



American Studies Institute 2004

By Kees de Mooy

This summer, the Department of State once again selected Washington College as the site for the American Studies Institute (ASI), one of only four programs like it in the nation and the only one aimed at South Asian Muslim college students. During an intensive five weeks of classes at Washington College, 21 student leaders from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh studied the fundamentals of American history, democracy and culture, their lessons augmented by field trips to Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York. During an additional whirlwind week in Washington, DC, the students enjoyed many memorable sightseeing opportunities, including a tour of

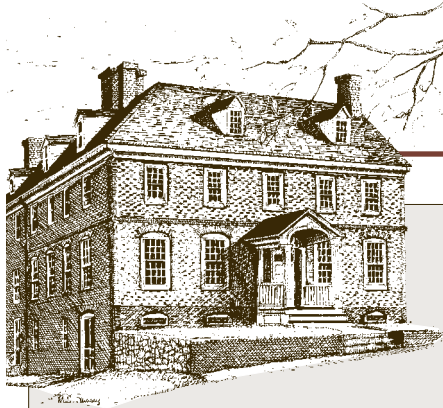
the U.S. Capitol with a member of Congressman Wayne Gilchrest's office, meeting Space Shuttle astronaut at the National Air and Space Museum, and Friday prayers at the Islamic Center, the site of George W. Bush's speech to the nation shortly after 9/11.

Chestertown and the Washington College community welcomed the ASI students with open arms. For all but one participant, this was their first trip to the U.S., and for many, their first trip away from home. On field trips, exciting as they were, it was common to hear the phrase, "I miss Chestertown!" A female student from Bangladesh, Narmin Tartila, wrote glowingly about the "emerald green grass," "plump brown squirrels" and "little bunnies" on the Washington College campus, and of the many friends that she made, not only American, but also her fellow students, many of them from regions that have had difficult relations within

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ASI students, faculty and staff on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial



From the Custom House

This edition of the C.V. Starr Center newsletter brings sad news along with the usual litany of announcements. On September 20, Senior Fellow Townsend Hoopes died from complications of melanoma. During his two years in residence here, Tim helped us in countless ways, small and large. It is easy to list the impressive things that he did for us – the talks he gave to Washington College students and faculty, the opinion pieces he contributed to newspapers, and the lectures that he arranged (including last spring’s memorable visit from Ambassador Joseph Wilson). What is harder to convey, but no less important, is the warmth and camaraderie he brought to the old Custom House. History centers can quickly be outdated places if they are not careful. But there was never any danger of that while Tim was in residence. With his long experience in war and government, dating back to World War Two, he was an endless fount of fascinating recollections and amusing stories. Having served under Republicans and Presidents, he was equally indignant when either side

did anything to compromise the moral authority and national security of the United States – which he, more than most, saw as one and the same.

On a happier note, the Starr Center hosted the American Studies Institute for a second straight summer, deepening our partnership with the Department of State and bringing 21 impressive young men and women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to the shores of the Chester. Thanks to Kees de Mooy and a very talented group of Washington College student-mentors, it was another stellar summer, with a parade of visiting dignitaries and stimulating trips to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. But the best days of all were those we spent here, debating the fine points of democracy, US foreign policy, and the elusive science of what makes a community tick. One of our students wrote us not long after returning to Bangladesh: “whenever I close my eyes I am in Chestertown! My Chestertown!” If all goes well (Inshallah), we will see our South Asian friends again this winter at a reunion sponsored by the State Department in Bangladesh.

The summer also witnessed other forms of academic activity in the Custom House and beyond. We were proud to help sponsor a first-rate conference at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, one of the nation’s premier repositories for early American history. And during a memorable week in July, we hosted the great cartoonist R. Crumb as a visiting artist in residence. The simultaneity of the ASI, the JCB conference, and the R. Crumb residency suggests a more ambitious definition of the American Experience than most academic centers provide – a good thing, in my opinion.

Finally, we’ve got a great lineup of talks this fall, treating a wide variety of topics from early American history to the present. For those of you wanting more instantaneous information, we hope you’ll sign up for our email list.

Warmly,

Ted Widmer

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South Asia. In spirited classroom discussions in Goldstein Hall, family dinners in homes across Kent County, and personal conversations with local, state and national leaders, the ASI

students gained a deeper understanding of the diverse and complex strands of our democratic system.

During the institute, it was a profound pleasure to see the distinctions between our various nationalities

become blurred. Americans and South Asians discussed mutual hopes and dreams for their countries, thus drawing everyone into a new appreciation for the phrase “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” which Bangla-



deshi student Asad Khan Priyo called “wonderful words that I never heard before coming here.”

As ASI Director Ted Widmer wrote in an article that appeared in the Gilder-Lehrman Institute’s on-line journal, *History Now*, “despite many new restrictions on foreign students, it is comforting to know that one part of the federal government is rediscovering a sense of pride in one of our most effective forms of diplomacy. I hope other teachers of American history will think hard about ways to use their gifts to reach out to other places and traditions where democracy is not just a word in a textbook, but an essential path to a better world.” ❀



Legendary cartoonist R. Crumb enjoying his spacious working quarters as “artist in residence” at

Seedlings of Peace

Sarah Alam, a student from Karachi, Pakistan, published her final ASI presentation in the Junior Journal, an on-line publication dedicated to providing young people from around the world a global forum for change. The comments below are excerpted from her article.

It was indeed a privilege for all of us to take part in this program, as it enabled us to broaden our perspective and see the other side of the world. Before attending ASI, I had no shame or hesitation in admitting that my knowledge about the world at large and especially American history, their Revolution and political infrastructure was very limited. It is through this program that I got an opportunity to widen my knowledge and get to know the perspectives of people from four different countries, and at some points, even the varying views of people from my own country. This program was a great source of

inspiration for me as it helped me get a better picture of the world and enabled me to go beyond my closed boundaries.

I arrived in US with high-rise buildings, arrogant people, and fast moving life in my mind, as was my impression of US from my earlier visit. Since after September 11, it was my first visit there I thought I would be subjected to a lot of criticism due to the fact that I am a Pakistani Muslim especially since my country is considered to be a den for terrorists. But as soon as I landed in Chestertown, MD, I was bound to change my views as the people there and the program itself turned out to be completely different from the images I had in my mind.

The message that I want to convey around the globe is that whatever biases we have developed need to be ended. Life is too short to hate each other. We need to enjoy each others’ company and make friends. We need to cultivate the seedlings of peace through which we get the fruits of tolerance and acceptance. ❀

Charles Sumner Post Update

By Kees de Mooy

The Charles Sumner Post has a new lease on life, thanks to a recent stabilization by Roy Kirby & Sons Construction. The landmark structure, one of only two like it in the United States, was in danger of collapse. Cross-beams and posts were installed throughout the interior, the roof was closed in, and the exterior walls were patched with plywood.

Constructed in 1908 and eventually abandoned in 1985, the Sumner Post meeting hall’s historical significance has attracted a great deal of attention from historians and preservationists nationwide, as well as the local community. The C.V. Starr Center and Preservation Incorporated are leading the restoration effort with help from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Maryland Historical Trust, Preservation Maryland, the University of Maryland’s School of Architecture,

To receive electronic announcements of Starr Center events, send your e-mail address to jsucharewic2@washcoll.edu



*The C.V. Starr Center was a cosponsor of the international scholarly conference, *The Haitian Revolution: Viewed 200 Years After*, held from June 17-20 in Providence, Rhode Island. The conference was organized by the John Carter Brown Library, an independently funded and administered institution for advanced research in history and the humanities, located at Brown University.*

Planning and Preservation, Kent County Heritage Trust, the Historical Society of Kent County and the rapidly growing Friends of the Sumner Post.

The Charles Sumner Post was built as a meeting hall for African American veterans of the Civil War. It was affiliated with the Grand Army of the Republic, the largest veterans' organization of its. Named after the abolitionist Senator from Massachusetts, the Sumner Post was the hub of Chestertown's black community for many decades. It was rented out for community

meetings, celebrations and musical performances, but its primary function was a gathering place for veterans and their auxiliary organization, the Woman's Relief Corps No. 1, the first such group formed in Maryland. Barb Gannon, a doctoral student who is writing her dissertation on African Americans in the G.A.R., surmises that it was the women of the Sumner Post who were largely responsible for keeping the Post going long after the last veteran member, William Wesley Broadway, died in 1928.

The Sumner Post was recently nominated for National Register status with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and is one of four Chestertown sites to be included in Maryland's Civil War Trail. *

Adam Goodheart Named C.V. Starr Scholar

Adam Goodheart, who spent the last two years at the Custom House as a C.V. Starr Visiting Fellow, has accepted Washington College's invitation to become its first C.V. Starr Scholar. While continuing his work as an independent historian and journalist, he will also assist with Starr Center programs and projects, and will teach two courses per year at Washington College. The classes he is offering in the spring of 2005, "Creative Nonfiction: Abroad in America" and

"Chestertown's America: Across Four Centuries," reflect Goodheart's interest in bridging the genres of history and travel literature.

For his work as a travel essayist, Goodheart was recognized this fall by the Society of American Travel Writers, which awarded him one of its prestigious Lowell Thomas Awards. The society's judges voted his essay on Northwest Australia, which originally appeared in the December 2003 issue of *Travel & Leisure*, a gold medal as the best magazine article on foreign travel of the past year. His recent journalistic assignments have included a feature for *National Geographic* on the development threats facing Civil War battlefields across America, slated to appear in the magazine's April 2005 issue. *

Book Releases

In January, Times Books will publish Ted Widmer's *Martin Van Buren*, part of the American Presidents series, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger.

The first "professional politician" to become president, the slick and dandyish Martin Van Buren was to all appearances the opposite of his predecessor, the rugged general and Democratic champion Andrew Jackson. Van Buren, a native Dutch speaker, was America's first ethnic president as well as the first New Yorker to hold the office, at a time when Manhattan was bursting with new arrivals. A sharp and adroit political operator, he





established himself as a powerhouse in New York, becoming a U.S. senator, secretary of state, and vice president under Jackson, whose election he managed. His ascendancy to the Oval Office was virtually a foregone conclusion.

Once he had the reins of power, however, Van Buren found the road quite a bit rougher. His attempts to find a middle ground on the most pressing issues of his day—such as the growing regional conflict over slavery—eroded his effectiveness. But it was his inability to prevent the great banking panic of 1837, and the ensuing depression, that all but ensured his fall from grace and made him the third president to be denied a second term. His many years of outfoxing his opponents finally caught up with him.

Citadel Press recently published Kees de Mooy's third book, *The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln*.

Politician. Statesman. Civil rights leader. Literary craftsman. For a century and a half, the life—and words—of 16th President Abraham

Lincoln have been praised as a shining example of American leadership. But Lincoln's path to greatness was a humble one. The son of a frontier farmer, Lincoln was largely self-educated. When he took the national stage as a politician, his simple, straightforward prose was revolutionary for its time—resonating with men and women from all walks of life. In



fact, with his “jogtrot prose, compacted of words and phrases still with the bark on,” Lincoln almost single-handedly changed the way the English language is spoken in America. And while he will always be remembered as the man dedicated to restoring a shattered Union, Lincoln was also one of the greatest communica-

tors this country has ever seen. Now, in this one essential volume, excerpts have been collected from all of Lincoln's finest speeches, letters, and, of course, documents like The Emancipation Proclamation and his famous Gettysburg Address. *The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln* pays tribute to the president and patriot who, through both his words and deeds, changed the course of history. ✱

Teaching American History: Washington's Legacy Project

At the end of the first year of the Teaching American History project, more than 120 teachers from across the Eastern Shore have participated in conferences, Saturday seminars and Summer Institutes to increase their knowledge of American history content and instruction, and improve their students' attitude, learning and achievement in American history. Washington College instructors Michelle Johnson and Peggy Donnelly have appeared in the classroom along with speakers from partner organizations Schooner

Sultana, the Reginald Lewis Museum for African-American History and Culture, the National Park Service, Maryland Historical Society, National Archives and Records Administration, Maryland Center for the Study of History, Maryland State Department of Education, and from schools across the Eastern Shore.

The latest event was a two-day conference at the picturesque Harbourtowne Golf Resort in St. Michaels, Md. The keynote address was delivered by Bruce



On June 18, Mt. Vernon celebrated a groundbreaking for a new educational facility with the planting of a large red maple tree near George Washington's bowling green gate. Soil collected from 25 sites related to the nation's first president, including Washington College, was mixed in at the time of planting.

Van Sledright, a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, and author of *In Search of America's Past: Learning to Read History in Elementary School*. Based on his personal research with elementary school students, Van Sledright contends that carefully guided reading, analysis and interpretation of primary documents leads young children to a better understanding of history and historical thinking. More importantly, this type of activity—much different from the nearly universal focus on remembering names and dates—is much more likely to instill an appreciation and love of history.

In January, 2005, a new graduate course, "Teaching and Learning American History: Content, Learning Theory and Pedagogy," will be offered

at Washington College to Eastern Shore elementary, middle and high school teachers. The course will start in January, 2005, and will be taught by Dr. Alexa Cawley. ✱

Comegys Bight Fellowships

Thanks to the generosity of Drs. Thomas and Virginia Collier, the Starr Center was able to fund four student research projects during the summer of 2004.

John R. Bohrer researched the presidential nomination process, focusing on the primary and caucus system. With help from George McGovern, former Senator and

Democratic presidential candidate, Hohman attended the Democratic Convention and experienced firsthand the complicated election process presently underway.

Beth Ann Hargraves studied the impact of legislative opinion on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Though the ERA had bipartisan support in Congress and narrowly missed passage by the states, Hargraves learned how the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment ultimately led to the defeat of pro-ERA forces.

Charles A. Hohman studied the legacy of H.L. Mencken, the acerbic social commentator fondly known as the Sage of Baltimore. Hohman researched Mencken's papers at Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Library and the New York Public Library, and studied Mencken's books as well as those of his biographers.

Leslie Meredith traveled to Tennessee to study the life of John Sevier (1745-1815), a former Tennessee governor, Congressman and soldier who distinguished himself in the Battle of King Mountain. Working in archives throughout the state, Meredith found new information that will shed light on "how we as a culture turn people into historical legends and what their legends say about us in return." ✱

In Memoriam



TOWNSEND HOOPES
1922-2004

Senior Fellow of Washington College and the C.V. Starr Center.



Fall Events

(See our website at starrcenter.washcoll.edu for additional information)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Joel Achenbach

The Grand Idea: George Washington's Potomac and the Race to the West

Co-sponsored with the Center for the Environment and Society
Hynson Lounge, 7:30 p.m.

Joel Achenbach — acclaimed author, *Washington Post* writer, and *National Geographic* columnist — offers a fresh and remarkably vivid portrait of George Washington's ambitious plan to make the Potomac River the major commercial thoroughfare of the young United States, a scheme that had direct and unexpected effects on the political future of the nation.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Harvey Cohen

The Marketing of Duke Ellington in the 1930s: Changing American History and American Music

Casey Academic Forum, 4:30 p.m.

Music served as an excellent venue to challenge and subvert the conventions



NOVEMBER 16
HARVEY COHEN

of American racial and cultural. Cohen, a lecturer in American history at the University of Maryland, examines how Duke Ellington's music impacted the black struggle for civil rights. Ellington's career, from the 1920's to the 1970's, spanned the period of greatest racial change in the nation's history.

TUESDAY,

NOVEMBER 30

ASI Faculty and Staff

Salaam Chestertown:

The American Studies Institute Experience

Casey Academic Forum,
4:30 p.m.

A multimedia presentation of this summer's ASI, a State Department sponsored program that brought Muslim college students from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to Chestertown this summer to learn about American democracy, history and culture. The participants lived and studied on the Washington College campus for six weeks, and explored famous American sites on field trips to Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and Washington, DC.

[photo: Hasnain and Shandana]

[caption] Pakistani ASI students Hasnain Raza and Shandana Wazir brandishing french fries during one of their last dinners in the U.S.



DECEMBER 2
JEFF ST. JOHN '03

THE WAY WE WERE

On Thursday, December 2, at 4:30 p.m., the C.V. Starr Center and Washington College Department of Art will host an opening reception at the Custom House for the work of Jeff St. John '03, a photographer whose pairings of historic Kent County postcards with contemporary photographs of the same scenes evoke nostalgia for times gone by. Several Kent County residents will discuss their memories of the sites depicted by St. John. The exhibit can be viewed following the opening reception on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2-4 p.m. until Christmas. ✱

The image of the compass rose sun, used in the Starr Center logo, was drawn from the map *Carte de la Nouvelle-France*, 1613, by Samuel de Champlain.

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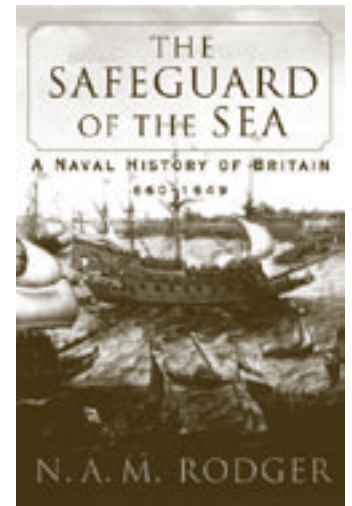
Thomas Stanley

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Maritime Lecture Series Continues

The Maritime Lecture Series will continue this spring with N.A.M. Rodger, renowned author of *The Wooden World*, and, most recently, a landmark two-volume history of the Royal Navy, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of History of Britain, 660-1649*, and *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*. Rodger, Professor of Naval History at Exeter University, will present *The Command of the Ocean: British Sea Power in the 18th Century*, in which he will discuss the British government's organization of supply, money and management of the Royal Navy during the era of Britain's domination of the world's oceans. *



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Custom House

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