



A Moment in History—A Teaching Moment

Carol Rempp

On the morning of January 20, 2009 an announcer on the radio asked, “How many mornings do you wake up knowing that you are about to experience an historical day?” I’ve thought about this quite a lot both on that day and many times since. Indeed, how often does that really happen? In our personal lives we experience those moments on days of graduations, weddings, anniversaries, and occasionally births or deaths—days that have a personal historical significance to us. Rarely, if ever, do we wake up knowing we are going to experience an historical day with the entire world. Yes, we have all experienced historical days, in the afterthought, but the “*wake up knowing*” is the part that touches me.

In education we often talk about teachable moments. You know, those moments that happen without any planning or preparation and yet create some of our best teaching moments—sometimes the ones we remember the best or the longest and no matter how hard we try can never be recreated. You may be wondering now, why is she talking about a teachable moment and an historic moment all at the same time especially when both have passed? It does seem a bit out of step but hang in here with me for a bit and hopefully you’ll see the connection.

Last Fall before the election a friend of mine—who herself has grandparents who came from the Middle East—lamented to me about what would happen to us white people if Barak Obama was elected President? Ironic? I thought so. Insensitive? I also thought so. In yesterday’s paper I read a commentary by Ruben Navarrette, Jr. titled *Unnecessary worries for white Americans*.

Continue page 12



Highlights

Notable Black Americans	2
Black History Month Teaching Aids	3
Educator Beat (grants, fellowships, news) ..	4-5
Read Across America	6
Health Beat	7-8
Attack of the Nuclear Family (Brokenleg)	7
Grandma Is Moving In	7
Dad's are Important Too!	8
Drop in Child Wellness	8
Design a Pendleton	9
Free Books	9
Historical Dates	10
Navajo Students Speak	10
Workshops/Conferences/Meetings	11

Often times individuals that have impacted history and or culture fall through the invisible cracks. Have you hear of these notable individuals?



Bessie Coleman 1892-1926
Opened the world as a renowned aerobatic pilot, skydiver and airshow performer. She broker the culture and gender barriers in aviation. Bessie was the first African American to receive an international pilot's license.



James Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
Hughes was a prolific writer. He devoted his life to lecturing and writing after receiving his B.A. degree in 1929. Sixteen book of poems, novels, short stories, play, musical, operas, autobiographies and volumes of editorial and documentary writing, and radio/television scripts. He was the founder of Black History Week and editor of the Journal of negro Life and History.



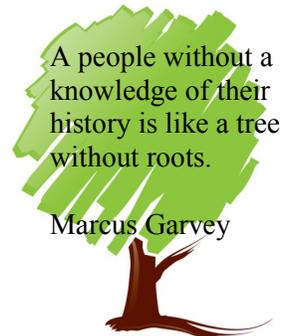
Madam C. J. Walker (1867-1919)
"I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair good and preparations. I have built my own factory on my own ground." National Negro Business League Convention, 1912



Toni Morrison (1931-)
First black woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature (1993). She received her master's degree in 1955. In 2000 she won the national Humanities Medal for her contributions to American culture life, Pulitzer Prize in 1988.



Mae Jemison (1956-)
Medical doctor, engineer, astronaut. Jemison was the first African American woman in space, Endeavor, September 12, 1992. She has spent numerous years as a Peace Corp physician in West Africa. "I want to make sure we use all our talent, not just 25%."



Notable firsts of African American individuals from poets, senators, governors and President!!!
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmfirfirsts.html>

Resources



Teacher Vision. Lesson plans, printables and more
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/black-history-month/teacher-resources/6602.html>



HotChalks Lesson Plans. <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/BlackHistoryMonth.htm>

Teacher Planet. <http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/blackhistory.php>

The Teacher's Corner. <http://www.theteacherscorner.net/seasonal/black-history-month/>

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence. http://www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=116&res_feature_request=0

Interactive Websites



History.com where you'll find interactive websites. <http://www.history.com/minisites/blackhistory>

Find biographies of famous individuals at Biography.com. <http://www.biography.com/blackhistory/>

A Gift from Larry Long. Larry has made a lifework of celebrating American stories and heroes. The fruits of his work can be downloaded for free at <http://www.larrylong.org>. Go to "Projects" in the menu of choices and then look for the PDF of Songbooks entitled "Just Be Who You Are" and "Be Kind to All That Lives."

From the Nebraska Department of Education

We had a secret for years but now it is out. A loaner library is available FREE and online February 3 at <http://rmate.nde.state.ne.us>. Category searches include African American, Native American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Bullying and School Violence, At-Risk/Poverty, Racism-Prejudice, Character Development, general Multicultural Education and a spot for educators, classroom activities and MORE. We are still adding on about 1,000 items.

Some of our best teachers measure themselves by how many top students they have in their classes, not how many struggling students they help become better.

Jay Mathews, *The Washington Post*, January 19, 2009

In an essay in *The Washington Post*, Jay Mathews weighs the imperatives of teaching versus sorting, and asks which will win out in this era of accountability. "Is it best to strain ourselves and our children trying to raise everyone to a higher academic level," he asks, "or does it make more sense to prepare each child for a life in which he or she will be comfortable?" The preferable alternative is clear to Mathews, who argues that sorting out the high achievers from the low, whom he characterizes as "less-advanced" or "later-maturing," is tantamount to racism, since these categories frequently organize themselves along racial and socioeconomic lines. What is less clear to him is which impulse will win out. His antidote to "sorting" or what used to be known as "tracking" is the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), a network of 66 schools, mostly public charters, in 19 states and the District of Columbia, which he profiles in his new book "Work Hard. Be Nice: How Two Inspired Teachers Created the Most Promising Schools in America." Read more: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/18/AR2009011802345.html>

An education system increasingly segregated

A new study finds that black and Latino students are more segregated from white students than at any time since the Civil Rights movement, and are more often educated at failing schools, reports Reuters. The trends are "the result of a systematic neglect of civil rights policy and related educational and community reforms for decades," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, which issued the findings. Orfield gave several demographic explanations for the trend. As the percentage of white students shrinks -- whites now make up 56 percent of the U.S. school population -- they are less integrated with students who are nonwhite. In addition, increasing residential segregation in the country dictates racial composition of schools unless education

authorities take specific measures to create and maintain integration. According to Orfield, residential segregation has intensified due to lax enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, which forbids discrimination in housing and was set up to foster equality in the housing market. The overall segregating trend was strengthened due to the 2007 Supreme Court decision on voluntary desegregation, which removed pressure on local authorities to foster integration. The report calls on President Obama to address these issues.

Read more: <http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSTRE50D7CY20090114>

See the report: http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/deseg/reviving_the_goal_mlk_2009.pdf

Cultivating minority youth in the sciences

The Saturday Science Academy at Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in South Los Angeles gives minority youth of all incomes the opportunity to realize their dreams of becoming physicians, scientists or engineers.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-whitecoats18-2009jan18.0.6081121.story>



For reading problems, think globally but act locally

"While a deficiency in reading may look like an across-the-board failure, it is often a local problem in just one or two of the components that add up to the ability to read," write Alan Kazdin and Carlo Rotella in Slate Magazine. "Reading, like golfing or playing the guitar, is not one big global skill but a constellation of many smaller ones." The authors narrow the culprit skills to several overlapping components: vocabulary, comprehension, phonological awareness, decoding, and fluency. Their recommendations for beefing up these skills are the now commonplace instructions for parents of young children: talk to your child, encourage speech-like sounds, read to your child and have books around, and make reading a peaceful, enjoyable exercise. A parent-child reading routine should continue through elementary school, and should include asking the child anticipatory and inferential questions. "Parents should take heart in remembering that mundane low-pressure practice during games and other activities with you can make an enormous difference," the authors counsel. "Even a slightly increased sensitivity to breaking down sounds or rhyming, even a slightly heightened familiarity with books and motivation to engage with them, can provide a significant boost at school." Read more: <http://www.slate.com/id/2206105/>

Teacher Opportunity

U.S. Dept. of Education: Teaching Ambassador Fellowship

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting applications for the 2009-2010 Teaching Ambassador Fellowship program, which offers highly motivated, innovative public school teachers the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and experience to the national dialogue on public education. Washington Fellows become full-time federal employees at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., participating in policy discussions and working alongside staff on education programs and strategies aimed at educational improvement. Classroom Fellows remain in their local schools under their regular teaching contracts and provide their experience and perspectives to the Department through various assignments and part-time projects. Maximum award: fellowship compensated at the federal GS-12 level. Eligibility: state certified pre-K-12 public school teachers of all subjects who have spent at least three years in the classroom. Deadline: March 16, 2009. <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherfellowship>

Funding/Grant Opportunity

Nike: Jordan Fundamentals

The Jordan Fundamentals Grant Program recognizes outstanding teaching and instructional creativity in public secondary schools that serve economically disadvantaged students. Maximum award: \$10,000. Eligibility: public K-12 teachers in the U.S. Deadline: April 15, 2009. <http://www.nike.com/jumpman23/features/fundamentals/overview.html>



"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."

What better way to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday than reading to a child? On the evening of March 2nd (Dr. Seuss's birthday), Random House and the National Education Association (NEA) urge you to participate in the second annual Read Across America and read to a child.

WHY CELEBRATE DR. SEUSS?

Dr. Seuss epitomizes a love of children and learning. Also, his use of rhyme makes his books an effective tool for teaching young children the basic skills they need to be successful. When we celebrate Dr. Seuss and reading, we send a clear message to America's children that reading is fun and important.

March 2

Sign up for the free toolkit which includes

1. Ideas
2. How to get high school students involved
3. Break a record with Guinness
4. Turn it into a multilingual/multicultural affair
5. Ask local celebrities to read to the class
6. Pledge your miles.



Resources

<http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/readacross>

[Read Across America](#) resource kit request

[100 Ways to Celebrate Dr. Seuss](#) (860KB PDF)*

(<http://www.seussville.com/seussentennial/pdf/calender.pdf>)

[Reader's Oath](#) (NEA)

[Dr. Seuss: An American Icon](#) (NPR)

[Dr. Seuss Collection](#) (UCSD)

[The Political Dr. Seuss](#) (PBS)

[The Seuss, the Whole Seuss and Nothing But the Seuss](#) (Amazon)

[The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss](#) (Amazon)

[Dr. Seuss Collection](#) University of California, San Diego Library

**The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Multicultural Education
is challenging all schools and classrooms to
"Read Across America" by March 2, 2009!**

Guidelines:

1. You must read multicultural books (see "resources" for book ideas)
2. How to earn miles
Picture books 1 book = 1 mile
Chapter books 1 page = 1 mile
3. You must find a route that includes all 50 states
4. Send your list of books read, a map of your route, the classroom teacher's name and class list or the school name to Carol Rempp by **March 13, 2009** to receive your class certificates.



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Attack of the Nuclear Family

by The Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg
Co-founder and Vice President, Reclaiming
Youth International
Professor of First Nations Theology and Minis-
try, Vancouver School of Theology

(excerpt from Reclaiming Youth Newsletter)

Some ideas have an influence on us that we do not immediately appreciate. In 1981, I first saw an ad for a TV with a remote control. I thought to myself that it was a useless device since I would be in the same room as the TV. I now have four remotes in a box on my coffee table. Remote control devices are now a part of my life in ways I did not see at the beginning.

Sociologists report the idea of a nuclear family is about 100 years old and it is an accepted concept only in North America and northern Europe. The understanding that this social unit is made of only parents and children is a new idea in the world and I believe it is dangerous to children. Other cultures and regions in the world understand a family to be “extended” with multiple parents and siblings. Sociologists also report that it is business interests that push the idea that a family is nuclear only. A nuclear family will buy more for only themselves and they are willing to accept a transfer across the country.

Nearly 40 years ago, while counseling couples, I saw how unrealistic it is for one partner to expect the other to meet all of their emotional needs. This may happen in the movies but not in real life. In real life I have perhaps a

dozen people, my own personal “village,” who are my intimate family and who all look after me and care for me. One person cannot meet all the emotional needs of another. It takes a “village” to care for a spouse.

It also takes a “village” to raise a child. In human history, we know that all societies have developed the idea of multiple parents. Whether in culturally defined social structures, the addition of godparents, or legally defined guardians, societies know every child should have more than two adults and a teacher to raise a child. In most societies outside of North America, grandparents and other elders are always involved in the lives of children and are a significant part of childcare. Naturally, we are to understand that care involves the emotional and spiritual as well as physical care.

I believe that once a society accepts the “inhuman” idea of the nuclear family, that society is destined to place all of their youth at risk. It is inhuman since human beings around the world have a long history of “extended” families, except for our modern age. Without a “village,” children might be understood to be the responsibility of only the parents and the occasional teacher. Without a “village,” there is no failsafe system to support a child when a parent has a crisis. Without a “village,” there is no community to guide and model the child throughout life, teaching the child how to mature, age and eventually die. A child without a “village” is at risk as a child, as an adult, and even as an elder.

I refuse to accept the idea that a nuclear family is a complete family.



Grandma is Moving In

The Obama's will have their grandmother, Marian Robinson living with them in the Whitehouse to maintain family structure and values. A census survey shows over 5.8 million grandparents households and the number keep increasing. Historically, this is

common for African American families.

Grandparents are seen in some cases as the “safety net” to a host of problems, being traveling parents to emotional, drug dependence, health or economic hardship.

Dads are Important Too!

Since the creation of PTA (Parent Teacher Association) over 112 years ago, never has a man taken the leadership reins. In 2009, meet Charles J. Saylor, the new president.

More dads are stepping up to the plate with parenting, attending school events, assisting with extracurricular activities and even taking their kids to school.

Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) is a program designed to bring "dad into the classroom" and use in 800 schools in 30 states. Funded through the National Center for Fathering, this program has partnered with PTA.

Studies have shown 55% of the children do better in school and in life when Dad is involved. Father figures are also included, grandpa, uncle, older brother or significant male family member.



Watch D.O.G.S. www.fathers.com/watchdogs
PTA www.pta.org

Our system is failing adolescents in health. According to an Associated Press article, "adolescents aren't just big kids, and too many start falling through cracks in the health care....after the pass the stage of preschool shots and summer camp checkups."

From 10 to 19 their bodies transform more rapidly than during infancy. Fewer doctors treat this age category. Close to 20% experience depression or anxiety annually.

This age category is also left standing in the cold within the federal and state health care programs. Over five million have no insurance, parents are selling their household items to cover costs.

The National Academies issued a full report on this growing concern sweeping in December.

[Read article](#)

National Academies www.nationalacademies.org

Report sees steep drop-off in child wellness

Why is this age group falling through the cracks?

Health Beat Update

We've taken a different approach to our Health Beat section of The Drum.

New articles on mental health, family health and general wellness will be included.

We NEED your Design

Showcase your talent



The National Indian Education Association is calling all Native artists! NIEA marks its 40th anniversary during the conference October 22-25, 2009.

NIEA is soliciting qualified artists and designers to participate in an open competition for works of art designed to be incorporated onto the Pendleton Commemorative Blanket.

Application to participate is due February 28. Find the application and guidelines at their website.

www.niea.org

Native Wellness Institute has a new website
www.nativewellness.com



Want FREE books?

To be eligible for RIF funding, a program MUST:

Serve children in early childhood programs or at school-age programs or sites

Serve a population that is 80% eligible for free or reduced lunch

Be a non-profit organization

Apply at <http://erams.rif.org>

The John G Neihardt Foundation
Sunday Afternoon at the Museum
Bancroft NE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH
2:00 PM

SUNDAY, MARCH 1
2:00 P.M.

www.neihardtcenter.org

Navajo students write Obama

Students from Tuba City, Arizona on the Navajo Nation reservation wrote the newly elected President, giving him plenty of advice and enlightened him on their life.

The fourth, fifth and sixth grade students of Margaret Erhart designed the program which also gave a glimpse of poverty childhoods.

Hello, my name is Mykaila Black. I am 12 years old and I am Navajo. I wanted to know if you could help my family by lowering down gas prices so we don't have to spend so much money on gas. I also wanted to know if you could send me money for my father's Christmas gift. My father is a single parent and he always gives us so much and I wanted to do the same for him. I want to wish you good luck and I also voted for you.

My name is Shanyah Manygoats. I am 11 years old. I have a three-year-old sister who is mean to me. Mr. Obama, thank you for running for president. You are the first black president we ever had. I live in trailer so please Obama send me and my mom some money for clothes, bills, and a new house with running water and electric. This is what my house looks like on the inside: It only has one room. I don't have a room, I have to sleep on the floor. Outside it's purple, with a tire on top. It's torn, ruined, just out of shape. Give me a call if you would like to help us.

My name is Shane Moran. I am 11 years old. I would like to ask you a few questions. For my first question, what will you do about gas prices? Secondly, what will you do about the second amendment? Third, what will you do about our troops in Iraq? Finally, (I know this question is silly but I'll ask it anyway) are there really aliens at Area 51?

Historical Dates

February-African American Month

- February 1 National Free Day established 1949, commemorates the abolishment of slavery in 1865.
- February 2 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War of 1848.
- February 3 Elizabeth Blackwell, nation's first woman doctor, born 1821.
- February 3 15th Amendment passes giving African Americans the right to vote, 1870.
- February 4 Rosa Parks, African American woman whose courage ignited the Montgomery Bus Boycott, born 1913.
- February 5 Henry "Hank" Aaron, African American athlete, broke many baseball records, including Babe Ruth's 714 home run records in 1974, born 1934.
- February 6 Arthur Ashe, first African American to win the U.S. David Cup (tennis), died 1993.
- February 11 First U.S. Treaty signed with the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, 1794.
- February 14 Race Relations Day-Designated by the National Council of churches in recognition of the importance of interracial relations, 1973.
- February 15 Susan B. Anthony Day, American women's suffrage, advocate, born 1820.
- February 17 Marian Anderson, African American singer regarded as one of the world's greatest contraltos, born 1902.
- February 17 Black Panther Party founded by Huey Newton, 1966.
- February 21 The Cherokee Phoenix, first Native American newspaper printed in English and Cherokee.
- February 23 William E. B. Dubois, African American author founded the NAACP, born 1868.
- February 25 Hiram Revel, first African American Senator, took office 1870.
- February 26 Jimmie Lee Jackson, African American Civil Rights activist, died from police beating in Alabama, 1965.
- February 28 Phillis, African American poet, born 1753. America's first woman poet.

Native American Advisory Council Meetings

Wayne State College
Student Activities Center
February 3 5:00-7:00 p.m.
April 14 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Chadron State College
North Platte Room
February 12 5:00-7:00 p.m.
March 31 5:00-7:00 p.m.

4th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum
Call for Presenter Deadline: February 20, 2009
Conference: June 16, 2009
NCIA Niagara Falls, New York

National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center is inviting scholars and organizations (native and non-Native) conducting research with practical applications for tribal communities to submit a program to present. Research from all disciplines and fields are considered. Conference To obtain more information and forms visit ncaiprc.org

College Board Announcements

Prepárate: Educating Latinos for the Future of America brings together education professionals from across the country seeking to increase Latino students' access to and success in higher education.

April 23-24, 2009; Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel, Orlando, Florida. Early bird registration ends **February 15**. Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/preparate.

The Native American Student Advocacy Institute: Building Nations through Education provides opportunities for collaboration and partnership to ensure postsecondary access and achievement for Native American, Alaska Native and Hawaiian students.

May 18-19, 2009; University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. Early bird registration ends **March 16**. Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/nasai.

A Dream Deferred™: The Future of African American Education convenes education and community leaders to address the most critical issues facing African American students.

May 21-22, 2009; Westin Los Angeles Airport, Los Angeles, California. Early bird registration ends **March 16**. Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/dreamdeferred.

Reclaiming Youth Seminars

Summer in the Black Hills
Life Spaces: June 15-19
Person Brain Model Training: June 18-19
Circle of Courage (June 20)
Reclaiming Youth Conference (June 20-23)
Response Ability Pathways (June 24-26)
Developmental Audit (June 24-26)

www.reclaiming.com



Educating Children with ASD: Building the Local Capacity of Nebraska Schools
April 16-17, 2009
Embassy Suites-LaVista
www.nde.state.ne.us/autism



April 17-19, 2009 * Norman, Oklahoma*
Register and information at www.indianeducation.org/conference

* date/location change



June 10-12, 2009
Elkhorn Public Schools
Elkhorn Ridge Middle School

Information forthcoming—**SAVE THE DATE**
“Our” Space: Connecting with Middle Level Learners

Continue from page 1

He discusses several comments that people have been sensitive to or that have been taken out of context that have caused feathers to ruffle since the election and inauguration. He concludes by stating “These worries are a waste of time. This is still a country of limitless opportunities where anyone can succeed—as long as they don’t spend all their energy coming up with excuses for failing.”

In his inaugural address, President Obama said, “...The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.” He continued saying, “In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never given. I must be earned.” And later in the speech he states, “Time and again these men and women (referencing those who fought in past wars) struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions as;

greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.”

Frank LaMere was quoted in the Lincoln Journal Star, in response to President Obama’s speech, “We will have to come together and help one another. That was (Obama’s) message, and it was very moving to me.”

A moment in history—a teachable moment. Yes, we are past the inauguration and all the hoopla but we are not past the teachable moments. Racism is alive and well in the United States and in Nebraska as evidenced by the numerous remarks, comments and commentaries regarding our new President. As educators we have an obligation to teach our students about being the best they can be and working to create a better life for themselves as well as being good stewards of the land, life and country we have been given to live in. We all woke up on January 20, 2009 to experience an historic day. Now I challenge you to continue to live the historic moment and take the teachable moments that will continue to arise to teach your students about tolerance, how to overcome racism, rising to meet the challenges that are set forth before them, and creating a world of peace and understanding, even if that world begins only in your classroom or community. When a pebble is dropped into a pond no one knows where the ripple effect will end. You may think you are teaching one lesson but you may also be creating a ripple effect. Make it a positive one.

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