



# IRC Yerevan Times

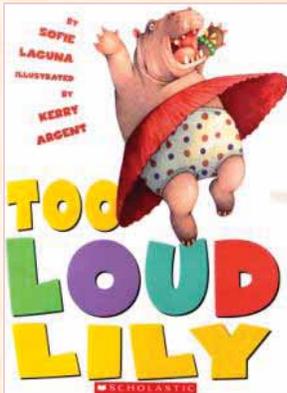
March-April, 2011 Volume 7, Issue 2

## U.S. Ambassador Promotes Reading to Children



On March 2, U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch was the honorary guests of the National Children's Library of Armenia. The Ambassador visited the li-

brary to promote reading to young children. The visit coincided with the birthday of Dr. Seuss, a popular American storybook author.



Ambassador Yovanovitch and Ms. Ruzan Tonoyan, director of the National Children's Library, read storybooks to 30 elementary school students from various Yerevan schools. Ambassador Yovanovitch read a story in English entitled *Too Loud Lilly* by Sofie Laguna, and Ms.

Tonoyan read an Armenian story *The Most Useful Thing* by Avetik Isahakyan.

The children loved both stories. As Ambassador Yovanovitch read her story, she asked the children questions about the story's characters and illustrations. At one point,



she passed out toy musical instruments and encouraged the children to stomp their feet, beat the drums, and crash the cym-

bals just like the story's hero, Lilly the Hippo. The children responded enthusiastically. All of the English teachers and their children thoroughly enjoyed the story hour.



During her visit, Ambassador Yovanovitch said "Reading to young children helps instill in them a life-long love of books."



After reading to the children, Ambassador Yovanovitch presented a collection of Dr. Seuss storybooks to Ms. Tonoyan as a

donation to the National Children's Library. Then each of the five schools received different Dr. Seuss publications to support their own story reading activities and English language programs.

For the image gallery of the event, please visit the U.S. Embassy Facebook Page at: [www.facebook.com/usdos.armenia](http://www.facebook.com/usdos.armenia)

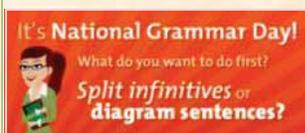


## Women's History Month



By 1986, 14 states had already declared

March as [Women's History Month](#). This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale to lobby Congress to declare the entire month of March 1987 as National Women's History Month. In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women.



## National Grammar Day

Language is something to be celebrated, and March 4 is the perfect day to do it. It's not only a date, it's an imperative: March forth on March 4 to speak well, write well, and help others do the same!

[More on National Grammar Day](#)

## Teen Tech Week



Teen Tech Week is a national initiative aimed at teens, librarians, educators, parents, and other concerned adults that highlights nonprint resources at the library. The 2011 theme — [Mix and Mash @ your library](#) — focuses on encouraging teens to use library resources to express their creativity by developing their own unique online content and safely sharing it by using online collaborative tools.

## International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) was first declared in 1910 with the first IWD event held in 1911. 2011 sees 100 years of International Women's Day having been celebrated around the world. Widespread increased activity is anticipated globally on 8 March 2011 honoring 100 years of International Women's Day.



## [International Women's Day Centenary 1911 - 2011](#)

[National Women's History Project Site](#)

## Earth Day

[Earth Day](#) is the annual celebration of the environment and a time to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central organizing force behind it though several nongovernmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. Earth Day is observed around the world, although nowhere is it a national holiday. In the United States, it affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment - once the province of a few conservationists - has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.



[EPA Earth Day Site](#)

## IRC SPRING MOVIE CALENDAR



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.

The next movie will be shown on March 20 at 15:00pm. U.S. Embassy Health Practitioner, Jill Barnes, chose the featured movie, "[Arranged](#)" (2007) by Diane Crespo, Stefan C. Schaefer. Ms. Barnes will introduce the movie and facilitate a group discussion after the screening.

Storyline: [ARRANGED](#) centers on the friendship between an Orthodox Jewish woman and a Muslim woman who meet as first-year teachers at a public school in Brooklyn. Over the course of the year they learn they share much in common - not least of which is that they are both going through the process of arranged marriages. Written by Stefan Schaefer.

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[Read more about the movie at:](#)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0848542/>

Please contact: [ircyerevan@usa.am](mailto:ircyerevan@usa.am) or call 49 44 11 or 49 42 65 if you plan to attend the movie series.

## IRC Introduction Seminar at the Yerevan State University Library



On February 23, 2011, in partnership with Yerevan State University Main Library, the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center conducted a seminar on "IRC Online Databases and Resources" designed for students and faculty of the Yerevan State University. The IRC director and assistant introduced students to the IRC reference collection and periodicals, as well as to the online databases and social



media tools. A group of 20 students from Yerevan State University actively participated in the IRC session and learned how to use various IRC resources. The participants showed great interest particularly in the IRC electronic databases and expressed their eagerness to visit the IRC during public access hours to conduct their research.

## **Black History Month**

### **African American Footprints in America**

In celebration of Black History Month, U.S. Embassy Yerevan organized a public lecture at Brusov University.

On February 24, 2011 LaWanda Shepherd gave a lecture entitled "African American Footprints in America." More than 30 students and faculty members attended. The audience learned a lot about American society in the 60's and 70's. A lively discussion took place after the presentation.



Ms. Shepherd spoke upon such outstanding African Americans as Colin Powell, Dr. Charles Drew, Patricia Bath, Garrett Morgan, Madame CJ Walker, Oprah, and President Barack Obama. Ms. Shepherd noted that President Obama is the President of all Americans, no matter what is the color of their skin.

The discussion touched a wide range of



questions: from demographics to the cultural life of African Americans nowadays.

IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan disseminated publications about Martin Luther King JR, IRC brochures, and Info-USA CDs.

The head of the American Studies Faculty at YSLU proposed organizing U.S.-related lectures every month. She stated that these kinds of lectures contribute a lot to the understanding of U.S. history, values, and life today.

## IRC ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS



### Colors of American Jazz at the American Corner in Yerevan

On Saturday, February 12, American Corner Yerevan organized an "Americans at the American Corner" public presentation. The featured American speaker was Sean O'Hara, the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer, and the topic he chose was jazz music.

Mr. O'Hara is a big fan of jazz and also an amateur saxophone player. For this event, he invited two professional Armenian jazz musicians to help him demonstrate the musical elements of jazz. Mr. Artur Yeghiazaryan (saxophone) and Mr. Gerasim Petrosyan (piano) joined Mr. O'Hara on stage for a presentation that included stories, photographs, music performance, and lots of audience participation.



Mr. O'Hara highlighted the artistry of several American jazz legends, and discussed their contributions to the music. For example, he displayed photographs of Louis Armstrong and talked about Armstrong's use of syncopated rhythms and musical "call-and-response" patterns. Then, the speaker asked the audience to sing with him in a call-and-response game. This was followed by an instrumental performance of the song "When the Saints Go Marching In" by the presenter and guest musicians that showed how call-and-response patterns are used by jazz musicians.



Mr. O'Hara involved the audience throughout the presentation. In fact, the spectators (about 50 people) were regularly called upon to perform. At one point, Mr. O'Hara asked members of the audience to try singing in the "scat" style like Ella Fitzgerald. Later, he led them in imitating the trumpet, trombone, and cymbal parts to Count Basie's swing hit "One O'Clock Jump." Not to be outdone, the professional guest musicians proved that Armenians know a thing or two about jazz. Mr. Yeghiazaryan and Mr. Petrosyan delighted the crowd with beautiful

versions of Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" and Dizzy Gillespie's "A Night in Tunisia," among other songs. All in all, Mr. O'Hara's presentation at the Yerevan American Corner was a lively, interactive, and thoroughly enjoyable introduction to jazz, a music born in American and played throughout the world.

*"Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong." Ella Fitzgerald*



"The First Lady of Song," Ella Fitzgerald was the most popular female jazz singer in the United States for more than half a century. "Lady Ella" was well-known for her purity of tone, impeccable diction, phrasing and intonation. Ella was a very hard-worker, sometimes performing two shows a day in cities hundreds of miles apart. Ella frequently made generous donations to organizations for disadvantaged youth, and her manager felt very strongly about civil rights and required equal treatment for his musicians, regardless of their color. Norman refused to accept any type of racial discrimination. By the 1990s, Ella had recorded over 200 albums. In her lifetime, she won 13 Grammy awards. In 1987, United States President Ronald Reagan awarded Ella the National Medal of Arts.

## WHAT'S NEW AT THE AMERICAN CORNERS?

### NEW ARRIVALS AT THE AMERICAN CORNERS' BOOK CLUBS

IRC Yerevan is happy to announce new arrivals at the American Corners' Book Clubs! From now on you can enjoy such best-selling novels as *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, *Reading Lolita in Teheran* by Azar Nafisi, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson, *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir* by Frank McCourt, and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. The film adaptations of the books are also available at the American Corners. U.S. Peace Corps volunteers hold book club meetings and film discussions at American corners in Gyumri, Vanadzor and Kapan.

For additional information about the American Corners in Armenia please visit:

<http://www.americancorners.am>

### A COLLECTION OF 63 AMERICAN CLASSICS DONATED TO THE CORNER IN GYUMRI

The Gyumri American Corner was established in 2005. The Corner's collection contains more than 850 books, 480 CDs, videotapes and other materials on American history and economics, education and culture.



On December 10, 2011 the U.S. Embassy donated a great selection of 63 American classic fiction novels to the Gyumri American Corner. The collection includes such masterpieces as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee; *Ragtime* by E. L. Doctorow and *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell. In a short time these books have become very popular among the Corner's patrons.



G y u m r i American Corner readers are mainly students of the foreign language departments, as well as members of the public

who are interested in literature. It should be noted that the book collection donated by the U.S. Embassy is exceptional in the Shirak region. The readers repeatedly expressed their gratitude to the U.S. Embassy for this wonderful donation. In order to know more about the collection, please visit the following site:

<http://gyumri.americancorners.am/en/resources/>

### AN EVENT ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN GYUMRI AMERICAN CORNER

On February 10, 2011, Gyumri American Corner together with U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers organized an event dedicated to Black History Month. The speakers were students from Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute, State Economic University and State Engineering University. The students presented the life and the achievements of well-known African Americans, such as Michael Jordan, Barack Obama, Michael Jackson, Ray Charles and Eddie Murphy.

About 17 students and three Peace Corps Volunteers discussed the importance of equality as well as the need to respect people irrespective of their race. The students also had a chance to practice their spoken English.



## IRC ALUMNI ROUNDTABLE ON CIVIL SOCIETY

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center held its monthly Alumni Roundtable Program on the topic “Civil Society: Present and Future Perspectives” on February 25, 2011. Participants included 38 future politicians, journalists and lawyers from Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia, Yerevan State Pedagogical University, European Regional Educational Academy, Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University, Yerevan State Linguistic University and Gladzor University. Three featured speakers facilitated the discussion: Karen Zadoyan, Leader of Young Lawyers Association; Vrezh Gasparyan, Adviser to the Head of the Staff of the National Assembly; and Dr. Shushan Doydoyan, President of the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia and professor of the Journalism Department at Yerevan State University. The speakers, all of whom participated in U.S. Government sponsored study through the International Visitor Leadership Program, shared their knowledge and experience gained in the U.S. in the fields of civil society, election monitoring, and characteristics of law abiding states. Karen Robblee, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy, welcomed the participants.

The discussion started with Karen Zadoyan’s presentation on civil society’s present and future perspectives in Armenia. He defined civil society, talked about its shortcomings in Armenia, and outlined ways to develop civil society. He also stressed the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in democratic society. According to Mr. Zadoyan, there are 4,522 registered NGOs in Armenia.

Dr. Doydoyan’s presentation touched on the practical aspects of civil society. She introduced the Freedom of Information NGO whose main task is to defend the people’s constitutional right to have access to information. She talked about



success stories and noted that her NGO won 75% of 44 court cases concerning the protection of ordinary people’s rights. Among other cases, Shushan mentioned the case when the “Asparez” Press Club applied for copies of Gyumri municipality’s decisions and received the ridiculous answer, “You can find the list of decisions on our web page, which is under the construction.” Each year, on 28 September, International Freedom of Information Day, the NGO organizes an

Annual Award Ceremony and hands a golden key as positive award to the state institution with the best system of providing information, as well as a padlock (negative award) to the state institution which does the worst job fulfilling its obligations in FOI field. The speaker also encouraged students to protect their

right to be informed.

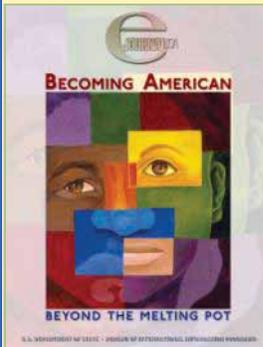
Vrezh Gasparyan concentrated his speech on the law abiding state and the protection of human rights. He valued the rule of law, appreciated the U.S. Declaration of Independence and opined, “The American Founding Fathers put great love and respect for American statehood in the Declaration.” The speaker concluded, “In Armenia people have rights but can’t protect their rights. NGOs are trying to protect people’s rights as provided by local legislation

and help create an environment where officials will feel obliged to provide information.”

The question and answer period focused on the activities of NGOs. A student mentioned cases when NGOs are founded just to meet the founder’s personal needs. Another student expressed doubt about the

real purpose of NGOs. He said “local NGOs are mostly funded by foreign countries and protect the interests of those countries/ This could lead to conflict with Armenian national security interests.” Students also touched upon the transparency of financial sources and budgets of non-governmental organizations. Both students and the speakers found the meeting very inter-

## EJOURNAL USA: BECOMING AMERICAN: BEYOND THE MELTING POT



The United States is often referred to as the “Great Melting Pot,” a metaphor that connotes the blending of many cultures, languages and religions to form a single national identity. But this metaphor fails to capture the slow, complex and frequently turbulent process by which immigrants of diverse

backgrounds and beliefs join U.S. society, even as they transform it.

Debate — even rancor — over immigration is neither new nor uncommon in U.S. history. Immigration is both an important part of our national identity and a source of social and political tension. Today, as during earlier periods of mass immigration to the United States, integrating newcomers into the American mainstream is a dynamic process that requires adaptation and change not only on the part of immigrants, but by receiving communities, public institutions and private entities.

Highlights:

- “A Permanently Unfinished Country” by Reed Ueda
- “Immigration as a Two-Way Street: Beyond the Melting Pot” by Mark A. Grey
- Immigration as a Two-Way Street: Beyond the Melting Pot” by Anna C. Woodrick.
- “Beaverton: Oregon’s Most Diverse City” by Amy Martinez Starke
- “Leading New Lives in Louisville, Kentucky” by Cary Stemle

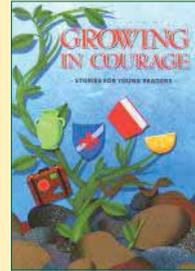
The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publication/ejournal/immigration.html>

## IRC NEW ARRIVALS

### Growing in courage stories for young readers

The books excerpted here are all written by American authors, but the stories they tell exemplify values that are shared by many societies in the world today. They are future young protagonists in the process of finding their own personal strength and courage.

This anthology includes many different heroes facing a wide range of situations. They come from different countries and even different times in history. But they are all determined to make a life for themselves on their own terms.



### USA Elections in Brief

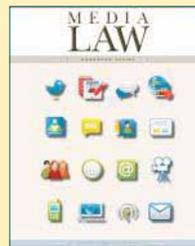
A background guide to the entire U.S. electoral system, from federal, state, local, and primary elections to related topics such as polling and the role of the parties and the media.



## UPCOMING BOOKS

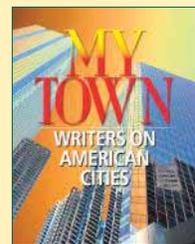
### Media Law Handbook

What are the privileges and responsibilities of a free press? In Media Law Handbook, Professor Jane Kirtley, Silha Professor of Media Ethics and Law at the University of Minnesota, explores how free societies answer this question.



### My Town: Writers on American Cities

My Town: Writers on American Cities features 12 American authors describing how the U.S. cities where they live contribute to their creativity. Pete Hamill offers a touching reminiscence of growing up in New York, Washington Post critic Jonathan Yardley introduces the reader to his hometown of Baltimore, and best-selling author Jonathan Kellerman describes “the sprawling, inchoate alternative-universe” that is Los Angeles. Also featured are portraits of Boston, Houston, Atlanta, Chicago, New Orleans, Memphis, Miami, and Washington, D.C.



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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