

## Education Gold!

# My Trip to India



*Our author (front row, fourth from left) with other West Virginia teachers at the Taj Mahal.*

“Congratulations,” the letter read, “you have been chosen...”

I read it several times in disbelief. “I’m going to India!” I said to the stove. “India!” My kids ran into the kitchen to see what I was yelling about, and I shared the good news with them.

We rushed to the computer and I showed them photos of the Taj Mahal and other famous places in India. It was at this point that I realized

for you!” And she was right. I have always been fascinated by people of all cultures and the things they create.

When I attended the training seminar at Davis & Elkins in June, we covered so much information in three days that I filled up a notebook with questions, Hindi phrases, travel tips, and more. At first, I felt overwhelmed. There was so much to learn in such a short time. But as others started contributing to the

*It was a new experience for me, being in a crowd and not understanding the language being spoken.*

that I knew very little about the country myself, other than the fact that I love Indian food and Indian artwork. As an art teacher, I had touched on Hindu and Muslim art from time to time, but beyond identifying basic characteristics I knew nothing. Now was my chance to correct that.

The India Institute is a program through Davis & Elkins College, funded last year by the West Virginia Humanities Council, which trains teachers in the cultures, religions, art and architecture of India and allows them to experience those things firsthand. Then, the teachers come back and teach their students about the things they learned on the trip. When my principal handed the brochure to me, she said, “This sounds so perfect

discussion, I realized that we would all be both students and teachers. I felt honored to be part of such a group. I learned as much from other participants as I did from our instructors, and that’s a lot.

The trip itself was amazing. When I boarded the Air India flight in New York, I closed my eyes and listened to the voices surrounding me. People were speaking various dialects of Hindi, a language that is very melodic and rhythmic. It was a new experience for me, being in a crowd and not understanding the language being spoken.

I visited temples, mosques, marketplaces,

*Continued on page 4*

## Grant Categories

The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories:

**Major Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) support humanities events: symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures.

**Due:** Sept. 1, \*Feb. 1

**Minigrants** (\$1,500 maximum) support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation.

**Due:** Oct. 1, Dec. 1, \*Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1

**Fellowships** (\$2,500) support research and writing projects for humanities faculty and independent scholars.

**Due:** \*Feb. 1

**Media Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) support the production of electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series.

**Due:** Sept. 1

**Publication Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) are available to nonprofit presses and recognized academic presses, and support only the production phase of a completed manuscript.

**Due:** Sept. 1

**Teacher Institute Grants** (\$25,000 maximum) are available to colleges and universities and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers.

**Due:** Sept. 1

### \*Approaching Deadlines!

Visit [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org) for applications and guidelines, or call (304)346-8500.



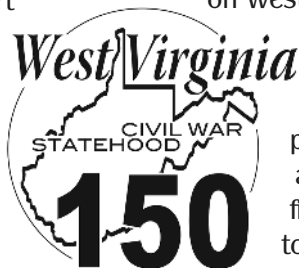
Kennedy advisor Ted Sorensen speaks with Joe and Gayle Manchin and Kay Goodwin on May 10 in Charleston during the program marking the 50th anniversary of the 1960 West Virginia presidential primary. Sorensen died October 31 at the age of 82.

A national traveling exhibition titled *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War* is available to public libraries, historical societies, museums, colleges, and community organizations in commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. The exhibit is a program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association among other institutions. Two hundred host sites will be selected. Apply online at <http://ala.org> or email Sofiana Krueger at [skrueger@ala.org](mailto:skrueger@ala.org).



## Sesquicentennial Speakers

The Humanities Council announces its new Sesquicentennial Speakers Bureau featuring free lectures by scholars with expertise on the Civil War and West Virginia statehood. The roster includes Mark Snell of Shepherd University, who speaks on the causes of the Civil War; Concord University's David Bard, who presents driving tours of New River Valley battle sites; *Rebels at the Gate* author Hunter Lesser, who discusses 1861 Western Virginia; WVU's Connie Park Rice, who addresses slavery, abolition, and the Underground Railroad; State Archives director Joe Geiger, who speaks on West Virginia statehood; and Dennis Frye of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, who lectures on John Brown. Contact [payne@wvhumanities.org](mailto:payne@wvhumanities.org) or call (304)346-8500 to book a speaker. Bureau presentations must be free and open to the public for an audience of at least 40 people. Sesquicentennial figures are also available through the Council's "History Alive!" program.



**Little Lectures:** Planning is under way for the upcoming Little Lecture Series at the MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston. In honor of the house's 175th anniversary in 2011, Ken Sullivan will open the series with a talk titled "House History." Little Lectures are offered once a month on Sunday afternoons from March to June with the complete schedule to be announced later.

As of November 2010, all West Virginia Humanities Council grant recipients are required to obtain and submit a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number to receive grant awards. This is used by the federal government to track how federal money is disbursed. To request an existing or new number call 1-866-705-5711, or apply online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.



Noah Cowger at the family mill, about 1900.

Visit the West Virginia Encyclopedia at [wvencyclopedia.org](http://wvencyclopedia.org).

## Pendleton County Mills

With support from the Humanities Council, the Fort Seybert Heritage Educational Association recently produced a one-hour documentary on the history, architecture and function of water-powered gristmills and sawmills in Pendleton County. Many of the county's mills were destroyed by three major floods during the last century, the worst in 1985, and others were torn down or disassembled and rebuilt in

other locations. *Water-Powered Mills of Pendleton County, West Virginia, the South Branch of the Potomac* includes stories from people who remember how mills were integral to the social and economic life of the community. The Fort Seybert association documented more than 40 mills during its work on the film that premieres this spring on West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

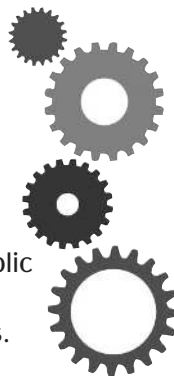
The Humanities Council will host National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman Jim Leach when he visits West Virginia next month. Chairman Leach will present a public talk titled "Civility in a Fractured Society" on February 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the University of Charleston rotunda and will also meet with Council board, staff, and constituents during his two-day visit.



**Multicultural Celebration:** Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and the Logan-Boone Chapter of the NAACP will continue "Harmony 365," a series of events celebrating multiculturalism with the support of the West Virginia Humanities Council. On February 24, Ivin B. Lee of the West Virginia Human Rights Commission will provide the keynote address as part of "Harmony 365." The festivities begin at 11:00 a.m. at the Logan campus performing arts center. For additional program dates and more information visit [www.southernwv.edu/harmony](http://www.southernwv.edu/harmony).

## Exhibit Sites Selected

Six West Virginia venues will host the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, *The Way We Worked*, which explores the history of American work culture over the past 150 years. The exhibit, coordinated by the Humanities Council, will visit the Point Pleasant River Museum, Mary Weir Public Library in Weirton, Morgantown History Museum, Pocahontas County Public Library in Marlinton, Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg, and the Randolph County Community Arts Center in Elkins. Details of the tour will be announced in the spring.



## Program Committee Election

Please help us choose citizen members for the Humanities Council program committee. Your vote gives the public a voice in our grants and program decisions. Vote for four of the candidates below:

\_\_ **Kevin T. Barksdale**, Cabell County, is assistant professor of American history at Marshall University and the author of *The Lost State of Franklin: America's First Secession*. He now serves on the program committee and is eligible for re-election.

\_\_ **Robert Bridges**, Monongalia County, is curator at the Art Museum of West Virginia University and co-edited *Blanche Lazzell: The Life and Work of an American Modernist* (2004). He now serves on the program committee and is eligible for re-election.

\_\_ **James E. Casto**, Cabell County, is a Huntington native and the author of several books on local and regional history. He was a reporter and editor for the Huntington *Herald-Dispatch* for more than 40 years before retiring in 2004.

\_\_ **Robert Enoch**, Wood County, has been president of the Wood County Historical and Preservation Society for the past 13 years. He also serves as chairman of the Fort Boreman Historic Park Commission.

\_\_ **A. Waller Hastings**, Marshall County, is associate professor of English and chair of the Humanities Department at West Liberty University. Before coming to West Virginia, he taught at South Dakota's Northern State University and at Rutgers.

\_\_ **Myra Ziegler**, Summers County, is director of the Summers County Public Library and also serves as secretary-treasurer of the Summers County Historic Landmark Commission. She received her MLIS from the University of South Carolina.

Return your ballot to the West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25301 or email [saunders@wvhumanities.org](mailto:saunders@wvhumanities.org) by March 15.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Office of the West Virginia Secretary of Education and the Arts; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State and beyond.

*Continued from page 1*

and tourist attractions. I loved standing in the temple at Mathura as dancers whipped around, the crowd singing loudly with drummers beating their dholeks in time. It was a totally different experience closing my eyes in the B'hai Lotus Temple near New Delhi and hearing nothing but the fluttering of wings as birds built nests above the temple interior. And in Fatehpur Sikri, listening to hawkers haggling with tourists, with the sound of praying coming from the mosque nearby.

I absorbed everything I could at each site – first the sounds and smells, then the colors, then the details of the architecture and art all around. Each place we visited had interesting history and stories associated with it – each was an opportunity to experience the people, and the things they make, and the way they go about their day, and the foods they eat, and the music they listen to, and what they talk about. Each place was an opportunity to be overwhelmed with humanity.

This was education gold! Though I teach art, I consider myself to be a teacher of history and world cultures as well. Art history is the history of the world and the people in it. Most of what we know of prehistoric cultures comes from their art and the things they made. Everything I experienced I wanted to bring back to my students. As we traveled in India, “that would make a cool lesson plan” became the most overheard statement in our group. We began taking photos and recording videos of things we thought our students would be interested in, and we shared our resources with each other after returning home. Even now, I keep finding

parallels from which to bring Indian art into lesson plans I've used for years.

I've always told my students that nothing beats experiencing art in person. Taking it further, I believe that you really don't appreciate a culture until you experience it from the inside. In a time when it seems that so many groups are at odds, bringing cultural appreciation into the classroom is crucial. When I dressed in a sari and shared my experiences with my school's senior theology classes, the feedback suggested those students had gained a better understanding of Indian people and their ways of life. Understanding leads to peace, so in a small way



*Indian women at Fatehpur Sikri.*

I feel that this experience allowed me to contribute to world peace. What if every teacher had a chance to bring greater cultural appreciation into their classrooms?

To the West Virginia Humanities Council, a great big *dhanyavad* for this fantastic opportunity!

– Rebecca Burch

*We'll take that to mean “thank you,” and give a big namaskar right back. Rebecca Burch teaches at Charleston Catholic High School. – eds.*

*People & Mountains* is published three times a year by the West Virginia Humanities Council. We welcome reader letters, freelance manuscripts, and financial contributions. Please address correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, E., Charleston, WV 25301 or email [sonis@wvhumanities.org](mailto:sonis@wvhumanities.org).