



American Resource Center Newsletter

U.S. Embassy Helsinki

October, Issue 7 - 2012

U.S. Elections 2012



President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney

Barack Obama

Democratic Presidential Nominee

Barack Obama was elected to the presidency in 2008 and became the first African-American president of the United States.

Obama was elected to the U.S. Senate in November 2004 and served until his resignation following his 2008 presidential election victory. Prior to the Senate, Obama worked as a community organizer in Chicago and as a civil rights attorney. He also served for eight years in the Illinois State Senate before being elected to the U.S. Senate.

Obama was born August 4, 1961, in Hawaii and grew up in that state, and, from 1967 to 1971, in Indonesia. His mother was from Kansas and his father from Kenya. Obama attended Columbia University and earned a law degree at Harvard University.

In 2009, Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."

Mitt Romney

Republican Presidential Nominee

Mitt Romney is a businessman and former governor who first sought the U.S. presidency in 2008.

He served as governor of Massachusetts from 2003 through 2007, but has spent most of his professional life in the private sector. In 1999, he was named chief executive officer of the 2002 Winter Olympics Organizing Committee. In 2008, Romney was among the candidates seeking the Republican presidential nomination eventually won by Senator John McCain.

Romney was born March 12, 1947, in Michigan and grew up in that state. In the late 1960s, he spent 30 months in France as a missionary for his church. Romney attended Brigham Young University and then earned dual graduate degrees from Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School.

Romney has been awarded honorary doctorates in business, law, public administration, public service and the humanities.

The 2012 U.S. presidential election will be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2012. It will be the 57th quadrennial presidential election. Incumbents Democratic President Barack Obama and Democratic Vice-President Joe Biden, are running for a second term. Their major challengers are the former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and his running mate Congressman Paul Ryan.

Besides Presidential elections, there will be Congressional elections, in where will be elected 33 seats in the Senate and all of the 435 seats for the House of Representatives are contested.



The New President Is...

The U.S. Embassy and the American Resource Center invite you to a panel discussion on the outcome of the U.S. Elections. Finnish and American experts will be on hand to provide analysis of the results, offer insights on what happens next and to take your questions.

The Panel: U.S. Ambassador Bruce J. Oreck, Professor of American Studies Dr. Markku Henriksson, Researcher Mari K. Niemi, Researcher Charly Salenius-Pasternak.

Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at
16:15-18:00

Fabianinkatu 30, 7th floor
Helsinki University Main Library at
Kaisa House

There is limited space available for this event, so please reserve your seat as soon as possible with an e-mail to arc@usembassy.fi

WEB PICKS

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American Life

The Adventures of the Real Tom Sawyer by Robert Graysmith. Smithsonian, October 2012.

Mark Twain prowled the rough-and-tumble streets of 1860s San Francisco with a hard-drinking, larger-than-life fireman.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/The-Adventures-of-the-Real-Tom-Sawyer-169773916.html#ixzz28zeyRTTZ>

Hail to the Chiefs by Steven Heller. Metropolis Magazine, October 2012.

On the eve of the election, we take a critical look at six decades of presidential branding.

<http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20121016/hail-to-the-chiefs>

Kennedy After Dark: A Dinner Party About Politics and Power by Ted Widmer. Smithsonian, October 2012.

In this exclusive transcript from the JFK library, hear what he had to say just days after announcing his candidacy for the presidency

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Kennedy-After-Dark-A-Dinner-Party-About-Politics-and-Pow-er-169811326.html#ixzz28zflhpnN>

The Lie Factory by Jill Lepore. The New Yorker, September 24, 2012.

How politics became a business.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/09/24/120924fa_fact_lepore#ixzz28zioe1Tf

Step by Step by Martin C. Pedersen. Metropolis Magazine, October 2012.

Can American cities walk their way to healthy economic development?

<http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20121016/step-by-step>

Waking Up at the Movies by Jana Prikryl. New York Review of Books, October 11, 2012.

Prikryl reviews *The Age of Movies: Selected Writings of Pauline Kael* by Pauline Kael and edited by Sanford Schwartz, Pauline Kael: *A Life in the Dark* by Brian Kellow and *When Movies Mattered: Reviews from a Transformative Decade* by Dave Kehr.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/oct/11/waking-up-at-the-movies/>

Why Kids Should Grade Teachers by Amanda Ripley. Atlantic, October 2012.

A decade ago, an economist at Harvard, Ronald Ferguson, wondered what would happen if teachers were evaluated by the people who see them every day—their students.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/why-kids-should-grade-teachers/309088/>

Economy and Politics

The League of Dangerous Mapmakers by Robert Draper. Atlantic, October 2012.

Who's most to blame for our divisive politics? How about the gerrymanderers quietly deciding where your vote goes. Inside the dark art and modern science of making democracy a lot less democratic.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/the-league-of/309084/>

Stimulus or Reform? Charting a Path Out of the Recession by Menzie D. Chinn; Karl Smith; Raghuram G. Rajan. Foreign Affairs, September/October 2012.

Since weak demand is at the heart of the recession, governments need to enact not just structural reforms but also stimulus programs, argues Menzie Chinn. Such reforms, moreover, don't always work out, writes Karl Smith. Raghuram Rajan demurs.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138018/menzie-d-chinn-karl-smith-raghuram-g-rajan/stimulus-or-reform>

Global Challenges

Addicted to Food? The New Research Suggests It's Possible by Laura Beil, Newsweek, October 29, 2012.

Science is now proving what we've long suspected: we're hard-wired to want the foods that are worst for us.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/10/28/addicted-to-food-the-new-research-suggests-it-s-possible.html>

The Arctic: Past or Prologue? by Robert Harriss. Environment, September-October 2012.

The word unaami from the Alaskan Native Yup'ik language translates broadly to "tomorrow", and is commonly used with a connotation of change. There is no question that Arctic environments are changing, and not just the climate. There are a host of social, ecological, and economic factors that are transitioning to unknown futures. Given international economic fragility, and the daunting challenge of limiting the impacts of future climate change, we can no longer afford to allow parochial, short-term political and economic interests to determine policy. This article explores Arctic changes unleashed by distant human actions, why scientific data has been ineffective in influencing personal and policy choices, and how we may have to deal with shaping the future history of the Arctic.

http://www.environmentmagazine.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/2012/September-October%202012/arctic_full.html

International Relations

China's Free Trade Agreement Strategies by By Guoyou Song and Wen Jin Yuan. Center for Strategic & International Studies, Fall 2012.

Many in China fear that the United States' Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) framework seeks to coopt or destroy regional economic cooperation, leading Beijing to devise strategies to respond, including constructing its own regional web of FTAs or even joining TPP itself.

<https://csis.org/publication/twq-chinas-free-trade-agreement-strategies-fall-2012>

A Foreign-Policy Mystery: Six Areas the Debate Missed by Steve Coll. The New Yorker, October 25, 2012.

The final Presidential debate, devoted to foreign policy, was the most reasoned and the least polluted by rehearsed talking points of the three. The format and the moderator helped: the candidates sat side by side at a table, close to Bob Schieffer, of CBS News, who conducts interviews of this kind every Sunday morning on "Face the Nation"; his confidence showed, and the roundtable feeling seemed to calm everyone down.

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2012/10/a-foreign-policy-mystery-six-areas-the-debate-missed.html>

Elections 2012 Special

Battleground 2012. National Journal. October 14, 2012.

The Mysteries of the Swing 16.

<http://nationaljournal.com/battlegrounds-2012>

Chris Christie: Obama Has Been 'Outstanding' During Sandy by Matt Vasilogambros. National Journal, October 30, 2012. New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie, whose state has been battered by super-storm Sandy, said President Obama has been "outstanding" in his response to the disaster that hit the East Coast.

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/2012-presidential-campaign/chris-christie-obama-has-been-outstanding-during-sandy-20121030>

Get It Done, Mr. President! by Michael Tomasky. Newsweek, October 29, 2012.

It's time to show us—really show us—how much you want another four years.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/10/28/michael-tomasky-on-barack-obama-s-last-stand-before-election-day.html>

Internet Gains Most as Campaign News Source but Cable TV Still Leads - Social Media Doubles, but Remains Limited. Pew Research Center, October 25, 2012.

With the election less than two weeks away, Americans are following the presidential campaign more closely on nearly every news platform than they were earlier in the year, including print newspapers. The biggest gains have come on the internet—both to the websites of traditional news sources and those native to the web.

http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/social_media_doubles_remains_limited

Romney's Delicate Challenge: Campaigning the Day After Sandy Hit the East Coast by Garance Franke-Ruta. The Atlantic, October 30, 2012.

The Republican presidential campaign's plan to hold a series of "relief" events in Ohio, Iowa, and Wisconsin could backfire.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/10/romneys-delicate-challenge-campaigning-the-day-after-sandy-hit-the-east-coast/264289/>

Who Could Be in the Next Presidential Cabinet? National Journal, October 19, 2012.

<http://nationaljournal.com/power-players>

Who's Got a More Presidential Brain? Obama, Romney, and the genetics of power by Helen Fisher. Newsweek, October 29, 2012.

Barack Obama and Mitt Romney may appear to be originals. But they—like all the rest of us—have inherited some of their political perspectives.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/10/28/obama-romney-and-the-genetics-of-politics.html>

Why Democrats Are Likely to Keep the Senate: A Look at the Key Races by David A. Graham. The Atlantic, October 31, 2012.

Republican face a challenging map, made even harder by candidates like Richard Mourdock and Todd Akin.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/10/why-democrats-are-likely-to-keep-the-senate-a-look-at-the-key-races/264259/>



American Resource Center Welcomes new Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Amy Hirsch

I'm delighted to be able to introduce myself to friends of the ARC. As the Deputy Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy, I hope to have the chance to meet as many ARC patrons as I can during my two years in Finland. I arrived in Helsinki just as the new space in Kaisa House opened. The American Resource Center space is exactly as modern, efficient, and comfortable as I imagined our space in Finland would be.

My last posting was in Chennai, India, which is in many ways the opposite of Helsinki. Coming from a city of 12 million people, the relative quiet of Helsinki has been a pleasant difference. I am so excited to explore Finland. I have already found much here to fascinate me. Prior to joining the State Department, I worked in the field of International Education, focusing on fellowships and exchanges. I am heartened to see that so many in Finland value an international perspective. I hope that I can act as a resource for you to augment the American perspectives that my colleagues at the ARC provide.

November is Native American Heritage Month



Teepees in Wallowa County, Oregon



Cheyenne Hoskins performs a traditional Native American dance

Every November, National Native American Heritage Month celebrates the enduring contributions of the first Americans to the history and culture of the United States.

The month is designated by Congress and the president as a time to reflect on the rich traditions and accomplishments, as well as the suffering and injustices, that mark the history of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Today, there are 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States. They make up 1.7 percent of the

total population, according to the 2010 census. Their numbers are expected to increase to 8.6 million, or 2 percent of the population, by 2050.

Most American Indians live in metropolitan areas and not on the 227,000 square kilometers of land held in trust for reservations. The states with the largest numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives are California, Oklahoma and Arizona.

What started as an effort to gain a special day of recognition for the first Americans has resulted in a whole month being

designated for that purpose.

Each year the sitting president designates November as National Native American Heritage Month. (The National Museum of the American Indian calls it National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.)

Non-Indians have little knowledge of the vibrant culture of American Indians today, a recent study found. Both Indians and non-Indians said they want to see American Indians' history and contemporary life better understood by non-Indians.



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