

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



This month America is celebrating the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement on land that became part of the United States. Our cover story explains that the legacy of the Jamestown settlement is complex and ambiguous, much like the history of any nation viewed from such a distance in time. The Jamestown colonists governed themselves in a form of frontier representative democracy that was eventually enshrined in the Constitution. At the same time, the colonists alternately traded with and fought against the Native Americans in the region known today as Virginia. The slavery by the early Virginia landowners was a shameful practice ended by a bloody Civil War and anathema to contemporary Americans.

There were always individuals who spoke and worked for freedom, however, and we are proud to present an article by a new SPAN writer, Francis C. Assisi, who tells us the intriguing story of how Indians from India were part of America's earliest legacy. Many of them were brought to the New World as servants, then indentured or enslaved. Recently discovered historical records show that these individuals were determined to win their freedom, through the courts of law or by courageously escaping. Many succeeded and their descendants are part of the "American melting pot" of races, cultures and creeds.

Sebastian John, an Indian journalist and photographer who has recently become part of that melting pot, provides an entertaining and insightful look at this phenomenon of all kinds of people living together and often helping each other as he takes us on a bus journey across the United States in this month's travel section.

Our articles on families look at how they are changing in India and the United States, and explores how couples in both countries are balancing work and family life in ways that are good for society.

We also present a package of stories on higher education. It includes tips and details on the range of choices for those interested in studying in the United States. Articles on public and private universities, two-year colleges, the accreditation system, a handy list of Web sites, and a calendar of events sponsored by the U.S. Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) over the next few months should answer many questions about the opportunities available.

And don't miss the exhibition of contemporary Indian and Indian American art displayed in the center of the magazine.

*Gary Schwartz*