



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

IRC Yerevan Times

July-August, 2011 Volume 7, Issue 4

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Independence Day honors the birthday of the United States of America and the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

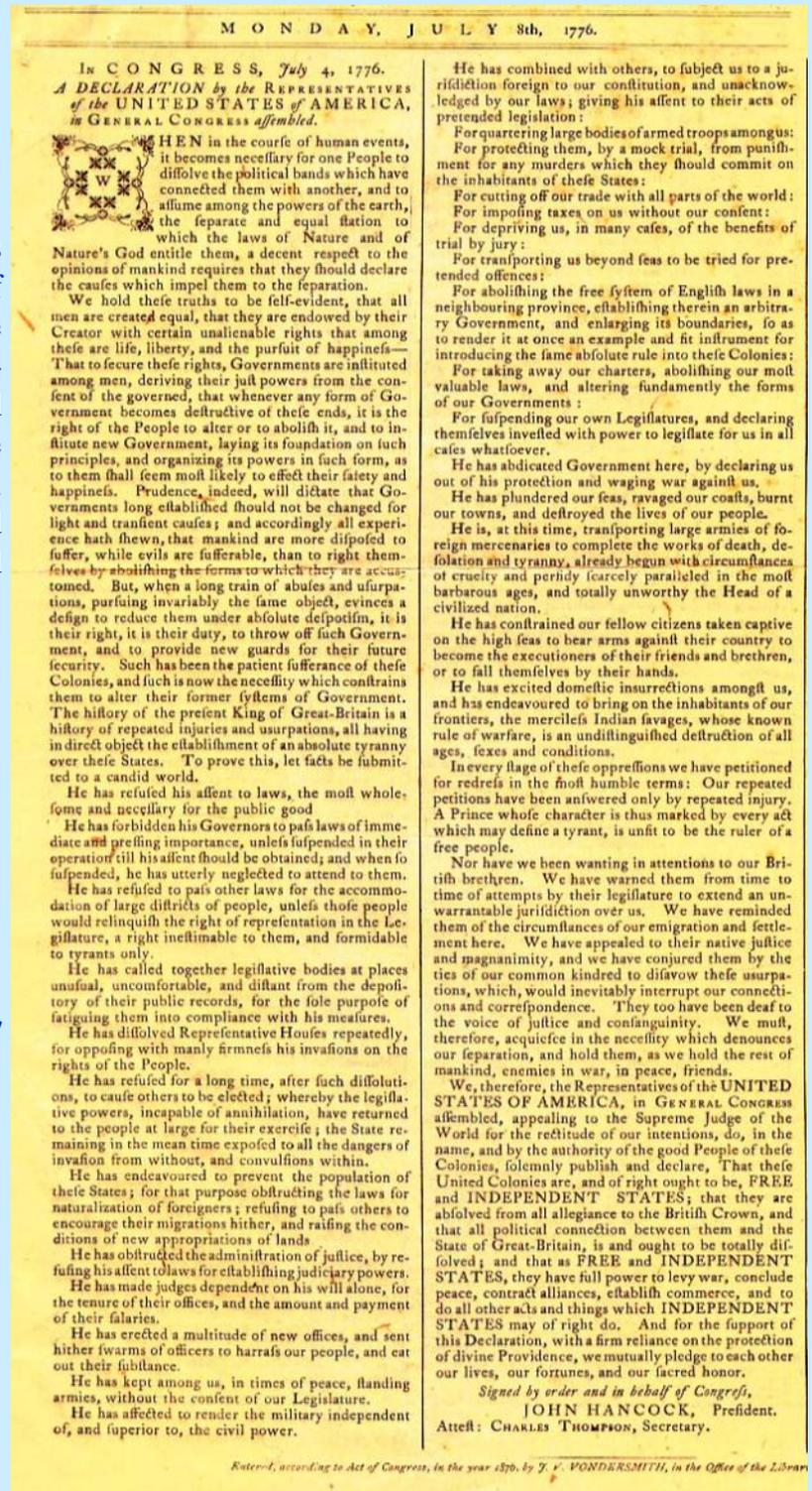
This year Americans and Armenians celebrated the 235th anniversary of American independence and the signing of the Declaration of Independence! This year we celebrated with a n e n j o y a b l e reception for friends and colleagues, the Armenian State Jazz Band played American jazz music, and we capped off the night with fireworks!



Sweet Fourth of July!



Marine Corps presenting the flag.



as it was originally published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* in its issue of Monday, July 8, 1776. Source: <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/freedom/doi/doi.html>

IRC ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

IRC ALUMNI ROUNDTABLES

Health Insurance: Parallels between United States and Armenia

On 15 June, 2011, the Information Resource Center hosted an alumni roundtable program for students, faculty members, specialists from the Armenian State Medical University, the American University of Armenia, and the Yerevan State Economic University. The roundtable featured three speakers: Saro Tsaturyan, General Director of "Diagnostica" Medical Center, Aharon Barseghyan, from the Health State Agency and Garnik Tonoyan, head of Cascade Insurance Company. Both Mr. Tsaturyan and Mr. Tonoyan are alumni of Community Connections and Muskie programs sponsored by U.S. Government. The topic of the discussion was "Health Insurance: Parallels between U.S. and Armenia." Sean O'Hara, Cultural Affairs Officer welcomed the 20 participants.



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Mr. Tsaturyan presented on health insurance in the U.S. and discussed the reforms initiated by President Obama. The Armenian government representative briefed participants about local public health insurance program and mentioned that Armenia is in its own way of development.

A lively debate on health care also took place, and the participants expressed the wish to continue the discussions. On the IRC Facebook page, students rated the meeting as excellent. A comment reads, "It was really informative and data was available even for those who are not specialists of the given field! Thanks to presenters." Speakers also were very excited, Mr. Tsaturyan wrote on FB page, "It was a great opportunity to discuss and share ideas among health care professionals and students. Armenia needs more public discussion on introduction of mandatory health insurance system, so this was one of rather rare occasions for that. Many thanks to US Embassy and especially to Information Resource Center staff for organizing this event!"



For more photos and comments please go to [IRC Facebook Profile](#).

IRC ROUNDTABLE ON MASS MEDIA AND NEWS COVERAGE

On May 20, 2011 the Information Resource Center hosted a roundtable program for students from Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia, and Yerevan State Linguistics University. The topic for the discussion was Mass Media and News Coverage. The IRC was honored to host two guest



speakers; Dr. Rosati from University of South Carolina and Mrs. Lusine Petrosyan, columnist from Armenian “Hraparak” daily. Dr. Jerel Rosati is a professor of political science and international studies and has been a member of the Department of Government and International Studies at the University of South Carolina since 1982. Lusine Petrosyan is a well known journalists in Armenia with over 20 years experience working in three major Armenian newsletters.

Jay Treloar, the U.S. Embassy Information Officer, gave opening remarks.

The speakers discussed different aspects of contemporary print, electronic and social media. Among the highlighted issues about news media coverage were the relationship between the media organizations and the government, big business, the major American news sources, and perceptions of national and international news.

The IRC disseminated IIP publications and Media Making Change eJournal issues to the students.

IRC ROUNDTABLE ON INDEX of ECONOMIC FREEDOM

On 23 May, 2011 the Information Resource Center hosted a roundtable for 20 economic students from Yerevan State University, State University of Economics and European Regional Academy. The topic for the discussion was the “2011 Index of Economic Freedom”. The guest speaker was James M. Roberts, Research Fellow for Economic Freedom and Growth at the Heritage Foundation. Sean O’Hara, U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer, also participated in the discussion.

Mr. Roberts made a presentation on the 2011 Index of Economic Freedom, explaining how that index has changed for Armenia compared to the index from last year. He also talked about think tanks as vital organizations to conduct research



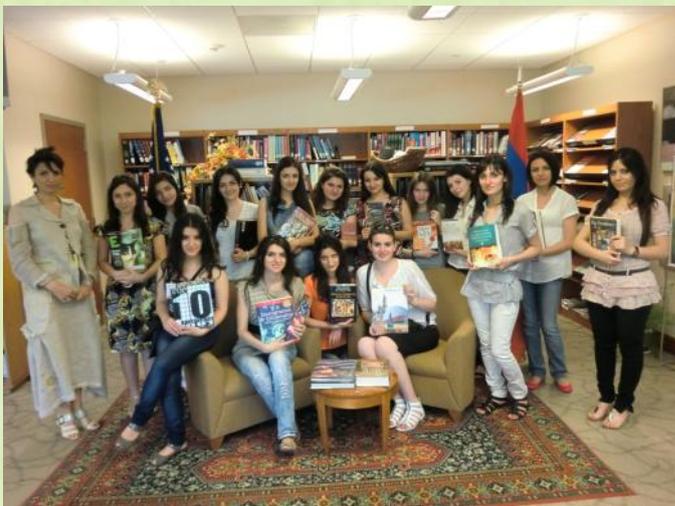
and to engage in policy making.

For more photographs of these events please go to: [IRC Facebook Profile](#).

For IRC autumn roundtable discussions please send your inquiries to: ircyerevan@usa.am

Helpful Seminar for University Students Group

On June 10, 2011, the IRC in Yerevan organized an Introduction Seminar for the students group from Yerevan State University. This visit was initiated by the Young Translators Union which is an umbrella NGO that unifies students and teachers mainly at Yerevan State University Romance-Germanic Faculty. Stu-



dents learned helpful information about the IRC print and electronic resources and public activities. CAO Sean O'Hara welcomed students group and highlighted the important work that Public Affairs section provides for the Embassy and Armenian public. Mr. O'Hara spoke about USG exchange programs for undergraduate and graduate level students and encouraged students to visit the IRC and participate in public events and activities initiated by

the IRC. The IRC director and assistant introduced the Center's print and electronic resources and highlighted materials and services available at the Yerevan American Corner. IRC assistant Anna Mkrtychyan conducted a training session about eLibraryUSA databases. The students and their English language instructor enjoyed the IRC presentation very much. IRC staff donated IRC and American Corner brochures and IIP publications to participants.

Afterwards, when we asked the students if they would return to use the resources at the Information Resource Center, they all said that they would. All students were registered to IRC distribution lists. In two days all 15 participants including the English instructor became friends to IRC Facebook profile and made their positive comments about the visit that they will never forget.

For more photographs please go to IRC Facebook profile at:

<http://www.facebook.com/ircyerevan>



WHAT'S NEW AT THE AMERICAN CORNERS?

Sixth Annual American Corners Workshop Outlines Corners Success Stories

From July 12-14, 2011, U.S. Embassy in Yerevan organized the sixth annual American Corners in Armenia Workshop. The conference included the participation of American Corner coordinators from all four of Armenia's American Corners, and host library directors.

Belgrade-based U.S. Information Resource Officer (IRO) Alka Bhatnagar and IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan opened the workshop. Mr. Hayrapetyan then provided a review of American Corner activities over the past year. The IRC Director provided statistics about the American Corners January-June 2011 activities and services. The American Corners registered over 16,843 visitors and borrowed 8,194 books and 3,873 publications in 2011. The Corners organized over 203 public events, including lectures, film showings, English classes and club meetings. In the coming autumn the AC Armenia will welcome their 150,000th visitor! American Corner coordinators from Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, and Kapan presented annual reports about their activities. In 20-minute presentations, each American Corner director described its most successful program in 2010-2011.

IRO Alka Bhatnagar shared AC updates from Washington, D.C. IRO delivered two helpful presentations; one on first day about current shifts in library service philosophy with respect to future of library spaces, and the second day she spoke to AC coordinators about the means to shape their professional skills.

Workshop training, conducted by U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section Program Specialist Avetik Petrosyan, focused on Creating and Publishing Video Highlights for American Corners. Participants learned how to manage the American Corners Facebook and YouTube pages.

At the end of the first day a special session was organized for AC Host Library Directors to discuss MOU 2012, and plans and strategy for improvement. IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan discussed MOU issues with the host library directors.

The second day of the workshop focused on American Corners outreach to children and resources for children and young adults. The U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer Sean O'Hara invited the AC coordinators to discuss in details how they plan a story hour and produce videos for the events for kids and teenagers. Each of the corners demonstrated video highlights about their last story reading activity, and all participants actively discussed the content and scenes, the narration of the video, editing techniques, and ways to upload and share the videos on YouTube and other video sharing sites.

IRC Assistant Anna Mkrtychyan guided a tour to introduce the eLibraryUSA database. And PAS alumni coordinator Lusine Mkrtychyan discussed with workshop participants helpful methods on how to regenerate USG alumni lecture series.

A "Fish Bowl Discussion" also generated lively debate on various aspects of American Corner activities for children, including how to deal with local media, how to organize a program in short time frame, how to better utilize the AC Facebook pages, and about AC Advocacy and marketing.

During the summing up session, IRO Alka Bhatnagar and IRC Director donated Spelling Bee books and DVDs to the American Corners coordinators. The American Corner coordinators and all other participants took away many new ideas about video reporting and outreach to children for activities that will be implemented in the coming year.



AC KAPAN: Learning English through American Popular Music



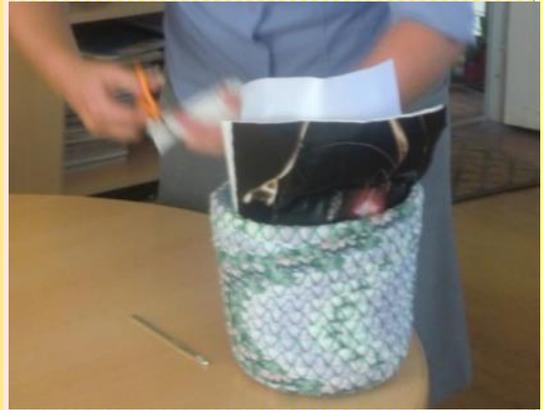
On June 23, 2011, U.S. Embassy Information Officer Jay Treloar gave a lecture on “Teaching English through American Pop Music” at the Kapan American Corner. Mr. Treloar introduced the audience to popular music genres, including jazz, blues, rock, country, hip-hop and R&B, and he discussed popular American music groups and artists. The audience of around 40 participants was composed of Leadership school students, teachers, and the general public. Armenpress News Agency, Aravot Armenian Daily journalists and two local TV channels highlighted the event.

Watch the video of this event on U.S. Embassy Yerevan Facebook page.

AC VANADZOR: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

On July 06, 2011 AC Vanadzor hosted Vanessa Bowie, who has been a Peace Corps volunteer in Vardenik and now is working at the U.S. Embassy Yerevan. Vanessa introduced herself as an ‘environmental enthusiast’. She made a creative and bright presentation on three Rs of reduce, reuse, recycle, by giving examples of how each of us can cut down on the amount of waste we throw away. She presented some of her own handmade items—bowls and purses, and explained how the attendees, all girls, could make them too. As a Public Administration specialist Vanessa also underlined the importance of increasing the transparency and responsibility of the environmental performance of corporations.

“The lecture was very inspiring! I would never think one can make such beautiful things out of material, that could be just trash!”, one of the participants said.



AC YEREVAN: Libraries in American Universities

On Wednesday, July 27 American Corner Yerevan organized "Americans at the American Corner" public lecture entitled “Libraries in American Universities.” Our guest speaker was U.S. Embassy Intern Meri Nagapetyan.

The lecture started with the presentation of the history of American university libraries, including the first academic library established in Harvard University. The speaker also talked about the statistics of academic libraries nowadays: they host more than 20.3 million visits weekly and have addition of 20 million e-books within a year!

Miss Nagapetyan also presented the famous Congress Library - the oldest federal cultural institution, which has a rich collection that highlights all aspects of Armenian life and culture, holding 26,000 items.

She also talked about the future of the libraries and their work in conversion to E-Books and E-Journals, cooperation with Google Books etc.

There were around 25 AC visitors in the audience, mainly students, and professional librarians who didn't miss the opportunity to acknowledge new information about libraries. The lecture was followed by an active discussion not only by the librarians, but also by the visitors who are active library users. They learnt how university libraries operate in the U.S. and compared them with those of Armenian ones.



AC YEREVAN: Diversity in American Schools

On Saturday, June 25, Yerevan American Corner organized "Americans at the American Corner" public lecture. Our guest speaker was U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section's Intern Katherine Donahue.

Katherine Donahue started the lecture by presenting her origins as an example of American diversity, being an ethnic South Korean who was adopted at age 2 by an American family with a varied ethnic background.

She has gone to school in Moscow, Russia, Virginia and New York in the US. Katherine shared her experience of studying in many ethnically and culturally diverse schools. She made note of the numerous cultural, political, religious clubs and organizations for multinational students. She also presented the ethnicity statistics of the students in the schools she studied.

Miss Donahue also talked about the large Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in Rochester and presented some of the obstacles that the deaf and hard of hearing encounter when communicating with other students. The participants then watched a short video of American Sign Language being used to interpret a popular song.

Grant Writing Seminar for Librarians

On June 17, 2011, the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center (IRC) organized a grant writing seminar for librarians and library graduate school students. 18 librarians from Yerevan and provincial public, academic, school and special libraries actively participated in the seminar. Among the participants there were also librarians from the regions. The cities of Armavir, Charentsavan and Vanadzor were represented.



Librarians found the seminar particularly helpful to them. The seminar provided useful recommendations and ideas for their library career development plans. By improving librarians knowledge about grant writing, the activity directly supports library professional's appreciation of U.S. support and assistance to strengthen public and academic library

services and activities.

Summer reading program in Charentsavan City Library

"In summertime, when there are no classes at school, more children come to the Library", says Anahit Khechoyan, Charentsavan City Library Director. "Many of them have a to read list for summer, but others follow the librarians' suggestions".

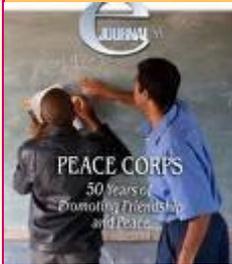
This year Charentsavan City Library has made a surprise for its young visitors: Summer reading program has launched on June 1st and it's called 'Summer in the Library'! The program includes group readings and discussions, small performances, audio books, cartoons, various games and also painting classes.

On June 16th IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan visited the Library. Keeping up the good tradition, he had some gifts for the Library: books for children, CDs and DVDs, and which was the most exciting for the youngest readers – toys for a puppetry!

"Having scarce funding to update our collections, we greatly appreciate the U.S. Embassy support to our Library!", said the Library Director.



EJOURNAL USA: EDUCATING WOMEN AND GIRLS



Education is crucial to a country's economic and social development. Research by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) shows that each year of schooling increases an individual's economic output by 4 to 7 percent. Educating women and girls, in particular, yields profound social and economic benefits. Studies demonstrate that educating women and girls leads to lower infant and child mortality rates, lower maternal mortality rates, better educated children and increased participation by women in the workforce. Yet despite these benefits, in many countries females receive less schooling than males.

This issue of *eJournal USA* explores how international organizations, state governments, the private sector and individuals — in many different countries — are tackling this global challenge and improving people's lives.

Highlights:

[Introduction: Educating Women and Girls is Key to Meeting 21st Century Demands](#)

Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large, Global Women's Issues

[Educating Girls: What Works](#)

Dr. Barbara Herz, specialist in girls' education policy
Educating women and girls is crucial to a country's economic and social development.

[The Right to Education](#)

Dr. Kishore Singh, United Nations special rapporteur on the right to education

["We Women Have Paved the Way to a New Life!"](#)

Kristen Potter, education team leader with USAID/Morocco

USAID teaches literacy to women and girls in Morocco.

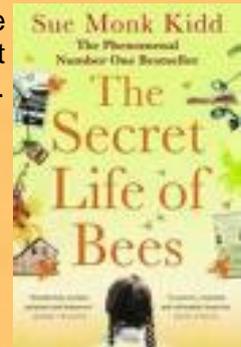
[More than Building Schools](#)

In Rwanda, access to affordable sanitary pads can help keep girls in school.

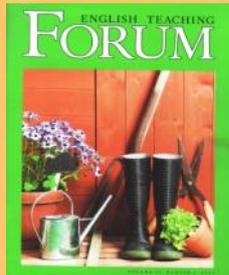
BOOK CLUB: Featured Books

On June 2011 Yerevan American Corner initiated a new program for its patrons and readers, called *Book Club*. This is a very interesting program for those who are excited to discuss the book they have just read. The program includes reading a book, watching a movie based on the book and then a discussion of both of them. "The Kite Runner" by an Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini was the first book to be discussed at the American Corner.

The featured book for the next discussion is "The Secret Life of Bees" by Sue Monk Kidd. The book is available at the Yerevan American Corner.



IRC NEW ARRIVALS



The IRC has received the new issue of FORUM magazine (Vol. 49, number 3, 2011). Interested English language fellows, university and school teachers can ask for the magazine at the IRC!

English Teaching Forum is a quarterly journal published by the U.S. Department of State for teachers of English as a foreign or second language. Over 82,000 copies of the magazine are distributed in more than 125 countries.

Visit the Forum website at: <http://forum.state.gov> This site contains articles from issues of English Teaching Forum dating back to 1993. To find a particular article or issue, visit past issues to find a particular article or issue.

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 13:00 to 18:00.

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