

MAY, ISSUE 5 - 2011 AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER U.S. EMBASSY HELSINKI

HAPPENS @ ARC

Information Literacy Specialist Inspired the Audience at the American Resource Center

Fulbright Awards in Teaching Grantee Sarah Applegate gave an inspiring and engaging keynote speech at the School Library Roundtable Meeting at the American Resource Center on Thursday, May 19. Ms. Applegate's presentation "School Libraries, Student Research Skills, Student Success: Observations from Finland" provided the audience of education and library professionals with a summary of her project on school libraries and information literacy instruction in Finnish schools.

In addition to the keynote speech, the Roundtable consisted of the addresses by Finnish School Library Specialists: Pirjo Sinko gave an overview on the capacity of National Board of Education to develop Finnish school libraries; Anu Ojaranta discussed information literacy in the curriculum and in secondary school practices based on her forthcoming dissertation; Anne-Maria Mölläri and Kaija Fredrikson



Information Literacy Specialist Inspired the Audience at
the American Resource Center

presented the KirKou project, which deals with the co-operation between schools and public libraries in Helsinki.

Finnish school library functions are covered by a variety of professionals, and the

Roundtable offered a new forum to the participants to discuss the current challenges and share best practices. The discussion continues at the School Library Discussion Group in Facebook - you are welcome to join! (<http://goo.gl/B2C1s>)

PEEK INTO THE ARC'S MAGAZINE SHELF

ONLINE Magazine



ONLINE is written for both experienced and novice information professionals—librarians in academic, corporate, and government work settings; serious researchers; webmasters; site designers; content managers; and those involved in knowledge/information management. It publishes practical articles, product reviews, case studies, and informed opinions about selecting, using, manipulating, and managing digital information products.

The latest issue, for example, has articles ranging from Digital Transparency and Google Search to Changing Semantics and Website Usability Testing.

Source: *New York Review of Books*

INVITATION:

Poet Laureate Billy Collins in Helsinki

Billy Collins is an American phenomenon. No poet since Robert Frost has managed to earn high critical acclaim with such broad popular appeal.

"Such a sensible and gifted man is America's poet laureate—young writers have plenty to learn from his clarity and apparent ease."
--*The New York Times Book Review*

On Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 18:00 at the Great Hall of the Finnish Literature Society, Hallituskatu 1.

FREE ENTRY

Event flyer available here:

<http://goo.gl/kx1IE>

WEB PICKS

Disclaimer: The views expressed on these websites are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect U.S. Government policies. These links are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or approval by the ARC or the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, nor can we bear any responsibility for the accuracy, legality, functionality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links.

American Life

The Americans Are Coming (American Theatre, May/June 2011)

Yankee groups of different sizes and aesthetics find more than one way to reach international destinations.

<http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/mayjune11/americans.cfm>

Dense, Denser, Densest (The Wilson Quarterly, Spring 2011)

Americans like their cities spacious. Will concerns about costs and the environment push them to rein in sprawl?

<http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/article.cfm?AID=1810>

The Digital Campus (The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 2011)

The Chronicle's special report casts a critical eye on the technology making a difference at today's colleges and universities.

<http://chronicle.com/section/The-Digital-Campus/529/>

North America's Most Endangered Animals (Smithsonian, June 2011)

Snails, marmots, condors and coral reef are among the many species on the continent that are close to extinction

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/North-Americas-Most-Endangered-Animals.html#ixzz1NAWp4M2o>

Urban Planting (Audubon, March-April 2011)

Abandoned lots, marginal land and even rooftops in cities across the United States are being turned into small scale farms to supply urban dwellers, farmers markets and restaurants with local produce.

<http://www.audubonmagazine.org/currents/currents1103.html>

What's It Worth: The Economic Value of College Majors (Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, May 2011)

For the first time, researchers analyze earnings based on 171 college majors.

<http://cew.georgetown.edu/whatsitworth/>

Economy and Politics

America's Energy Future: New Solutions to Fuel Economic Growth and Prosperity (The Brookings Institution, May 25, 2011)

The recent climb in gasoline prices to \$4 per gallon is the latest headwind facing the U.S. economy. In addition to this threat to economic growth, America's current energy system poses long-term threats to national security, health, and the environment.

http://www.brookings.edu/events/2011/0518_energy_future.aspx

Back to School for the Billionaires (Newsweek, May 9, 2011)

The richest man in America stepped to the podium and declared war on the nation's school systems. High schools had become "obsolete" and were "limiting—even ruining—the lives of millions of Americans every year." The situation had become "almost shameful." Bill Gates, prep-school grad and college dropout, had come before the National Governors Association seeking converts to his plan to do something about it—a plan he would back with \$2 billion of his own cash.

<http://www.newsweek.com/2011/05/01/back-to-school-for-the-billionaires.html#>

Nearly Half of Americans Are 'Financially Fragile' (Wall Street Journal, May 23, 2011)

Nearly half of Americans say that they definitely or probably couldn't come up with \$2,000 in 30 days, according to new research, raising concerns about the financial fragility of many households.

http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2011/05/23/nearly-half-of-americans-are-financially-fragile/?utm_source=Budget+Campaign&utm_campaign=a1cd071785-Balance_Sheet5_11_2011&utm_medium=email

The Next America (The National Journal, April 2, 2011)

Minorities are increasing in number faster than just about anyone expected. That could have important implications for the 2012 presidential race.

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/u-s-transforming-into-majority-minority-nation-faster-than-expected-20110331>

Study: \$2 Trillion Needed for U.S. Infrastructure (Washington Post, May 17, 2011)

The United States is falling dramatically behind much of the world in rebuilding and expanding an overloaded and deteriorating transportation network it needs to remain competitive in the global marketplace, according to a new study by the Urban Land Institute.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/study-2-trillion-needed-for-us-infrastructure/2011/05/16/AFyppB5G_story.html?utm_source=Budget+Campaign&utm_campaign=da49c91bae-Balance_Sheet5_11_2011&utm_medium=email

Global Challenges

A Billion Prices Now (New Yorker May 30, 2011)

Between official government statistics, industry surveys, and Wall Street forecasts, it often seems like we're drowning in data, often of uncertain value. But consider the alternative. In the early years of the Great Depression, it was clear that things were awful, but the government had few good figures to go on; there was no official G.D.P. number, and no solid information about unemployment. As a result, policymakers persistently underestimated the severity of the crisis. In June of 1930, relying on some anecdotal evidence of an upturn, Herbert Hoover announced, "The Depression is over."

http://www.newyorker.com/talk/financial/2011/05/30/110530ta_talk_surowiecki#ixzz1NXxJYF3c

A Greener Pawprint (E-The Environment Magazine, May 1, 2011)

Dog and Cat Companions Help Us Appreciate Nature—Can We Minimize Their Impact On It?

<http://www.emagazine.com/magazine/a-greener-pawprint>

The Island of Love (Newsweek, May 15, 2011)

Refuge to emperors and princes, poets and eccentrics, Capri retains its amorous spookiness.

<http://www.newsweek.com/2011/05/15/capri-the-island-of-love.html>

The New Geopolitics of Food (Foreign Policy, May/June, 2011)

From the Middle East to Madagascar, high prices are spawning land grabs and ousting dictators. Welcome to the 21st-century food wars.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/25/the_new_geopolitics_of_food

Understanding the Revolutions of 2011 (Foreign Affairs, May/June 2011)

Revolutions rarely succeed, writes one of the world's leading experts on the subject -- except for revolutions against corrupt and personalist "sultanistic" regimes. This helps explain why Tunisia's Ben Ali and Egypt's Mubarak fell -- and also why some other governments in the region will prove more resilient.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67694/jack-a-goldstone/understanding-the-revolutions-of-2011>

International Relations

Arab Spring Fails to Improve U.S. Image: Obama's Challenge in the Muslim World (Pew Research Center, May 17, 2011)

As President Obama prepares to make a major address on the tumultuous changes spreading throughout the Middle East, a new survey finds that the rise of pro-democracy movements has not led to an improvement in America's image in the region. Instead, in key Arab nations and in other predominantly Muslim countries, views of the U.S. remain negative, as they have been for nearly a decade. Indeed, in Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan, views are even more negative than they were one year ago.

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1997/international-poll-arab-spring-us-obama-image-muslim-publics>

How Suppressing Volatility Makes the World Less Predictable and More Dangerous (Foreign Affairs, May/June 2011)

Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Mark Blyth write that the upheavals in the Middle East have much in common with the recent global financial crisis: both were plausible worst-case scenarios whose probability was dramatically underestimated. When policymakers try to suppress economic or political volatility, they only increase the risk of blowups.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67741/nassim-nicholas-taleb-and-mark-blyth/the-black-swan-of-cairo>

Obama's Timely Transatlantic Message (Program on International Institutions and Global Governance, May 25, 2011)

President Barack Obama's address to the UK parliament had one overriding objective: to reassure nervous Brits and a broader European audience that the United States still regards the transatlantic partnership as the central pillar of world order.

http://www.cfr.org/us-strategy-and-politics/obamas-timely-transatlantic-message/p25103?cid=rss-analysisbriefbackgrounder-sexp-obama_s_timely_transatlantic_m-052511

Toward a Political Strategy for Afghanistan (The Brookings Institution, May 25, 2011)

According to the Kabul-based Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, an independent research organization, in the eyes of most Afghans, "elections are being used to legitimize or 'rubber stamp' the control of the powerful," and "elections are compounding a distrust of institutions." Meanwhile President Karzai must constitutionally leave office in 2014.

http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/05_afghanistan_ohanlon.aspx

MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY



The Memorial Day holiday celebrated by Americans on the last Monday of May represents for many the unofficial beginning of summer. Many will travel over the long holiday weekend to seek out friends and family, beaches and amusement parks. But most will pause at some point to recall the holiday's true purpose: honoring those who died defending their nation.

Memorial Day entertainments throughout the United States range from large sporting events to quintessentially small-town celebrations. The Indianapolis ("Indy") 500 motor race, by some measures the world's largest single-day sporting event, attracts an estimated global audience of more than 320 million.

Meanwhile, in Waterloo, New York — the place where Memorial Day began (at least according to Waterloo) — festivities include a parade, arts and crafts show, a strawberry festival, music, tours of the town's Civil War museum and

an antique car show. Civil War buffs in period uniforms and dresses hold a two-night encampment and stand by for live cannon-fire demonstrations. Those not too full from the pizza-eating contest can compete in a five-kilometer race.

The story of Waterloo, and that of the holiday itself, is woven deeply into the nation's history.

During the American Civil War of 1861–1865, which claimed the lives of more than 550,000 people, 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 Waterloo, 450 kilometers from New York City.

Source: <http://goo.gl/1QwlX>

Read more: <http://memorialday2011.org/>

BEAT OF AMERICA



Beat of America is the social media home of the Embassy of the U.S. Helsinki. You can consider it as our New Media White House (Washington D.C.) and our Facebooks, Twitters, and other social media tools as our embassies (the globe) - trying to better help and inform you.

In Beat of America we are discussing all manner of things about culture, arts, grassroots, sports, the Internet, and anything else you deem of interest. We hope that you find our thoughts interesting and don't hesitate to join the discussion through comments or via our 'embassies'

We have also invited our friends and partners to join to the Beat as guest bloggers and have given them the freedom to write in English or Finnish. We hope this creates more diverse voice to our blog and finds new readers to our pursuit to digitalize diplomacy.

Never miss a beat!
<http://www.usembassy.fi/america/>

Opening hours during the summer

From June 6th until August 31st, the national library is open from Monday to Thursday 9–18, Fridays and Saturdays 9–16.

In July the library is closed on Saturdays.

The American Resource Center

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9-20, Sat 9-16; Reference service: Mon-Fri 9-17

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<http://www.facebook.com/AmericanResourceCenter>

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