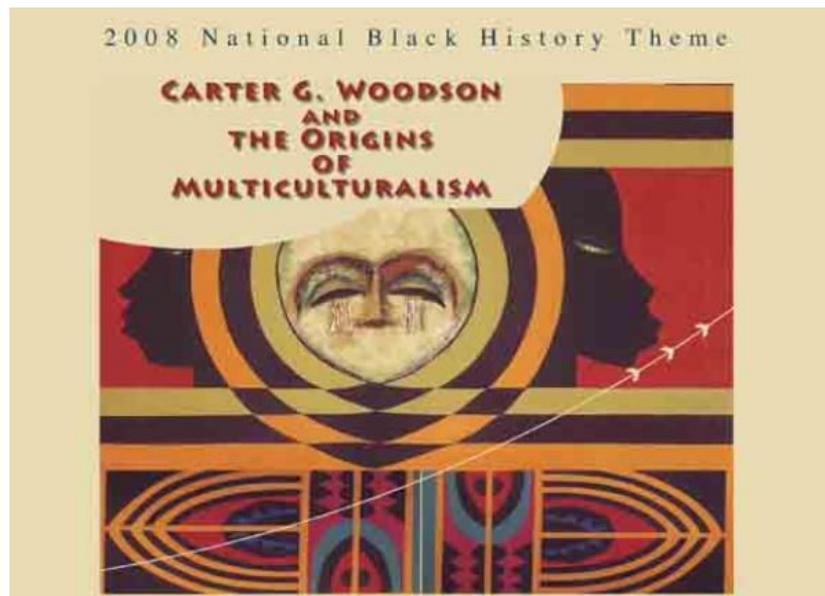


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# NEWSLETTER

February 2008



From its inception, America has been a landscape peopled by diverse ethnic and racial groups, and today virtually all peoples are represented. If America has always been racially and ethnically diverse, the nation's self-image has not always recognized its multicultural history. Until the last decades of the twentieth century, America has seen itself largely as the flowering of Anglo-Saxon culture and prided itself on allowing immigrants to adopt the American way.

During the early years of the twentieth century, a small number of intellectuals began to question whether America was simply a transplant of English civilization. W. E. B. Du Bois, Theodore Herzl, and Randolph Bourne believed that modern America should embrace the cultural differences that newcomers brought with them to America. Democracy, they believed, required tolerance of difference and could sustain those differences in harmony.

Among those intellectuals of the Progressive era, Carter G. Woodson did most to forge an intellectual movement to educate Americans about cultural diversity and democracy. For the sake of African Americans and all Americans, Woodson heralded the contributions of African Americans and the black tradition. In 1915, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and by the time of his death in 1950, he had laid the foundation for a rethinking of American identity. The multiculturalism of our times is built on the intellectual and institutional labors of Woodson and the association he established. He should be known not simply as the Father of Black History, but as pioneer of multiculturalism as well. In honor of its founder, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History devotes the 2008 Annual Black History Theme to both the labors of Woodson and the origins of multiculturalism.

<http://www.asalh.org/>

# President's Day

## History of the Holiday

The original version of the holiday was in commemoration of George Washington's birthday in 1796 (the last full year of his presidency). Washington, according to the calendar that has been used since at least the mid-18th century, was born on February 22, 1732. According to the old style calendar in use back then, however, he was born on February 11. At least in 1796, many Americans celebrated his birthday on the 22nd while others marked the occasion on the 11th instead.

By the early 19th century, Washington's Birthday had taken firm root in the American experience as a bona fide national holiday. Its traditions included Birthnight Balls in various regions, speeches and receptions given by prominent public figures, and a lot of revelry in taverns throughout the land. Then along came Abraham Lincoln, another revered president and fellow February baby (born on the 12th of the month). The first formal observance of his birthday took place in 1865, the year after his assassination, when both houses of Congress gathered for a memorial address. While Lincoln's Birthday did not become a federal holiday like George Washington's, it did become a legal holiday in several states.

In 1968, legislation (HR 15951) was enacted that affected several federal holidays. One of these was Washington's Birthday, the observation of which was shifted to the third Monday in February each year whether or not it fell on the 22nd. This act, which took effect in 1971, was designed to simplify the yearly calendar of holidays and give federal employees some standard three-day weekends in the process.

Apparently, while the holiday in February is still officially known as Washington's Birthday (at least according to the Office of Personnel Management), it has become popularly (and, perhaps in some cases at the state level, legally) known as "President's Day." This has made the third Monday in February a day for honoring Washington and Lincoln, as well as all the other men who have served as president



## Important Notices

The American Corner Bitola  
will be changing its  
working hours  
as of February 1<sup>st</sup>

**Monday through Friday**

**10:00 to 20:00**

**Saturday**

**10:00 to 16:00**

- We will be closed on Monday February 18<sup>th</sup> in honor of the American holiday President's Day
- We ask all members to contact us to update their memberships

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**AMERICAN CORNER BITOLA  
MONTHLY PROGRAM – FEBRUARY 2008**

Monday February 4<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**Children's Storytelling Hour**

Tuesday February 5<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**English Conversation Hour \*PLEASE SIGN IN TO ATTEND\***

Wednesday February 6<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**Video Showing "African American Lives: Listening To Our Past"**

Saturday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 o'clock **\*Please sign in to attend with your child\***  
**"Child Development Games" Workshop**  
Facilitated by Miranda Carruth, Lotus Yu and Patrice Koerper –  
U.S. Peace Corps volunteers

Monday February 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>  
**Paper show display in honor of African American History Month**  
**"Singing the World: Contemporary African-American Writers"**

Tuesday February 12<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**English Conversation Hour \*PLEASE SIGN IN TO ATTEND\***

Wednesday February 13<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**Video Showing "African American Lives: The Promise of Freedom"**

Friday February 15<sup>th</sup> from 14:00 – 16:00  
**Individual Education Consultations \*PLEASE SIGN IN FOR APPOINTMENT TIME\***

Tuesday February 19<sup>th</sup> at 13:00 o'clock  
**Presidents' Day Quiz**

Tuesday February 19<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**English Conversation Hour \*PLEASE SIGN IN TO ATTEND\***

Wednesday February 20<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**Video Showing "African American Lives: Searching For Our Names"**

Thursday February 21<sup>st</sup> at 18:00 o'clock - In Honor of African American History Month  
**Presentation "Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America."**  
by Peter Neisuler, U.S. Embassy Skopje Officer

Tuesday February 26<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**English Conversation Hour \*PLEASE SIGN IN TO ATTEND\***

Wednesday February 27<sup>th</sup> at 18:00 o'clock  
**Video Showing "African American Lives: Beyond the Middle Passage"**

# Highlights from December/January Programs

American Corner Bitola hosted two sessions of Children's Storytelling Hour this month. On December 22<sup>nd</sup> 11 children visited the Corner and enjoyed hearing four stories read to them in English by Tara Trepanier, Peace Corps volunteer. The stories all focused on the winter and holiday season which lead into



a short discussion with the children about holiday traditions. A craft time was included where the children then had the opportunity to make their own Santa Claus and Snowmen. Christmas carols were played while refreshments, cookies and candy canes were provided for the children.

With the great success of the first program the AC organized the same program on December 26<sup>th</sup> with a different group of 12 children. The children in both programs expressed their gratitude for being invited to the American Corner Bitola by bringing us small gifts for the office. These programs provide school age children greater exposure to the English language.

On December 27<sup>th</sup> American Corner Bitola celebrated the winter holidays together with 29 members. The celebration included festive games where prizes were given, Christmas music and decorations along with refreshments and Christmas cookies. The games included the reading of a Christmas story in English as well as a pistachio jar guessing game. The relaxing atmosphere provided for an opportunity for the members to bond further with the American Corner while learning of American holiday traditions.



# Highlights from December/January Programs



On December 13, 2007 the American Corner Bitola organized the program titled “**A Musical Journey to New York City**” presented by Trio InterArt, a local classical music trio, made up of Emilijia and Aleksandar Stefanovski and Tatjana Bozinovska. The trio traveled to New York City in September and performed at the Macedonian Culture Center in honor of the Macedonian Independence Day sponsored by the Macedonian Ministry of Culture. To an audience of 15 people they presented a 25 minute documentary film which highlighted the grand attractions of New York City and their memorable journey through the city. Following the film showing a lively discussion took place

between the audience and presenters where the landmarks in NYC as well as the Cultural Center was further discussed. Travel to the United States and the importance of cultural exchanges between Macedonia and the US was highlighted with this program.

**English Conversation Hour:** On January 15th 12 members of the American Corner Bitola furthered their knowledge about adjectives in the English language through very interesting and interactive exercises that Mrs. Patrice Koerper, Peace Corps volunteer, prepared for them. They learned how to describe people’s features, qualities and characteristics and enriched their English vocabulary. The attendees are becoming more familiar with the English language and enjoy the opportunity to have regular interaction with a native English speaker.



# Highlights from December/January Programs

American Corner Bitola hosted a **Readers' Club** on January 24<sup>th</sup> attended by 14 people and run by the Peace Corps volunteer Patrice Koerper. The attendants, instructed by Mrs. Koerper, discussed the book *Our Iceberg is Melting* by John Kotter, that all of them has read prior to the club session. It was interesting to understand in how many different ways a book can be reviewed and how many aspects of life a book can cover and explain. By exchanging their variety of thoughts about *Our Iceberg is Melting* and about the topics that this book refers to such as change in life, the members not only realized the effects that the book can have in their own lives, but also strengthened their confidence in expressing their ideas and considerations in English.



American Corner Bitola organized an informative program on January 31<sup>st</sup> that promoted the **The Macedonian American Alumni Association** and US Department Exchange programs such as Fulbright, Humphrey and Ron Brown. Assoc. Prof. Atanas Kocov, PhD, president of the Association and Fulbright Alumni together with Ryan Rowlands, Public Affairs Officer U.S Embassy Skopje provided the audience of 25 people with essential information on the programs, where further information can be accessed and the benefits of the programs. Current

projects of MAAA were also discussed and promoted such as the new Internship program which is aimed to assist university students to receive first hand work experience in their field of study. All attendees were invited to visit the US Embassy website to receive regular updates on open programs as well as to visit the American Corner Bitola for further information. This program received media coverage from two local TV Stations.



