Hart Willard founds the Troy Female Seminary in New York – the first endowed school for girls

1833: Oberlin College becomes the first coeducational college in the United States. In 1841, Oberlin awards the first academic degrees to three women. Early graduates include Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown

1837: The first National Female Anti-Slavery Society convention meets in New York City

1837: Mary Lyon founds Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, eventually the first four-year college exclusively for women in the United States

1839: Mississippi passes the first Married Woman's Property Act

1848: The first women's rights convention in the United States is held July 19-20, in Seneca Falls, New York

1849: Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery. Over the next ten years, she leads many slaves to freedom by the Underground Railroad

1852: Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which rapidly becomes a bestseller. Lucretia Mott writes *Discourse on Woman*, arguing that the apparent inferiority of women can be attributed to their inferior educational opportunities

1866: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage

1868: The Fourteenth Amendment, which extends to all citizens the protections of the Constitution against unjust state laws, is ratified. This Amendment is the first to define "citizens" and "voters" as "male"

1869: The women's rights movement splits into two factions as a result of disagreements over the Fourteenth and soon-to-be-passed Fifteenth Amendments. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the more radical, New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organize the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which is based in Boston. In this same year, the Wyoming territory is organized with a woman suffrage provision. In 1890, Wyoming was admitted to the Union with its suffrage provision intact

1870: AWSA begins publishing *Woman's Journal*, under the editorship of Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Mary A. Livermore (who gives up her own Chicago publication, *The Agitator* in order to participate in the venture)

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1872: Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, demanding a ballot; she is turned away

1874: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is founded by Annie Wittenmyer. With Frances Willard at its head (1876), WCTU becomes an important force in the fight for woman suffrage. Not surprisingly, one of the most vehement opponents to women's enfranchisement is the liquor lobby, which fears women might use the franchise to prohibit the sale of liquor

1878: A Woman Suffrage Amendment is introduced in the United States Congress. The wording is unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passes both houses

1884: In the presidential contest of this year, Belva Ann Lockwood runs for president on the National Equal Rights Party ticket and a reform platform. She wins 4149 votes in six states

1890: NWSA and AWSA are reunited as the National American Woman Suffrage Association under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1912: Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive (Bull Moose/Republican) Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a woman suffrage plank

1913: Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Congressional Union, later known as the National Women's Party

1913: Members of the Congressional Union organize a suffrage parade, carefully scheduling it for the day before President Wilson's inauguration

1914: The National Federation of Women's Clubs formally endorses the suffrage campaign

1916: Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first American woman elected to represent her state in the U.S. House of Representatives

1917: Women win the vote in New York state. A suffrage petition signed by more than a million women signals the determination of the women of the state (and the suffrage campaign workers who gathered the signatures) to gain the vote

1919: The Nineteenth Amendment passes both House and Senate in a special session and goes to the states for ratification

1920: Following ratification by the necessary 36 states, the Nineteenth Amendment is adopted

1920: Women across the United States vote for the first time on November 2

A select bibliography on famous American women

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/>

American Women: A Gateway to Library of Congress Resources for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~kmiddlelet/history/women.html>

American Women's History: A Research Guide

<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/>

Eagleton Institute of Politics – Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey – Center for American Women and Politics

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/womens-history.html>

The National Archives – Archives Library Information Center – Women

<http://www.cowgirl.net/>

National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=435

National Endowment for the Humanities – EDSITEMent

<http://www.nwhp.org/resourcecenter/equalityday.php>

National Women's History Project

<http://www.nwhm.org/Education/biographies.html>

National Women's History Museum – Biographies

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/pwmmh/>

Places Where Women Made History – Historic Places in Massachusetts and New York

http://library.law.columbia.edu/rise_of_women/

The Rise of Women in the Legal Profession

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/womeninfln/>

U.S. Department of State – International Information Programs – Women of Influence

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/womenofthecentury/>

Discovery Education – Women of the Century – 100 years of American Heroes

<http://womenincongress.house.gov/essays/essay1/legislative-interests.html>

Women in Congress

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/edresource.html>

Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. – Resources

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/>

Women Watch – International Women's Day

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070806-4.html>

The White House – Women's Equality Day, 2007 – A Proclamation by the President of the United States

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/womenstimeline1.html>

Women's History Month – Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.

Note: Internet sites included in this listing, other than those of the U.S. Government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

MUMBAI MONDAYS

A Discussion on The American Musical and the Film “West Side Story” led by Daniel Cisek

Monday, March 17
American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

The program will briefly review the history of the American musical, and then look at the film *West Side Story* (1961) as one of the highest achievements in the genre. We will view excerpts of the film and discuss the musical score, choreography, and plot. *West Side Story* is a modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* that is widely recognized for the brilliance of its musical score, the emotional power of its story, and its groundbreaking exploration of contentious social issues such as racial prejudice, immigration, teenage delinquency, and urban violence.

Daniel Cisek is from Chicago and has a Bachelor’s degree in History and Political Science from Northwestern University and a Master’s degree in International Relations and Russian Politics from Indiana University. Mumbai is his first diplomatic assignment as a Foreign Service Officer. He has traveled to Europe, China, and Taiwan, and has lived in Germany and Russia. Daniel speaks Russian and has studied Chinese. He is a film, theater, and music enthusiast and has a particular interest in American musical theater and movie musicals.

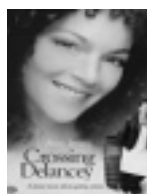
FILMS THIS MONTH

Friday, March 14
Tuesday, March 25
Friday, March 28

Crossing Delancey (1988, color, 97 mins)
Absence of Malice (1981, color, 117 mins)
Norma Rae (1979, color, 114 mins)

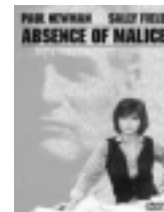
American Center Auditorium

3:30 and 6:30 p.m.



A winning and heartfelt romantic comedy, with Amy Irving as a young Jewish New Yorker trying to improve her social status and meet Mr. Right, but fixed up by her grandmother and a matchmaker with likable pickle salesman Peter Riegert. Jeroen Krabbe, Reizl Bozyk and Sylvia Miles also star.

This powerful drama questions the power of the contemporary press. A businessman unknowingly becomes the subject of a criminal investigation thanks to a story written by a feisty reporter. Fine acting by Paul Newman, Sally Field and Melinda Dillon.



Sally Field copped a Best Actress Oscar for her performance as a Southern textile worker who joins with a labor organizer to unionize her mill. Ron Leibman and Beau Bridges add able support to this heartfelt drama. Martin Ritt directs.

VIOLIN CONCERT

by

Michael Braudy and Sunita Bhuyan



Tuesday, March 11
American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.



Michael Braudy is a Western classical violinist who also plays Indian classical violin – often playing concerts with both. He is also a versatile improviser, who collaborates with poets and storytellers, theater, dance and mimes. He has performed regularly in the United States and India, including a concert at the American Center in Kolkata in 2001, where he played Western classical music, Indian ragas and Celtic music. He studied Indian music with the late Pandit V. G. Jog.

Sunita Bhuyan is a Hindustani violinist who has carved a niche for herself as an upcoming Indian musician. She received her initial training from her mother, eminent violinist and disciple of Pandit V. G. Jog, Minoti Khaund. She received her Master’s degree in Hindustani Music from Prayag Sangeet Samitte, and has also studied advanced music under the apprenticeship of Pandit V. G. Jog. She has performed extensively in India and abroad.

The program will include a Bach solo by Braudy, a raga by Bhuyan, and a jugalbandi with both artists.

Admission will be on a first-come, first-served basis

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Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring the envelope containing this issue of the bulletin for admission (maximum two persons). The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.
