

# STAFF CLASS TO THE PAST

The Wormholes on the Bus Go  
Round and Round

Winter 2012  
Staff Humanities

HIGH TECH MIDDLE



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# Introduction

“Once confined to fantasy and science fiction, time travel is now simply an engineering problem.”

- Michio Kaku, *Wired Magazine*, August 2003

**I**t all started as a dream, literally a dream. I dreamt that my students and I traveled back in time and experienced history, rather than just learning about U.S. history from a textbook or an over-planned classroom reenactment. I told my students about the dream. We read and watched videos on wormholes, which I honestly couldn't wrap my head around.

Somehow, a few of my students really did start to understand the concept of a wormhole. On the day of our fieldtrip, a few enthusiastic 8th graders explained that, in their engineering class, they had created two rings of a man-made wormhole – an entrance and an exit. They then convinced the bus driver to affix the rings to our fieldtrip's bus tires. Somehow, they created a device using turbo chargers that allowed the rings to spin deep within the tires at the speed of light.

I know this all sounds silly and that's what I thought. When Sam, one of my students, presented me with a gummy worm and told me that by traveling through a wormhole with it, the students and I could consume the gummy worm and be led to the exit of the wormhole... well, I

laughed, too. But, I'm a teacher, so I'm not supposed to laugh at kids. I'm supposed to support my students and believe in them, even if they're talking about time travel. So, I shoved the gummy worm in my pocket and took a seat on the bus. I was along for the ride. I even took out my example notes on the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson like Sam told me to. As a class, we had determined what we considered the 16 most significant events in United States history. Every student had notes on one of those sixteen major events and unique notes on the specific historical figure they had chosen to research from that particular moment in time. Sam explained that holding the notes on our specific time, place and person as we entered the entrance of the wormhole, would allow us to be transported to that specific time and place of that historical figure. I didn't believe him, of course, but as the bus actually started turning from bus to ball of speeding light, whether I believed Sam or not became irrelevant. We were all hurtling back in time. The moment before my body turned from mass to energy, I shouted, “Don't forget to take a picture and record...” Swooooooshhhh!

# Phyllis And Columbus

Phyllis



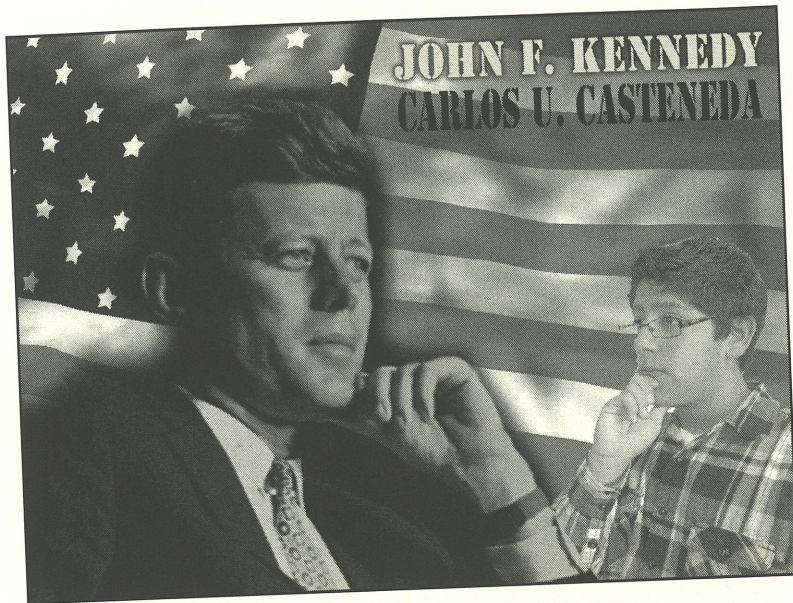
I slipped my gummy worm in my pocket as I was walking along the damp wooden planks that made up the ship's floor. Then I spotted Hannah, talking to a man that had a triangular hat and fancy clothes. That must be Columbus in the year of 1492! I looked at my notes one time and started walking towards them. But before I could get there, I guess someone yelled, "Land ho!" because everyone perked up and looked excited as they were dashing toward the side of the ship. I soon realized that Columbus was about to land in America! Well, actually, Rodrigo de Triana saw it first from the ship. "By prevailing over all obstacles and distractions, one may unfailingly arrive at his chosen goal or destination." I heard Columbus say.

As soon as I got off the ship, I immediately started wondering where the Native Americans were. I knew from humanities class that the Taino tribe would find us arriving in their

home. I just hoped that when Columbus was converting the Native Americans to Catholicism, he wouldn't be very harsh. Then I saw tan bodies behind the bushes and the trees. Not only did they look confused, their facial expressions were most definitely sending out a vibe telling they were angry. When I looked under their faces and to their bodies, I saw that they had bow and arrows ready to shoot. I heard Columbus say, "Their houses are built in the shape of tents, with very high chimneys," as I decided to pop the gummy worm into my mouth.

# Carlos and John F. Kennedy

Carlos



**W**hoosh! “Whoaaaa!” I felt a sudden breeze and then regretted that I took the gummy worm. Then I looked at my surroundings and realized I was in the White House! I never thought I would ever visit the White House, but there I was! I noticed that I was in the Oval Office when all of a sudden, I heard the noises of two people coming to the door. I dashed to the big office chair and hid behind it. From behind the chair, I saw President John F. Kennedy walk in. I just couldn’t believe I was in the past!

The office was big and looked like it does on television, but a little quaint. The President looked a little stressed

and I wondered why. Then, I noticed that he was talking to himself about the Cuban Missile Crisis and the threat of nuclear war with Russia setting up nuclear weapons in Cuba. It snapped into my mind that this was about the Cold War. I heard him say he was planning to announce to Cuba and Russia that they must dismantle the nuclear weapons in Cuba and no longer ship weapons to Cuba. He knew this would not go over well. As I was wondering what I could do to help, JFK left the room stressed and not knowing what to do. I remembered that this confrontation would be remembered as the closest we came during the cold war to nuclear war.

I quickly went to the desk and looked at the classified papers. I saw his plan and speech for the Space Race and was amazed at the secret things I read that I have vowed not to reveal. Then, I saw a copy of JFK’s Inaugural Address on his desk and I read the line: “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” I was amazed by the quote and was content. It was motivating and strong to persuade people to be more helpful to each other and to the country. I knew that JFK was working hard for his country and I was sad knowing that he would be assassinated in the near future. I wished I could have saved him, but I knew it wasn’t my place or time. I noticed that shadows were coming. I saw the door open and saw that a shoe was noticeable, so I calmly ate the gummy worm and felt the whoosh that took me away...