

Research Reports

AMERICAN HISTORY

The American presidency: An office filled with prestige, pain and glory

By Jo Ann Webb
Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs

Few people ever assume a burden so heavy. Thomas Jefferson described it as a “splendid misery.” To Theodore Roosevelt, it was a “bully pulpit.” Warren Harding said, “It’s hell. No other word to describe it.” Harry S. Truman said, “It’s like being a jackass in a hailstorm—all you can do is stand your ground and take it.”

The American presidency, the nation’s highest and most important job, may also be the hardest, according to a new permanent exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History titled “The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden.” The show addresses the lives and times of the country’s 42 presidential administrations.

The exhibition

The show is one of the largest ever mounted by the Smithsonian, and it was put together in eight months, instead of the typical two to three years.

The exhibition was initiated by Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small. When he took office in January 2000, Small noted that the Smithsonian had never addressed the office of the presidency, a uniquely American institution, with a permanent tribute. He challenged the National Museum of American History to open a show on the American presidency, in conjunction with the 2000 presidential election. Museum Director Spencer Crew, who is one of three curators of the exhibition, understood the Secretary’s vision and supported it.

Harry Rubenstein, curator of political history at the museum and another of the exhibition’s curators, says, “The American presidency is a topic that we had been thinking about for years. But we had thought of and worked on it in sections.”

This exhibition, spanning 200 years, pulls it all together. It looks at the office of the president from historical, cultural, political and social perspectives and

emphasizes the personal sides of the office as well.

“While it was a challenge to put the exhibition together in such a short period of time,” Rubenstein adds, “it was the opportunity that drove us forward. The compressed schedule made everything a bit more demanding, but we worked very hard at not making any compromises in the quality, material or depth of the content of the exhibition or its accompanying book.” (See “Off the Shelf,” Page 8.)

In describing the executive office, Crew notes that “there was no precedent for the American presidency when the framers of the Constitution created the office in 1787. Yet these revolutionaries—who distrusted centralized authority—entrusted near-monarchical powers to this one office.”

The exhibition, divided into 11 themes, takes visitors from the campaign trails, through family life at the White House, to assassinations and mourning, to life after the presidency.

The objects

In rich detail, the more than 900 objects “tell” the story of the office of president. There’s the top hat worn by Abraham Lincoln the night he was assassinated and the wooden lap desk on which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. George Washington’s battle sword and general officer’s uniform and the carriage Ulysses S. Grant rode in to his second inauguration in 1873 are on view. A teddy bear inspired by Theodore Roosevelt and Bill Clinton’s saxophone, along with his daughter Chelsea’s ballet slippers, are in the exhibition as well.

“Both Harry and I are trained in political history,” says Lonnie Bunch III, then associate director of curatorial affairs at the museum and also one of the show’s curators, “but we knew that we had to play to the strength of our collections in order to get the show up in time. There was a lim-



George Washington’s military uniform, battle sword and sheath from the 1790s is on view in the exhibition “The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden.”

ited time to borrow artifacts and limited time and space to tell the story.”

According to Bunch, there’s always that tug-and-pull between selecting objects that are your personal favorites and making sure that they are the best ones for the show. “It’s a challenge to choose the right object that best tells the story in a fresh and exciting way, yet have the objects that are intrinsically interesting to people,” he says.

“We knew that our collections were strong,” Rubenstein adds, “but our challenge was to fill in huge gaps. It required a lot of object research. We had to make sure that the objects were what we thought they were.”

Mining the collections

Division of Political History Collections Manager Lisa Kathleen Graddy, who played a major role in coordinating production of the exhibition, recalls spending last Easter weekend going in and out of the collections areas compiling lists of thousands of objects that could be included in the exhibition.

As museum staff combed storage cabinets for presidential artifacts, some items stood out as favorite finds. For example, an intern found an ivory seal used by President James Polk during a steamy Washington, D.C., summer when he sent staff home and completed work himself.

Some finds were amusing. Harding’s silk pajamas gave everyone a chuckle. “We opened up the storage drawers, and there were these amazing silk 1920s pajamas,” Graddy says. The pair on display is turquoise with white appliquéd leaves.

Theodore Roosevelt’s African safari camp desk arrived from storage in Suitland, Md., “packed up like a port-a-crib” in a vintage canvas bag, Graddy says.

Only about 5 percent of the objects were borrowed, “which speaks to the strength of our collections,” Rubenstein adds. Those objects include cowboy boots with the presidential seal, from the Lyndon B. Johnson Library; a gun from the Secret Service that Sara Jane Moore used in an assassination attempt on Gerald Ford; and from the White House’s Presidential Library, a naval cloak worn by Franklin D. Roosevelt to the World War II conference at Yalta.

Much thought went into proper conservation and display of the exhibition.

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Curator Liza Kirwin ■ When Liza Kirwin was growing up, she enjoyed the same things her friends did—dolls, tree climbing, listening to music. But she also liked going through old trunks in her family's basement, unfolding moldy papers and reading letters from relatives long gone.

Now, as curator of manuscripts at the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, Kirwin has found the perfect niche, where her natural tendencies can benefit American art history. "We provide researchers and the public with access to the largest collection of documents on the history of the visual arts in the United States," Kirwin explains. "This consists of the papers of artists, dealers, critics, art historians, curators, administrators, and the records of art dealers and museums. It's an intimate view of American art history."

Kirwin's relationship with the Smithsonian began in 1979, after her senior year at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, when she tried to get hired by the Archives. "When I was in college studying art history, a job in an art history research facility was a dream come true," she recalls. "But they wrote me a nice letter saying nothing was available. So I went to work at the Hall of Records in Annapolis, Md." There she developed an interest in archival work. "Unfortunately, I was tremendously bored with my first project—cataloging 19th-century chancellery court records." That same year, however, a position opened at the Archives, and Kirwin was hired as an archives technician.

After getting a master's degree in library science at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., while working full time at the Archives, Kirwin became a documents collector.



Liza Kirwin (Photo by Terry McCrea)

"My assigned area was the Southeast of the United States," she says. "I would go on the road for weeks, from Jackson, Miss., to Mobile, Ala., to Charleston, S.C. It's really important for collectors to meet artists, dealers, the people in historical art societies and the curators." Kirwin's mission involved more than getting the word out. "They all had a sense of what the Smithsonian was, but not necessarily what the Archives was,"

Kirwin says. "And that is why I was there,

to tell them about the Archives and to impress upon artists the need to save their papers and, of course, to gently persuade them to donate their documents to us."

Kirwin's mission also required a tender touch and a thick skin. "Most of the artists I contacted were of an advanced age. Many had had their heyday in the 1930s or 1940s, and no one had been around since then to show interest in their careers," she says. "Some of these artists would wear their Sunday best to reminisce about their lives in the American art world long ago. It was touching, and they had fabulous documentation."

Some artists, however, were not so eager to be immortalized. "I've been called a 'black widow spider.' It was a joke, of course," Kirwin recalls. "But I do read the obituaries. It is important to be in touch with the artists' heirs to express our interest in papers that might otherwise be thrown away and lost forever."

Kirwin eventually pursued a doctorate in American studies at the University of Maryland in College Park. Her doctoral thesis focused on the art market in New York's East Village in the 1980s. After 20 years at the Smithsonian and a variety of responsibilities, collecting and preserving documents is still the work closest to Kirwin's heart. "The process can be very long and slow," she says, "but when you rescue something that has been neglected and is deteriorating, something of importance to the artist, the region and the history of American art, it is a thrill."

—Angela Cervetti, Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs



Peter Marra shows a cardinal to Kate Redford and her daughter, Alexis, in their back yard. Redford is a volunteer in the Neighborhood Nestwatch program. (Photo by Dave Hunter)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Neighborhood birdwatching program is more than just for the birds

By Angela Cervetti
Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs

While most people look at their back yards and see tasks that have long gone undone, Bart Hutchinson makes mental notes of the birds he sees behind his house: ...Cardinals seem to like that bush...House wrens building a new nest...Are those chickadees new?

Hutchinson and about 70 other volunteers are part of Neighborhood Nestwatch, a year-old program developed by Peter Marra, a terrestrial animal ecologist at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Md.

"The program has multiple purposes," Marra explains. "The first is to understand the factors that drive the population dynamics of birds in this area." By that, Marra means that the study seeks to understand the impact of urbanization and human population growth on the reproduction and survival of resident and migratory birds. "Birds are an important part of our local ecosystem. It's important to understand how they interact with their environment," he says.

Marra, however, preferred not to do this alone. His second goal involved the community. "I wanted to develop an outreach component to my research and for people to get excited about science the same way I did when I was a boy," he says. "Besides, I needed their back yards."

Marra's passion for birds started when, at 5 years old, he saw a naturalist hold a bird in his hand. "I was fascinated by that," he remembers. "Ever since then, birds have had a special place in my heart."

Marra wants others to feel the same way about all types of birds, including the backyard variety. "The birds that form the focus of the study live and breed in urban and suburban environments, from south-

ern Pennsylvania to the tip of southern Maryland," he says.

Involving volunteers

But studying birds in the suburban areas where they live presents some complications. "You can't go around with binoculars and scientific equipment looking for birds in people's back yards. You'd get shot at, chased by dogs or thrown in jail," he

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Smithsonian Institution Research Reports

No. 103 Winter 2001

Published quarterly by the Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs, Smithsonian Institution Building, Room 354, Washington, D.C. 20560-0033, for Smithsonian Contributing Members, scholars, educators, museum personnel, libraries, journalists and others. To request this publication in an accessible format, call (202) 357-2627, ext. 124 (voice) or (202) 357-1729 (TTY).

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Smithsonian archaeologist uncovers shipwreck buried for 171 years

By Michael Lipske
Special to Research Reports

Some ships are steady, serious sorts. They trudge along the sea lanes for decades without attracting much attention. Other vessels own the fast lane. Like ill-starred celebrities, they rocket from bright beginning to bad ending in an eye blink.

As an example of the latter, consider the amazing eight-year run of America's first ocean-going yacht, *Cleopatra's Barge*. Built entirely for pleasure and grandly outfitted by one of the country's richest men, George Crowninshield Jr., the 100-foot brig drew thousands of gawkers daily as she was being built in 1816 in Salem, Mass. In an age when ships were launched only for war, whaling or trade, the pleasure yacht was an extraordinary sight.

Thousands more people came to see the yacht during its six-month Mediterranean cruise the following year. But by 1820, Crowninshield was dead, and his ship swapped for a fortune in sandalwood to Hawaii's King Kamehameha II, a member of America's only authentic royalty.

Rechristened *Ha'aheo o Hawaii* (Pride of Hawaii), the ship plied the Hawaiian Islands as the royal yacht.

But four years later, in April 1824, it had sunk to the bottom of Kauai's Hanalei Bay, wrecked after a drunken crew steered it into a reef.

There, the yacht rested for 171 years. Only now has the wreck been uncovered, thanks to Paul Johnston, curator of maritime history at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Johnston, who has done archaeological studies in the Indian Ocean and the Baltic and Mediterranean seas, recently concluded five summers of excavation at the *Ha'aheo o Hawaii* wreck site, retrieving the only material remains from the brief reign of Kamehameha.

Discovery of the yacht

Johnston learned about the ship in 1981, when he was a curator at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. Many of the yacht's original furnishings are displayed at that museum, and the New England history of *Cleopatra's Barge* is described in several books.

"But all of those books end with: 'And then in 1820, she was sold to the King of Hawaii, and she was wrecked in Hanalei Bay in 1824'—the end," Johnston says. "I wanted to find out what the ship was doing out there in the four odd years between the time she was bought and the time she sank."

According to Johnston, a Boston firm in the China trade sent the yacht to Hawaii, confident that the king would covet her. "She was unique, she was beautiful and very extravagant," Johnston says. "And the kings of Hawaii had always liked fancy western vessels." In fact, Kamehameha bought the yacht within 10 days of its arrival in the islands.

As *Ha'aheo o Hawaii*, the yacht was a multipurpose vessel. It carried cargo, assisted in establishing Christian missions and was even used to kidnap a rival chief. Johnston believes the yacht had been sailed to Kauai, the island where it sank, for the purpose of political reconnaissance—"sort of a CIA job"—to investigate rumors of a budding revolt.

Kamehameha never learned the fate of one of his favorite possessions. In late 1823, he sailed to England on a British whaler to seek an audience with King George IV. While there, the Hawaiian monarch and his queen died of measles.

Ask Johnston what started him on the path to a career in marine archaeology and he smiles and asks, "Did you ever see a TV show called 'Sea Hunt?'"

Back in the 1960s, Mike Nelson, hero of that popular series, wrestled bad guys and fended off sharks and other dangers in nearly every episode. Johnston was intrigued with Nelson's adventures.

Luckily, Nelson's adventures did not require a formal environmental assessment for review by 26 state and federal agencies plus the general public—

just part of the gauntlet that Johnston ran when he sought a state permit to investigate the wreck site. "Basically, I had to undergo the same process I would for building a hotel on the shores of Hanalei Bay," Johnston says of the bureaucratic adventure that consumed much of 1994. "And this was just to look for the thing. What would I have to do if I found it?"

The search begins

By the summer of 1995, the archaeologist was cleared to search for the sunken yacht. Guided by an American missionary's written account of the wreck and deploying a magnetometer and other remote-sensing gear, Johnston's team hunted for the ship's remains from a 40-foot work boat. They quickly located the scattered wreckage, buried under the sand in 15 to 20 feet of water at the southwestern corner of Hanalei Bay.

"The wreck is in a very dynamic surf zone," Johnston says, "and that makes it



A watercolor of *Cleopatra's Barge* in 1818 (Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum)

kind of confusing." Prevailing winds and waves have pushed objects, old and new, into the corner of the bay where the yacht sank. As a result, scuba gear, surfboard skegs and Clorox bottles were mixed in with pieces of copper hull sheeting and other yacht remnants.

Alcoholic beverage containers buried beneath the sand ranged from early 19th-century Dutch gin bottle fragments to modern beer cans. "I had to tell my crew, 'Don't throw stuff overboard, or you're going to have to catalog it tomorrow,'" Johnston says.

The wreck of *Ha'aheo o Hawaii* occurred just decades after Capt. James Cook's 'discovery' of the Hawaiian Islands. "There's a really significant blend of Native Hawaiian and Euro-American objects," Johnston says of artifacts from the yacht. Divers recovered stone poi pounders that were used to mash taro root, a staple of the Hawaiian diet; octopus lures crafted from seashells; a conch horn; and other Native Hawaiian tools, along with early western navigational instruments, musket balls, a fork and a folding pen knife.

Cleaning the treasures

Artifacts recovered from the wreck are put through a lengthy rinsing process—2½ months in tap water followed by several weeks in deionized water—to wash away salts absorbed during years in the ocean.

In the basement of the National Museum

of American History, Johnston lifts the lid of a plastic cooler filled with deionized water and takes out a copper gunpowder flask. "Absolutely perfect," he says of the dripping object, "and it's actually full of powder." From another water-filled cooler, he removes a stone adze, a cutting tool similar to an ax—"the nicest thing we found this year."

Several artifacts in Johnston's horde resemble chunks of concrete. These lumpy "concretions" were formed when rusting iron objects bonded with sand on the floor of the bay. Ron Cunningham of the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education at the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center in Suitland, Md., is making X-ray photos of the mystery lumps as a first step toward identifying their contents.

Years of research on artifacts from the wreck lay ahead of Johnston. He is consulting with archaeologists who work in the Hawaiian Islands and also is searching through published and unpublished accounts of other excavations in an attempt to compare objects from the sunken yacht with similar artifacts that date from the same era. He also has been piecing together the story of the ship itself.

The rarest find

In his office, Johnston picks through a box on the floor. "This is the coolest thing of all," he says, holding up a bronze object recovered from the wreck. As a concretion fresh from the sea, it had resembled a modern truck piston. Cleaned and restored, it turned out to be the ship's pump.

The object is extraordinary, for the simple reason that when such pumps were being manufactured, no one considered saving one for posterity. "As far as I know, there's nothing like this that's ever been preserved in museums," Johnston says.

The pump is engraved with the names of its manufacturer and designer, and Johnston plans to comb through early 1800s patent records to assemble the full story of the contraption. "This is where we can make a contribution to artifactual, as well as historical, knowledge," he says of the homely little pump.

More information on the wreck site is available by logging onto www.si.edu/i%2bd/ship.arc.html.



A copper relief of a putto, or Cupidlike figure, sharpening his arrow on a foot-operated grindstone. This object was found in the shipwreck. (Photo by Harold Dorwin)



Scientific divers Richard Rogers and Tom Ormsby record hull timbers from the wreck of *Cleopatra's Barge* in Hanalei Bay, off the Hawaiian island of Kauai. (Photo by Paul Johnston)

Conservators race against time to save space shuttle suits from decay

By Evelyn Kent
Special to Research Reports

A good conservator looks to the future, as well as to the past. That's exactly what a team of conservators at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum is doing as they work on threatened artifacts from the Apollo Space Program.

In March 2000, the museum launched an 18-month conservation program, headed by Conservator Lisa Young, to preserve the yellowed and cracking suits that American astronauts wore on their voyages to outer space. Eventually, the suits will be stabilized so that they can be displayed and preserved for future generations. Despite all that the conservation team has learned about the suits, members still have a long way to go.



"These suits were not treated like sacred museum objects," Young says. Some were on display at museums, some were stored and some were used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for testing. Still others traveled from mall to mall and lecture hall to lecture hall with the astronauts who wore them into space.

Analyzing the suits

Aside from studying the materials the suits were made of, the team also considers their use, travel and display, which contribute to the present condition of the suits. These factors are essential in the team's efforts to "stabilize" the suits.

Many of the materials used were developed in the 1950s and 1960s specifically for the space program. "Even then, the manufacturers knew there were aging problems," Young says. As the program and technology advanced, she adds, the chemical makeup of the materials changed. Today, those changes affect how the suits can be stabilized and give clues as to why some suits have fared better than others. Piecing together which suit was constructed using what technology is an enormous task.

The first steps

When Young and the team begin work on a suit, they must first clean it, leaving the moon dust, but analyzing other marks and stains. Next, they examine the metal on the suit. Aluminum components, such as bands circling the neck and wrists, are degreased with a simple solvent to arrest corrosion.

Recent observations led the team to speculate that the adhesives used to attach aluminum to the suits may be acting as a catalyst for this corrosion. Team members are now researching the origins and types of adhesives used.

The outside layer of the suits is made of beta cloth, a Teflon-coated fiberglass, which, in some cases, has been damaged by ultraviolet rays. The damage is irreversible. Thus, when the suits are displayed in the future, the team will suggest that they be rotated off display or be

One of the Apollo spacesuits being conserved by a team at the National Air and Space Museum's Paul E. Garber Facility (Samantha Snell photo)



Samantha Snell, a museum technician, cleans an Apollo 1 spacesuit. (Photo by Eric Long)

better protected through the use of filters or fiber-optic lighting.

The inner layers of the suit are not so easily assessed, because "we cannot use destructive testing," Curator Amanda Young says. Consequently, team members have turned to nontraditional conservation methods. Researchers at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History performed a CT scan (formerly known as CAT scan) of one of the 12 lunar suits in the collection, which allowed Lisa Young to peer through 22 layers of Mylar, Dacron, PVC, rubber and other materials. She discovered that, in some suits, the rubber components used in the joints had begun to break down.

Causes of decay

Tracing the display and storage history of the suits made it easier to determine why the rubber is unstable in some suits but not in others. In the past, some suits were displayed on wooden, metal and fashion-store mannequins for more than 20 years. The weight of the heavy suits caused some of the rubber to break down.

In addition, conservators once thought that cold storage would preserve the rubber in the spacesuits, so many suits were stored in cabinets in cold-storage units. But cold makes rubber hard and brittle,

and the theory that the rubber would soften as it warmed proved false.

The design of the storage cabinets also made it difficult to remove suits without bending them, which caused the rubber to crack. Sealing the suits in closed cabinets compounded the problem. Because the suits were pressurized, they emitted gases that could not dissipate. This created an unhealthy environment inside the suits, which contributed to the breakdown of materials within.

Now, the suits are stored in an open room at 68 degrees Fahrenheit and 45 percent humidity. Inside each conserved suit is a soft mannequin made of inert, acid-free foam that is covered with a cloth stocking. The suits lie flat on acid- and lignin-free paper that lines a moveable tray, which makes access easier and significantly reduces handling.

The team may never know all of the reasons for the deterioration. Some of the gloves were covered with Armor All, and others were even dry-cleaned. One helmet had the padding cut out so that it would fit on a mannequin head.

Indeed, each suit was created as an original, hand sewn and tailored for each astronaut, though made to general specifications. However, changes were made to the

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A Grand Salon is restored to its Victorian splendor of 100 years ago

By Angela Cervetti
Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs

Perched atop a hydraulic lift 25 feet above the floor, Robyn Kennedy and George Gurney carefully studied approximately 40 paintings laid out below them in a careful arrangement. “It was a good way to see how they all worked together before putting them on the wall,” says Gurney, deputy chief curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Gurney and Kennedy, a designer at the museum, were largely responsible for arranging the art that now adorns the Grand Salon—the 99-foot-long-by-45-foot-wide Victorian art room—inside the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery. The salon reopened last summer after six months of extensive renovation.

“The salon was in terrible shape,” says Kenneth Trapp, curator-in-charge at the Renwick Gallery. “The whole idea is to have a grand room in which art is displayed in Victorian-era style,” he says. “This was becoming increasingly difficult given the state of the room.”

The state of the salon included missing panes in the laylight (a glass window that diffuses light from above, in this case, from florescent and metal halide lamps), disintegrating drapery, bad lighting, empty spots on the walls where art once hung, and water damage leading to raised and peeling paint.

In October 1999, the salon was closed for refurbishing. “We didn’t like closing such an important part of the museum for any period,” Trapp says. “We tried to get everything done in the shortest possible time.”

Going back 100 years

“Everything” started with how the salon should look. “Historical accuracy was important,” Kennedy says. “At the same time, the building had been changed many times, so the way the room would eventually look was based on research about how art was exhibited in Victorian times.”

During her research, Kennedy found a watercolor of the room painted in 1874. “It was very useful to give us an idea of how things were arranged 100 years ago,” she says.

With that vision in mind, the different teams tackled their respective challenges. “The walls represented a massive project,” says Ellen Myette, operations administrator at the Renwick Gallery. “Not only did the crew have to prepare these huge walls and paint them, they also had to deal with lead paint abatement. Each of the areas they worked in had to be sealed off with plastic, and everyone wore protective clothing and masks. This work had to be done before any other work could begin.”

Lights represented another challenge. “The lighting, through the laylight, is supposed to give the illusion of natural light,” says Scott Rosenfeld, an exhibits lighting specialist at the American Art Museum. “But the old laylight had holes, which revealed the ceiling and different shades of replacement panes. All illusion of natural light was completely lost.”

In the end, the entire laylight—approximately 39 feet long by 17 feet wide—was replaced and raised about a foot to make room for a new system of track lighting that can be directed to particular artworks on the walls. The lights also can be adjusted to reflect the time of day.

“It is really working out well. The new system makes the room and the art in it look great,” says Rosenfeld, who, together with staff from the Smithsonian’s Office of Facilities Management, occasionally straps himself to a beam above the laylight and hovers 40 feet above the ground to adjust the lights.

The finishing touches

Finally, the room was ready, painted in soft rose with cornices accented in gold leaf and windows draped in curtains made in France especially for the Renwick. Kennedy, Gurney and the American Art Museum Exhibitions Office staff were ready to start the delicate process of hanging the artwork.

“Since the American Art Museum’s main building is closed for renovation, we saw this as a great opportunity to exhibit paintings from our collection,” Gurney says. “We also decided to have all American art, as opposed to the mix of European and American artists that hung here before.”

Kennedy devised a system of maquettes, or paper replicas, of each wall. She then

digitally photographed each painting, reduced them to scale and pasted them on the paper maquettes. “This was crucial to see how they would fit together and to avoid moving paintings unnecessarily,” Kennedy says. “The Morans, for example, are massive, with delicate frames and not easily transported.”

Three enormous Western landscapes by Thomas Moran, each weighing approximately 500 pounds, serve as anchors in a sea of 138 works that span a period from the early 1800s to the beginning of the 20th century. They are displayed salon-style, one right next to the other. “We have been able to present a comprehensive review of American art during that period, bringing in work that had not been exhibited in years, in a grand setting,” Gurney says. “We are pleased with how it turned out. It makes for a wonderful experience.”

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suits on an individual basis, some as the astronauts were boarding ship.

The team does not have access to records of many of these changes. So Lisa Young has been taking oral histories from the engineers who worked on portions of the suits.

Expert advice

“The engineers have amazing stories and memories,” Young says, “but occasionally, a detail will be off. I will do research and find that something is a little different from what they told me.” When re-approached with her research, the engineers’ memories will often reveal more precise details.

“For me, it is very exciting to talk to people who have made these artifacts,” she adds. “As a conservator, I find that seldom happens.” In addition to talking to the engineers, Young and the research team are using the experience of industry experts, some of whom are working as volunteer consultants. They are donating their time, knowledge, expertise and archives to the cause of conserving these spacesuits.

Members of the industry advisory group include Ken Thomas of Hamilton Sundstrand, the producers of Apollo life-support systems; Bill Ayrey of the International Latex Co., the primary contractor for the Apollo suits; and Jack Bassick of the David Clark Co., which manufactured the A-1-C spacesuits used for the first Apollo mission.

International conservation scientists have also helped. Yvonne Shashoua from the National Museum of Denmark conducted original research and analysis on PVC components of the suits, and Mary Baker of Chemonics in Cairo is advising on rubber components.

Funded by a grant from Save America’s Treasures and the Hamilton Sundstrand Co., the project team’s work is confined to Apollo. That may change, however, if additional funding is found, says Lisa Young. But for now, the team is concentrating on having the suits ready for their new home at the National Air and Space Museum’s Paul E. Garber Facility in Suitland, Md.



From left, George Gurney, Robyn Kennedy, Kenneth Trapp and Ellen Myette in the Renwick Gallery’s newly refurbished Grand Salon (Photo by Richard Strauss)

tion’s objects, such as an 1801 Jefferson-era inaugural banner, one of the most important objects in the exhibition because of its age. When curators took the banner out of storage last spring, they were reacquainted with the extremely fragile quality of its fabric. As a result, the banner eventually will be replaced with a graphic reproduction or another object.

Video and film research

Graphics research also had to be done to supplement the story the curators were trying to tell. Video and film research, in association with the History Channel, was done as well. The more than a dozen videos running in the exhibition range from home movies of life in the White House to news footage of presidents in crisis and excerpts from feature films and TV shows such as “The West Wing.”

“We worked closely with the folks at the History Channel, who are among the best,” Bunch says. “They had to go through their archives and research the film footage that we wanted. We had to make sure that the videos ‘interacted’ with the objects and that they supported and helped pull the exhibition together.”

Putting it all together

Research took the curators and their research support team to numerous libraries, including the Library of Congress and presidential libraries, the National Archives and the Secret Service. In addition, the curatorial team used the expertise of presidential scholars.

Each day, the research, whether object-related or scholarly, yielded new discoveries. “I, for example, have a deeper respect for Theodore Roosevelt than I had prior to this exhibition,” Bunch says. “My displeasure with his presidency stemmed from the Brownsville Affair of 1906, in which he ordered 167 black infantrymen who had been stationed near Brownsville,

Texas, discharged without honor from the Army because of a shooting in that town that killed a white man. The soldiers were accused, but no one was ever indicted. Roosevelt dismissed the unit anyway.

“But as I began to do research,” Bunch continues, “I began to realize Roosevelt’s appeal. After watching hours of newsreel footage of him, I saw how Americans would respond to his vibrancy, his desire to see America as a great world power and his belief in creating ‘a square deal’ for all Americans.”

Bunch says that “‘The American Presidency’ is the Smithsonian at its best. It is a testament to the commitment of the people—from the museum’s director and researchers to the conservationists, exhibits

specialists and interns—who gave up their weekends and evenings to help the museum accurately tell the story of the presidency, its challenges and how the office has dramatically evolved and changed over time.”

Public programs

There will be a yearlong series of films, lectures, storytelling, conversations, demonstrations, interviews, pan-

els, living history programs, family programs, music and school tours in conjunction with the exhibition. For more information, log on to www.americanhistory.si.edu/presidency, which features a navigation system linking objects from the exhibition and presidents to historical eras.

“The American Presidency” is made possible by the generous support of Kenneth E. Behring, the History Channel, Chevy Chase Bank, Cisco Systems Inc., Elizabeth and Whitney MacMillan, and Heidi and Max Berry, with additional support provided by Automatic Data Processing Inc.; KPMG LLP; Sears, Roebuck and Co.; and T. Rowe Price Associates Inc.

Adrienne Durand, Melinda Machado and Anne Edgar contributed to this article.



This drum, played during Abraham Lincoln’s funeral in 1865, can be seen in the exhibition.



The popularity of John F. Kennedy led to the creation of this board game in 1962.

Did you know?

- George Washington gave the shortest inaugural address—135 words—at his second inauguration in 1793.
- William Henry Harrison gave the longest inaugural address—8,445 words—in 1841.
- In 1977, Jimmy Carter was sworn in using his nickname, Jimmy, instead of his given name, James Earl.
- Abraham Lincoln has been represented in more than 150 films, making him the most frequently portrayed president.
- Theodore Roosevelt wore a ring to his 1905 inauguration that held a lock of Abraham Lincoln’s hair, cut off after Lincoln was shot.
- After taking office in 1797, John Adams was the first president to live in the White House, starting in 1800.
- Benjamin Harrison had the first electric lights installed in the White House,

in 1891, but his wife, Caroline, never turned them on, since she was afraid of electric shocks.

- Warren G. Harding was the first president to ride in an automobile to his inauguration, in 1921. Also, in 1922, he was the first to use a radio in the White House.
- Richard M. Nixon was the first presidential candidate to campaign in all 50 states, winning him the 1969 election.
- Rutherford B. Hayes’ wife, Lucy, was the first president’s wife to be called “first lady” when Hayes took office in 1822.
- Millard Fillmore ordered the first kitchen stove to be installed in the White House during his term, from 1850 to 1853. His wife, Abigail, established the White House library.
- Franklin Pierce introduced the first White House Christmas tree, in 1854.
- Bill Clinton gave the first presidential Internet address to the nation in 2000.

‘Birdwatching,’ continued from Page 2

says. “The best approach is to get people to cooperate, and for that, you have to get them excited about doing the science.”

Birdwatching instructions

The program requires volunteers to keep track of birds on their property or in their neighborhoods. “We give participants an orientation and a package that contains data sheets they fill in with information about the birds,” Marra explains.

The volunteer participants are taught how to observe birds, find nests and check them without leaving a scent for possible predators to follow. “You don’t go up to the nest and stand there,” Volunteer Bart Hutchinson says. “You have to keep on walking around it and away. Otherwise, cats or raccoons will get at it.”

Then, Marra, or fellow SERC scientist Bob Reitsma, comes to the volunteer’s home bearing nets and tape recorders. “In my case,” Hutchinson explains, “Bob set up the net and turned on a recorder. It played a tape of a bird singing. In about 15 seconds, a Carolina wren dove straight into the net.”

Once the bird is caught, the scientists put aluminum and colored bands around its feet and set it free again. “That was the best part,” Hutchinson says. “You get to hold a bird in your hand and see how even mundane birds are complex and beautiful. They feel warm and light and full of energy. Besides, it’s also neat to have scientists tramping around in your back yard,” the volunteer adds.

Generally, volunteers spend a few hours a week tracking birds and taking notes on their habits, such as nest building, egg laying, incubation and feeding nestlings.

“The feedback has been very positive,” SERC’s Marra says.

A win-win experience

For volunteers like Hutchinson, Neighborhood Nestwatch enhances his lifelong interest in birds. “It definitely makes backyard birdwatching more interesting. Once birds are banded, you can keep track of them from one year to the next,” he says. “It establishes more of a connection.”

Even though Hutchinson has two young children and not a lot of time to spare, he intends to volunteer again next year. “It is definitely something I can do with my oldest son,” he says. “It is great way to get children excited about nature.”

Next year, Marra hopes to attract 250 volunteers and even more the following year. Beyond that, however, a big question mark looms on the horizon. “The Mills Corp. has very generously provided funding for the next three years. After that, we’ll see,” Marra says.

In the meantime, Marra and his fellow bird trackers can be seen in neighborhood yards setting up nets, consulting with volunteers, and banding cardinals and catbirds. “It is important for people to realize they don’t have to go to the Blue Ridge Mountains or the Chesapeake Bay to see wildlife,” he says. “It’s right in their own neighborhoods.”

Hutchinson agrees. “Every fall, these birds migrate to places as far as South America and somehow manage to come back to this little parcel of land that is my back yard, without maps or guides,” he says. “I find that truly amazing.”

To learn more about the program, log onto www.nestwatch.si.edu. If you live in the Maryland area and would like to volunteer during the next breeding season, send an e-mail to nestwatch@serc.si.edu.

Research Highlights

Giant panda cubs. Two long-awaited giant panda cubs arrived at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park in early December amid much fanfare. According to National Zoo officials, Tian Tian, a 3½-year-old male, and Mei Xiang, a 2½-year-old female, weathered the 17-hour trip from their native China very well. To ensure that the pandas were disease-free and well-adjusted to their new home—a newly improved Giant Panda House equipped with caves, ponds and a sand wallow—they were quarantined for a period of time. The cubs were introduced to the public on Jan. 10, when the giant panda exhibit opened. The pandas also can be seen online at natzoo.si.edu/zooview/exhibits/panda.

New director named. Paul Warwick Thompson, former director of the Design Museum in London, will be head of the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National



Paul Warwick Thompson

Design Museum in New York City beginning early this year. He replaces Dianne Pilgrim, who retired last January, after 12 years as director.

New moons found. Four new moons have been discovered in orbit around Saturn, giving that planet a total of 22 known moons, according to a group of astronomers from around the world who made the discovery. The astronomers included Brian Marsden of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Mass. A telescope device that amplifies light helped the astronomers spot faint pinpoints of light in orbit off Saturn, a gaseous giant that is the second largest planet in the solar system. The astronomers estimated that the new moons, based on the amount of light they reflect, are six to 30 miles in diameter.

Ancient morsels. Researchers digging in the remains of an ancient settlement in Panama have uncovered what they say are the earliest direct evidence of the cultivation of root crops in the Americas. Archaeobotanist Dolores Piperno and her colleagues and collaborators at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama and Temple University in Philadelphia found the starch grains, which are generally less than

half the width of a human hair, at an archaeological site near the Pacific coast of Panama. The grains were found on milling stones in sediments that date from 5,000 to 7,000 years ago. By comparing the size and other characteristics of the grains to those from modern domesticated and wild versions of the same root plants, the researchers were able to determine that the ancient grains came from domesticated plants.

Ferrets released in the wild. Late last year, the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park released 10 black-footed ferrets on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota. The black-footed ferret is the most endangered mammal in North America. By the mid-1980s, there were only 18 alive, because plague, poison and loss of prairie had reduced the prairie dog population, which is the main food source for black-footed ferrets. Now, there are about 600 black-footed ferrets. Half are in captive breeding facilities, including the National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Va. The restoration program, coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, involves more than three dozen government agencies, breeding programs, environmental groups and landowners.

Sea urchin pathogen. A bacterial pathogen that caused the die-off of the sea urchin *Diadema antillarum* and devastated many of the reefs of the Caribbean is the focus of a research study by Kimberley Ritchie, a Smithsonian postdoctoral fellow working at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. With the assistance of staff biologists Harilaos Lessios and Penelope Barnes, Ritchie will analyze the pathogen to better understand its characteristics and to determine its potential threat to other marine echinoderms.

Black memorabilia. Collecting art and historical objects has been a central activity for artists and scholars at the nation's historically black colleges and universities for decades. Many of these pieces have found their way into the holdings of some of the nation's best-known museums. Portia James and Gail Lowe, both historians at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, are researching these holdings and the stories they tell about the history of African Americans. Selected institutional holdings will become the backbone of a museum-sponsored traveling exhibition titled "Precious Memories," scheduled to open first at the Smithsonian in 2002.

Viewing the universe. Your home computer can become the portal to a wonderland of stars, thanks to a massive infrared sky survey sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation and conducted in large part from the Smithsonian's Whipple Observatory in Arizona. An online repository of nearly 2 million images of galaxies and stars—the equivalent of 6,000 CD-ROMs—was gathered by the Two-Micron All Sky Survey, or 2MASS, the most thorough census of stars ever made. The images can be found at www.ipac.caltech.edu/2mass/gallery.



Mei Xiang, left, rests while Tian Tian munches on bamboo. (Photo by Jessie Cohen)

Eadweard Muybridge. For 100 years, historians have considered Eadweard Muybridge's famous photographs of animal and human locomotion, made between 1884 and 1887, to be scientific studies of the body in motion. Using the collection of Muybridge's works at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History as the basis for her research, Collections Manager Michelle Delaney and a research team suggest a more complex interpretation. The photographic proofs, according to Delaney, prove that Muybridge manipulated his data. He freely reprinted, cropped, deleted or substituted negatives to make his final prints. Delaney's research has resulted in an exhibition at the museum titled "Eadweard Muybridge's Photography of Motion," on view through March 15.

Series Publications

The following publications on research in various fields were issued during the period Aug. 1 through Dec. 31, 2000, by Smithsonian Institution Press in the regular Smithsonian series. Diane Tyler is managing editor. Requests for series publications should be addressed to Smithsonian Institution Press, Series Division, 750 Ninth St. N.W., Suite 4300, Washington, D.C. 20560-0950.

Smithsonian Contributions to Earth Sciences

- 32 *The Guadalupean Symposium*, by Bruce R. Wardlaw, Richard E. Grant and David M. Rohr, editors, 415 pages, 1 frontispiece, 191 figures, 43 plates, 45 tables.

Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology

- 609 *Higher Level Phylogenetics of Erigonine Spiders (Araneae, Linyphiidae, Erigoninae)*, by Gustavo Hormiga, 160 pages, 48 figures, 79 plates.

Books & Recordings

To Hanoi and Back: The U.S. Air Force and North Vietnam, 1966-1973, by Wayne Thompson (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, \$27.95). Drawing upon 20 years of research in classified records, the author integrates operational, political and per-

sonal details to present a full history of the Air Force role in the war against North Vietnam.

Ants: Standard Methods for Measuring and Monitoring Biodiversity, edited by Donat Agosti, Jonathan D. Majer, LeeAnne E. Alonso and Ted R. Schultz (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, \$60 cloth; \$26.95 paper). This comprehensive book, written by 30 leading ant biologists, describes procedures for surveying the diversity of ground-dwelling ants.

Black Tents of Baluchistan, by Philip Carl Salzman (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, \$55). Having spent 27 months among the people of the Yarahmadzai tribe of Iranian Baluchistan, the author relates the details of their lives and their shift between decentralized, egalitarian, segmentary lineage politics and centralized, hierarchical, chief-based politics.

Insights and Artistry in African Divination, edited by John Pemberton III (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, \$65 cloth; \$29.95 paper). Fifteen essays by leading scholars reveal the similarities and differences in the practices of a wide range of sub-Saharan cultures.

Henry Norris Russell: Dean of American Astronomers, by David DeVorkin (Princeton University Press, 2000, \$49.95). This is the first book-length biography on Henry Norris Russell, who, more than any American of his generation, worked to turn an observation-centered discipline into a theory-driven pursuit centered on physics. Copies of the book may be ordered by calling 1 (800) 777-4726, or order online at pup.princeton.edu.

The Genesis of Flight: The Aeronautical History Collection of Col. Richard Gimbel, by Tom D. Crouch, Clive Hart, Paul Marvelas, Ellen Morris, Dominick A. Pisano, Holly Pittman and Edward Rochette (University of Washington Press, 2000, \$60). The history of flight, from the time man first dreamed of flying to the advent of powered flight at the beginning of the 20th century, is covered. The book, which contains a CD-ROM, may be ordered from the University of Washington Press, Marketing Department, P.O. Box 50096, Seattle, Wash. 98145-5096, or by calling

'Books,' continued on Page 8

The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden

By Lonnie G. Bunch III, Spencer R. Crew, Mark G. Hirsch and Harry R. Rubenstein
(Published by Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, \$50 cloth; \$24.95 paper)

Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small writes in the foreword to *The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden*, "In these pages, you will find portrayed both the grandeur of the office of the presidency and the gravity of the personal toll it can exact."

This richly illustrated 208-page book provides a revealing glimpse of the culture, particularly the material culture, of the presidency—the duties, responsibilities, rituals, representations and personal effects. *The American Presidency* accompanies a new permanent exhibition of the same name, which opened at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in November 2000. (See story, Page 1.)

Using an array of objects from the National Museum of American History's vast collections, the book reveals how the presidency has changed and how presidential administrations have shaped and been shaped by relationships with the American people.

Lonnie Bunch III, then associate director of curatorial affairs at the National Museum of American History, says they did not start on the publication until about two months into the exhibition project. "This was very difficult to do, because not only did we have exhibition scripts to write," he says, "but we also had numerous meetings with designers and with the people at the History Channel [who produced the videos that are shown in the exhibition]."

Like the exhibition, the book is divided into 11 sections. Deciding who would write which chapters was easy. "We

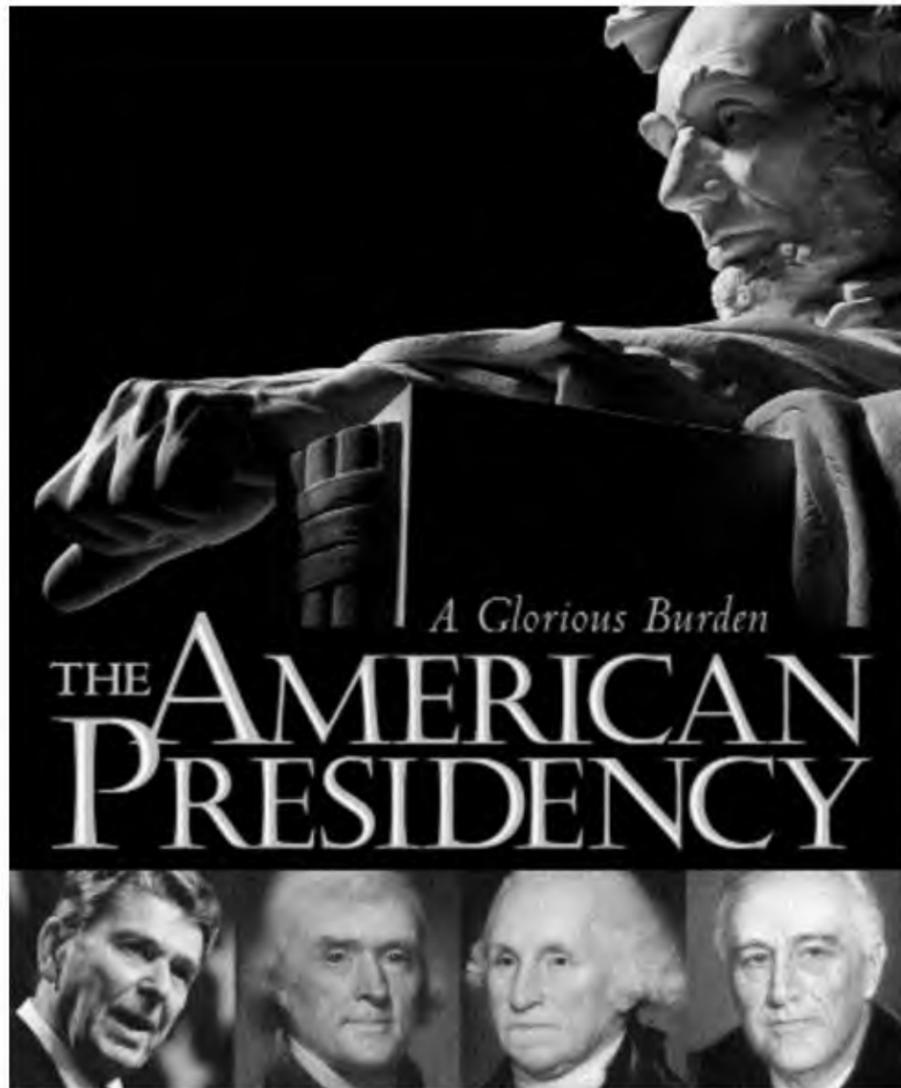
decided that we would follow the exhibition format and that the curator who wrote the section in the exhibition would take primary responsibility," Bunch says. "But I must emphasize that Mark Hirsch, senior editor for American studies at Smithsonian Institution Press, played a crucial role in writing or editing the chapter headers. We all read and reread the book and changed it based on our internal assessments."

Bunch says they used some of the museum staff in Research and Collections to obtain and double-check the images and to review the copy for accuracy. With

limited time for review, the curators also asked Don Ritchie, Richard Norton Smith and Alan Lichtman, all presidential scholars who advised throughout the project, to either review or provide guidance for the publication.

When asked if the research from the exhibition lent itself to the book and provided the opportunity for the book to almost "write itself," Harry Rubenstein, curator of political history at the museum, smiles and says, "There were many days that I wished it would have."

—Jo Ann Webb



The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden accompanies the exhibition of the same name.

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1 (800) 441-4115. Copies may be ordered online at www.washington.edu/uwpress.

Science, Cold War and the American State: Lloyd V. Berkner and the Balance of Professional Ideals, by Allan A. Needell (Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000, \$60). The origins and management of the partnership between American science and those U.S. government agencies responsible for planning and executing American national security policies during the Cold War are traced. To order copies of the book, write to Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, P.O. Box 32160, Newark, N.J. 07102, or call 1 (800) 545-8398, or order online at www.gbhap.com.

Vocal Music in Crete: The World's Musical Traditions II (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2000, \$15 CD). This presentation of rare recordings of "rizitika," "mandinakhes" and "tabakhaniotika" music made in Western Crete from 1977 to 1982 is the last in the acclaimed series produced by the International Institute for Traditional Music.

Ella Jenkins: Songs, Rhythms and Chants for the Dance (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2000, \$15 CD). Children's recordings by Ella Jenkins often involve both songs and movements. In this unique release, she produces music made especially for dancing.

Books published by Smithsonian Institution Press can be ordered from P.O. Box 960, Herndon, Va. 20172-0960. To order by phone or for more information, call 1 (800) 782-4612. There is a \$3.50 postage and handling fee for the first book ordered and \$1 for each additional book.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings can be ordered by writing to Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order, 750 Ninth St. N.W., Suite 4100, Washington, D.C. 20560-0953. To order by phone or for more information, call (202) 275-1143 or 1 (800) 410-9815. There is a \$5.50 fee for shipping and handling of the first 15 recordings ordered; call for other shipping prices.

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