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Corner Craiova

THIS MONTH'S CELEBRATION

February 12th, 2009

Abraham Lincoln's
Birthday

February 16th, 2009

Presidents' Day

February 22th, 2009

George Washington's
Birthday

February 26th, 2009

The Grand Canyon

Established (1919)

Inspiring Abraham Lincoln Quotes

"...As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy".

"If we do not make common cause to save the good old ship of the Union on this voyage, nobody will have a chance to pilot her on another voyage. "

PRESIDENTS' DAY

Washington's Birthday Holiday Honors the "Father of our Country"

George Washington served
his nation as a military,
as well as civilian leader

Americans long have honored George Washington, commander of the United States armies in the War of Independence, first President of the United States and "first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Washington enjoyed nearly universal respect, not least for spurning all offers of political power at the moment of his military triumph (1781), choosing instead to return to his Mount Vernon, Virginia farm. When leading Americans in 1787 drafted the new Constitution, they were willing to afford the executive branch greater powers because they anticipated that Washington, who could be counted on not to abuse his office, would serve as the chief executive, and would establish important precedents for his successors. Still the most popular figure in America at the end of his second four-year term, Washington again decided to relinquish power, establishing an informal eight-year limit later formalized by the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution (1951).

It has been said that the American people themselves forced Congress to establish the Washington's Birthday holiday, which today is fixed by law on the third Monday of February. 19th century Americans commonly celebrated a holiday on February 22th, the day of Washington's birth under the Gregorian calendar adopted by Britain and its colonies in 1752. Apparently motivated by chronic employee absenteeism

on that date, Congress in 1879 declared Washington's Birthday a legal public holiday.

In 1971, Congress fixed Washington's Birthday and a number of other holidays on Mondays, to create long holiday weekends. Because a number of states (but not the federal government) also celebrated on February 12th

Abraham Lincoln's birthday, the 16th President, many Americans have come to believe - incorrectly - that the third Monday of February is a consolidated "Presidents' Day," and many merchants now offer Presidents' Day sales.

*Information Resource
Center of USA in Bucharest*



President George Washington on his white horse, Jack, by an unknown nineteenth century folk artist. (© AP Images)

Learn more about US Presidents at
<http://www.potus.com/>

Learn more about the White House at
<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/>

Black History Month

Every February, millions of American citizens celebrate the triumph over the most devastating obstacles of social evolution- slavery, poverty, racial segregation and bring forward the contribution of the Afro-Americans to the cultural and political development of the American society, and their courage to beat imposed barriers.

2009 marked the 83rd celebration of the Black History Month and also the investment of the first Afro-American president: Barrack Obama



Month, on February 25 *Alexandru and Aristia Aman* County Library and the American Corner Craiova hosted a digital videoconference on the Civil Rights Movement. Participants were students of the *Carol I* National Col-

lege and of the University of Craiova— School of Languages. The invited lecturer, Dr Thomas C. Battle, Director of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at the Howard University offered a brief presentation of the Civil Rights Movement and answered students' questions. A small book exhibit was also organized, and participants received various information materials. Craiova students met online with their colleagues from Bucharest and Timisoara

More on the Black History Month and its initiator, Carter G. Woodson, at <http://www.asalh.org/woodsonbiosketch.html>

Abraham Lincoln

Of all the presidents in the history of the United State, Abraham Lincoln is probably the one that Americans remember the best and with deepest affection. His childhood in the frontier of Indiana set the course for his character and motivation later in life. He brought a new honesty and integrity to the White House. He would always be remembered as "Honest Abe." Most of all, he is associated with the final abolition of slavery. Lincoln became a virtual symbol of the American dream whereby an ordinary person from humble beginnings could reach the pinnacle of society as president of the country.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12th, 1809, in Kentucky, and spent the first seven years of his life there. In 1847 he was elected into Congress, but his opinions did not ensure him a long stay there. He was vehemently against slavery and took stands on other controversial issues. He was not elected for a second term, so he returned to his law practice.

A few years later, slavery became a stronger issue, and more people were willing to abolish it. Lincoln

joined the Republicans, a new political party that was opposed to slavery. The Republicans nominated him for the U.S. Senate in 1858, and in his acceptance speech, he stated: *"A house divided against itself cannot stand... This government cannot endure, permanently half-slave and half-free... I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it will cease to be divided. "*

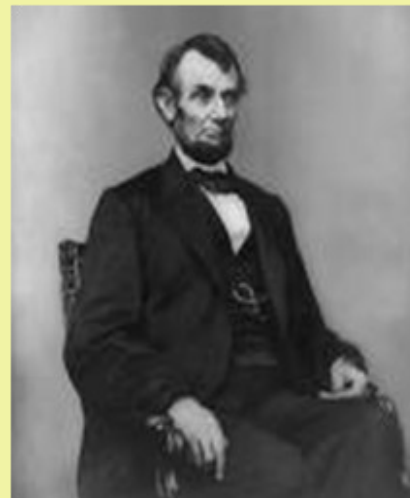
Abraham Lincoln's oratorical powers brought him to the attention of the nation. He challenged the Democratic nominee to the Senate to a series of debates. Using the simple language that he used to communicate with people all his life, he defeated Douglas in the debates but lost to him in the election. Nominated by the Republican Party in 1860 as its candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Lincoln won by a small margin. But with his election, the country began the process of "dividing against itself." South Carolina had seceded from the Union before he was even inaugurated. Other states followed to form the Confederate States of America. The North and South were divided, and the Civil War began. The war was not only over the abolition of slavery, but also the rights of individual states to make their own choices on other issues.

The bloody Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania was the largest battle

ever fought on American soil. On November 19th, 1863, at a ceremony to establish Gettysburg as a national monument, Lincoln delivered what was to become one of the finest orations in American history, the Gettysburg Address.

Lincoln was elected to a second term in 1864. The South surrendered, and the Civil War ended on April 9th, 1865.

(Keneally, Thomas : Abraham Lincoln)



Abraham Lincoln's Day



To celebrate Abraham Lincoln's Day, we received the visit of a kindergarten group named "Ladybugs", brought to American Corner by their teacher, Mrs. Florentina Badica. It was a great opportunity for the children to discover more about Abraham Lincoln, about what he has done for the American people, about his life and, mostly, about his beliefs.

The children were happy to leave the American Corner knowing a little more about the world in



which they live, as their teacher said. A small book exhibition was organized and the children could browse all the books. The children and their teacher were happy to participate and they assured us of their future participation for which they are already preparing themselves.

The Grand Canyon National Park Anniversary

The United States was the first country in the world to set aside federally protected land as national parks. Yellowstone was the first such park, declared in 1872, and in 1978 it became the first American park to be named a World Heritage Site. Today, approximately one-eighth of the land area of the United States has been set



aside for national parks, preserves, forests, and wildlife areas – an astonishingly large proportion for a developed country. These parks protect some of the country's finest natural wonders, including the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon, the celebrated snow-capped peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and the geysers and hot springs of Yellowstone. The Grand Canyon, an immense abyss 277 miles (446 km) long, up to 18 miles (29 Km) wide, and an average of 5,700 feet (1,440m) on the North Rim, is one of the natural wonders of the world. From view sites along the canyon's rim, the Colorado River is barely visible 4 miles (6 Km) away across eroded ridges and spires that plunge in rough, gigantic steps to the canyon floor. If America's man-made icons include the Statue of Liberty, Golden Gate Bridge, and the New York skyline, then the Grand Canyon is its most enduring and unchallenged natural symbol among a list of contenders that includes the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt established a National Monument to protect the canyon. In 1919, February 26, the Canyon was placed under the control of the National Park Service. Subsequent land additions have increased the park to its present size of 1,904 square miles (4,911sq. Km), making it the fourth largest park in the lower 48 states. In 1979, the Grand canyon was declared a World Heritage Site. Apart from the extensive land area included within the park., three wilderness areas and forest reserve border its northern boundary. As one of the most popular national parks in America, the canyon receives nearly five million visitors per year, of which 30 percent are foreign tourists. Nearly one million visitors view the canyon from the air.



(Brett, Michael :

The National Parks of America)

On February 26th, *Alexandru and Aristia Aman* County Library, through American Corner, and School No. 29 Nicolae Romanescu organized a meeting with Kerry Glamsch, American Teacher at the University in Florida and Fulbright Teacher at the University of Letters in Craiova. The anniversary of The Grand Canyon National Park was the main reason of the meeting and students of sixth and eighth grades took part in the event. The presentation of the documentary film about The Grand Canyon National Park was followed by free conversation, sharing impressions about the Grand Canyon and different aspects of the American culture and civilization.

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The American Corners Program seeks to promote understanding and cooperation between the United States of America and Romania, by providing accurate and diverse information about the United States on a variety of topics that will expand communication and exchange between our two countries.

The American Corner Craiova is interested in interacting with the public by using its resources in conducting cultural programs, including speakers and student advising, as well as art exhibits and professional development training.

This newsletter seeks to inform American Corner's users and be a tribune of expression for those who teach and learn English as a second language

Who Shall I Be ? DAY

Shall I be rich? Shall I be famous?

Shall I be good? Shall I be loved?

Shall I be ...everything I have always dreamt of being.

So many questions, so many dreams, so many plans and possible scenarios. But to what end? For, indeed, "the significance of a man is not in what he attains, but rather what he longs to attain", as Lebanese poet, Khalil Gibran, once said. Yet is the future of a man likewise shaped by what "he longs to attain"? To which extent does this simple question "Who shall I be?" define the future me, you, the future us?

"Shall I be rich and famous?"

Certainly. I shall become an actress and go to Hollywood. I shall star tens of movies and perform alongside Brad Pitt and Johnny Depp. Then I shall be awarded an Oscar for the best actress in a leading role.

"Shall I be good?"

Naturally. I shall make charity dona-

tions and create a fund for...uhm... for..children who..suffer. Yes, for children who suffer. And I shall militate for saving the dolphins and for world peace!

"Shall I be loved?"

Undoubtedly. I shall find my Prince Charming not on a white horse, though. Let's say...a white Maybach. And it will be love at first sight, and each Valentine's Day he will wake me up with a white rose. And we will live happily ever after...

If you have ever, for any reason, tried to answer these quintessential questions of our teen years with some of the samples above, forget it all. This instant! For you are utterly wrong and completely misguided. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that you might wish or want that can faithfully outline your future. Surely, one must have plans. Plans help us, they provide the necessary base for our road through life. But they hardly ever point the way towards our goals. Because success is too sweet an accomplishment to be easily reached, just like happiness is too sweet an ideal to be preserved for more than a second.

Who shall I be? I DO NOT KNOW. And this does not, in the least, scare me. For I do know who I am now and, for the moment, this is all I need. Do not search, therefore, answers whose time has yet to come. Life cannot reveal itself to you until you are truly prepared to meet the challenges it poses. Be happy with what you have and make the best out of what you do not have. And remember that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

So, dear reader, what you can do, for a change, is hope. Hope that you will be all the above and beyond. Hope, pray, and wait. Because patience and love at once will see you through every predicament you might encounter in life. In a phrase, "you can muffle the drum, you can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who shall command the skylark not to sing?"(K. Gibran)

Delia Radu -

Carol I Nationale College
Teacher Amelia Draganescu