



January, Issue 1 - 2010 AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER U.S. Embassy Helsinki

LOOKING AHEAD

February is African-American History Month

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to the United States made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month.

Facts from Census.Gov

- As of July 1, 2008, the estimated population of black residents in the United States was 41.1 million, including those of more than one race. They made up 13.5 percent of the total U.S. population.
- The projected black population of the United States (including those of more than one race) for July 1, 2050, is 65.7 million. On that date, according to the projection, blacks would constitute 15 percent of the nation's total population.
- Percentage of Mississippi's population that was black in 2008, highest of any state, was 38 %.

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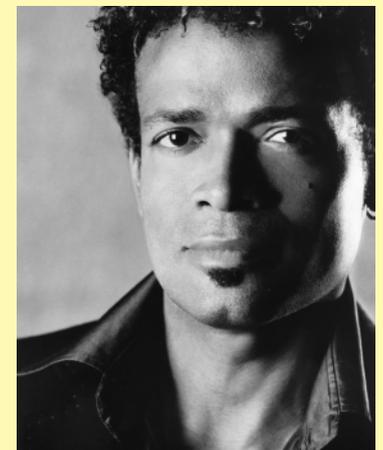
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PEEK INTO THE ARC'S MAGAZINE SHELF

Journal of the Month

Art in America is an illustrated monthly magazine published since 1913. The magazine covers the visual art world, both in the United States and abroad, with a concentration on New York City and contemporary art fairs. Art in America bills itself as "the World's Premier Art Magazine."

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



Mario Van Peebles

(Photo by Alan Light;
Source Wikimedia Commons)

WEB PICKS

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American Life

Journalism's Future. Chronicle of Higher Education, November 15, 2009.

Chronicle's Review section features several articles on the future of journalism:

"Academe and the Decline of News Media": <http://chronicle.com/article/Academethe-Dcline-of-/49120/>

"University-Based Reporting Could Keep Journalism Alive": <http://chronicle.com/article/University-Based-Reporting-/49113/>

"Journalism Schools Can Push Coverage Beyond Breaking News": <http://chronicle.com/article/Journalism-Schools-Can-Push-/49115/>

"We Need 'Philosophy of Journalism'": <http://chronicle.com/article/We-Need-Philosophy-of-Jour-/49119/>

The Reconstruction of American Journalism by Leonard Downie, Jr., Michael Schudson. Columbia Journalism Review, November/December 2009.

The authors of this in-depth report ask hard questions about the function of the press and the future of "accountability" journalism as a public service at a time of crisis in news media.

http://www.cjr.org/reconstruction/the_reconstruction_of_american.php

Reports of Reading's Demise Are Exaggerated by Eliot Van Buskirk. Wired, December 29, 2009

We're reading more words than ever, but fewer of them are in print.

<http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2009/12/reading-expands-study#ixzz0caoUVMmk>

Economy and Politics

Beware Social Media Snake Oil, BusinessWeek, December 3, 2009.

Hordes of marketing "experts" are promoting the value of wikis, social networks, and blogs. All the hype may obscure the real potential of these online tools.

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_50/b4159048693735.htm?chan=magazine+channel_top+stories

A Changing Climate for Development, Finance & Development, December 2009.

Climate finance can provide the resources developing countries need to mitigate and adapt.

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2009/12/hamilton.htm>

Does Buying a Hybrid Make Sense?, Forbes Magazine, posted December 28, 2009.

Hybrids don't make dollar sense, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't buy one. It depends on your worldview.

<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2009/1228/outfront-autos-hybrids-toyota-backseat-driver.html>

The Global Middle Class Is Here: Now What?, World Policy Journal, Winter 2009/2010.

Agrowing middle class does not guarantee a move to democracy, the elimination of corruption or enactment of property-ownership laws, but is an indication that change is afoot.

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/wopj.2010.26.4.75>

How China Won and Russia Lost: Two Dissimilar Economic Paths, Policy Review, December 2009/January 2010.

The economic reforms that took place in China and Russia in the 1980s have resulted in very different outcome.

<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/72997307.html>

Investing: Six People Who Helped Shape a Tumultuous Decade, BusinessWeek, December 17, 2009.

Bloomberg BusinessWeek identifies the people who had the greatest impact on the investing arena in the past decade.

http://www.businessweek.com/investor/content/dec2009/pi20091217_161173.htm

The Renminbi Challenge: The Future Role of the Chinese Currency, The International Economy, Fall 2009.

Will the Chinese unit challenge the primacy of the U.S. dollar in the international monetary system?

http://www.international-economy.com/TIE_Fog_Wu.pdf

The Root of the Financial Crisis, Policy Review, No. 158, December 2009/January 2010.

The crisis was both a market failure and a government failure – financial executives had too much confidence in their risk-management strategies, and government regulators did not question the soundness of the oversight measures in place.

<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/72903637.html>

Should, or Can, Central Banks Target Asset Prices?, International Economy, Fall 2009.

Twenty experts offer their views in this symposium on the degree to which central banks should attempt to influence asset prices, or whether it is even possible.

http://www.international-economy.com/TIE_Fog_AssetPriceSymp.pdf

The “Slow Money” Movement May Revolutionize the Way You Think About Food, AlterNet, posted December 22, 2009. In an economy structured around industrial agriculture, sustaining small farms can be a challenge. ‘Slow money’ economics could be the answer.
http://www.alternet.org/workplace/144721/the_%22slow_money%22_movement_may_revolutionize_the_way_you_think_about_food/

Global Challenges

10 Ways to Help Save the Planet, macleans.ca, October 8, 2009. From fake trees to showering with friends—these ideas might even save you money.
<http://www2.macleans.ca/2009/10/08/simple-steps-to-salvation/>

Carbon Dioxide and the Climate, American Scientist, January/February 2010. A 1956 American Scientist article explores climate change; two contemporary commentaries illuminate its relevance to the present.
<http://www.americanscientist.org/issues/feature/2010/1/carbon-dioxide-and-the-climate/1>

The Comparative Costs of Climate Change, The Christian Science Monitor, January 4, 2010. How much will mitigating global warming or climate change cost the world? Here are some comparisons.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/Bright-Green/2010/0104/The-comparative-costs-of-climate-change>

The FP Top 100 Global Thinkers, Foreign Policy, December 2009. From the brains behind Iran’s Green Revolution to the economic Cassandra who actually did have a crystal ball, they had the big ideas that shaped our world in 2009. Read on to see the 100 minds that mattered most in the year that was.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/11/30/the_fp_top_100_global_thinkers

First Carbon Tariff Will Tax CO₂ at the Border, Scientific American, January 1, 2010. The first carbon tax to reduce the greenhouse gases from imports comes not between two nations, but between two states.
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=first-carbon-tariff-will-tax-co2-at-2010-01>

The Hostage Business, New York Times Magazine, December 6, 2009. Kidnapping for ransom around the world has grown, despite the advent of the global economic crisis. The article focuses on a recent spate of kidnappings in the oil-producing Niger River Delta region of Nigeria.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/magazine/06kidnapping-t.html>

The Secrets of Stability: Why Terrorism and Economic Turmoil Won’t Keep the World Down for Long, Newsweek, December 12, 2009. There has not been a global collapse in the last year because the current global economic system is inherently more resilient than commonly thought.
<http://www.newsweek.com/id/226425>

International Relations

Afghanistan Is Still Worth the Fight, Foreign Policy, January 2010. There may not be a single or short explanation justifying a U.S. presence in Afghanistan. But that doesn’t mean it’s time to cut and run.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/11/30/afghanistan_is_still_worth_the_fight

Europe’s New Security Dilemma, Washington Quarterly, October 2009. After the September 11, 2001, attacks, governments throughout the world rushed to improve their counterterrorism policies. Several countries tightened legislation, increased resources available to their intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and established repressive policies to uncover and prosecute terrorist networks.
http://www.twq.com/09october/docs/09oct_Vidino.pdf

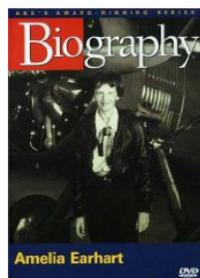
Should the U.S. Destroy Jihadist Websites?, Time, December 23, 2009. The Internet has played a key role in radicalizing a number of key players in alleged terror plots this year.
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1949373,00.html>

Something from Nothing: U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, Boston Review, January/February 2010. President Obama asks how our strategy serves U.S. security, but McChrystal’s report answered a different question: how can Afghanistan control its territory?
<http://bostonreview.net/BR35.1/rosen.php>

Think Again: Nuclear Weapons, Foreign Policy, January 2010. President Obama’s pledge to rid the world of atomic bombs is a waste of breath. But not for the reasons you might imagine.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/04/think_again_nuclear_weapons



Amelia Earhart Day January 11



“She was an uncommon heroine, a legendary aviator, and the focus of one of the greatest mysteries of all time.”

Amelia Earhart is the most celebrated aviatrix in history and was one of the most famous women of her time. As America’s charismatic “Lady of the Air,” she set many aviation records, including becoming the first woman to fly across the Atlantic in 1928 as a passenger and the first woman (and second person after Lindbergh) to fly solo across the Atlantic in 1932. Her legacy is remembered on January 11, when in 1935 she became the first person, man or woman, to fly solo across the Pacific. In an era when men dominated aviation, she was truly a pioneer.

Amelia Earhart is also remembered on her birthday on July 24th.

A&E’s Award-Winning Series Biography: **Amelie Earhart** is available for loan at the ARC. Produced in 2005, DVD format, approx. 50 minutes (*video shelf 192.*)

(www.infoplease.com, www.holidaysmart.com)



Library of Congress Puts Thousands of Historic Books Online

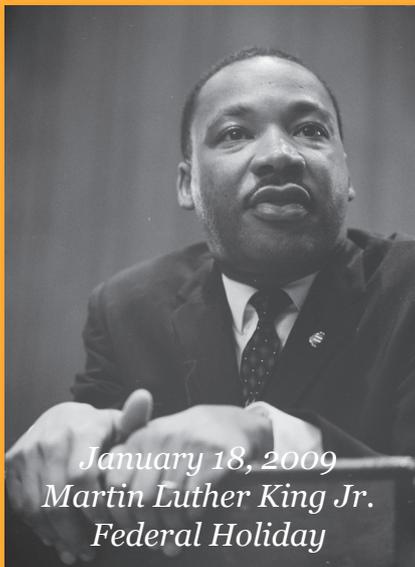
Readers worldwide have free access to significant part of its collection
24 December 2009

Washington — Nearly 60,000 books prized by historians, writers and genealogists, many too old and fragile to be safely handled, have been digitally scanned as part of the first-ever mass book-digitization project of the U.S. Library of Congress (LOC), the world’s largest library. Anyone who wants to learn about the early history of the United States, or track the history of their own families, can read and download these books for free.

“The Library chose books that people wanted, but that were too old and fragile to serve to readers. They won’t stand up to handling,” said Michael Handy, who co-managed the project, which is called Digitizing American Imprints.

“Many of these books cover a period of Western settlement of the United States — 1865–1922 — and offer historians a trove of information that’s otherwise tough to locate,” he said. Books published before 1923 are in the public domain in the United States because their U.S. copyrights have expired.

Read more at <http://www.america.gov>



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a United States holiday marking the birthdate of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., observed on the third Monday of January each year, around the time of King’s birthday, January 15. It is one of four United States federal holidays to commemorate an individual person.

King was the chief spokesman for nonviolent activism in the civil rights movement, which successfully protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. He was assassinated in 1968.

The campaign for a federal holiday in King’s honor began soon after his assassination. Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed in 1986. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

Source: Wikipedia

Martin Luther King, Jr., at the ARC

Books by Martin Luther King, Jr., and research written on him is available at the American Resource Center (*shelf 323 Civil and political rights*)

The American Resource Center

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

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