

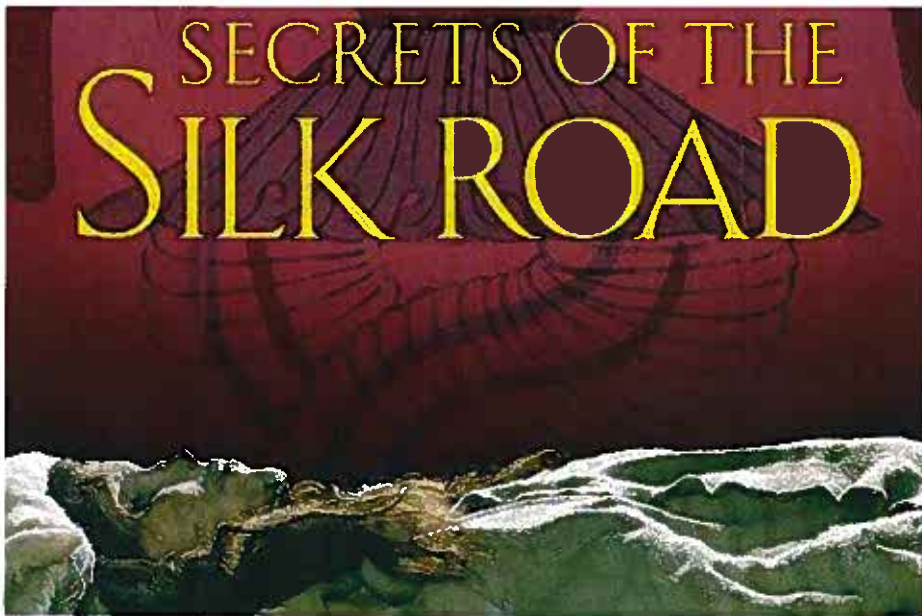
My Space: Coming Soon

Follow Us!

BREAKING NEWS

Feb 6, 2011

Start Spreading the News!



Category: travel

Posted by: donnell

By **Renée S. Gordon**

"The heavens often rain down the richest gifts on human beings"

--Leonardo da Vinci

Years ago I tutored a 3rd grader named Ida. In our first session together her assignment was to write ten sentences using her vocabulary list. She assured me she could do it alone and I need only to check her finished work. She handed me her notebook and there were 10 numbered sentences and as I read I discovered that each sentence ended abruptly at the end of the line. I pointed this out to her and, in the exasperated way only a 7-year old can manage, she took the book from me, read sentence number one, turned a few pages in the book and read the end of the sentence. She then pointed out that she did not care to continue on the next line so she put the "ends" randomly throughout her book. She

looked at me as if I were a lunatic when I told her she couldn't do that and said, "Why not? It makes the end a surprise."

Throughout the year I am privy to information that does not always fit in a specific column but is too good not to be shared and so I offer you my surprises.

The "Secrets of the Silk Road" exhibition at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology opens this weekend with a large number of special events and activities. On Saturday and Sunday, February 5th and 6th, from 10 AM to 5 PM the sole East Coast premiere opens with a bang. The exterior Water Garden will be transformed into a desert oasis complete with Bactrian camels, a Central Asian nomad's dwellings and tent. Museum admission includes numerous exhibits, video and interactive displays and demonstrations including dance, henna tattooing, sari wrapping, etc.

The Silk Road extended to Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The exhibition interprets the history of China's Tarim Basin's role as part of the legendary road. This is accomplished through an exploration of items found there, the highlights of which are well-preserved mummies. The exhibition runs until June 5, 2011. (215) 898-4000. www.penn.museum/silkroad

Now that Penn has heightened our awareness of China it just might be time to begin planning a visit. China is not only exotic, colorful and exciting, it is also an outstanding bargain for the money. Many tour companies offer trips to China but one company you should consider is Wendy Wu's China. Ms. Wu is the largest China tour company in both the UK and Australia and she recently entered the US market. What sets her apart is that her affordable luxury tours are truly all-inclusive. Travelers are taken care of from obtaining a visa to returning customs with all daily tours included in the price. There is a one-time tip of less than \$100.00 and groups never exceed 28.

Her destinations include all the sights we have heard about as well as Tibet, Zhangjiajie, the inspiration for Cameron's "Avatar," Jiuzhaigou National Park and the Himalayan Express, the "world's highest railway." The train is outfitted with two oxygen sources and personal canisters for use at the highest elevations. (This train ride is my personal dream). www.wendywutours.com.au

Leonardo da Vinci is probably best recognized for his paintings "The Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa." The Franklin Institute's newest exhibition, "Leonardo da Vinci's Workshop," acknowledges his artistic achievements but concentrates on his genius as a scientist and inventor. Visitors are exposed to models of his inventions, his personal codices or journals and most importantly interpretive information on his futuristic designs, robots, weapons, and flying devices that presage contemporary designs. Highlights of this exhibit are the Great Kite and his self-propelled cart. The exhibition was curated in Milan and all models were created scrupulously following da Vinci's codices. "Leonardo da Vinci's Workshop" will be on display from Feb 5th to May 22, 2011. www.fi.edu/leonardo

Franklin Institute's Educator's Night Out will take place on Wed., Feb. 9th. The event is free and open to teachers and administrators. Pre-registration is required as well as a current ID for admission. www2.fi.edu/educatorsnightout

Sisters are doing it for themselves and one of the ways they are doing it is on a Harley. A really great time for the ladies is available at a Garage Party at Reading's Classic Harley-Davidson. Guests select from a series of possible experiences including a motorcycle ride, if you like it you might work your way up to 1,000-miles in 24-hours and the "Iron Butt" designation, a photo op in Harley attire, a tour of the service and sales areas and a tattoo at the interior tattoo shop.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of Harley-Davidson's Pink Label line of clothing benefits the Cancer Awareness Network. On display in the showroom is a must see, uniquely designed, one-of-a-kind, Pink Label Motorcycle that will benefit the cancer charity of the purchaser's choice.

Whether you book a party, arrange a girlfriend's getaway or a solo trip Harley is not just for the boys anymore. www.classicharley.com/home Thalassa, a goddess of the sea and mother of all the fish therein, has lent her name to a region in France renowned for the 1890 creation of thalassotherapy. In the last century this concept of spa treatments, relaxation and healthy eating has developed into a wellness regime offered largely in France.

Miraculously six luxury Sofitel Hotels across the country and in Canada are premiering their new Thalassa low-calorie gastronomy program and The Philadelphia Sofitel is among them. The hotel will begin the gourmet 'De-Light' menu in mid-February in both the restaurant and the bistro. The cuisine uses no starch, oil, butter or flour and only limited dairy and salt. Chef Levett relies on fresh local produce, fish, meat and culinary creativity to produce complete meals, from appetizer to dessert that hover around 500 calories and are created to promote nutritional balance and healthy eating. These are meals you must taste to believe. www.sofitel.com

New York, as always, has lots to offer. The hot new theatrical productions are "Spiderman, Turn Off the Dark" and "The Whipping Man" starring André Braugher. If you are more of a movie buff than a theater lover than the Classic New York TV and Movie Sites Tour is your dream come true. Movie locations include "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "Taxi Driver," "The Godfather," "Gossip Girl," "Sex in the City" and a host of others. Information on the bus tour is available online. www.screentours.com/classics

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website, www.tsa.dhs.gov/travelers/airtravel/assistant/index.shtm, should be on every traveler's radar. This website covers everything you need to know regarding government security regulations, packing, carry-on luggage, traveling with children, etc.

Most of us carry our telephones overseas but are we really prepared for an emergency? Remember to ensure that your phone will work internationally while you are still stateside. The best international coverage is attained with quad-band GSM phones. They give the broadest coverage worldwide. Access www.phonescoop.com to see if your phone is

equipped with it.

Why is an international telephone a good idea? The fastest way to obtain news is on the web. Should you be in a situation where there is no television service you can access CNN on your phone. You should also program into your telephone all emergency numbers including the country's equivalent to 911, the police, hotel, embassy, etc.

A great tool for driving vacations is www.tripbase.com. Users enter their starting location, dates, how many hours they are willing to drive and what they like to do. The website provides a snapshot of all of the destinations that fit your criteria. It really removes the hassle from planning.

"Cleaning for a Reason" provides a free housecleaning service to women undergoing cancer treatment. Women are eligible for service once a month for four months anywhere in the United States. Please pass this along.
www.cleaningforareason.org

The SecuraPal Guardian is a potentially lifesaving device that is designed to be placed inside your children or teens pocket or worn on their person. The device's SOS feature is activated by the push of a button to send a text and email within 10 seconds to relay the carrier's location and directions to the site. The device can be purchased or rented and details are available on the web. www.securatrac.com

I wish you smooth and smart travels!

[Previous Article](#)

BOOKMARK   

COMMENTS (0) [ADD A COMMENT](#)

Comment Title:

Your Name:

Your Email Address:

Notify me of new comments to this page:

Your Rating: 

Additional Comments: