including photographs. One box had almost a complete skeleton in it. And this has created terrible embarrassment because the government does not want to proceed with the airing. It’s too recent; too many people would be implicated, some still in government. And of course there is a movement to make the documents public. Considering that Chile and Argentina have set a remarkable record for reviewing atrocities, probably the Brazilians will have to yield.

IN SPAIN, AFTER FRANCISCO FRANCO’S DEATH IN 1975, POLITICIANS OF THE left and right formed an informal alliance, deciding not to review the civil war so painful to all, but rather put the nation on the road to democracy with a pact of silence. But in 2001, a relative of someone who had been executed asked for permission to exhume the body from a shallow grave near his house. When the grave was opened up, the memory was opened up too. Everybody wanted to talk about the war. There were documentaries, memorials, a TV series, monographs, and exhibitions—about the conflict and the dictatorship that continued the war against the other side. The Congress of Deputies passed a resolution of moral recognition for the victims. One citizen said the Spanish had confused amnesty with amnesia, reconciliation with forgetting.

Perhaps the most surprising country in my group is France. The National Assembly passed a law calling for a positive portrayal of the colonial past. This did not go over very well in Algeria or Martinique, creating a flap as they resisted quite dramatically. Then there were riots among North African immigrants—all the more embarrassing because of this law. Jacques Chirac called for change, saying that the statute was dividing the French. It must be rewritten. It is not up to the law to write history. Well, yes and no, that’s the virtuous position, but I think anthropologist Mary Douglas, writing in How Institutions Think, has a more accurate account.

To keep its shape, any institution needs to control the memory of its members, causing them to forget experiences incompatible with its righteous image. This is certainly how nations have behaved for a long time—denying abuses, suppressing the memory of events, and generally whitewashing the record. And it’s not just the officials. In every one of these countries there’s always a divide between the parts of the public that resist the official position and those that applaud it. It’s certainly true in the United States. In almost any honest presentation there are those who complain it’s really an effort to besmirch history.

The National Park Service is in the middle of this minefield. Any site that touches on the Civil War, Japanese internment, battles with Native Americans—to name a few—will prompt conflict. I realize you’re well aware of this tension.

A RECENT CONTROVERSY TOOK PLACE ON BAINBRIDGE ISLAND IN THE STATE OF Washington. There were some 230 Japanese Americans on the island at the beginning of World War II. This was the first group interned in Manzanar. They left Bainbridge in 1942.

Two years ago, a sixth-grade teacher won a state grant for a project to deal with how the event affected the island. The students spent about six weeks on it, eliciting a number of complaints from parents, sometimes about the project’s length, other times about its negative aspect. One outraged parent called it an example of an agenda-based curriculum designed to lead our n-year-olds to hate America. The school called on the support of scholars, drawing sustenance from President Ford’s declaration that the evacuation was wrong and from a federal commission that said the internment was motivated largely by prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of leadership. An entire unit of the curriculum could be devoted to fears after Pearl Harbor. Understanding how good people do bad things is an important part of studying history.

I won’t trivialize the challenge you’re facing by rattling off a list of quick fixes. There isn’t any way to avoid controversy when one is committed to presenting honest history. But here are a few guidelines.

Always go with historical fact as represented by contemporary scholarship. But yet those who advance it for bias, oversatement, and distortion. There is usually an impetuous rush that goes with improving on the scholarship of the previous generation.

The outrage expressed by those representing victims doesn’t have the same moral quality as the outrage of victims themselves. Highlighting documents, pictures, artifacts, and quotations from the event are better than interpretative statements written in the present.

Present the perspectives of those not on the side of the angels; cultivate an appreciation of the past as a foreign country. Help people understand why ideas not now admissible once were.

And finally, present the United States as a nation struggling to live up to the demanding values imposed by the Declaration of Independence. Our society has done much to rectify injustices. This record should be celebrated at the sites where abuses are depicted. Showing how our ideals have been contested, neglected, and reaffirmed will give everyone something of value to take away.

The United States has the largest body of scholarship exploring the so-called underside of history. This is partly because historians have chosen to steer an independent course as witnesses to the past rather than as spokespersons for official positions. It’s wonderful to have the National Park Service share that commitment.

Excerpted from an edited transcript of the Scholars Forum: The National Park Service and Civic Reflection, January 14, 2006. Joyce Appleby is the former president of the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association as well as former Harmsworth Professor of American History at Oxford. She is the author of A Restless Past: History and the American Public and Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans. Contact her at the University of California, Los Angeles, email appleby@history.ucla.edu.
ABOVE: WILLIAM CLARK'S ILLUSTRATION OF SLAVES CUTTING SUGAR CANE DURING HIS VISIT TO ANTIGUA IN 1823, ON VIEW AT THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
“The New-York Historical Society has a wonderful exhibit about the history of slavery in the city. It has drawn the largest crowd in the society’s history, which goes back over 200 years. I was just there. The audience was incredibly diverse—old, young; black, white. It was the kind of group you don’t often see in the national parks.”

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*Eric Foner, Dewitt Clinton Professor of History, Columbia University*

**MANY VISITORS COME TO THE PARKS LOOKING FOR TRUTH, BUT OFTEN THERE isn’t one single truth that is completely uncontroversial. History is not a collection of facts. It is an ongoing dialogue, involving many different people with many different points of view. Sometimes we don’t give audiences credit for being able to tackle that.**

We live at an odd moment in terms of the public and history. On the one hand, attendance at museums is growing. The History Channel is tremendously successful. The number-one best seller on Amazon’s list is Doris Kearns Goodwin’s book about Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet. David McCullough’s book 1776—I just noticed in the *New York Times*—was the fifth-best-selling book for the year. Many people outside the academic world are reading these books and I say more power to the authors.

On the other hand, the subjects are the same as you would have found on the best-seller list 50 years ago. Perhaps more importantly, and I don’t say this in an uncharitable way, the content probably doesn’t differ that much either. The approaches—by people like McCullough, who I admire very much, he’s a wonderful writer—choose not to engage the debates that historians engage in.
"People of color are not very visible in the national parks," says Myron Floyd, professor of parks and natural resources recreation at North Carolina State University. It is an indication, he says, of the great distance between the promise and the reality of the parks as places of civic engagement. In a survey of people who do not visit the parks, says Floyd, Hispanic and African Americans were far more likely to report disincentives such as cost, distance, and a lack of information on what to do when they arrive. Of those who did visit, African Americans were most likely to say that they did not feel at ease and that park staff gave poor service. By 2060, the census predicts, most Americans will be non-Anglo; the implications for civic engagement are enormous. "If the pattern persists," Floyd asks, "how will the Park Service engage an increasingly multicultural society? Will the parks be relevant to future generations?" The answers, he says, will be critical to maintaining popular support.

"Reconstruction is an era central to understanding our history, with issues relating to citizenship to democracy, to who is an American, to relations between the federal and state government. That's when the concept of civil rights originated in American law."

Reconstruction is an era central to understanding our history, with issues relating to citizenship, to democracy, to who is an American, to relations between the federal and state government. That's when the concept of civil rights originated in American law.

Fortunately there's a lot of misunderstanding and even resentment about Reconstruction. There are still people who don't want that piece of our history uncovered. Civil rights sites, which are now burgeoning, ought to talk about their origins in that era. These issues are still very much with us today.

Below: Band of the 107th U.S. Colored Infantry, 1865. Bottom: Virginia Freedmen Cast Their First Vote After the Passing of the 15th Amendment.
"I wonder if we have not added to people's burdens by our repeated stance that there is no one truth. Martin Blatt, in the introduction to an issue of the George Wright Forum, said 'civic engagement encompasses both the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and a commitment to act accordingly.' So what do we do? Stir up controversy and then say, 'Well it's just a point of view you know.' That's a very tenuous position."

**Conversation: Eric Foner, Myron Floyd, Patricia Limerick, Michael Kammen, Edward Linenthal, Richard West, John Francis**

**ERIC FONER:** **THERE'S A SORT OF INERTIA AT SOME OF THE PARKS TODAY,** an acceptance of the current state of affairs as "natural." Even though the parks were created at certain moments in time, for certain reasons, reflecting points of view that are often very out of date. Take Gettysburg. On the one hand it's a battlefield and what can you say about that? But it was put up at a moment when the emphasis in national thinking was on reconciliation—"amnesia" as Joyce Appleby called it. I was shocked the first time I went there. It seemed like a shrine to the South, even though it was the Union's greatest victory. It represented the high tide of the Confederacy. There was no mention of slavery, and that wasn't an oversight. The park reflected a certain vision and got stuck. Now it's being changed, which has led to discomfort among people comfortable with the old way of thinking.

Every national park is an historical snapshot. Grant's Tomb, which is eight blocks from where I live, has a terrible description of Reconstruction. Yet it's impossible to change without going through 50 different bureaucratic procedures. Once something's set in stone it's hard to get rid of it. So people come and find a vision of history that can be very alienating.
We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish
inure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to
and our Posterity, do ordain and establish the Constitution for the United States of America.
"In retrospect, the Smithsonian made a very big mistake in the way they handled the Enola Gay. It goes to the idea of a singular truth. There are those who felt that that's the only thing the Smithsonian should speak. That there was truth sitting out there with a capital T and various groups were arguing vehemently to gain control of it. The Smithsonian and the Park Service should be safe places for unsafe ideas."

There are those who felt that that's the only thing the Smithsonian should speak. That there was truth sitting out there with a capital T and various groups were arguing vehemently to gain control of it. The Smithsonian and the Park Service should be safe places for unsafe ideas. They should be able to incorporate this kind of discourse.

EDWARD LINENTHAL: I have the honor of serving on the Flight 93 Committee, where a controversy began to gain speed and take life on the web. A response in the op-ed pages blunted what could have been very ugly. I was also a member of the advisory committee for the Enola Gay debacle. When I was writing about it in History Wars, I had in my files very articulate and defensible responses from people at the National Air and Space Museum, which were never released. When the field is left open, there's a vacuum that's going to be filled.

JOHN FRANCIS: I'm on the National Park System Advisory Board and a vice president at National Geographic. When we had three networks, there was something called the "flipper effect," where perhaps 30 percent of our population on a good night could come away feeling moved by the issues. Nowadays, you have a 1 percent share.

At National Geographic, we suffer by those numbers, realizing that the way to get people to care is to hit a broad spectrum of media opportunities. If you don't get people tuning in, you aren't going to get the message across.

And the question I have for the National Park Service is how do you get civic engagement into the lexicon—into the blogosphere, if you will? I would argue that at each site there's an opportunity to get out the buzz. Connect with the people who are interested in Harpers Ferry, connect with the people who are interested in the Tetons. That way you get a diverse audience to convene on a common theme.

If you aren't relevant, you aren't going to get the traction you need to advance the dialogue.

"I do not claim a monopoly on an approach that puts native voices in charge of narratives; a number of museums are moving in the same direction. But none has done it at this level of magnitude."

W. Richard West, Founding Director, Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian

Not very long ago the National Museum of the American Indian opened in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol. With that grand event as our backdrop, today I want to discuss the museum's emergence as a vital native place in America's monumental and political center. This vitality has everything to do with our curatorial process, which sees native people themselves as a primary source of authority. The recalibration allows us to transcend historical definitions of what museums do, helping create a social space of great public import.

Fifteen years ago, my first boss at the Smithsonian, former Secretary Robert McCormick Adams, urged that this museum "move decisively from the older image of the museum as a temple with its superior self-governing priesthood." His words were visionary at the time and they remain guideposts for us today. Dr. Adams' remarks make me think of an incident in which a good friend led a number of distinguished visitors on a tour of the museum. Afterwards, one of his guests—a former trustee of one of America's renowned art museums—exclaimed in exasperation, "I do not like this museum. It is not a collector's museum. Something else is going on here." Both Bob Adams and the exas-
perated visitor had the museum pegged spot on. Something else is indeed going on here.

I do not claim a monopoly on an approach that puts native voices in charge of narratives; a number of museums are moving in the same direction. But none has done it at this level of magnitude.

The National Museum of the American Indian represents people from Tierra del Fuego in South America to the Arctic Circle in North America. As the frustrated trustee observed, it is not simply a palace of collections. The museum aspires to go beyond the artful presentation of its 800,000 objects to interpret ideas, peoples, and communities.

Putting native voices in charge requires the direct involvement of indigenous peoples. Scholars and curators must, in the words of my Smithsonian colleague Richard Kurin, recognize that knowledge exists in homes, villages, and slums; in fields, factories, and social halls.

This scholarship of inclusion has important implications. Exhibitions, the mainstays of museum presentation, may look quite different. But even more important is the shift in power.

Such changes are not taken lightly by critics with conventional ideas. Reviewing our opening, a New York Times writer objected to our “studious avoidance of scholarship,” voicing disdain for the choices made by the Tohono O’odham community of Arizona in the exhibit “Our Peoples.” In response, let me quote Roger Kennedy, director emeritus of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. Said he, “If he had a sense of humor, a critic of this sort might be worth attending even though tone deaf to the numinous and colorblind to the symbolic.”

The Tohono O’odham refuse to be talked down to. Their parable says, “With a smile we will listen to the elders who have earned our respect, but we will not be patronized by puppies.” I’m with them.

As the director I have a moral and intellectual commitment to the simple yet fundamental proposition that native people present authoritative knowledge about themselves. Their presence offers our two million or so annual visitors real opportunities for learning. In the past two decades anthropology has moved well beyond the notion of native informants, the sometimes empty descriptiveness of a generation ago.

Clearly, there are multiple paths to interpretive legitimacy. Those of us who labor to develop new approaches should be granted the same respect as other truth seekers.

This approach takes us beyond the nature of the institution as a museum. As I watched some 30,000 people from all over the Americas at the museum’s opening, I had a sense that I was experiencing something far more significant than the unveiling of a dazzling new gem in the Smithsonian’s illustrious crown. The inauguration acknowledged at last the centrality of an entire set of peoples and cultures.
set up a day camp next to the museum, where they lob-bied passersby about their opposition on religious and cultural grounds to legislation in Congress concerning the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I applaud their choice of a protest site."

Earlier this fall, representatives of the Gwich'in Nation of Alaska and Canada set up a day camp next to the museum, where they lob-bied passersby about their opposition on religious and cultural grounds to legislation in Congress concerning the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I applaud their choice of a protest site. For what links this event and our exhibitions is that both intend to promote social discourse.

This potential for civic engagement is our real offering to museum theory in the 21st century. Australian anthropologist Claire Smith crystallized the meaning of our arrival on the National Mall in this way: "Museums shape our sense of historical memory and national museums shape our sense of national identity. This new national museum is claiming moral territory for indigenous peoples, in the process reversing the impact of colonialism and asserting the unique place of native peoples past, present, and future."

With humility and with the knowledge that much always remains to be done, I take pride in our accomplishments to date. We'll continue to rely on the inherent authority of native voices to provide new knowledge. But we will also reach beyond earlier conceptions of museums, which will allow these institutions to have far greater impact in the 21st century than they did in the 20th.


DECLINING DEMOCRACY

The importance of civic engagement is paramount in an era that is witnessing "a societal decline in historical literacy and political participation," says Alexander Keyssar, professor of history and social policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He paints a picture of a society steadily absen-ting itself from the functions of democracy. From presidential elections to public meetings, participation is dwindling, with the lack of involvement extending to the PTA, the Red Cross, and the Boy Scouts.

In terms of historical literacy, the news is not good. Nearly 60 percent of all 12th graders score below minimal standards, he says. "Most do not know what the Monroe Doctrine was, how government spending affected the economy during the Depression, and that the Soviet Union was an ally of the United States during World War II."

It's a critical juncture in history, says Keyssar, noting research that shows civic engagement is vital to society's survival. "Crime levels correlate with lack of civic involvement," he says. "So does inequality of education. There's even an argument that economic growth relates to civic engagement."

With the high rates of immigration and the resultant changes in the social fabric, Keyssar wonders if we will be equipped to respond wisely. Though he applauds National Park Service efforts to promote civic engagement, he notes that the solution does not rest with any one institution.
“Look at what we have to work with at Gettysburg—over 1,400 monuments, most put up by veterans of the Civil War, primarily installed between the 1870s and the 1920s. These monuments cite the honor, the valor, the heroism of both Union and Confederate soldiers, with invariably a casualty list. None of them—zero—commemorate emancipation.”

John Latschar, Superintendent, Gettysburg National Military Park

GETTYSBURG IS A PLACE OF CONTESTED HISTORY, A PLACE OF MUCH engagement and much dialogue. How much of it is civic or civil we’ll leave to others to judge. But it does reflect the cultural memory of our nation, as David Blight so ably pointed out in his remarkable book Race and Reunion.

And that’s because of a phenomenon that we label the “Myth of the Lost Cause,” which says that, number one, states’ rights, not slavery, was the cause of the Civil War; number two, the Confederacy lost only because of the overwhelming industrial and manpower advantages of the North, thus loss did not bring dishonor; and number three, slavery was a benign institution necessary for the protection of an inferior race.

This was the prevailing view of the Civil War for almost 100 years—from roughly 1865 to perhaps 1964—aided and abetted by historians both amateur and academic. The myth has been debunked over the last four decades by the academic world. But not in our cultural memory, and not in the National Park Service—until fairly recently, in the 1980s.

Perhaps I’m incredibly fortunate—or unfortunate—because I understand both the origin and the persistence of the myth. I was raised in Virginia and South Carolina, and am the product of their school systems. I graduated from high school in 1965, just after the
"I quoted biblical examples justifying slavery in the past and discrimination against gay people today. And I quoted two Supreme Court justices—one from 1850 and one from 2003—predicting the mayhem that would befall American society if full civil rights were granted. And no one could tell me which statement was made when."

Changing our cultural memory isn’t easy. If you think it is, look at the controversy over putting a statue of the 16th President of the United States in Richmond. Ask former National Park Service Director Bob Stanton about the thousand postcards I received from a southern heritage coalition complaining that I was rewriting history.

Look at what we have to work with at Gettysburg—over 1,400 monuments, most put up by veterans of the Civil War, primarily installed between the 1870s and the 1920s. These monuments cite the honor, the valor, the heroism of both Union and Confederate soldiers, with invariably a casualty list. None of them—zero—commemorate emancipation.

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND OUR AUDIENCE. WE DID A SURVEY JUST BEFORE laying out a management plan for the park. Forty percent of our visitors graduated from high school before the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and twenty-five percent were from former Confederate states. Gettysburg is an example of our inability to attract diverse members of the citizenry. Males heavily predominate over females of all races. And part of this is because we’ve concentrated on “who shot whom where” without talking about why they were shooting.

We’ve been working on this for a good seven or eight years. We want to engage folks with what the fighting was about. What did it mean? Why should you care?

There are two critical elements of support and thank goodness they have been there. The first is support from the academic community. As I like to say, academic folks deal in what I call the pure history, the research. The National Park Service deals in the applied history. We take the research and translate it into thought-provoking stories.

The second element is political cover. Thankfully we’ve been blessed with the kind of support that lets us talk to our public.

Our goal is not so much to teach—and this is not anything against teachers, but teaching has always struck me as passive. It’s one way of learning. But to us the most compelling way is through self-discovery.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum is one of the best museums in the world. I was there studying the top floor, which is a prelude to the Holocaust as the German people are being mentally and emotionally prepared to accept discrimination. And on my way home—it was a presidential primary year—I heard a radio excerpt from a speech a candidate made that day. And the hair rose up on the back of my neck because he was using the same phrases, the same code words to justify discrimination as were on the walls of the Holocaust Museum. That was a point of self-discovery.

A FEW YEARS AGO, I WAS ASKED TO ADDRESS A GROUP OF LAWYERS AND jurists in York County, Pennsylvania. The American Bar Association was celebrating the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board. And they were celebrating in feel-good style, as if all attorneys supported that decision in 1954. So here were 200 lawyers and judges in one room—too great an opportunity to resist. I took them through the layman’s history of slavery from colonial days through the Civil War, through the Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era, all the way up to where we were that day. I tried to suggest that the story of American freedom has constantly evolved and always will. Just to make sure they left feeling uncomfortable, I quoted biblical examples justifying slavery in the past and discrimination against gay people today. And I quoted two Supreme Court justices—one from 1850 and one from 2003—predicting the mayhem that would befall American society if full civil rights were granted to all citizens. And no one could tell me which statement was made when.

Lincoln once said, “If we could first know where we are and wither we are tending we could then better judge what to do and how to do it.” If we can provide opportunities for increased historic literacy, civic engagement will follow. And perhaps our visitors will be better prepared to know what to do and how to do it as they go about our responsibility of defining this nation.

“The managed contention can be over any kind of issue—the number of elk at Yellowstone, how to interpret Sand Creek. Visitors walk around a series of kiosks that host the advocates of different positions. Each visitor can choose two, who are brought out under the umbrella of managed contention, which is in the center. The contestants argue until they become uncivil, at which point they’re sent back to their kiosks. And as visitors leave, there are souvenirs that say things like ‘I survived the Managed Contention Site at Little Big Horn.’”

Patricia Limerick, Professor of History and Environmental Studies, University of Colorado

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS ONE OF THE FEW AGENCIES ON THE PLANET that has poetry in its enabling act—I’m thinking of those lines about preserving the parks unimpaired for future generations. Yet when you get to voter turnout, the most pathetic group—for reasons not their fault—are the people not born yet. They are very bad about showing up to vote for their interests.

Now, I have veteran experience when it comes to the word we’ve been using here, controversy. Part of the time I stirred it up myself. I loved controversy. It was huge fun. But those who have not seen me for a while may be surprised because I’ve gone through a life change. Where I was once contentious, I’m now congenial. And it’s a bitter disappointment, for some folks, to see what’s become of me. But this is what I’d concluded: When there is controversy, something like 80 percent of it is noise, and 20 percent is substantive. We must do what we can to diminish the 80 percent, so that we can pay proper attention to the rest. Reduce the noise and have much more productive conversations.

But part of my pitch today is to not suppress the conflict. One goal is to get high on the adrenaline. Adrenaline is a fine natural chemical. It’s just endlessly available in our systems. I’m very fond of it as you can probably tell. Suppressing the conflict would be deadening; we wouldn’t want to do that. The goal is to state and explore the conflict with clarity, with civility, with tranquility.

History has a curious double role in controversy. All of our problems originated before our arrival on this planet. We are fond of sitting around blaming each other, but that is finally a goofy exercise. Historical figures generated the dilemmas we struggle with. It’s sometimes a frustration that we can’t resurrect historical figures in order to hang them.

So it seems to me there’s tranquility brought on by the notion that our problems have a deeper origin, which requires that we wrestle with them in ways that are more productive.

At the University of Colorado I hosted a series that brought together almost all of the secretaries of the interior. You try hosting Jim Watt in Boulder if you want an adrenaline-soaked experience. But he had a fine visit. He was seen as much more complex than we ever knew from the press reports.

Experiences like that gave me an idea that simply has not caught on yet—Managed Contention Sites. In the last 10 years, I have seen a desire for better public discourse on the part of people in
ABOVE: ROBERT LINDNEUX’S 1936
PAINTING OF THE 1864 SANDB CREEK
MASSACRE IN COLORADO
TERRITORY

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
all kinds of circles. I have seen a willingness, even an eagerness, to defer to referees. The Managed Contention Site takes off from this enthusiasm for umpired circumstances.

The managed contention can be over any kind of issue—the number of elk at Yellowstone, how to interpret Sand Creek. Visitors walk around a series of kiosks that host the advocates of different positions. Each visitor can choose two, who are brought out under the umbrella of managed contention, which is in the center. The contestants argue until they become uncivil, at which point they're sent back to their kiosks. And as visitors leave, there are souvenirs that say things like "I survived the Managed Contention Site at Little Big Horn."

This is such a fine way of not attempting to change human nature—which is not going to happen anyway, ladies and gentlemen—but to take the contention and make it fun and festive.

THERE IS ANOTHER TERM THAT YOU HAVE, PART OF THE POETRY OF THE enabling act—the bit about enjoyment. We were not given that in higher education. I do not recall anyone saying we were supposed to provide enjoyment for ourselves or our students. What a privilege to work for an agency where enjoyment is your mandate. I'm jealous of that.

I'd like to tell you about what my late husband Jeff and I wore to a grad school Halloween party in 1975—and ask you to apply it to your work. Our friend Carol Bundy joined us. We went as the Id, the Ego, and the Super Ego. Guess who I was.

Jeff played the Ego and wore a nice brown suit. Carol played the Super Ego, hair all in a bun with a tight skirt and a hairbrush with which she was threatening the Ego all the time. I was wearing a rather suggestive fabric with Id in big red letters on the front. We had not studied psychology as carefully as we should have, but what we did bore some relation to Freud's model. The Id would walk up to a stranger and say one word, "Wani." The Ego would come up behind and pull me back, saying to the stranger, "This is embarrassing, I'm sorry, the Id is getting out of control, but it really is a tribute to what a magnetic person you are." The Super Ego would be behind Jeff saying, "You've screwed this up again. We always go to parties and make fools of ourselves when you let the Id get out of control." We had many adventures and met people under difficult and interesting terms.

Usually, in civic engagement, we aim mainly at the super ego. We appeal to the stern and proper part of the personality. Some people, whose egos and super egos run the world, will respond. But there's an element of pleasure in it that I would really like to have accentuated. So let's not forget the enjoyment aspect. Be stimulated, be engaged.

Excerpted from an edited transcript of the Scholars Forum: The National Park Service and Civic Reflection, January 14, 2006. Patricia Nelson Limerick is chair of the University of Colorado Center of the American West, which she co-founded. She is a former president of the American Studies Association and the Western History Association whose works include The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West and Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West. Contact her at the University of Colorado, email Patricia.Limerick@Colorado.EDU.

CHAMPIONING THE ENVIRONMENT

"Civic engagement is not just about historic sites," says Rolf Diamant of the National Park Service. He cites a project in Great Smoky Mountains National Park where local schools and volunteers helped inventory critical species, learning skills they can apply in their own communities. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, where Diamant is superintendent, offers another fine example. At what was once the home of successive 19th century conservationists, programs such as "A Forest for Every Classroom: Learning to Make Choices for the Future" engage young people in the stewardship of public lands, including their own schoolyards and community open spaces. The park is also home to the Conservation Study Institute, which helps national parks and heritage areas develop new tools for community engagement.

"From its earliest days," Diamant says, "the National Park Service has demonstrated the best practices in a wide range of civic endeavors—in planning, preservation, architecture, and road construction." More recently, the agency has championed alternative transportation, sustainable design, and energy conservation, making the parks a vital laboratory for contemporary stewardship.

Diamant recalls the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted, who spoke of the movement to create the parks as "a refinement of the republic." Today, parks are places to learn about democracy, sustainability, and stewardship, making the country a better place to live for everyone.

National heritage areas exemplify this idea very well, Diamant says. The people he's met—such as Terrell Delphin, a descendent of Louisiana Creoles in Cane River National Heritage Area, and Herman Agoyo from the San Juan Pueblo in Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area—speak with affection about what the link with the National Park System means to their communities. Relationships like these make the system more representative, he says. But most importantly, they give people a voice in preserving what they value most. Stewardship and democracy are both strengthened, critical to the refinement of the republic.

LEFT: ONE OF THE THOUSANDS OF ELK AT YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK.