



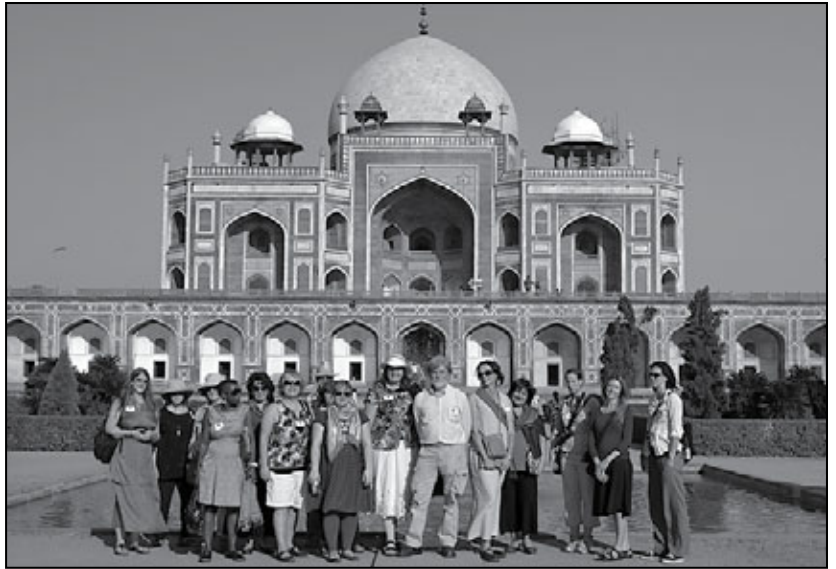
F. Robert Sabol

Namaste! I am writing this column during a 7,700-mile, 15-hour return flight, while going nearly 600 miles an hour at 39,000 feet somewhere over India, Afghanistan, and Russia. This year a delegation of 16 art educators from 11 states and 2 foreign countries served as delegates in the **NAEA International Art Education Research Program** as we traveled to **India**.

The program began last year and included a research mission to Havana, Cuba. This year the delegation spent 10 days in India traveling to **Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur**. The delegation included members from all NAEA membership divisions and from all NAEA Regions. Members of the delegation included: **Dr. Robert Sabol**, NAEA President and Delegation Co-Leader; **Dr. John White**, NAEA Research Commission Chair and Delegation Co-Leader; **Liz Asworth**, Ontario, Canada; **Tammy Ballard**, Utah; **Lora Durr**, New Jersey; **Melissa Green**, Washington, DC; **Barbara Hughes**, California; **Debbie Kippley**, Nebraska; **Jo Kirkman**, Minnesota; **Allison Kuhn**, Pennsylvania; **Elizabeth Mask**, Tennessee; **Robin Miller**, California; **Nombe Mpako**, Pretoria, South Africa; **Jill Ritchey**, Alabama; **Valerie Van Pham**, Pennsylvania; and **Diana Woodruff**, Massachusetts.

The principal goal of the program is to learn about art education and preservice teacher preparation in other countries. We traveled to India to conduct research about the Indian education system, art education models, school facilities, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and about models for preservice preparation of art educators and community arts education programming. We talked with many administrators, teachers, and students about art education and issues of concern for art educators in India. It was surprising to learn that many of the same topics we discuss as art educators in America are being discussed in India as well. Things like curriculum content, availability of instructional supplies and materials, assessment of learning, and professional development were recurring topics in discussions with our Indian counterparts. There also are marked differences we discovered as well, including that India has a national curriculum that is followed in all educational facilities. This curriculum uses arts integration to introduce the content of art at the elementary level. Later, at the secondary level, art is treated as a distinct discipline of its own. It was of interest to learn that formal preservice art education programs do not exist in India. Art educators enter the teaching profession as artists first and then acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills after beginning their teaching. We were struck with the welcoming warmth and professionalism of everyone we encountered in each of the schools we visited. Our common interests in promoting quality art education in each of our countries provided a common basis and language for hours of meaningful discussions.

Another significant goal of the mission is to teach educators in India about the educational systems and models currently being used to deliver art education in American schools. We found equal interest among our Indian art education colleagues in learning about our American system for providing art education in our schools, communities, and art museums. They expressed interest in our national visual arts standards, curriculum content, assessment systems, and instructional resources used on our programs. Of particular interest was how we as art educators manage to



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find time to create our own artwork in addition to managing our teaching responsibilities.

In fully understanding the Indian art education system and curriculum content, it was of equal importance that the delegation be immersed in the more than 10,000 year old history of India, which included the ancient Indus valley civilizations and conquests by the Mughals, Muslims, and the British, and with the rich and varied artistic culture of India. We traveled through congested city streets to visit a number of artists who painted classical Indian miniature paintings, wove exquisite rugs, crafted rich hand-made papers, printed elegant textiles, produced amazing pottery, and created stunning jewelry. We enjoyed exotic foods, whose names we usually could not pronounce, and watched and participated in delightful dance and puppetry performances.

In addition to riding in our tour bus, we rode rickshaws, camel carts, and elephants to some of the historic venues. We visited a number of monuments, including the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort, Delhi's Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb, and the five-story victory tower of Qutb Minar built in 1199, Jaipur's City Palace and Amber Fort, and the Jantar Mantar Observatory. Many other sites proved helpful for fully understanding the cultural heritage of the people of India, the art educators teaching in their schools, and the culturally rich and varied student populations in the schools we visited.

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It is of increasing importance for all art educators to learn about how art is taught in other nations and to study the issues and problems for art education on a global scale. Through learning about the educational systems developed in other countries, American educators develop a broader understanding of the similarities and differences in our goals and ultimate objective we hope to accomplish in our art programs.

Members of the delegation will participate in a session presentation during the coming **NAEA Convention in Fort Worth this coming March**. You'll want to be sure to put this session on your convention schedule. Delegates will share their experiences and outcomes of their research during the session. The session will include examples of Indian lesson and unit plans created by delegates for their students after returning from the trip, exhibit reports, publication and conference presentation reports, and other examples of how delegates utilized the knowledge and experience they gain through their research and participation in the program. Be sure to monitor the NAEA website for an announcement about the next NAEA International Art Education Research trip for next fall. ■

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