



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

Yerevan Times

March-April, 2010
Volume 6, Issue 2



Iowa International Writer's Program

Violet Grigorian, Armenia's first participant in the University of Iowa International Writer's Program since Armenia's independence, speaks at the Hayeli Press Club about her experiences in Iowa and discusses the importance of cultural exchange in the field of literature. U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center Director Nerses Hayrapetyan and Assistant Public Affairs Officer Susan Bridenstine also participated in the press conference. The U.S. Embassy provided partial funding for Ms. Grigorian's participation the program. For more information about U.S. Government exchanges, please visit www.usa.am and www.exchanges.state.gov.

Women History Month

International Women's Day (8 March) is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world. This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. When women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their day, they can look back on a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

In 1981, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution establishing National Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress ex-



panded the week to a month, and has since passed such a resolution every year. Congressional action is followed by a U.S. presidential proclamation declaring March as Women's History Month.

Since its founding in 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHHP) has recognized and celebrated the rich and varied contributions of women to the history and culture of the United States.

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history. It is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

Earth Day

Earth Day, April 22, is the annual U.S. celebration of the environment and a time for Americans 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 non-governmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. 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.

Groundbreaking federal legislation followed the success of the first Earth Day. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, followed by the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Among the many far-reaching provisions of these bills was the requirement that automobiles use unleaded gasoline, achieve a minimum number of miles-per-gallon of gasoline, and be equipped with catalytic converters to reduce the amount of toxic fumes released by automobile exhaust.

Earth Day celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. What began in 1970 as a protest movement has evolved into a global celebration of the environment and commitment to its protection.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/env-english/2008/>



IRC Hosts Roundtable on Business Lobbying

Roundtable on Protection of Business Interests

On February 25, 2010, the U.S. Embassy Yerevan Information Resource Center (IRC) held a roundtable discussion with 22 economic students from Yerevan State University, the American University of Armenia, Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University, and the Armenian State University of Economics. They met with Armen Martirosyan, President of Antares Holding, and Arsen Stepanyan, Advocacy Program Manager for Counterpart International. The speakers, who both participated in the U.S. Government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), shared their knowledge and experience in the field of business lobbying. Marko Velikonja, Economic Officer at the U.S. Embassy, also addressed participants. He noted that democracy is key to economic and business development and that open borders, especially for neighbors, is beneficial for creating a free business environment.

Speakers discussed business lobbying in general and opined that small businesses often unite to voice their problems and to find ways to improve legislation and the tax system, to decrease corruption risks, and to locate new markets. Armenpack, the National Association of Publishers, the Council of Advertisers, and the Club of Polygraphists were mentioned as business lobbying organizations in Armenia. Armen shared his experience obtained during the protection of his own business interests in Armenia and agreed that the saying "There are no permanent friends or foes in politics," works in the business sphere as well. Speakers noted that the mass media, the judiciary system, information technology, and market research are good tools to protect business interests. Participants inquired about how the judiciary system protects businesses and asked about current legislation in Armenia that protects business interests.



Economic Officer Marko Velikonja addresses the participants



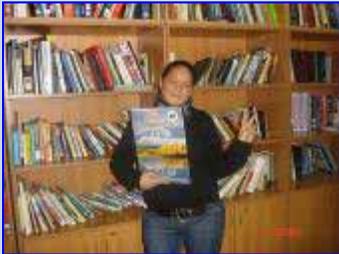
Speakers, Armen Martirosyan and Arsen Stepanyan, explain the topic

To watch the video of the event please check our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ircyerevan>



Asya Tonoyan was awarded at the American Corner in Yerevan

when all of a sudden, coming to the Corner where I am a frequent visitor, I was presented a magnificent, illustrated book about America’s landscape” wrote Asya in her letter to the IRC Director.



Tamara Khlgatyan was awarded at the American Corner in Gyumri



Varduhi Movsisyan was awarded at the American Corner in Vanadzor

KAPAN:



Mary Soghomonian was awarded at the American Corner in Kapan

Mary Soghomonian is a daily visitor of the Kapan American Corner, who never misses English Club meetings and discussions. Mary is the “Aravot” Armenian daily’s correspondent in Kapan. Host library director Susanna Minasyan welcomed her and announced that she is selected as their nominee and will be awarded with a certificate and a presentation book. Correspondents from Armenpress news agency, “Hetq” and “Syunyats Ashkharh” newspapers attended the award ceremony.

YEREVAN:

Asya Tonoyan was the lucky patron of the year at the Yerevan American Corner. She is a 4th year student at the Yerevan Armenian Pedagogical University majoring in English. “I can’t express the joy and happiness I felt

when all of a sudden, coming to the Corner where I am a frequent visitor, I was presented a magnificent, illustrated book about America’s landscape” wrote Asya in her letter to the IRC Director.

GYUMRI:

Tamara Khlgatyan is a 1st year student in the Faculty of Linguistics at the Gyumri European University. She is a volunteer at the Corner, where she conducts English courses for kids.

VANADZOR:

Varduhi Movsisyan is one of the most devoted patrons in Vanadzor, a daily visitor of the Corner. Varduhi is a graduate of Vanadzor Mkhitar Gosh University. She thinks that the Corner resources and services are very helpful for those who are engaged in American Studies.

THE AMERICAN CORNERS OF ARMENIA HOST 100,000TH PATRON

On February 11, 2010, the American Corners of Armenia hosted their 100,000th guest. All four Corners selected nominees and awarded gift presentation books on famous American landscapes.



The American Corner program was inaugurated in Armenia in April 2005, when the U.S. Embassy opened the first Corner in Yerevan. Over the past five years, more than 100,000 people have visited the Corners in Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor and Kapan. Each year, the Corners organize more than 50 public lectures, 400 English classes and club meetings, and over 100 movie screenings and discussions. Patrons borrow over 15,000 books and more than 10,000 U.S. magazines annually.



All four Patrons received Certificates of Appreciation signed by Ambassador Yovanovitch

American Corners are small American-style libraries that provide information about America in a variety of formats, including reference books, works of fiction, journals, and videos. The Corners also provide computers with free Internet access, and offer a variety of public programs including speakers and workshops. The American Corners are open to the general public and access is free of charge. A network of over 400 American Corners operates globally through partnerships between the U.S. Department of State and

local host organizations. In Armenia, the American Corners are hosted by the City Central Library in Yerevan, by the Lori and Syunik Provincial libraries in Vanadzor and Kapan and in Gyumri, hosted by the Gyumri Branch of the National Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.



PAO Tom Mittnacht presenting “America the Beautiful” to Asya Tonoyan

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

Upcoming lectures at the American Corners:

- March 3, Vanadzor “Smithsonian Institution” by Charles Clegg
- March 10, Gyumri, “Guns in America” by Steve Kessler
- March 20, Yerevan

RECENT PUBLIC LECTURES AT THE AMERICAN CORNERS



Gold Rush in California

On Wednesday, February 10, 2010, U.S. Embassy Political Officer Daniel Hastings delivered a public lecture at the American Corner in Gyumri entitled "The Gold Rush in California." Mr. Hastings started the lecture by introducing himself and speaking a little bit about his experiences as a

Peace Corps Volunteer in Armenia from 1992-94.

Then, Mr. Hastings talked about the history of the California Gold Rush, how it began, and what the economic and demographic impacts were as a result of the great migration of people from eastern states and other countries to California. He introduced famous Gold Rush pioneers Johann August Sutter and James Marshall, who discovered gold in Coloma, California in 1848. Mr. Hastings also discussed famous Gold Rush businessmen Phillip Armour, Levi Strauss and John Studebaker. Participants learned that the most famous celebrity of the Gold Rush era was Samuel Clemens, who is better known worldwide by his literary name Mark Twain. Finally, Mr. Hastings mentioned the early mining industry in the United States and how people lived at the time.

After the presentation, participants asked a wide range of questions. More than 15 people from different universities as well as Peace Corps Volunteers participated in the lecture.

United Plates of America

On February 20, 2010, the American Corner Yerevan organized a public lecture entitled "United Plates of America." The guest speaker, U.S. Embassy Assistant Public Affairs Officer Susan Bridenstine, presented the more than 250-year history of American cuisine.

She noted that American cuisine reflects the diversity of the United States and said that American cuisine, like the U.S. population, incorporates a rich mix of ethnic influences. Ms. Bridenstine talked about the influence of immigration and the economic conditions of the country on the food industry. She discussed Native American food traditions, coffee drinking post American Revolutionary War, the influence of slavery on Southern cuisine, the bucolic image of the American farmer, Prohibition, the impact of dietary patterns from various wars, and important social movements related to food. She also mentioned popular American fast food chains and the American diet industry. Ms. Bridenstine gave the participants the opportunity to sample American sauces, crackers, cookies, and other delicious treats.

Around 25 people enjoyed the "food party-lecture" and requested recipes for the food they tasted. There were many students and U.S. Government exchange program alumni among the participants, who now have a fluent understanding of "The United Plates of America."



Passing around the American treats

The Library of Congress 2.0

Websites Related to Armenia at the Library of Congress

The Armenia Country page gives contact information for queries concerning Armenia and acquisitions of materials related to it at the Library of Congress, as well as access to a variety of online sources related to collections, programs, and research methodology.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/nes/cty/cai/caihome.html>

This link provides a selected and annotated portal page arranged by subject heading to online sources related to all aspects of Armenia.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/armenia/armenia.html>

The text and illustrations of the chapter on Armenia and Georgia Library of Congress Near East Collections: An illustrated Guide has been added at this URL.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/nes-armeniageorgia.html>

This is the link to the African and Middle Eastern Division which provides access to all aspects relating to the Near East Section (which has custody of Armenian language materials), as well as to the African and Hebrew sections.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/>

Access to the Library of Congress' superb cataloged collections.

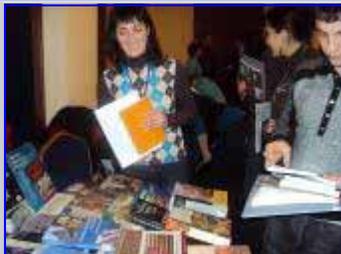
<http://www.loc.gov>

A search under Armenia in the Prints and Photographs Divisions site will yield photographs, posters and a variety of other important materials.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html>

A search under Armenia in the Armenian Memory Page of the Library's homepage will yield photographs, documents, maps, folksongs, and historical articles on Armenia and the Armenians.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



Winter School 2010

Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Armenia organized a winter school in Armenia called “Redefining American Democracy.” The Winter School was organized in Tsaghkadzor on January 27-31, 2009, at Kecharis Resort

House. The program was aimed at enhancing the participants’ knowledge on subjects such as American society, the U.S. political system, government institutions, domestic and foreign policy, etc. Nerses Hayrapetyan, IRC Director, gave a presentation about IRC services and resources. In addition, the IRC displayed over 20 books on American Studies which attracted the interest of participants. Several participants registered for different IRC list serves and joined the IRC Facebook page fans group.

Read more about the Winter School at: <http://winterschoolblog.wordpress.com/2010/02/15/13/>

Information Resource Center’s Booth at the 3rd Yerevan Publishers’ Fair

On February 19-21, the 3rd Junior Book Fair took place in Yerevan which was organized by the National Children’s Library after Khnko-Aper and the National Association of Publishers with the support of the Culture Ministry. Over 23 publishing houses presented their books for kids and teenagers in their pavilions of the National Children’s Library.

Director of the National Children’s Library, Ruzanna Tonoyan, stated for the press that the goal of the fair was to make books available to library patrons as well as the local public.

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center (IRC) and American Corner Yerevan represented their collections and services for young learners and school students. The American Corner assistant coordinator Ella Asmaryan disseminated the Corner brochures and presented English language grammar and fiction. At the IRC pavilion more than 10 titles of books and journals were available for public outreach, among them Black Garden by Tomas De Waal, the Department of State International Information Program publication “Outline of U.S. Government,” Forum English Teaching Magazine, and other titles. During the fair over 1000 visitors obtained information about services and programs of the IRC.



U.S. Embassy and American Corners information booth



The Children’s Library is one of Yerevan’s favorite places for kids

U.S. Embassy Yerevan and Yerevan State University Celebrate Black History Month

In celebration of Black History Month, the U.S. Embassy Yerevan’s Information Resource Center (IRC) has organized a series of events, including two public lectures and a poster show, at Yerevan State University. On February 19, George Zarycky, Director of the Democracy & Governance Office of USAID in Armenia gave a lecture entitled “The American Civil Rights Movement: An Overview.” The university audience learned about American society in the 60’s and 70’s and America’s struggle to end segregation. A lively discussion took place after the presentation. An audience of more than sixty students and faculty members attended the lecture.

On February 26, Economic Officer of the U.S. Embassy Marko Velikonja met with 25 students from the faculties of International



Relations, Philosophy and Psychology and Economics of YSU.

The lecture helped to

expose the Armenian audience to an important part of U.S. history and the contribution of African Americans in the development of the United States. In the framework of Black History Month, the IRC also organized a university paper show on the “Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.,” which began at the university on January 21.

The IRC also donated two books on international human rights and freedom of expression to support the university’s area studies program.

All four American Corners organized different activities to celebrate Martin Luther King’s birthday and African-American History Month. The Corners screened “Citizen King” in Vanadzor (January 19th), in Gyumri (January 22nd), and Yerevan (January 30th). From January 18 to 23, the Kapan and Yerevan American Corners also organized a book display devoted to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Visitors viewed a range of books and print articles devoted not only to Dr. King, but also to other prominent African Americans. The American Corner visitors learned about Dr. King’s legacy and his accomplishments.

Useful New and Social Media (Web 2.0) Sites

Social Networking

Social networks are online communities of people who communicate with each other and share interests and activities.

Popular social networking sites include **Facebook**, **Linked In**,



MySpace, Hi5, Orkut, and Ning

Facebook (Facebook.com)– social networking. Users can add friends and send them messages, and update personal profiles.

IRC's on FACEBOOK!

Are you on Facebook? Send us a friend request. (Search for us by email address ircyerevan@usa.am or by



www.facebook.com/ircyerevan)

Myspace (myspace.com) – social networking site

MySpace allows users to customize their user profile pages by entering **HTML** into such areas as "About Me," "I'd Like to Meet," and "Interests." Videos and flash-based content can be included this way. Users also have the option to add music to their profile pages via MySpace Music, a service that allows bands to post songs for use on MySpace.



Linked In (linkedin.com) - social networking. LinkedIn is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world. LinkedIn exists to help you make better use of your professional network and help the people you trust in return. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form enduring connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you.



Flickr (flickr.com) - photo sharing website. Flickr is a free photo and video sharing social network owned by Yahoo!. Flickr allows users to upload, edit, organize, share, tag and place photos on an interactive world map. Flickr offers users the ability to create and join groups where they can share their photos with other members of that group as well as post discussion topics and comments.



YouTube (youtube.com) is a free social networking site operated by Google dedicated to sharing user-generated videos. Web content creators can copy a unique link to a YouTube video and embed it on their own Web page, blog or social network. YouTube users are given a "channel," that allows users to share uploaded videos and allows comments on the videos. In fact, 100,000,000 videos are viewed on



YouTube everyday. Thirteen hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.

Social Bookmarking Sites

Social bookmarking is the act of saving links to

Web sites to a public site and tagging them with keywords. It differs from making bookmarks because bookmarks are only available on the computer you are using. Social bookmarking is a great way to collect a set of resources and share them with others.



Del.icio.us (del.icio.us.com)– social bookmarking web service for storing, sharing and discovering Web bookmarks. Delicious allows users to tag, save, manage and share web pages from a centralized source. With emphasis on the power of the community, Delicious greatly improves how people discover, remember and share on the Internet.

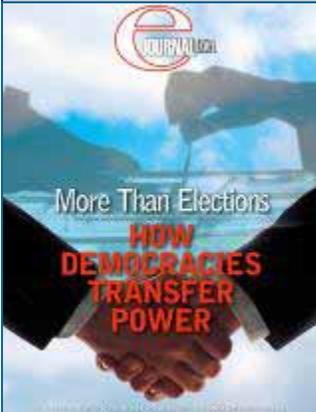


Digg (digg.com) – technology and science articles. Digg is a place for people to discover and share content from anywhere on the web. From the biggest online destinations to the most obscure blog, Digg surfaces the best stuff as voted on by our users.

DID YOU KNOW ?.....

- 75% of cell phone users worldwide send text messages on a daily basis.
- The number of Internet users is estimated to be about 1.5 billion people. In Armenia it is about 180,000-200,000 people.
- U.S. Internet users spend an average of 15 hours a week online.
- More than 113 billion searches were conducted in the U.S. online in 2007.
- The World Wide Web has more than 63 billion pages and there are more than 100 million websites.
- There are an estimated 112 million blogs.
- More than 120,000 new blogs are created every day.
- An estimated 500,000 people join Facebook every day.
- YouTube hosts 100 million daily video streams. In January 2008, 79 million users watched over 3 billion videos.
- There are now 3 billion cell phone subscribers worldwide.
- In almost 50 countries, there are more cell phones than people.

EJOURNAL USA: “MORE THAN ELECTIONS: HOW DEMOCRACIES TRANSFER POWER”



Democracy requires more than holding elections. Healthy democracies are defined by the expectations of citizens and the common rules, understandings, and trust they build. This *eJournal USA* explores the contours of civil society and political legitimacy within which peaceful transitions of power can occur.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0110.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>

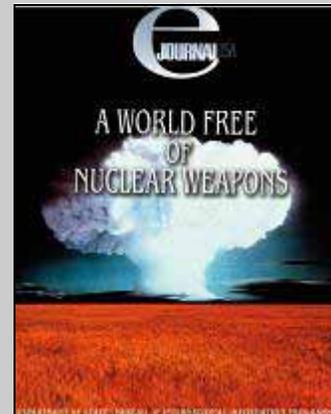
The printed copy of the e-journal is available in the Information Resource Center and American Corners in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor.

EJOURNAL USA: “A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS”

Since the first atomic bombs exploded in 1945, some have tried to rid the world of nuclear weapons. President Obama has embraced this goal with new vigor. This issue of eJournal USA examines the challenges to achieving nuclear disarmament. It conveys the hopes of some thinkers, and explains the doubts of others.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#0210>

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.

March

Global Trends in Agriculture

April

Climate Change Partnerships

May

See You in the U.S.A.—an update

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 13:00 to 18:00.
1, American Ave., Yerevan 0082, Republic of Armenia
Tel: (374-10) 49-44-11, 49-42-65

E-Mail: ircyerevan@usa.am <http://www.usa.am/irc3.html>