



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

Yerevan Times

September-October, 2010
Volume 6, Issue 5

Labor Day



This holiday, which always is observed on the first Monday of September, has been a federal holiday since 1894, but was observed in some places before that day as a result of a campaign by an early organization of workers called the Knights of Labor. Its purpose is to honor the nation's working people.

In many cities the day is marked by parades of working people representing labor unions.

Most Americans consider Labor Day the end of the summer, and the beaches and other popular resort areas are packed with people enjoying one last three-day weekend. For many students it marks the opening of the school year.

Read more on Labor Day at: "[The History of Labor Day](#)". U.S. Department of Labor.

Columbus Day

Columbus Day commemorates the explorer's arrival in the New World. The holiday is also a celebration of Italian-American cultural heritage.



A federal holiday observed the second Monday in October, Columbus Day commemorates Christopher Columbus's landing in the New World in 1492. A number of nations celebrate the day, including the Bahamas, Spain, and much of Latin America.

In 1971, Congress moved the U.S. holiday from October 12 to the second Monday in October to afford workers a long holiday weekend. In the United States, Columbus Day is typically a celebration of Italian and Italian-American cultural heritage, Columbus generally being considered a native of Genoa, Italy.

Bizarre American Holidays

We all look forward to September 19, when we celebrate International Talk Like a Pirate Day. But that isn't the only unusual celebration in the year. There's Tom Sawyer Fence Painting Day and Frog Jumping

Jubilee Day. There's a Great Poetry Reading Day AND a Bad Poetry

Reading Day. On December 31st there's the Festival of Enormous Changes at the Last Minute. There are dozens of days celebrating food, though few can equal National Chocolate Covered Anything Day.

Have a look at this website and see if anything inspires you:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/2886/>

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THE U.S. EMBASSY IN ARMENIA PRESENTS

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ԲՐԱՉԱՎԻԼ ինդի փոփ խումբ, ԱՄՆ
Brazzaville indie pop band, U.S.A.

12 սեպտեմբերի, 2010թ., 20:00
Երևանի Սիրտիարմենոյի զրոսայգի
Մաղալ Բաղդամյան 21

September 12, 2010 @ 8:00 PM
Lovers' Park Yerevan
Baghrarian Ave. 21

13 սեպտեմբերի, 2010թ., 19:00
Գյումրի, պետական
դրամատիկական թատրոն
September 13, 2010 @ 7:00 PM
Gyumri, State Drama Theater

IRC MONDAY MOVIE PROGRAM

On August 23rd, the IRC screened the drama “The Great Debaters” with Denzel Washington. This film is based on the true story of Melvin Tolson, a professor at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. During his tenure, he coached a small group of students to form the first debate team from a black college to compete against those from white colleges. The movie shows the many challenges faced by this team as they make history to compete against the national debate champions of Harvard College.

After the movie, an American guest from New York, Ms. Rud, moderated a 30-minute discussion. The spectators commented on the issue of segregation and mentioned that segregation exists everywhere, not only along racial lines but also in issues of gender and age. Students also were interested in the current situation in the USA regarding racial segregation. Ms. Rud said she believes that prejudice still exists in subtle forms in the schools, in the job application process, and in salaries. Ms. Rud highlighted the key idea of the film – “No law is better than an unjust law.”



LECTURE ON PEOPLE FOCUSED LIBRARIES

On August 5, 2010, IRO Vienna Catherine Marsicek presented a lecture on “People Focused Libraries” to about 20 city and rural librarians and NGO coordinators at the Sisian Public Library. The library is a partner in an embassy-driven civil society project administered by the “Civilitas” Foundation. The discussion emphasized the importance of the public’s participation in programming at public libraries. Participants asked questions about library practice in U.S. public libraries. Ms. Marsicek prepared a slide show to illustrate library buildings and design in the United States. The local Sisian television station also covered the event and interviewed Mr. Marsicek and the IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan.



IRC 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.

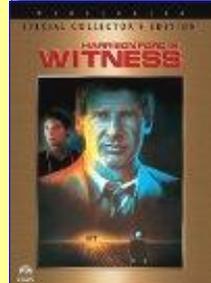
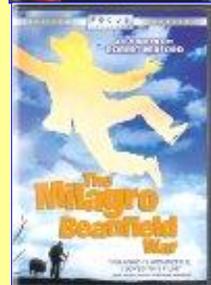
An upcoming movie will be shown on September 20 at 15:00pm. To be shown is “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance” (1962) by John Ford. It is a story about a senator, who became famous for killing a notorious outlaw, returns for the funeral of an old friend and tells the truth about his deed. Read more about the movie at: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056217/>

Please contact: ircyerevan@usa.am or call 49 44 11 if you plan to attend the movie series.

The next screenings are scheduled on:

October 18, 14:30pm - “The Milagro Beanfield War” (1988) by Robert Redford

November 15, 14:30pm—
“Witness” (1985) by Peter Weir



What's New at The American Corners?

Fifth Annual American Corners Conference Prepares Coordinators for Active Role in Innovative Children and Youth Programming

From August 3-4, 2010, U.S. Embassy in Yerevan



hosted the fifth annual American Corners in Armenia Workshop. The conference included the participation of American Corner coordinators from all four of Armenia's

American Corners, information technology (IT) specialists, library directors, and assistant librarians from host library institutions as well as from libraries funded through Embassy Yerevan's "Libraries as Centers of Civil Society" project.

Vienna-based U.S. Information Resource Officer (IRO) Catherine Marsicek, Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Karen Robblee, and IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan opened the workshop. Hayrapetyan then provided a review of American Corner activities



over the past year. American Corner coordinators from Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, and Kapan presented annual reports about their activities. In 15-minute presentations

each Corner described its most successful program in 2009-2010.

IRO Catherine Marsicek shared AC updates from Washington, D.C. including the new virtual library, Pop Culture Universe database (new version), and the 10th Anniversary Edition of the AC Manual.

Workshop training, conducted by U.S. Embassy IRC Assistant Anna Mkrtychyan, IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan, and Public Affairs Section Program Specialist Avetik Petrosyan, focused on New Social Media and American Corners. They covered social bookmarking, RSS feeds and custom search engines, document shar-

ing in the cloud and other web-oriented applications. Participants learned how to manage the American Corners Facebook and YouTube pages.

At the end of the first day, Salpi Ghazaryan, Director of Civilitas Foundation presented her talk entitled "Libraries as Centers of Civil Society: Civilitas project for Armenian Libraries." Librarians from the Project participant libraries from Armavir, Ashtarak and Charentsavan participated in the discussion.

The second day of the workshop focused on American Corners outreach to children and resources for children and young adults. IRO Catherine Marsicek opened a panel discussion with presentation entitled "Spelling Bees and board games make English language learning fun: How to hold Gaming Events at ACs." Then U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer Susan Bridenstine delivered a pres-



Two themes ran through the workshop: 1) effective use of social media for internal communications and external outreach, and 2) developing engaging and innovative children and youth programming.

entation on "Hosting a Story Hour at the American Corner," which discussed in detail helpful hints and tips for planning a story hour.

A "Fish Bowl Discussion" also generated lively debate on various aspects of American Corner activities for children, including how to find a native



English speaker to volunteer for possible how to American how to toon Corners.

ble story hour, attract kids to Corners, and organize a car-screening at the

U.S. Peace Corps Armenia Program and Training Officer Nicholas Bruno discussed successful partnership projects with the Corners in Gyumri, Vanadzor and Kapan. PAS webmaster Isabella Zaratsyan discussed with AC coordinators how to better utilize their digital cameras to convey messages with photos.



American Corners Fifth Annual Workshop



At the end of the workshop IRC Director Nerses Hayrapetyan discussed MOU issues with the host library directors. During the summing up session IRO Catherine Marsicek, Cultural Affairs Officer Susan

Bridenstine and Assistant PAO Sean O'Hara donated board games, books and DVDs to the American Corners coordinators. Each American Corner received a collection of Dr. Seus books and DVDs.

To acknowledge the good work by the American Corners, the Embassy's Public Affairs Section organized an



outdoor reception at the Embassy's Gilmore Field and inviting over 40 leading Armenian librarians and information specialists from

academic, public, and special libraries. American Corner coordinators and all other participants took away many new ideas about social media and outreach to children for activities that will be implemented in the coming year.



IN KAPAN: SPELLING BEE FOR BEGINNING ENGLISH STUDENTS



On August 6, 2010, the American Corner Kapan organized a public presentation, "Americans at the American Corner." The Information Resource Officer from Vienna, Catherine

Marsicek, hosted a spelling bee for English language beginners. The speaker introduced the spelling bee to

the audience of students, parents, and librarians. Then the participants watched a documentary about the 1999



National Spelling Bee. More than 12 children and young adults participated in the Kapan Spelling Bee competition. The three winners were Nona Elyazyan from the Kapan school

No.3, Inga Soghomonyan from School No. 2, and Diana Stepanyan from school No.3. The same afternoon, a group of students, AC staff, and patrons participated in the second spelling bee for English language intermediate level learners.



All winners received DVDs, dictionaries, and fiction books as prizes. Participants learned a lot about spelling bees and American culture.

IN YEREVAN: A LECTURE SERIES ON GRANT WRITING

From August 24-31, Yerevan American Corner organized a lecture series on different topics for student audiences. Four lectures covered the grant application process from A to Z. The lecture topics were "How to fill in application form," "How to write a statement of purpose," "How to prepare for the international tests (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, SAT)," and "How to pass the interview." These lectures were presented by Armen Sahakyan, a student of the State Engineering University of Armenia. He is well informed about the application process for foreign universities and is a professional tutor of international tests. Armen has done an internship in London and is a graduate of the Yerevan-based "Career Internship Program."

Around 30 students from different Armenian universities attended the lectures. They are eager to study abroad and want to get more information how to the application process.

IN GYUMRI: Upcoming public lecture in Gyumri is scheduled on September 15 at 15:00pm. The U.S. Embassy Legal Advisor Steve Kessler will discuss with the audience the American criminal law on the issue of causation.

A RESEARCHER'S TOOLKIT

The sites below contain some of the best and newly available free online reference sites and are meant to make the research process for students, researchers, teachers and lifelong learners much easier and far more productive.

DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, HANDBOOKS & ALMANACS:

☀ www.lexicool.com

Lexicool.com: a directory of more than 7000 bilingual and multilingual dictionaries and glossaries that are freely available online.

☀ <http://www.acronymfinder.com/>

Acronym Finder: With more than 590,000 human-edited definitions, Acronym Finder is the world's largest and most comprehensive dictionary of acronyms, abbreviations, and initialisms. Combined with the Acronym Attic, Acronym Finder contains more than 4 million acronyms and abbreviations.

☀ <http://www.bartleby.com/64/>

American Heritage Book of English Usage: A Practical and Authoritative Guide to Contemporary English, includes an essential Grammar Toolkit and help with word choices and style.

☀ <http://www.bartleby.com>

Bartleby.com This is a mega-site offering the full text of fiction, non-fiction, reference works such as The Columbia Encyclopedia, The American Heritage Dictionary, Roget's Thesaurus, Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, Strunk's Elements of Style, U.S. Inaugurals, Gray's Anatomy, etc.

☀ <http://www.howjsay.com>

English Pronouncing Dictionary: Mouse over a word and a voice will actually pronounce it! There are currently 114, 614 entries in the dictionary.

☀ <http://www.infoplease.com>

Information Please: Online Dictionary, Internet Encyclopedia, Atlas and Almanac Reference. Contains most of the content found in the Information Please Almanac, U.S. and International Statistics, Biographical Information, Sports, Entertainment and Weather data.

☀ <http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units>

How Many? A Dictionary of Units of Measurement.

This dictionary describes the relationship between various English and metric units. Look here for measurement information covering most everything from Solar Flare Intensity to Paper Sheet Sizes to Wind Chill Charts.

☀ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Merriam - Webster Online:

Includes daily podcasts and RSS Feeds and the word of the day. Also, includes a free Medical Dictionary.

☀ <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/>

A separate dictionary for ESL learners

☀ <http://visual.merriam-webster.com/>

Merriam-Webster *Visual Dictionary* Online: Arranged by broad themes shows how a word or concept is related to similar words, using visuals to more easily understand the meaning and context.

☀ <http://www.onelook.com>

Reverse Dictionary: Type in a concept and retrieve the word or phrase for that concept. Example: Type in for example, "*fear of heights*" to retrieve the exact word, *acrophobia*.

☀ <http://www.bartleby.com/62/>

Roget II: The New Thesaurus

☀ <http://whatis.techtarget.com/whome/0,289825,sid9,00.html>

Whatis.com: This IT-specific Encyclopedia, serves both as a dictionary and an encyclopedia of thousands of computing and IT technology terms. It is a

DIGITAL LIBRARIES:

☀ **World Digital Library:**

<http://www.wdl.org/en/>

(Library of Congress with many international participants)

☀ **OAISTER:**

www.oaister.worldcat.org

Functions as an index to digitized records of cooperating digital libraries all over the world. Oaister contains over 20 million records, from over 1,200 cooperating international institutions. This site includes the full text of research studies and papers, as well as select theses and dissertations.

☀ **Catalogs and Databases of Digital Libraries and Initiatives**

http://www.unesco.org/cgi-bin/webworld/portal_bib2/cgi/page.cgi?d=1&g=Libraries/Digital/index.shtml

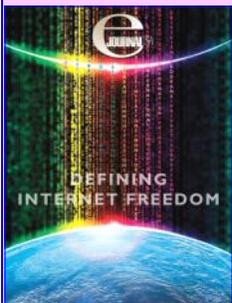
☀ **Directories of Digitized Collections Worldwide** (UNESCO/ IFLA Directories of Digitized Collections) <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/digicol/>

Currently lists over 300 digital collections by theme or category worldwide; also lists projects by type of institution—this site is truly invaluable.

To learn about more useful web sites please, explore the IRC's online bookmark page at: <http://www.delicious.com/ircyerevan>

EJOURNAL USA:

“DEFINING INTERNET FREEDOM.”



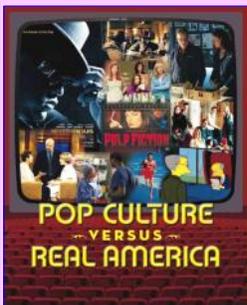
Information has never been so free, but threats to the free flow of information on the Internet are growing. Speaking in January 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton likened the spread of Internet-driven information networks to “a new nervous system for our planet.” “In many respects,” she continued, “information has never been so free.” But also “we’ve seen a spike in threats to the free flow of information.” Governments adopt diverse legal and policy positions in response to the increased availability of Internet-based communication technologies. Their motives are similarly diverse, and include cultural norms and political objectives. How governments and societies confront new and transformative Internet technologies is the subject of this *eJournal USA*.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#0610>

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>

NEW BOOKS ON AMERICA.GOV

POP CULTURE VERSUS REAL AMERICA



U.S. television and cinema promote images of Americans that are ... well ... wrong! Pop Culture versus Real America will contrast those pop culture images with profiles of real Americans in every walk of life.

PDF version of this publication is available at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books-content/pop-culture-vs-real-america.html>

US HISTORY LEARNER ENGLISH

This is the first in a planned series of books to help readers improve their English skills. Each book will teach you something about the United States. This book

is about U.S. history.

You can read the text or listen as a native-speaker reads it aloud.

PDF version of this publication is available at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books-content/us-history-learner-english.html>



AMERICAN LIVES



This picture book depicts Americans at every stage of life, from children to senior citizens, at work, home, and play.

The publication is available at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books-content/american-lives.html>

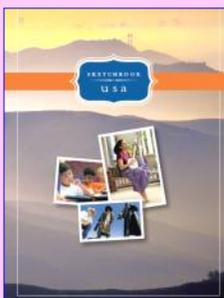
USA MAP WITH FACTS IN BRIEF

This publication includes plenty of facts and statistics about the United States -- its government, geography, environment, sports and entertainment, the economy and employment, education, transportation, and population.

The publication is available at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books/usamap.html>



SKETCHBOOK USA



Sketchbook USA lavishly illustrates many aspects of American life. These excerpts depict Americans at work, at play, and engaging in civic activities. View the entire Sketchbook USA and all its many photographs here.

The publication is available at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books/sketchbook.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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