



# American Resource Center Newsletter U.S. Embassy Helsinki

September, Issue 7 - 2013

## The U.S. Embassy Helsinki at the Turku Book Fair Oct 4-6

The main theme of the Turku Book Fair this year is the United States and we'll be there! Welcome to join our programs and to visit our stand. On the various stages you'll hear for example American playwright *Lynn Nottage* or Cuban-American writer *Cecilia Samartin* tell about their work. You'll also find out *Ambassador Oreck's* favorite books or hear *Jyrki Linnankivi* talk about Mark Twain. From American Indians to literature, Elvis, and American cooking, there is something for everyone.



We'll be giving short introductions and information about the American Resource Center at the Embassy stand where you can also participate in contests to receive cool prizes. See you there!

Full program available at <http://turunmessukeskus.fi/messut-ja-tapahtumat/turun-kansainvaliset-kirjamessut/turun-kansainvalisten-kirjamessujen-ja-tiedeme>

## Meet the U.S. Embassy's Guests at the Turku Book Fair

*Cecilia Samartin*



"I grew up as a typical first generation Cuban American girl. My parents worked very hard to learn English, and get ahead in a new country. Because they were so busy, my grandparents

helped to raise us, and thanks to them we didn't forget our Spanish. My sisters and I went to school, played with our friends, and tried our best to blend in a town where there were virtually no other Cubans and very few Hispanics. Our family mantra was "Work hard, and for God's sake be careful". Everything went smoothly until I reached adolescence, and then more than a little conflict was generated by the disparities between the Cuban and American versions of an ideal teenage life....]

I've been practicing as a psychotherapist and social worker with individuals and families from Mexico, and Central and South America for more than twenty years. It's gratifying work, and the most compelling inspiration I could hope for as a writer."

<http://www.ceciliasamartin.com/>

*Lynn Nottage*

Lynn Nottage's new play, *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*, enjoyed an extended run Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre and most recently at the Geffen Playhouse. It can be seen this upcoming season at Lyric Stage in Boston and The Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Her Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Ruined* premiered at Manhattan Theatre Club and Goodman Theatre. Her other plays include *Intimate Apparel*; *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine*; *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*; *Las Meninas*; *Mud, River, Stone*; *Por'knockers* and *POOF!*.

Nottage is the recipient of the 2010 Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award, the Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, the inaugural Horton Foote Prize for Outstanding New American Play, Helen Hayes Award, the Lee Reynolds Award, and the Jewish World Watch iWitness Award.

She is a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama, where she is currently a visiting lecturer. She is a co-founder and producer at Market Road Films LLC, a film production company.



<http://www.lynnnottage.com/>

# 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 Boom Towns and Ghost Towns of the New Economy** by Richard Florida. The Atlantic, October 2013.  
New York, Houston, Washington, D.C.—plus college towns and the energy belt—are all up, while much of the Sun Belt is (still) down. Mapping the winners and losers since the crash.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-boom-towns-and-ghost-towns-of-the-new-economy/309460/>

**The Case Against High-School Sports** by Amanda Ripley. The Atlantic, October 2013.  
The United States routinely spends more tax dollars per high-school athlete than per high-school math student—unlike most countries worldwide. And we wonder why we lag in international education rankings?  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-case-against-high-school-sports/309447/>

**Cell Internet Use 2013** by Maeve Duggan and Aaron Smith. Pew Internet & American Life Project, September 16, 2013.  
The Pew Research Center survey found 63 percent of mobile phone owners now use their phone to go online. And because 91 percent of Americans now own a cell phone, this means that 57 percent are “cell Internet users.”  
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Cell-Internet.aspx>

**Children of the Pen** by Susan Dominus. The New York Times Magazine, August 4, 2013.  
If you're a part of Stephen King's family, you definitely have great stories to tell.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/04/magazine/stephen-kings-family-business.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/04/magazine/stephen-kings-family-business.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

**How Junk Food Can End Obesity** by David H. Freedman. The Atlantic, July/August 2013.  
Demonizing processed food may be dooming many to obesity and disease. Could embracing the drive-thru make us all healthier?  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/07/how-junk-food-can-end-obesity/309396/>

**Leaks and Consequences** by Lincoln Caplan. The American Scholar, Autumn 2013.  
Why treating leakers as spies puts journalists at legal risk.  
<http://theamericanscholar.org/leaks-and-consequences/#.UkBHIYzyVaQ>

**Shedding the Superwoman Myth** by Debora L. Spar. The Chronicle Review, September 2, 2013.  
Can women pursue their dreams without losing their sanity? Debora L. Spar is president of Barnard College. This essay is adapted from her new book, *Wonder Women: Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection* (Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux).  
<http://chronicle.com/article/Where-Feminism-Went-Wrong/141293/>

## Economy and Politics

**Across The Red Line** by Michael Crowley. Time, September 9, 2013.  
Evidence of a brutal chemical attack in Syria poses a defining test to the U.S.'s reputation and to Barack Obama's foreign policy vision. Foreign policy grants American presidents almost supernatural powers.  
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2150618,00.html>

**Census Bureau's American Community Survey**, September 19, 2013.  
“The American Community Survey provides indispensable information about our nation's people, housing and economy,” Census Bureau Director John H. Thompson said. “In order for governments, businesses and communities to make the most informed decisions possible, they need timely and accurate statistics as a basis for future planning.”  
<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/#>

**Cybersecurity and Trade: National Policies, Global and Local Consequences** by Allan A. Friedman, Brookings Paper, September 19, 2013.  
Governments around the world have begun to develop strategies to protect themselves against cyber threats while trying to promote the benefits of a cyber-enabled world.  
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/09/19%20cybersecurity%20and%20trade%20global%20local%20friedman/brookingscybersecuritynew.pdf>

**The Misremembering of 'I Have a Dream'** by Gary Younge. The Nation, August 14, 2013.  
Fifty years after the March on Washington, Dr. King's most famous speech, like his own political legacy, is widely misunderstood.  
<http://www.thenation.com/article/175764/misremembering-i-have-dream#>

## Global Challenges

**Great Fall Birding Trails** by Kenn Kaufman. Audubon, September/October 2013.

Autumn migration season is here. Millions of birds are on the wing, covering thousands of miles across oceans and continents. Grab your favorite field guide and hit the road to see one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth.

<http://www.audubonmagazine.org/articles/birds/eight-great-fall-birding-trails>

**How to Attract Native Bees to Your Organic Garden** by Barbara Pleasant. Mother Earth News, August/September 2013.

Learn how to attract native bees to your organic garden with insect hotels, bee-friendly plants and more.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/how-to-attract-native-bees-zm0z13aszkin.aspx#ixzz2fJvF7S2M>

**Mark Zuckerberg's Advice to the NSA: Communicate** by Megan Garber. The Atlantic, September 18, 2013.

Facebook learned the power of transparency the hard way. Now, it wants the government to benefit from its education.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/09/mark-zuckerbergs-advice-to-the-nsa-communicate/279814/>

**To a Chinese Scrap-Metal Hunter, America's Trash Is Treasure** by Adam Minter. Bloomberg BusinessWeek, August 29, 2013.

"Zeng is one Chinese trader, in one rental car, traveling across the U.S. in search of scrap metal. By his estimate, there are at least 100 other Chinese traders like him driving from scrap yard to scrap yard, right now, in search of what Americans won't or can't be bothered to recycle. His favorite product: wires, cables, and other kinds of copper. It's an essential trade. In 2012, China accounted for 43.1 percent of all global copper demand, or more than five times the amount acquired by the U.S. that same year. A modern economy can't grow without copper. One way to get that metal is to dig holes in the ground; the other is from scrap."

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-29/to-a-chinese-scrap-metal-hunter-americas-trash-is-treasure>

**UN Retains Strong Global Image.** Survey Report by Pew Research Center, September 17, 2013.

Clear majorities in 22 of 39 countries surveyed say they have a favorable view of the UN. Ratings are on balance favorable in the U.S. and Russia, while the Chinese are divided in their opinion. However, views trend negatively in key Middle Eastern publics.

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/09/17/united-nations-retains-strong-global-image/>

## International Relations

**Backgrounder: Al-Shabab** by Jonathan Masters. Council on Foreign Relations, September 23, 2013 (updated).

Al-Shabab, or "The Youth," is an al-Qaeda-linked militant group and U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization fighting for the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state in Somalia.

<http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>

**Congress's Innocence Abroad** by Gary J. Schmitt and Daniel Fata. AEI Politico, September 17, 2013.

In Senate Foreign Relations Committee, only one member has served since 2001.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/09/opinion-congress-syria-96893.html>

**The Imperative for an American Strategy for Southeast Asia** by Marvin C. Ott. FPRI e-Notes, September 2013.

In geopolitical terms, Southeast Asia in the post-Vietnam War period has enjoyed remarkable regional stability. The sources of this strategic quiescence have been multiple and interesting.

<http://www.fpri.org/articles/2013/09/imperative-american-strategy-southeast-asia>

**Negotiating with Iran: The Strategic Case for Pragmatism and Real Progress** by Anthony H. Cordesman. CSIS, September 23, 2013.

The United States needs to be extraordinarily careful in dealing with Iran. Iran has now spent well over a decade using delaying tactics and negotiations to move towards a nuclear weapons capability.

<http://csis.org/publication/negotiating-iran-strategic-case-pragmatism-and-real-progress>

**Why Convergence Breeds Conflict: Growing More Similar Will Push China and the United States Apart** by Mark Leonard. Foreign Affairs, September/October 2013.

Many fear that in the not-too-distant future, the world will be torn apart as the gulf that separates China and the United States grows ever wider. How, they ask, can a communist dictatorship and a capitalist democracy bridge the gap between them? But it is time to stop thinking that the two countries come from different planets and that the tensions between them are the product of their differences. In fact, until relatively recently, China and the United States got along quite well -- precisely because their interests and attributes differed. Today, it is their increasing similarities, not their differences, that are driving the two countries apart.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139650/mark-leonard/why-convergence-breeds-conflict>

## Announcing the American Resource Center's Grant 2013

American Resource Center is once again inviting applications to its annual 1,000 € grant to be awarded to support Master's degree work on studies of the United States. Students of Finnish nationality, enrolled at a Finnish university, and who are currently working on a Master's Thesis on a topic related to the United States are eligible to apply. Applications are accepted until November 29, 2013.

Offered for the 8th time this year, the ARC Grant has become popular among students in all disciplines who are researching some aspect of the United States. Past winners have written their Master's thesis with titles such as "The Concept of Otherness / Alterity in the Foreign Policy Rhetorics of President Barack Obama," "Parents Perceptions about Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care in the United States and Finland," "Japanese-American Internment – Spectacularization, Americanization, and the Model Minority Myth," and "Asset or Liability? The Image of Sarah Palin in the Media."

More information and application form are available on the U.S. Embassy website at [http://finland.usembassy.gov/arc\\_grant.html](http://finland.usembassy.gov/arc_grant.html) where you will also find a full list of the past winners.



## MOOC on 21st Century American Foreign Policy

It is still not too late to sign up to MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on 21st Century American Foreign Policy!

Register to this free 6-week online class at Duke University (<https://www.coursera.org/course/afp21stcentury>) and sign up for the local study group facilitated by the American Resource Center that helps you complete the course.

Extra activities, prizes, and certificates to graduates upon completion of the course!

The MOOC kick-off event will be held on October 15th at 3 pm at Helsinki University Library (Kaisa House, Fabianinkatu 30, 7th floor). Welcome!

More information available at the U.S. Embassy website <http://finland.usembassy.gov/mooc.html>



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