

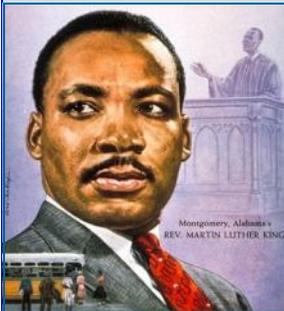


The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

Yerevan Times

January– February, 2010
Volume 6, Issue 1

Martin Luther King Day



Americans on each third Monday of January honor the life and achievements of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), the 1964 Nobel Peace laureate and the individual most associated with the triumphs of the African-American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s.

King was among those champions of justice whose influence transcended national boundaries. In August 1963, African-American leaders organized the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Here, before an estimated quarter million civil rights supporters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, King offered one of the most powerful orations in American history. Generations of schoolchildren have learned by heart lines from the *I Have a Dream* speech, in which King prayed for the day when people would “not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” The images from Birmingham and Washington helped crystallize support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. The *Voting Rights Act* became law on August 6, 1965.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/January/20060109162734jmnamdeirf0.3977777.html>

Presidents' Day

Americans long have honored George Washington, commander of the United States Army in the War of Independence, first President of the United States, and "first in the hearts of countrymen." In 1971, Congress fixed Washington's Birthday and a number of other holidays on Mondays, to create long holiday weekends. Because a number of states (but not the federal government) also officially celebrate the February 12 birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, many Americans have come to believe -- incorrectly -- that the

third Monday of February is a consolidated "Presidents' Day" honoring both Washington and Lincoln, and indeed all U.S. presidents. Many states designate the holiday as Presidents' Day. The federal holiday, however, remains Washington's Birthday. It is but one way in which Americans celebrate the life of the man often called the "father of his country."

It has been said that the American people themselves forced Congress to establish Washington's Birthday holiday, which today is fixed by law on the third Monday of February. Nineteenth-century Americans commonly celebrated a holiday on February 22, the day of



Washington's birth. Apparently motivated by chronic employee absenteeism on that date, Congress in 1879 declared Washington's Birthday a legal public holiday.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/February/20080214182328liameruo0.3151819.html>

Read more on U.S. holidays at: http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays.html

Official Embassy Holidays January-February 2009

Date	Day	Country	Description
Jan 1	THU	Arm/US	New Year's Day
Jan 2	FRI	Armenian	New Year's Day
Jan 5	MON	Armenian	Christmas Eve
Jan 6	TUE	Armenian	Christmas Day
Jan 18	MON	US	Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
Jan 28	WED	Armenian	Army Day
Feb 15	MON	US	President's Day

IRC Hosts Round Table on New and Social Media

On December 3, the U.S. Embassy Yerevan Information Resource Center (IRC) held a roundtable discussion with more than 20 journalism students from Yerevan's top universities and three blogging experts on the use of new media in Armenia. This was an important opportunity for Armenia's next generation of journalists to meet with new media leaders to discuss current reporting trends and introduce students to new media concepts. Experts included www.media.am website editor Gegham Vardanyan, FLEX alumni and RFE/RL internet journalist Artur Papyan, and 7or.am blogger Shushan Harutyunyan. The topic of the discussion was "New Media, Social Media."

Website editor Gegham Vardanyan began the discussion by introducing students to web tools and forums, including blogs, Wikis, Facebook, Last.fm, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, RSS feeds, Digg, and Del.icio.us. He noted that Armenian blogs are primarily hosted in Russian, Armenian and English on the www.worldpress.com and www.livejournal.com platforms. He also said that while Facebook is becoming more popular, a similar Russian language social networking page, Odnoklasniki, is used as a "fundamental search engine" to locate friends and relatives.

Internet journalist Artur Papyan focused on the ideology behind "Web 2.0," noting that the internet, while still largely inaccessible to the majority of Armenians, is both a communication tool and a lifestyle. He added that the first Armenian blog was created on cilicia.com, a seldom updated but popular blog for a group of Armenian-Americans living in the country.

Blogger Shushan Harutyunyan focused her comments on the opportunity to use the internet as an alternative source of information and to obtain a wide diversity of viewpoints.

While students expressed interest in new and social media, as young Armenians about to enter the job market, much focus was on how to use mediums like Facebook and Twitter to earn extra income. Presenters commented that the interest as a source of "open media" often means both free (open) and free (without cost and ultimately, without profit). Based on positive feedback, presenters agreed to give similar lectures in regional American Corners.



Discussion with students.



APAA Susan Bridenstine addresses the participants

What's New at The American Corners?

IN YEREVAN: The United States Agency for International Development Assistance to Armenia



After presentation discussion at the Yerevan American Corner

On Saturday, December 19, 2009, the Yerevan American Corner hosted a public lecture entitled "USAID Assistance to Armenia." USAID Program Office Director Timothy Alexander delivered the remarks. Using a power point presentation, Mr. Alexander presented U.S. foreign aid levels from 1960 to 2005. He discussed the goal of USAID assistance, noting that funding is used to support local government reforms to stimulate economic growth, strengthen financial management, and support social reforms. Mr. Alexander specifically highlighted U.S. assistance to Armenia starting from the December 1988 earthquake until today. Since 1992, the year a U.S. official presence in Armenia began, USAID has been implementing numerous programs in all of Armenia's regions. Over the years, USAID/Armenia's programs have evolved, however, from humanitarian assistance into the promotion of long-term economic development, and social and democratic reform. More information about USAID is available at: <http://armenia.usaid.gov>.

Nearly 30 participants, the majority of which were university students, U.S. Government educational exchange program alumni, and young professionals, attended the lecture. Participants asked several questions about U.S. Government investment in Armenia. The lecture served to highlight the 20th anniversary of the U.S. – Armenia partnership.

English Course for Beginners Graduation Ceremony

On December 29, 2009, beginning-level English Proficiency Certificates were awarded to 10 participants for completion of an English training course organized by the Yerevan American Corner.

The two month English training course was conducted by the Corner's volunteer English language instructor Nune Poghosyan. Nune is a graduate of Yerevan Interlingua Linguistic University. She taught the group in twice-weekly sessions. Eleven students were chosen from Yerevan State University, the State Engineering University, and Yerevan State Conservatory. Participants received English language instruction on everyday usage of spoken and writing techniques. The lessons enabled the group to become proficient in English grammar, and enhanced their listening comprehensions skills.

IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan participated in the graduation ceremony, providing each participant with InfoUSA CD's. American Corner Coordinator Anna Grigoryan and language instructor Nune Poghosyan awarded certificates to the participants.

IN GYUMRI: STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, the Gyumri American Corner, the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan and the Gyumri-based Ajakits NGO organized a roundtable discussion dedicated to the "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women." U.S. Embassy Resident Legal Advisor Steve Kessler was invited to the Gyumri American Corner to discuss this issue with an interested audience.

Mr. Kessler presented information about domestic violence laws in United States, as well as local government support and response. He mentioned that in the U.S., there are special shelters for domestic violence victims. Another discussion theme covered mandatory psychological counseling for perpetrators of domestic violence.

NGO representatives discussed domestic violence in Gyumri, noting that in many cases, Armenian women are hesitant to report instances of abuse to authorities. They mentioned that adopting a special law on domestic violence in Armenia would improve current conditions and assist in the protection of victims.

More than 30 people from 7 different NGOs and institutions participated in the discussion. One local TV station and three newspapers highlighted the event.

Read more about the American Corners Program in Armenia at: www.americancorners.am

Join the American Corners Armenia friend's groups at: www.facebook.com



Discussing with roundtable participants

Exploring countries and cultures online

U.S. Department of State- Background Notes

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/

The U.S. Department of State has prepared a page of background notes for about 200 independent states, dependencies, and areas of special sovereignty. For each entry, you will find information on the land, its people, history, government, political conditions, economy, foreign relations, and U.S. Embassy officials, plus contact information and links to travel and business information.

The World Factbook

www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook

The World Factbook, compiled by the CIA, is one of the best known reference tools on the internet. Revised annually and updated through-

out the year, it provides highly detailed data and narratives on 272 countries, territories, and other entities. For each country, the data is arranged in the following sections: Geography, Communications, People, Transportation, Government, Military, Economy, and Transnational Issues. Reference tabs include: maps of the major world regions, as well as flags of the world, physical and political maps of the world, and a standard time zones of the world map.

BBC Country Profiles

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

BBC Country profiles for 201 countries and 51 territories can be found by clicking the Country Profiles link on BBC's main news page. Each profile includes an Overview and Facts, Leaders, and Media sections.

The profiles are brief, but they provide a good quick look at the country. The Media links take you to the major news services for the country, and, just in case you happen to bump into him or her, a photo of the leader of the country is included.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

www.fco.gov.uk

The U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) site contains a Countries & Regions section. Click on the link in that section for Country Profiles. For each of the more than 200 countries (or other political entities) listed, you will find a report with information on the country's history, geography, economy, international relations, human rights, and health, and a link to travel advice.

Source: *The Traveler's Web* by *Pandolph Hock*

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

The Grand Canyon is unmatched throughout the world for the vistas it



offers to visitors on the rim. It is not the deepest canyon in the world, but the Grand Canyon is known for its overwhelming size and its intricate and colorful landscape. Geologically it is significant because of the thick sequence of ancient rocks that are beautifully preserved and exposed in the walls of the canyon. These rock layers record much of the early geologic history of the North American continent. The Grand Canyon is also one of the most spectacular examples of erosion in the world. The Grand Canyon was largely unknown until after the Civil War. In 1869, Major John Wesley Powell, a one-armed Civil

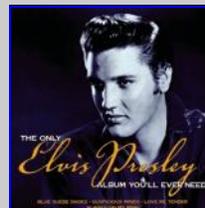
War veteran with a thirst for science and adventure, made a pioneering journey through the canyon on the Colorado River.

War veteran with a thirst for science and adventure, made a pioneering journey through the canyon on the Colorado River.

Although first afforded Federal protection in 1893 as a Forest Reserve and later as a National Monument, the Grand Canyon did not achieve National Park status until 1919, three years after the creation of the National Park Service. Today the Grand Canyon National Park receives close to five million visitors each year - a far cry from the annual visitation of 44,173 which the park received in 1919.

ELVIS PRESLEY—KING OF ROCK'N' ROLL

Elvis Presley is the undisputed King of Rock and Roll. He rose from humble circumstances to launch the rock and roll revolution with his commanding voice and charis-



matic stage presence that made him a teen idol.

Presley began his career in 1954 as one of the first performers of rockabilly, an up-tempo fusion of country and rhythm and blues with a strong back beat. His novel versions of existing songs, mixing "black" and "white" sounds, made him popular—and controversial. Presley had a versatile voice and he had unusually wide success encompassing many genres, including rock and roll, gospel, blues, country, ballads and pop.

In 1968, after making movies in Hollywood and having been away from the stage for seven years, he returned to live performances in a television special, which led to a string of successful tours across the U.S.

In 1973, Presley staged the first global live concert via satellite (*Aloha from Hawaii*), reaching at least one billion viewers live. It remains the most watched broadcast by an individual entertainer in television history.

OPEN ACCESS ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Beyond Wikipedia, attempts at OA encyclopedias

Steve Kolowich, Open Access Encyclopedias, *Inside Higher Ed*, December 14, 2009.

Can an information source that is free also be reliable? Or does the price of content always reflect its value?

In higher education, this debate usually takes place in the context of academic publishing, where open access journals have emerged to challenge their pricey print predecessors. ...

The same narrative is playing out in the world of scholarly reference works. Encyclopedia Britannica, the genre's sturdiest brand, has been marginalized in the Internet age by Wikipedia and Google — tools it dismisses as untrustworthy. Quality, Britannica says, comes at a price: \$69.95 per year for Web access, to be exact (\$1,349 if you want the bound volumes). ...

Meanwhile, a number of academic institutions are quietly trying to do what Britannica and others say can't be done: build online encyclopedias that are rigorous, scholarly, and free to access. ...

The first challenge of building an encyclopedia that is both free and scholarly, therefore, is finding a way to enlist expert contributors and qualified editors cheaply without compromising the rigor of the editorial process.

Eugene M. Izhikevich says the answer is to make contributing a privilege. Izhikevich, a former senior fellow at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, is editor-in-chief of Scholarpedia — a free, "peer-reviewed" online compendium. But unlike Britannica, Scholarpedia does not pay its experts for writing and overseeing entries.

The key to attracting voluntary labor, says Izhikevich, is by persuading experts that their contributions will be lasting, and that by participating they will be peopled with intellectual royalty. ...

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, which also does not pay its writers, has managed to work the prestige angle to mobilize a willing corps of more than 1,700 unpaid contributors. ...

In the absence of pay and a traditional clip for the tenure file, [SEP associate editor Colin] Allen has had to emphasize different incentives when coaxing busy professors to volunteer their time to the project. First of all, he points out that an entry in a free, Web-based encyclopedia is likely to be read by more people than an article in an expensive, narrowly tailored journal. And unlike Wikipedia, or more conventional encyclopedias, they'll get a byline. ...

Achieving [Wikipedia's] sort of breadth while being free and expertly fact-checked is a daunting prospect. Most of the free encyclopedia projects that have come out of academe are limited by topic: the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology and so on. Even Scholarpedia, whose name and tagline ("the peer-reviewed, open-access encyclopedia") implies a broad scope, currently only publishes articles on a few specialized topics in science. Other free, online encyclopedias supported by universities, such as the Encyclopedia Virginia, the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, and the New Georgia Encyclopedia, limit themselves to a single state and focus mostly on history. ...

Read full article at: <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2009/12/beyond-wikipedia-attempts-at-oa.html>



Pew Research Center

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an American think tank organization based in Washington, D.C. that studies attitudes toward politics, the press and public policy issues. In this role it serves as a valuable information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars and citizens.

The Center conducts regular monthly polls on politics and major policy issues as well as the News Interest Index, a weekly survey aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events. Shorter commentaries are produced on a regular basis addressing the issues of the day from a public opinion perspective. In addition, the Center periodically fields major surveys on the news media, social issues and international affairs.

On December 3, 2009 the Pew released the "America's Place in the World 2009" annual report that you can find it at: <http://people-press.org/report/569/americas-place-in-the-world>

An E-Book Buyer's Guide to Privacy

As we count down to the end of 2009, the emerging star of this year's holiday shopping season is shaping up to be the electronic book reader (or e-reader). From Amazon's Kindle to Barnes and Noble's forthcoming Nook, e-readers are starting to transform how we buy and read books in the same way mp3s changed how we buy and listen to music.

To read more go to <http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2009/12/e-book-privacy>

Google Translate

Google announced some new features for its Google Translate offering that makes it more immediate and even more useful. Google Translate is available at <http://translate.google.com/>. The site now translates as you type; set translations from English to Spanish...

You can find more about it at: <http://www.researchbuzz.org/wp/page/3/>

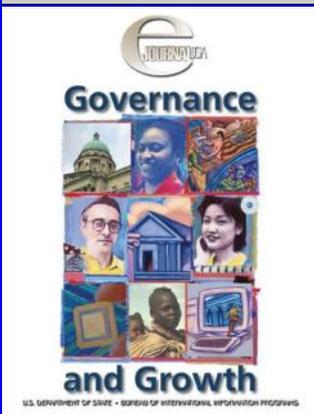


What is the open access movement?

Putting peer-reviewed scientific and scholarly literature on the internet. Making it available free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Removing the barriers to serious research.



EJOURNAL USA: "GOVERNANCE AND GROWTH"



"Governance and Growth," explores the reality behind President Obama's statement to Ghana's parliament earlier this year: "Development depends on good governance."

The link between stable, honest government and economic prosperity is being recognized increasingly around the globe by governments, private sector leaders, and entrepreneurs. Voices from all these quarters are heard in this edition of eJournal USA. National leaders and local leaders explain their views of good governance. Experts in the fields of business and development assistance explain how good governance has become critical to building prosperity.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0909.html>

PDF and Internet versions are currently available in English on www.america.gov, the IIP Web site. Selected articles will also be available for comment and discussion on the eJournal USA Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ejournalUSA>

EJOURNAL USA: "ROOTS OF INNOVATION"

Economic expansion depends more and more on innovation — not simply producing more goods and services, but producing ever newer goods and services. This issue of eJournal USA seeks to show that innovation needs the right conditions to emerge.

This issue of eJournal USA explores one nexus of questions at the heart of these discussions: What is innovation? Can governments and societies encourage innovation? How do the emergence of semiconductor-powered computers and Internet-based communication technologies affect the equation?

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/1109.pdf#popup>

The journals will be available in several other languages in the coming weeks. A listing of other issues of eJournal USA is available at <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>.

The printed copy of the e-journal is available in the Information Resource Center and American Corners in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor.

In upcoming months, the International Information Programs' Publications Office will be producing the following issues of eJournal USA:

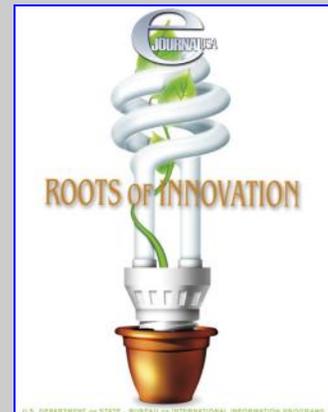
MONDAY MOVIES

As part of its movie series, an English language film is shown at the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center every third Monday of the month. A 30 minute English-language discussion follows each movie.

Please contact: ircyerevan@usa.am if you plan to attend the movie series.

January
February
March
April

After Elections: Bridging Differences
A World Free of Nuclear Arms
Global Trends in Agriculture
Climate Change Partnerships



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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