



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

# Yerevan Times

## MEMORIAL DAY



The Memorial Day holiday, celebrated by Americans on the last Monday of each May, represents for many the unofficial beginning of summer. An estimated 40 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more over the long holiday weekend, as they seek out friends and family or beaches and amusement parks, while others relax and enjoy the warm weather. But most will pause at some point to recall the holiday's true purpose: honoring those who died defending their nation.

Memorial Day's origins lie in the American Civil War of 1861–1865. During that conflict, which claimed the lives of more than 550,000 Americans, many citizens began to place flowers on the graves of the war dead. A number of northern municipalities continued these "Decoration Days" after the war ended, but the decisive event occurred in 1866 in tiny Waterloo, New York (2000 population 5,118), 450 kilometers from New York City.

Waterloo resident Henry C. Welles, the town's druggist, hit on the idea of setting aside a day to honor the nation's Civil War dead. Among his customers was John B. Murray, who had risen to the rank of Brigadier General in the Union (northern) Army and served as clerk of Seneca County. Murray adopted the idea as his own, and was instrumental in Waterloo's first Decoration Day, on May 5, 1866.

Among the ceremonies held that day was one at Arlington National Cemetery, located in Virginia across the Potomac River from Washington. President Ulysses S. Grant presided. After the speeches and tributes, thousands of war orphans, veterans and others decorated the graves of the Civil War dead. There were more than 20,000 such graves at Arlington Cemetery alone.

By the turn of the century, nearly every state had declared Decoration Day an official holiday. After World War I, Decoration Day expanded to honor those killed in all of the nation's wars and after World War II become known as Memorial Day. Congress established the federal holiday in 1971, and fixed its observance on the last Monday in May.

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day.

Read more on U.S. Holidays at: [http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life\\_and\\_culture/holidays.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays.html)



## American Corners in Armenia

Each month, the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center organizes "American at the American Corners," and "Armenian at the American Corners" lectures. All presentations are free of charge and open to the public. Here is the list of selective upcoming public lectures at the American Corners:

May 7, at 14:00: "U.S. National Parks" by Adela Renna in Vanadzor

May 14, at 15:00: "Ten Key Differences Between the Armenian and American Criminal Justice Systems" by Steve Kessler in Gyumri

May 24, at 14:00: "International Law of War and Military Occupations in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by Peter Holquist in Yerevan

At your convenience please visit: <http://www.americancorners.am>

*Please read also page 3.*

## NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK IN ARMENIA



On April 14-21, 2008 the Armenian library community observed the 7th National Library Week (NLW) with the theme, "Library Key to the Wisdom @ your library®."

The NLW campaign began as a result of the Strengthening Library Associations in the South Caucasus, May 5-8, 2001, Tbilisi, Georgia conference initiated by the American Library Association and sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Open Society Institute, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy – Tbilisi.

Every April, since 2002, all Armenian libraries celebrate a week devoted to reading, knowledge and access to information. Over the years, NLW has become an important library festival for Armenia.

This year, Armenian libraries initiated a year-long celebration of the centennial of Armenian-American writer William Saroyan's birth. Many public and school libraries hosted programs devoted to William Saroyan. All four American Corners in Armenia hosted interesting programs centered on William Saroyan's centennial. On April 16, the Lori Regional Public Library hosted a speaker program and display devoted to the famous Armenian-American writer. The same day, the American Corner in Vanadzor hosted Information Resource Officer Bill Middleton who gave a public lecture entitled "What Libraries and Others are Doing in the United States to Combat the Decline in Reading." On April 17, the American Corner in Kapan organized a program during which participants watched a slideshow about the writer's life and became acquainted with novels written by the author, including some passages from Saroyan's stories. The students of school №7 took part in a performance. On April 18, 2008, the American Corner in Yerevan hosted a lecture entitled "William Saroyan as an Ethnic Writer" which was presented by Maria Karapetyan, a 2003-2004 FLEX alumna and 4th year student of Yerevan State Linguistic University.

For the first time since Armenia's independence, the Armenian Government adopted a library development plan and gave funding to renovate central and city public libraries. Most of the Armenian libraries participate in NLW.

## Do you know?

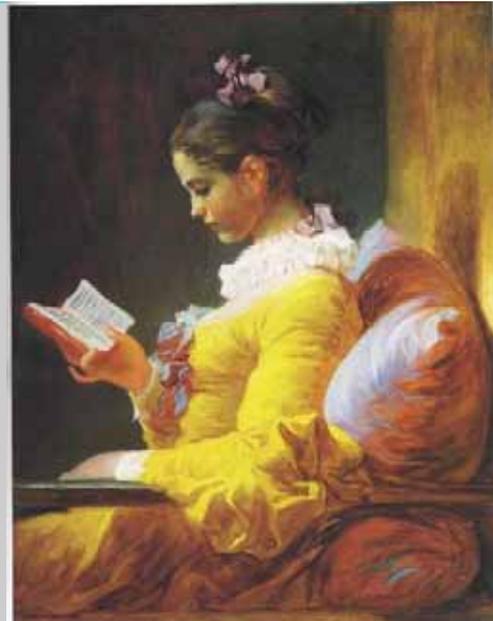
### April 23 - World Book and Copyright Day

By celebrating this day throughout the world, UNESCO seeks to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright.

[UNESCO: World Book and Copyright Day](#)

**Why April 23?** A symbolic date for world literature, for on this date and in the same year of 1616, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega all died. It is also the date of birth or death of other prominent authors such as Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla and Manuel Mejia Vallejo. It was a natural choice for UNESCO's General Conference to pay a world-wide tribute to books and authors on this date, encouraging everyone, and in particular young people, to discover the pleasure of reading [...]."

**Links:** UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library: [World Book and Copyright Day](#)



Jean-Honoré Fragonard, A Young Girl Reading, c.1776 (65 X 81 cm)

## What's New at The American Corners?

### IN GYUMRI: U.S. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES JOSEPH PENNINGTON VISITS GYUMRI

On April 17 2008, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Joseph Pennington gave a public lecture at the American Corner in Gyumri. The topic was "Work at the U.S. Embassy" and Pennington covered a wide range of activities, first giving a general overview of Mission goals and then identifying each of the Embassy sections and major areas of responsibility. After his presentation, the group participants addressed a wide range of questions to the Chargé and other embassy officers present. Most of the questions were connected with the current state of democracy and the recent presidential elections in Armenia. Several questions were about the border between Turkey and Armenia, only a few kilometers from Gyumri, which has been closed since 1993. One of the attendees, a member the Corner's English Conversation Club, asked to visit the Embassy and the group was immediately invited to the do so by IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan. After the presentation, the Embassy visitors observed the English Conversational Club in action.



### IN VANADZOR: PUBLIC LECTURE ON THE FUTURE OF READING



On April 16, 2008, Vienna based Information Resource Officer Bill Middleton gave a public lecture in Vanadzor entitled "What Libraries and Others are Doing in the United States to Combat the Decline in Reading."

The specifics of the problem, a burning issue not only for the United States but for the entire developed world, were presented together with various solutions. Mr. Middleton presented information about Internet sources like Amazon.com Online Bookstore, LibraryThing, a web-based social cataloging tool, and programs offered by the American Library Association.

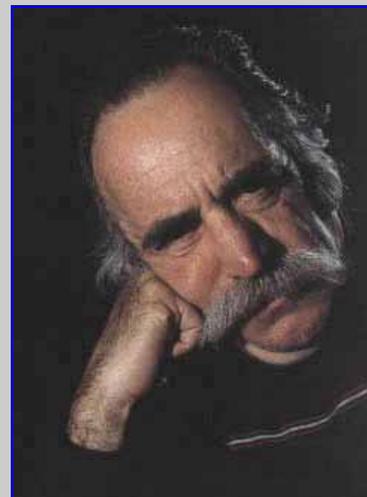
A discussion followed the lecture, in which over 15 students and faculty members from Vanadzor State Pedagogical University took part.

### IN YEREVAN: WILLIAM SAROYAN AS AN ETHNIC WRITER

On April 18, 2008, the American Corner in Yerevan hosted a very interesting lecture devoted to William Saroyan's centennial. The lecture, entitled "William Saroyan as an Ethnic Writer," was presented by Maria Karapetyan, a 2003-2004 FLEX alumnus and 4th year student of Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov.

First, she briefly presented William Saroyan's biography. Then, turning to Saroyan's writings, she mentioned that it is a bright example of how cultures can influence each other to create an unprecedented blend of quality and style. Then she analyzed William Saroyan's famous novel "My Name is Aram."

Over 30 students, including a large group from Open Armenian University, participated in the lecture. At the end, a live discussion took place, led by the IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan, along with Karapetyan and the audience.



## At the Information Resource Center

### U.S. ALUMNI ROUND TABLE PROGRAM

On April 30, the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section hosted thirty four tourism and economics students at Yerevan State University, Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University, the Yerevan State Institute of Economics, Russian State University of Tourism and Service, Yerevan Branch, and the Armenian Institute of Tourism. They met with specialists from private companies and travel agencies as part of the U.S. Alumni Roundtable Program. Speakers, who participated in U.S. Government sponsored study through the International Visitor Leadership (IVLP) and Junior Faculty Development Programs (JFDP), shared their knowledge and experience in the field of tourism and hospitality management obtained in the United States. The meeting started with speakers' presentations on hospitality management and offering tour packages. Discussion focused on improvement of the tourism market in Armenia, local ecotourism, and the creation of an Armenian brand. Students also touched upon issues such as the prospects of Armenia to become a tourism center.

Participants agreed that classification of Armenian Diaspora members as potential tourists for Armenia could create problems for the future development of local tourism, and mentioned that tourism can be a valuable source of local employment. They also discussed ways to make Armenia attractive for potential foreign tourists. Both students and speakers found the meeting very interesting productive, and useful.



### SELECTED WEBSITES FOR U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2008

#### POLLS

[ABC News Polling Unit](#) Polls and blogs on a variety of topics

[CBS News Polls](#) Video and links to the latest political polls

[Electoral Vote](#) Maps showing which states favor which party

[The Gallup Poll Election 2008](#) Data on both issues and candidates from one of the best-known polling organizations

[Los Angeles Times Poll](#) Polls on issues and candidates

[The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press](#) Polls on a variety of social and political issues

[Public Agenda](#) Information on what the public thinks of its leaders

[Quinnipiac University National Polls](#) Polls on a variety of issues

[Rasmussen Reports](#) Links to a variety of polls and commentary

[The Washington Post - ABC News polls](#) Variety of materials, including a blog that explains polls' findings



## Resources Available for Distance Learning

**American Library Association** Distance Learning – Current workshops include: reference, children's issues, management issues, and copyright. Fee-based workshops. <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=eventsdist&Template=/Conference/ConferenceList.cfm&ConferenceTypeCode=D>.

**Association of College and Research Libraries** - Current courses include designing websites, creating plans for information literacy, virtual reference, leading change, and Web 2.0. Fee-based: <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlproftools/elearning.cfm>

**Bibliographical Center for Research** - Workshops pertaining to OCLC, Internet, Web design, cataloging and ILL topics. Free (Free Friday Forum) and fee-based. <http://www.bcr.org/training/index.html>

**Alternative Basic Library Education (ABLE)** – Designed to help those who have no formal education in library science acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to work in a library. The online courses provide "just-in-time" training. Free and anyone who wishes may enroll. <http://libraries.idaho.gov/able>

**Supplemental Alternative Basic Library Education (SABLE)** - Designed to provide additional resources to help those who have no formal education in library science acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to operate or work in a library. This program is a supplement to the above ABLE courses and provide training on specialized services, including children and youth services. <http://libraries.idaho.gov/sable>

**Kovacs Consulting** - In-depth online workshops on a wide variety of library topics, including medical research, reference skills, web design, electronic collection development, etc. Primarily fee-based, although some are free. <http://www.kovacs.com/training.html>

**LEAD - Lifelong Education @ Desktop** - Fee-based, two-hour long courses on a wide variety of topics, including budgeting, volunteers, and information ethics. <http://leadonline.info/>

**Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science** - Fee-based online workshops on a variety of topics with an emphasis on new technologies and services for young adult. <http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/continuinged/workshops/online.shtml>

**Southeastern Library Information Network (SOLINET)** - Web-based instruction including such topics as: information literacy, creating digital objects, and trends in technology. [http://www.solinet.net/workshops/workshop\\_tmpl.cfm?doc\\_id=730](http://www.solinet.net/workshops/workshop_tmpl.cfm?doc_id=730)

## English Learners Corner

What is an **idiom**? What is a **saying**?

An idiom is a phrase or group of words with a meaning that is not obvious from the individual words (for example, "rain cats and dogs", meaning "rain heavily"). Even if you know all the words (rain, cat, dog), you will probably not understand "rain cats and dogs" if you don't know the idiom. "Rain cats and dogs" is not a saying because it does not express a general truth.

A saying is a short expression that expresses a general truth and contains advice or wisdom (for example, "once bitten, twice shy", meaning that an unpleasant experience makes us more careful the next time). If you know the words (once, bite, twice, shy) you can probably understand what this saying means. "Once bitten, twice shy" is not an idiom because it is understandable from the individual words.

Sayings can be further divided into: proverb; maxim; adage; motto; aphorism; epigram

Note that idiom in general also refers to the form of expression that is natural to a language, person or group of people.



## Double or single quotation marks?

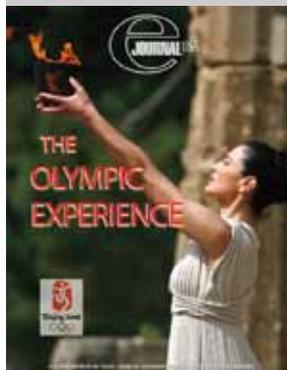
Quotation marks can be double ("") or single (''). If we want to use quotation marks inside quotation marks, then we use single inside double, or double inside single.

He said to her: "I thought 'Titanic' was a good film."

## ELECTRONIC JOURNALS Of the U.S. Department of State

### THE OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State, April, 2008



The Olympic Games remind us of certain universal human values. Every Olympian has a story that echoes the shared human struggle for excellence and our devotion to pursue purpose in life. In this issue of eJournal USA, we celebrate the Olympics through the individual experiences and insights of athletes who share their memories of the Olympic Experience.

When an Olympic medalist stands at the center of the world stage, a single, eye-filling, heart-bursting moment reveals a lifetime dream come true. We dare say that most everyone on the planet with a television has seen that moment at least once and wondered what it must feel like. For this issue of eJournal USA, we sought out athletes who could tell us.

Every four years when the world's nations join together in the Olympics, the event spotlights national aspirations and international causes. In 2008, this "celebration of humanity," as one of our contributors calls it, unfolds in Beijing, a city that has also been striving for excellence as it prepares to welcome the world. We'll see some of the stunning new additions to the city's skyline and learn of the Chinese plans to host an event that reflects the goal of "One World, One Dream."

This e-journal is available at the following web address: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0108/ijse/ijse0108.htm>

### THE GREENING OF U.S. CORPORATIONS

An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department of State, March, 2008

This issue of eJournal USA delves into what those familiar with the history of the environmental movement in the United States might see as a surprising trend — the way U.S. corporations in recent years have embraced environmentally friendly ways of doing business. What prompts a corporation to "go green"?

"We looked across our company and recognized that a focus on environmental technology could be a big business initiative for the company," said Jeffrey Immelt, the chief executive of General Electric, a leader in this field. "The concept we worked on at the time was this notion that green is green." So the environment has become a business opportunity, a chance to increase profits, and the core of any business enterprise.

But the story of converting corporations to green policies is more complex than that. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), consumers, investors, new technologies, and government policy have all played a role. NGOs and businesses are finding ways to work together to protect the environment, particularly through developing standards and green certification programs.

This e-journal is available at the following web address:  
<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0308.html>



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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