



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Cultural Envoy, Public Affairs Counselor Share Experience with Photojournalists



Cultural Envoy Frank Day

On April 1, the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa hosted a workshop for Ethiopian photojournalists. American Cultural Envoy and fine art photographer Frank Day opened the workshop. Mr. Day shared his own photography from Ethiopia and other countries. He showed examples of famous American photojournalists' work to illustrate the power of visual storytelling. In his talk, Mr. Day emphasized the different kind of shots photographers use to present an event or situation. He also touched on the difficulties of night photography and portraiture.

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Counselor Michael McClellan gave a
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International Fellowship for Community Leaders
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Education Advisor and Consular Section host media roundtable on student visas

As part of our ongoing public outreach to explain our visa procedures, the U.S. Embassy invited Ethiopian journalists to a roundtable discussion. Consular Section Chief Paul Cantrell explained that to qualify for a student visa, a person must demonstrate that he or she is a legitimate student and is able to fund tuition and other expenses associated with studying abroad. He noted that the number of student visas issues by the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa has

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Press and Information Officer Darragh Paradiso (far right) introduces Consular Chief Paul Cantrell (C), Consular Officer Scott Driskel (L), and Education Advisor Yoseph Shiferaw (R) to journalists.

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Remarks by DCM Deborah Malac at the Public Stakeholder Dialogue on the Draft Mass Media and Freedom of Information Law

U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Deborah Malac made opening remarks at the Public Stakeholder Dialogue on the Draft Mass Media and Freedom of Information Law held on March 29 and 30, 2008 in Addis Ababa. The meeting, organized by Pact Ethiopia in cooperation with USAID, was chaired by Ato Berhan Hailu, Minister of Information. Participants included journalists, publishers, private and government public relations officers and other stakeholders.



DCM Deborah Malac

(begin remarks)

I am honored to have the privilege to join the Minister of Information in welcoming you to this important public stakeholder dialogue on the draft Mass Media and Freedom of Information law. The U.S. Government has supported and followed with great interest the drafting of this law, as well as the work of the Media Forum to widely disseminate and discuss the draft among media practitioners in anticipation of this two day stakeholder dialogue.

This weekend's event is a milestone event for a number of reasons. First, it focuses on a draft law that not only addresses the rights and responsibilities of media practitioners, but also offers a freedom of information regime for the benefit of all Ethiopian citizens. If passed, it would make Ethiopia only the fourth country on the continent to adopt a freedom of information law. Secondly, this weekend's event reflects

the culmination of a long process of collaboration between government officials and journalists to hold an open discussion of the draft law. The process itself is to be admired and perhaps even duplicated as a model process for other legislative efforts.

The US government's involvement in the process began in March 2006 when it responded to a request from the Ethiopian Parliament to provide information on media laws and practices in other countries around the world. At the request of Ethiopian authorities, the United States then followed up this research effort with direct technical assistance to Ethiopian authorities working on the drafting of the press law. This assistance came in the form of an international legal scholar who provided technical advice and engaged in lengthy discussions with the legal drafting team.

In addition to supporting the drafting of a new law, the United States responded to Ethiopian authorities' interest in bringing together government officials and journalists to plan a public discussion of the draft law. With the help of USAID and the facilitation expertise of Pact Ethiopia, a Joint Planning Committee of journalists and government officials was established and has met regularly for more than six months to organize the event that we are all

attending today.

US assistance has also extended directly to journalists and other actors in the media sector. In February 2007, again with the help of its partner, Pact Ethiopia, the US supported the first Media Forum event. We sought to support such a gathering as a way to give space for new relationships to take root among government and private media practitioners; and as a way to help them to both identify their common interests and shared objectives, and to reach those objectives in ways that could advance the fledgling media sector and give it new strength.

Since that first meeting, the Media Forum has taken on a life of its own. I understand that it has met more than thirty times for regular weekly meetings and held numerous half-day workshops as well as a weekend retreat. Cumulatively, more than 100 people from more than 50 different organizations have attended these various events. It has identified a common agenda that speaks to both government and private media practitioners alike and is working hard to achieve those shared objectives. One of its identified goals was to have an open and constructive dialogue with the government on a new draft press law. At the conclusion of this two day consultation, the Forum will have achieved one of its major objectives.

I congratulate you on your efforts to date. I wish you well in your deliberations over the next two days. It is our hope for you that discussions unfold in the same spirit of cooperation and openness as the events leading up to this dia-

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Education Advisor and Consular Section host media roundtable . . .

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been increasing steadily over the past few years.

Consular Officer Scott Driskel outlined the documents needed for a student visa interview at the Embassy. These documents included an "I-20" form from the school where the student has applied and been accepted, a SEVIS fee receipt, and the Electronic Visa Application Form found on our Embassy Website (www.ethiopia.usembassy.gov). Mr. Driskel, who interviews student visa applicants every day, said, "One of the best parts of my job is being able to issue student visas to qualified applicants."

The Embassy's Education Advisor, Yoseph Shiferaw, explained the free education advising services available from his office in the Public Affairs Section. He emphasized the wide range of educational experiences available in the U.S. and the

need to thoroughly research and plan for study abroad. His office offers research materials, free Internet access for research, and guidance on the school application process. He also noted that the Embassy has a list of all accredited academic institutions in the U.S.

Our three colleagues emphasized that the U.S. Embassy offers comprehensive information and advice on studying in the United States free of charge. Interested parties can make an appointment for educational advising by calling (011) 517-4308. There are also many online resources about applying for school in the United States and for U.S. student visas. Several helpful links are listed below.

For an overview of student visa process and Frequently Asked Questions: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html

Instructions about how to apply for

your visa from the Embassy's website:

http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/how_to_apply_for_niv.html

To pay the required SEVIS fee prior to applying for a student visa: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>

To fill out the required Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF): <http://evisaforms.state.gov/>

EducationUSA provides a wide range of information about studying in the United States, including educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study, opportunities for scholars, financial aid, testing, admissions, and much more: <http://educationusa.state.gov/>

For information about the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS): <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm> ♦

Cultural Envoy, Public Affairs Counselor Share Experience . . .

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presentation on the "Composition Basics" of photography. Mr. McClellan talked about and showed examples of basic photographic concepts including line, balance, contrast, movement and framing. He illustrated the power of a single frame to tell a story and affect public opinion with examples of photos from American historical events like the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement.

The need to learn composition, he said, is universal, whether writing a

news story, composing a song, putting together an outfit for going out on the town, or making a photograph. Essentially "bringing order to chaos," composition is about arranging disparate elements into a unified whole and communicating a message that is clearly perceived without interference. In other words, it's all about communication. And a good photojournalist must have a point of view, but be factual and honest in the photographs produced.

The seminar also touched on ethics

in photography and the need for writers and editors to be "visually literate" so as to use photographs in the best possible way in a publication.

The U.S. Embassy expects to organize a full workshop for photojournalists and editors in the months ahead as part of its ongoing media training effort to improve professional media skills for both print and broadcast journalists. ♦

University of Georgia Partners with Tunisia on e-Learning Project

By Jeffrey Thomas
Staff Writer

Washington -- Like many developing countries, Tunisia has burgeoning numbers of students. Unlike many developing countries, Tunisia has pioneered an innovative approach to educating its young population. In 2002, the country established the Virtual University of Tunis (VUT) to address the needs of some students through distance-learning while also offering opportunities in higher education to all who qualify.

That same year, an engineering professor at the University of Georgia (UGA) created an educational partnership between her university and her home country, Tunisia.

Takoi Hamrita says she founded the partnership in part because she feared losing touch with Tunisia and in part be-

cause she feared her chosen field, engineering, might limit what she "could do to make a difference."

"When you grow up in a developing country, academic achievement is central to your life and you grow up with aspirations to change the world," she says in an open letter on the partnership's Web site.

"International work by definition requires going beyond established boundaries," she says, adding that educators also must challenge the boundaries at their institutions. "As

faculty, we have to overcome departmental, discipline, infrastructure, and traditional role boundaries if we are to be effective in our campus internationalization efforts."

In creating the UGA-Tunisia Educational Partnership, which recently won an Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education, she sought "to let Tunisian

sustainable e-learning environment to increase access to education, implementing international standards and promoting civic engagement among elementary, secondary and university students and faculty, she said.

There are several components to the partnership, which was funded by the U.S. Department of State's

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which President Bush launched in December 2002 to support economic, political and educational reform efforts, and to increase opportunities for all people in the region, especially women and children.

The largest of the UGA-Tunisia Partnership programs focuses on e-learning in support

of the Virtual University of Tunis, particularly teacher training and online course development.

In March 2006, a delegation of 20 Tunisian professors spent two weeks at UGA taking part in an advanced workshop on e-learning. The workshop covered such topics as designing e-learning courses, supporting distance learners, best practices for teaching and learning online and using two-way audio in a virtual classroom.

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Tunisian faculty members practice e-learning skills at 2004 workshop at the University of Georgia. (Courtesy of Takoi Hamrita)

national goals and strategic initiatives for higher education, as well as those of UGA, guide Partnership goals, and I let these act as magnets to attract human and financial resources, not the other way around." The award was presented by the Institute of International Education (IIE) at a ceremony March 13 at the United Nations.

The partnership aims to "assist Tunisia with higher education reform in a sustainable and holistic way," Hamrita said in an e-mail interview with America.gov. It is building a

University of Georgia Partners with Tunisia on e-Learning Project . . .

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Hamrita said she is “particularly pleased with the outcomes of our capacity building efforts in e-learning.” The more than 80 Tunisian faculty members who have participated in partnership e-learning training workshops have developed 52 online courses and continue to train their peers in Tunisia. Two alumni, for example, developed degree programs for special needs students, one in accounting, the other in information and communication technology.

Another component of the partnership has involved UGA faculty working closely with a national committee appointed by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education to establish effective evaluation mechanisms.

Through workshops and collaborative projects, the partnership also seeks to reinforce civil society through university public service and outreach. In 2006, for example, UGA students and faculty from 11 departments participated in a two-week service-learning course and civic engagement project in



Takoi Hamrita, founder and director of the University of Georgia-Tunisian Educational Partnership (Courtesy of Takoi Hamrita)

Tunisia with University of Sousse students. The participants held discussions on social and economic issues -- from juvenile delinquency to the environment -- and used art as a vehicle for communication and self-expression.

UGA has held several events to promote international understanding, including lectures on U.S.-Arab rela-

tions by the Tunisian ambassador to the United States. It also sought to create a voluntary, flexible network that benefits both UGA and Tunisia. UGA project participants receive intensive Arabic language training and Tunisian participants receive training in English. In addition, UGA has created a service learning course to enable UGA students to contribute to the projects. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.

Tunisian education leaders particularly praise the fact that the partnership supports its own reform efforts, Hamrita said. “We’re not handing down a formula, as many developed-developing country collaborations do. We’ve focused on empowering faculty and cultivating local leadership.”

UGA hopes within the next year to extend the program to Morocco and Egypt, as well as to other U.S. institutions, Hamrita said. ♦

Remarks by DCM Deborah Malac at the Public Stakeholder Dialogue . . .

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logue. The draft law you are discussing today is about advancing and protecting freedom of expression in Ethiopia. With freedom of expression also comes responsibility. Let your remarks and mode of engagement reflect open-ness and a respect for all opinions shared. I encourage you to work with integrity and with the idea in your

minds that history is in the making this weekend. You have an opportunity to forge new models of partnership and new models of dialogue. You have an opportunity to build trust and open new lines of communication. You have an opportunity, together, to collaborate on a milestone piece of draft legislation that can promote freedom of expression, guarantee the right to

information, and further advance good governance in Ethiopia.

I look forward to hearing the results of your deliberations and the outcome of this weekend’s events. Thank you and best wishes for a most successful dialogue.

(end remarks)

Debate Continues About Presidential Candidate's Speech on Race

By Lea Terhune
Staff Writer

Washington -- Barack Obama has sparked debate ever since he declared himself a Democratic candidate for U.S. president. But his speech on race in America started a significant conversation among television pundits, op-ed writers, bloggers and average Americans that shows no sign of ending.

Obama's poll ratings teetered in recent weeks, dipping after videos of Jeremiah Wright, the fiery former pastor of his Chicago church, appeared on YouTube, forcing Obama to distance himself from Wright's inflammatory comments. But his ratings bounced back after his March 18 speech in Philadelphia, in which he explained his relationship with Wright and tackled race issues head-on.

Within days a CBS News poll recorded "good reviews" for his speech and Gallup Daily showed him

edging ahead of Hillary Clinton by a few percentage points. He gained the endorsement of former rival, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, on March 22.

"I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas," Obama said, something that makes him a walking representative of an issue that has profoundly influenced -- and divided -- America for four centuries. "I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews,



Presidential candidate Barack Obama delivers a speech about race in Philadelphia March 18.

uncles and cousins of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible."

Race is an issue that "this nation cannot afford to ignore right now," Obama said. The recent controversy, he added, reflects "the complexities of race in this country that we've never really worked through - a part of our union that we have

yet to perfect."

Because problems in the African-American community predate the nation's founding -- originating with slavery, continuing in subsequent legalized discrimination and opportunities denied in the present day -- racism continues to define the world view of even successful blacks. But, Obama said, "anger is not always productive ... it distracts attention from solving real problems ... and prevents the African-American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about real change."

People across color lines share the same concerns, he said, and the lack of economic opportunity affects blacks, whites, Asians and Latinos, creating resentment in all affected communities. The race issue diverts attention from "the real

culprits ... a corporate culture rife with inside dealing, questionable accounting practices and short-term greed ... economic policies that favor the few over the many."

A UNIFYING FORCE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

Richardson, from a Latino background, called Obama "a once-in-a-lifetime leader," endorsing him in hopes of unifying Democrats. This

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Debate Continues About Presidential Candidate's Speech on Race . . .

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could bring more Latino votes to Obama.

"Senator Obama has started a discussion in this country that is long overdue, and rejects the politics of pitting race against race," Richardson said.

Even critics such as Washington Post columnist Michael Gerson, who said Obama should have refuted more specifically the "toxic views" of Wright, called it an "excellent and important speech on race in America."

Others saw courage and complexity in Obama's refusal to disown Wright, instead using Wright's views to explain the context from which those views emerged and the cultural divisions that created them. Bob Herbert, in the New York Times, lauded a "worldview that embraces both justice and healing."

Civil rights activist and George Mason University professor Roger Wilkins told America.gov that, given that blacks and whites do not have the same experience of racism, "To

try to speak to both blacks and whites at a level they both understand and which sought to pull them together toward a better understanding of this deep and profound American problem was very courageous.



Supporter Marty Nesbitt is moved to tears during Obama's March 18 discourse on race in America. (© AP Images)

"It provided a platform, a jumping off place for further rich conversation," he said, adding that Obama's words about his white grandmother helped to evoke a common humanity.

"He can be unabashedly a person who is defined as a Negro in the United States and still be someone who can reach across the racial divide," Wilkins said.

Other African-American observers agreed. Emira Woods wrote in The Black Commentator, "He elevates this pivotal issue at a critical moment. Obama gives a striking call to action, encouraging this generation to do its part."

"This amounts to a new set of talking points for a discussion about race," according to Eugene Robinson in the Washington Post.

Politico columnists Jim VandeHei and John F. Harris emphasized "the specificity with which Obama discussed racial attitudes and animosities" that politicians rarely address - - and also his skillful appeal to voters he needs to win.

Obama is the first African-American to have a real chance at becoming a U.S. presidential nominee. African Americans make up about 12.5 percent of the U.S. population.

"America can change. That is the true genius of this nation," Obama said, "What we have already achieved gives us hope -- the audacity to hope -- for what we can and must achieve tomorrow."

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Latina Women Expand Political Involvement in the United States

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington -- Latina women slowly but surely are making their presence known on the American political scene thanks in part to programs that encourage them to do so.

This year the Elección Latina program attracted about 40 Hispanic women to Rutgers University in New Jersey to learn more about how to campaign for political office or position themselves for a political appointment.

Elección Latina was added five years ago to Ready to Run: Campaign Training for Women, a nonpartisan program offered each year by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers.

Hispanics now account for nearly 13 percent of the total U.S. population. According to CAWP, of the 86 women serving in the 110th Congress, seven are Latina; of the 1,741 women state legislators nationwide, 75 are Latina.

INSPIRING WOMEN

"I have never run for political office and I never will. It doesn't suit my personality," Zulima Farber told America.gov at the 2008 Elección Latina session held March 14. "But I do want to encourage other

women to do that."

Farber has not been elected to office, but she has been appointed to political posts -- another goal of Elección Latina.

Farber, of Cuban descent, is the

Senate is a tremendous milestone. ... So we are very happy with the success so far, but we recognize that more needs to be done."

Gloria E. Soto, who works as the executive director of government affairs at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, is the current chair and one of the founders of Latinas United for Political Empowerment (LUPE), one of the Hispanic activist groups that partnered with CAWP to host Elección Latina.

"We Latinas come from all different countries," she told America.gov. "But whether you come from Puerto Rico or Cuba or Panama or Colombia, I think the issues to women are similar:

health care, education, employment opportunities."

Born in Puerto Rico, Soto said women of her generation had to subordinate their personal ambitions and defer to the men in their families. "That changed over a period of time," she said. "We have women who are second generation; it's not as much an issue to them."

Soto says she measures success of programs like Elección Latina by how many women participate, how many are first-time participants, how many chose to run for political office and how many win.

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Teresa Ruiz the first Latina to serve in the New Jersey State Senate talking to children.

former attorney general of New Jersey and the first Latina to serve as acting governor of New Jersey, having been appointed to that position in 2006 by New Jersey Governor John Corzine when he and some other state officials were out of the state.

Now an attorney with the law firm Lowenstein Sandler in New Jersey, Farber said the success of programs like Elección Latina cannot be measured from year to year.

"This is incremental change," Farber told America.gov. "I think having our first Hispanic woman [Teresa Ruiz] in the New Jersey

World Needs More Women Holding Public Offices, Expert Says

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington -- The best thing a woman can do is run for public office, says Melissa Harris-Lacewell, associate professor of politics and African-American studies at Princeton University.

Women in power help enrich democratic government and shatter stereotypes, according to the award-winning author, who has written and spoken extensively on African-American political thought.

Harris-Lacewell made her case before more than 100 women who had gathered March 14 at Rutgers, New Jersey's state university, to learn more about running for elected offices or winning appointments to government positions. They were enrolled in programs aimed at minority women as part of the Ready to Run: Campaign Training for Women program offered each year by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers.

Ready to Run was born 10 years ago, when CAWP, which keeps track of how many women hold political office in the United States, found that New Jersey was consistently ranking among the bottom 10 states for the number of women holding state offices.

The program seems to have helped: New Jersey has moved up to 15th in the country for the proportion of women in its state legislature. Many of the elected women are alumnae of Ready to Run, according to the program's coordinators. In addition, CAWP runs special one-day programs aimed specifically at Hispanic, African-American and

Asian-American women.

WHY WOMEN DON'T RUN

Cultural norms and structural barriers deter many women from considering a career in politics, Harris-Lacewell said in a keynote address at the 2008 Ready to Run program. "Women tend to help men get elected but don't run themselves," she observed.



Melissa Harris-Lacewell

Women can be deterred from seeking office for themselves by the amount of money they need to raise to run a political campaign, the time it will take away from their families and the sometimes unpleasant, "unladylike" battles they may have to wage against their opponents, Harris-Lacewell said. Women candidates, she cautioned, have to guard against negative campaigning, which alienates voters and ultimately hurts the female in the race.

Voter sexism and socially constructed perceptions of "how things should be" also work against women seeking leadership positions, Harris-Lacewell said. "Women must motivate voters to resolve the 'cognitive dissonance' regarding powerful women," she said.

WHY WOMEN SHOULD RUN

The only way to change public perceptions of what women "should" be doing in the world of politics, Harris-Lacewell said, is for women to seek and win public office in greater numbers. Elected and appointed women officials, she said, "alter the minds of both men and women."

"Women govern differently on average than men," she said. "Women are more focused on policies reflecting women's life experiences. ... They employ more consensus techniques."

Even if there were no differences in the leadership styles of men and women, it is important to have women leaders, she said.

"Democracies work best when they draw from the deepest possible well of knowledge and ability among its citizens," Harris-Lacewell said. "Women," she said, "are human. We should be able to express the full range of our desires, skills and capabilities." This, she said, is "the capacity of democracy."

Pointing to her young daughter sitting in the audience, Harris-Lacewell emphasized an even more important reason women should strive for leadership positions: "Our daughters deserve worlds that are wide open to them." ♦

Ford Motor Company International Fellowship of the 92nd Street Y

The 2009 Ford Motor Company International Fellowship of the 92nd Street Y is now accepting applications from community leaders who are citizens and residents of Azerbaijan; the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; Cambodia; Ethiopia; Israel; Liberia; and Uruguay. Applications must be postmarked, faxed, or emailed by June 30, 2008 to be considered. Please distribute the attached brochures and applications (in PDF and Word formats) to individuals you think would benefit from this wonderful opportunity.

This annual fellowship is funded by the Ford Motor Company and organized by the 92nd Street Y to provide education and support to community leaders engaged in the nonprofit sector. To date, 179 individuals from 46 countries have received the Ford Fellowship, which

is now in its eighth year.

An applicant must be a community leader engaged in the nonprofit sector, either professionally or as a volunteer and could be able to successfully address issues that affect the community's well-being.

The residency takes place June 5-June 24, 2009 in New York City. Airfare, accommodation, food, transportation, instruction, and other program-related expenses are included in the fellowship, and participants receive a small stipend upon arrival.

During the intensive three-week residency, Ford Fellows take



classes in areas including nonprofit management strategy and leadership training at Columbia University's Picker Center for Executive Education. The academic curriculum is complemented by visits to model nonprofits in New York City and

meetings with academic, business, and government leaders. The experience is enhanced by Fellows' residency at the 92nd Street Y, a community and cultural center founded in 1874 that now serves over 300,000 people annually.

For more information about the program, please see the enclosed brochures or visit our website at www.92Y.org/ford. ♦

Latina Women Expand Political Involvement in the United States . . .

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SOME THINGS ARE GETTING EASIER FOR WOMEN

It is becoming easier for women with children to combine family life with a political career, according to Gloria Montealegre, who works as the deputy press secretary for Corzine.

"I think women now can negotiate better hours and better salary for themselves and we've come a long way in just these 30 years," she told America.gov. Her message to women: "You don't have to choose one or the other now; you can do both." Montealegre calls her current job "wonderful," but

things were not as wonderful when she started her career in the early 1980s as the first Latina on-air television reporter for Channel 47, a precursor to Telemundo in New Jersey. In the beginning, she worked 16 hours a day for nearly five years, she says.

"It was a huge responsibility, but one that I loved," Montealegre told America.gov. But at that time, she said, "being a woman in television was really hard. Producers didn't understand that you had a family and so they didn't care."

Montealegre quit her television job to raise her two children, but later landed her job in the governor's office.

"I'm enjoying this to no end," she said of her duties, which entail dealing with local and international ethnic media for the governor. "I love doing what I'm doing."

For more information, "The World Needs More Women Holding Public Offices, Expert Says" and "Asian-American Women "Dip Their Toes" Into U.S. Politics."

See also the publication Women In Politics (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/womenpolitics/>).

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Martin Luther King's Dream Lives on 40 Years After His Death

By Michael Friedman
Staff Writer

Washington -- On April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, an assassin's bullet took the life of Martin Luther King, the main architect and the leader of the nonviolent civil rights movement in the United States. He was 39 years old. The medical examiners said King died with the heart of a 60-year-old, because he had for so long carried the burden of so many. Some 100,000 Americans stood outside the church at the time of his funeral.

The day before, as part of his "poor people's campaign," King was campaigning on behalf of striking -- and primarily black -- sanitation workers. His last address drew strongly on his lifelong study of the Bible. It would prove prophetic:

Well, I don't know what will happen now; we've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life -- longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so I'm happy tonight; I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord

The year 1968 was one of political upheaval throughout the world. In the United States, just two months later, on June 5, another assassin took the life of Senator Robert Kennedy, who as attorney general had provided timely assistance to civil rights activists.



*Dr. King makes his last public appearance in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 3, 1968.
(© AP Images)*

DAYS OF ANGER

The murder of Martin Luther King sparked riots in Washington and more than 100 other American cities, threatening to turn a peaceful struggle of African Americans into a violent racial confrontation. Even before the tragic event, the movement seemed to be undergoing a transformation that many of King's closest associates watched with apprehension.

By May 1966, Stokely Carmichael, veteran of numerous voter registration drives, had established himself as the new head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the principal student organization of the civil rights move-

ment, whose leadership was growing increasingly impatient with the gradualist strategy of Martin Luther King and his associates.

In a speech at Greenwood, Mississippi, Carmichael raised a call for "Black Power." Where people like Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King had sought integration, Carmichael instead sought separation. Integration, he said, was "an insidious subterfuge, for the maintenance of white supremacy."

Meanwhile, the Black Panther Party (some accounts trace the name to a visual emblem for illiterate voters used in an Alabama voter registration drive), founded in Oakland, California, in October 1966 by activists Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, employed armed members -- "Panthers" -- to shadow police officers who, they believed, unfairly targeted blacks.

While the party briefly enjoyed a measure of popularity, particularly through its social services programs, armed altercations with local police resulted in the death or jailing of prominent Panthers, turned many Americans against its violent ways, and fragmented the Panther movement. It petered out in a maze of factionalism and mutual recriminations.

Many feared, however, that King's assassination would increase the influence of militant elements within the movement. At that time, some questioned King's life work. But the "Promised Land" that King described was in many ways far closer than it seemed during the riots of April 1968.

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Martin Luther King's Dream Lives on 40 Years After His Death . . .

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AMERICAN CONSENSUS

The African-American historical experience will always be unique. But meaningful federal enforcement of the right to vote equipped black Americans with the tools that immigrants and other minority groups long have used to pursue -- and achieve -- the American Dream. In the United States, people who vote wield real political power. With the vote -- and over time -- legal and political equality for African Americans has produced gains in nearly every walk of life.

John R. Lewis, for example, was one of the Freedom Riders beaten bloody by a Montgomery, Alabama, mob in 1961. Today he represents Georgia's 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Nearly 50 of his congressional colleagues are African Americans, and several of them wield great political power as chairpersons of influential congressional committees.

In 1963, Denise McNair was among the girls killed when racist vigilantes bombed Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. In 2005, her friend Condoleezza Rice took office as the nation's secretary of state.

Black secondary school graduation

rates have nearly tripled since 1966, and the rate of poverty has been nearly halved in that time. The expansion of the black middle class

Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement generation.

Unquestionably, the civil rights movement forced the American people to confront squarely the contradiction between their ideals and the reality of segregation and inequality. In doing so, it launched the nation far along the path to full racial equality, a road it is still traveling.

Probably the most important measure of progress is the emergence -- not least among the younger Americans who will build the nation's future -- of a broad and deep consensus that the shameful histories of slavery, segregation and disadvantage must be relegated to just that: history.

The materials above are adapted from *Free At Last: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement*, a book to be published on America.gov during summer 2008.

Read Free At Last select pre-publication chapters

(<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/civilrights/>).

(*USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State.* Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦



Six men hang a sign in honor of murdered civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King at an expressway bridge near King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference headquarters in Atlanta, April 8, 1968. (© AP Images)

is a widely noted social development, as are the many successful entrepreneurs, scholars and literary and artistic achievers who are African American.

Although Americans continue to wrestle with issues of race, those issues differ profoundly from those addressed by Thurgood Marshall,

U.S. Women Making Strides in Education, Entrepreneurship

Washington -- American women -- 152 million or 51 percent of the U.S. population -- increasingly are making their influence felt in all spheres of American life. And the month of March -- National Women's History Month -- is a fitting time to measure the progress women are making in American society.



Cathy L. Lanier is Washington's first permanent female police chief.

Recognizing that education is their ticket to economic success, women now graduate high school at rates higher than those of men -- 87 percent for women; 85 percent for men. In the age range of 25 to 29 years, 32 percent of women compared to 25 percent of men obtained bachelor's degrees or higher in 2005. On the other hand, a higher proportion of males in the general population had a bachelor's degree or higher (28.9 percent compared with 26.5 percent of women).

About 59 percent of women age 16 or older participated in the labor force in 2005. Of these, 37 percent worked in management, professional and related occupations. The median annual earnings of women 16 or older who worked year-round, full time, in 2005 was \$32,168, according to figures provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Some 21.1 million women work in educational services, health care and social assistance industries. About 37 percent of women work in management, professional and related occupations. Nonetheless, on average, women continue to earn only 77 cents for every \$1 earned by men. Even so, in 17 per-

cent of married couples, the wife earned at least \$5,000 more than the husband in 2005. Among 22 percent of married couples, the wife has more education than the husband.

In 2005, some 63 million American women were married; and 55 million were widowed, divorced or never married.

More than 82 million American women are mothers -- only 5.6 million are "stay-at-home" mothers.

The number of women-owned businesses -- 6.5 million -- has increased by 20 percent between 1997 and 2002 and their revenues jumped 15 percent in the same time frame. There were 7,231

women-owned firms with 100 or more employees, generating \$274 billion in gross receipts in 2002. Nearly one in three women-owned firms operated in health care and social assistance, and other services such as personal services, and repair and maintenance.

Although their numbers still are relatively small, more women are serving in the U.S. military. In 2005, some 203,000 women were on active duty, representing 15 per-

cent of the armed forces. Nearly 35,000 women serve as officers.

More U.S. women citizens than men (65 percent to 62 percent) reported voting in the 2004 presidential elections.

Women are reversing the "gender gap" for computer use that was exhibited in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2003, more women (by 2 percentage points) than men used a computer at home.

In the last 30 years, girls have more than doubled their numbers in high school athletic programs. In the 2004-2005 school year, there were 2.9 million girls participating in school athletic programs compared to only 1.3 million girls in the 1973-1974 school year.



Sennheiser employee Antoinette Lucero inspects circuit boards at her work station in Albuquerque, New Mexico. (© AP Images)

In 2006, according to Census Bureau statistics, more women than men (57 percent to 37 percent) could be found working in their gardens, doing charity work (32 percent versus 26 percent) and reading literature (55 percent versus 38 percent).

For more information, see Women's History Month (<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/diversity/diversity--offering-a-place-for-everyone.html>) and Women in Politics (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/womenpolitics/>).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Gender-Equity Law Led to Boom in Female Sports Participation

By Jeffrey Thomas
Staff Writer

Washington -- "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid." -- Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act

In 1972, with the exception of historically black colleges and universities, virtually no college offered women athletic scholarships. Athletics programming for women generally consisted of little other than cheerleading squads.



According to most recent statistics (2005), National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I student bodies were, on average, 54 percent female, while athletic programs were 45 percent female, up from 31 percent in 1990, according to the NCAA and U.S. Education Department. Between 1971 and 2005, female participation in collegiate sports increased 456 percent.

Division I, the highest level of NCAA membership, requires schools to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for

In U.S. secondary schools the situation was not much better: approximately 300,000 girls participated in sports, or roughly one in 27. They did not have the same access to coaches as boys, their athletic facilities were not of comparable quality and their competitive events and games were not given the same attention and resources.

Then, in 1972, landmark civil rights legislation was enacted that banned sex discrimination in U.S. schools, both in academic subjects and in athletics. Popularly known as "Title IX," it was renamed the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act in 2002 after the death of the congresswoman from Hawaii who was its principal author.

Mink faced discrimination at the three universities she attended in the 1940s and 1950s and believed

she was denied entrance to medical school because she was a woman. "I didn't start off wanting to be in politics," she once told a reporter. "I wanted to be a learned professional, serving the community. But they weren't hiring women just then. Not being able to get a job from anybody changed things."

When she became the first woman of color and first Asian-American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1964, she championed the rights of immigrants, minorities, women and children. Title IX was her crowning legislative achievement, and its effect on women's sports has been profound.

Today, almost 3 million girls participate in high school sports in the United States (roughly one in three).

men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender.

U.S. schools are required to provide both sexes with equal opportunities for sports participation and equal numbers of athletics scholarships. They also have to treat male and female teams equally in terms of allocating resources, scheduling events, publicity and access to coaches.

While broadly popular with the U.S. public, Title IX has not been without controversy.

"Title IX has removed barriers to women's participation in sports. But it has also caused great damage, in part because it has led to the adoption of a destructive quota system," writes Christina Hoff Sommers, a resident scholar at the American

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Bush Accepts Putin's Invitation for Talks in Russia

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush will hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin after Bush attends the upcoming NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania. In the April 6 meeting, the two leaders are expected to discuss missile defense and the future of U.S.-Russian relations.

"I think a lot of people in Europe would have a deep sigh of relief if we're able to reach an accord on missile defense. And hopefully we can," the president says.

During a meeting with foreign journalists, Bush said that Putin's invitation to meet in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi April 6 underlined the enduring need for dialogue between Washington and Moscow. "It's important that we have good relations with Russia, we can find common interests," he said.

National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley said March 26 that the Kremlin's invitation follows recent "2 + 2" talks in Moscow between Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates and their Russian counterparts to address Russia's concerns about U.S. partnership with the Czech Republic and Poland to build a limited missile defense system. In addition, the recent talks also addressed a critical new "strategic framework" document outlining the full range of political, security and economic issues that define current and future U.S.-Russian relations.

"This is an opportunity for the two leaders to meet, assess what pro-



President Bush (R) and Russian President Putin shake hands at the end of a joint news conference, Maine July 2, 2007. (Xinhua/Reuters Photo)

gress has been made," said Hadley of Bush's visit with Putin. "Consolidate areas where we're cooperating together, maybe resolve some outstanding issues such as missile defense and provide a platform for the relationship of the two countries going forward."

NATO SUMMIT SHOWCASES ALLIANCE TRANSFORMATION

Before meeting in Sochi, Bush and Putin will be among dozens of world leaders coming together for the 2008 NATO Summit April 2-4 in Bucharest, Romania, a location that highlights how new members and partners have transformed the alliance as it adapts to meet new security challenges, Hadley said.

Following a working dinner with fellow alliance leaders April 2, Bush will take part in a full schedule of NATO events the next day, including participating in NATO's membership decision on the "Adriatic 3"

candidates, Macedonia, Albania and Croatia. Bush also will participate in a meeting of the 59-member Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

NATO will dedicate an entire afternoon to a review of the alliance's mission in Afghanistan, Hadley said. Talks will include Afghan President Hamid Karzai and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as representatives from the European Union, the World Bank and the 11 non-NATO states contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, Hadley said.

"We expect NATO nations and [alliance] partners in Afghanistan will demonstrate their firm commitment to Afghanistan

over the long term with pledges, of additional contributions and renewed resolve to help Afghanistan succeed," Hadley said. "Together these leaders are developing a comprehensive approach to strengthening Afghanistan's sovereignty and the democratic process."

In the 1990s, NATO helped Romania and many of its neighbors consolidate democracy through the Membership Action Plan, a multi-year process of reforms and training to help prepare future alliance candidates, said Hadley. The United States, he added, believes such an opportunity should be offered to Georgia and Ukraine.

"The president believes that NATO would benefit from Georgia and Ukraine as members and that these nations would benefit from being a part of NATO," Hadley said. ♦

Surge Helped Restart Iraqi Political, Economic Life, Bush Says

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The surge in U.S. forces across critical hot spots in Iraq in 2007 has helped Iraqis improve security and restart political and economic life and is bringing the United States ever closer to a strategic victory against radical extremism and terrorism, President Bush says.

These were the primary goals of the surge, when Bush ordered an additional 30,000 Army and Marine forces into Iraq. Since December 2007, five combat brigades have been withdrawn. The outlook for further force reductions will become clearer after a report in April from Army General David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq.

But the success of the surge did not depend on just military power; it was enhanced by the Iraqi people, who are anxious for a secure nation, Bush says. "A key factor in these security gains has been new cooperation from the Iraqi people. Ordinary Iraqis have come forward with intelligence. ... Citizens who were once hostile to the coalition have switched sides and are now joining with us."

The surge is doing what it was intended to do -- protect the Iraqi people and consolidate gains made by U.S.-led coalition forces, the president said. The coalition also took action on the other objective behind the surge -- providing "space" for political and economic progress with the return of security, the president said.

"So we deployed additional civilian experts and more than doubled the



President George W. Bush greets U.S. military personnel on his arrival to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Thursday, March 27, 2008, in Ohio. White House photo by Eric Draper

number of provincial reconstruction teams, with a mission to ensure the security gains were followed up by improvements in daily life," Bush said in a March 27 speech in Dayton, Ohio. The speech at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force is part of a series of public addresses Bush has made in advance of congressional testimony in early April from U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Petraeus on progress in Iraq.

Bush cited security improvements across Iraq, saying "in Baghdad, we've worked with Iraqi security forces to greatly diminish the sectarian violence and civilian deaths. We've broken the grip of al-Qaida on the capital. We've weakened the influence of Iranian-backed militias."

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki made a strong decision to go after illegal groups in Basra, which demonstrates his leadership and his commitment to enhancing Iraqis'

security, Bush said.

Following the surge and the improved security environment, Bush said Iraqis have restarted the political process.

"They're striving to build a modern democracy on the rubble of three decades of tyranny, in a region of the world that has been hostile to freedom. And they're doing it while under assault from one of history's most brutal terrorist networks," Bush said.

The president cited enactment of an Iraqi government pension law that would allow tens of thousands of Sunnis to collect retirement benefits they had been promised. "Part of reconciliation is to reach out to groups who may not have trust in central government. And you build trust by honoring commitments," he said.

Iraqi leaders in January enacted a

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New Agreement May Improve Palestinian Livelihoods, Says Rice

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- A new Israeli-Palestinian agreement easing border restrictions for Palestinians in the West Bank will improve the livelihoods of area residents and may help negotiators make further progress toward Mideast peace, according to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"The two parties have agreed to a set of steps that constitute a very good start to improving movement and access, improving potential economic prospects for Palestinians," Rice says. She held talks with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad during a March 28-31 visit to the region.

Fayyad and Barak also agreed to improving Palestinian livelihoods through investment and economic development projects in the West Bank, new housing for Palestinians in the West Bank, and more connections for Palestinian communities to the Israeli power grid, according to a March 30 State Department statement.

Israeli authorities agreed to remove 50 roadblocks and upgrade checkpoints to ease movement of people and goods between Israel and the West Bank, while Palestinians agreed to improve security in Jenin, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said March 30.

The announcement is a step forward for implementing the road map to Middle East peace -- a package of security and confidence-building measures developed by the diplomatic Quartet of the European



U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (C) stands with Israel's Defence Minister Ehud Barak (R) and Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad after their meeting in Jerusalem March 30, 2008 in this picture released by the U.S. Embassy. (JERUSALEM).

Union, the United Nations, Russia and the United States. General William Fraser, the U.S. representative monitoring progress on the road map, will meet with both sides to complete details and move forward on these new security improvements, Rice said.

Rice said that the announcement also reflects a renewed commitment toward addressing the interlocking political, security and economic elements of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict launched at the 2007 U.S.-sponsored Annapolis Conference.

"The whole point here is to have an integrated approach that looks at the security, looks at the movement and access issues, and looks at the potential for economic prospects, and then comes up with concrete steps that can move all three together in an integrated fashion,"

Rice said.

The Annapolis process defined the political horizon by placing the goal of a Palestinian state in sight, Rice said, while on parallel tracks the road map builds security and Palestinian reform and economic development efforts help ensure the future state's success.

"To the degree that we can take these elements together -- security, movement and economic prospects together -- I think we're going to make more progress," she added.

Following a stop in Jordan for talks with King Abdullah and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Rice will join President Bush in Europe, where he will attend the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania, as well as visit Ukraine, Croatia and Russia. ♦

Baseball, Once Just an American Game, Extends Reach Worldwide

By Ralph Dannheisser
Special Correspondent

Washington -- When major league baseball introduced the "World Series" as its season-ending championship matchup in 1903, the name was an exercise in hyperbole.

The sport was strictly American in nature, the bulk of players and managers were U.S. natives as well, and the claim that the series would determine the "professional baseball championship of the world" was hollow.

But now, after a steady influx of foreign-born players, the once grandiose "World Series" designation finally has gained some legitimacy. Many of the world's best players now come to the United States to demonstrate their skills -- and to earn the multimillion dollar paychecks typical for major league stars.

The "World" aspect has become a reality -- at least in terms of team makeup -- even if the "Series" itself continues to involve only teams based in North America. The 2007 World Series-winning Boston Red Sox, for example, included players from the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Japan, Canada and Puerto Rico.

At the start of the 2007 season, Major League Baseball reported, 246 of the 849 players on team rosters were born outside the United States. That came to 29 percent of all players, almost matching the 29.2 percent record set in 2005.

THE CRADLE OF SHORTSTOPS

The Dominican Republic produced



Mexico's Heber Gomez Contreras bats a ball against South Africa during the seventh inning of their International Baseball Federation's (IBAF) final Olympic qualifying tournament game in Taichung March 12, 2008. Mexico won the game. The top three teams will qualify for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. REUTERS/Pichi Chuang (TAIWAN)

most of those players, 98, followed by Venezuela with 51, Puerto Rico (28), Canada (19), Japan and Mexico (13 each), Panama (seven), Cuba (six), South Korea (three), Colombia and Taiwan (two each), and Aruba, Australia, Curacao and Nicaragua (one each). The New York Mets alone included on their 40-man roster 15 players born abroad.

The Dominican Republic has led in such listings for years -- and San Pedro de Macoris, with a population of some 200,000, has had an amazing distinction. Baseball-Reference.com reports that 70 players in major league history were born in that one town. Even more incredible, San Pedro was the birthplace of the shortstops for five of the 26 major league teams in 1989

and 1990 -- lending credence to its nickname, "The Cradle of Shortstops."

The New York Yankees, probably the most successful and richest of U.S. professional sports teams, in 2007 expanded ongoing efforts to court Latin American fans: they created a new Department of Latino Affairs.

Saying that, "In the United States, Latinos are the largest minority group, and, in the baseball world, they constitute the highest percentage of foreign-born Major League Baseball players," the team has launched outreach efforts that include a new Spanish-language Web site, yankeesbeisbol.com. And it has given three political leaders, the presidents of the Dominican Republic and Panama and the governor of Puerto Rico, the honor of throwing out the first pitch at individual ballgames.

A number of former Cuban pitching greats, including half-brothers Liván and Orlando ("El Duque") Hernández, also have become major league stars. For the Cubans, the situation is unique: Due to restrictions on their leaving Cuba and that country's hostile relations with the United States, those now playing here have defected to do so.

PULL OF THE RISING SUN

Japan, where baseball has been immensely popular since the 1940s, also has scored big in the United States.

In March, the Boston Red Sox and Oakland Athletics traveled to Tokyo to hold their league's season-

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Baseball, Once Just an American Game, Extends Reach Worldwide . . .

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opening games, the third time since 2000 that U.S. baseball inaugurated its season in Japan. The teams split the two games, with Red Sox pitching ace Daisuke Matsuzaka -- a hometown hero in Tokyo -- starting the opener. Matsuzaka, affectionately called "Dice-K" by Red Sox fans, left the game in the sixth inning and his team fell behind. But the Sox rallied to win for Hideki Okajima, a Kyoto native, who pitched a scoreless ninth inning. Fans in Boston watched the game on live television at 6 a.m.



Students from Fendtai Elementary school in South West Beijing participate in Play Ball, a program set up to teach Chinese youth baseball. Chris Hyde / For the Times

Two other Japanese superstars also have had huge success in the United States -- Ichiro Suzuki of the Seattle Mariners and Hideki Matsui of the New York Yankees.

And Japan has not lagged far behind in globalizing its own game. As of January 20, Japanese teams had signed 62 foreign players for the 2008 season, including ones from the United States, Canada, Australia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, South Korea and Taiwan.

BIG IN CHINA

Meanwhile, Major League Baseball is trying to expand its presence in China, almost 50 years after Mao Zedong banned the sport there:

The Yankees have entered into a contract with the Chinese Baseball Association to help develop players.

In March, the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres played a pair

of exhibition games in Beijing.

On March 31, officials announced the launch of a new Web site, www.major.tv/china, that will enable Chinese baseball fans to access highlights, scores, photographs, statistics and some games via an Internet service using simplified Chinese.

"I feel we're making inroads," Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig told reporters after attending the Beijing games. "We will continue to do what we can to accelerate the process. In fact, I feel so good about it, I have no doubt in my mind that in a decade, baseball will be big in China."

In March 2006, the idea of a true international championship finally became reality as 16 national baseball teams held the first World Baseball Classic. With many U.S. major leaguers playing for their homelands, Japan beat Cuba in the fi-

nale. The United States, which finished eighth, will get another chance in a repeat event scheduled for 2009.

In the 1940s, comedians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were identified with a routine in which they satirized the supposedly "strange names" of baseball players. Their mythical players included "Who" at first base, "What" at second and "I don't know" at third. The skit centered on Costello's frustrated confusion as he asked, "Who's on first?" and Abbott responded, "Yes."

This year, with the internationalization of the game in full swing, the Los Angeles Dodgers have a Taiwanese shortstop named Hu -- Chin-Lung Hu.

Abbott and Costello would have been amazed. ♦

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Surge Helped Restart Iraqi Political, Economic Life. . .

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new de-Baathification law that allows people who were mid-level members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party to re-enter political and civic life, Bush said, calling it another significant reconciliation measure.

Iraqi officials have enacted a budget, Bush said, that increases spending on security and capital reconstruction projects and provincial governments. Leaders also enacted an amnesty law to resolve the status of many Iraqis held in Iraqi custody.

Finally, Bush said Iraqi leaders reached an agreement on a provincial powers law that helps define Iraqi federalism and sets the stage for provincial elections later this year.

During a period of active sectarian

violence more than a year ago, Iraq's economy was in trouble as oil revenues declined and businesses closed their doors, the president said. "A year later, almost every key economic indicator has turned around. Since the surge began, business registrations have increased by more than 9 percent. Total inflation has fallen by more than 60 percentage points," he said.

Investment in energy and telecommunications industries has increased, Bush said, the agricultural sector is improving, oil production is up and economic growth nationwide is projected to be a robust 7 percent this year.

"As the economic situation stabilizes, Iraq's government has stepped forward to meet more of its own expenses. This is a mark of pride for Iraqis, and it is a point of insistence for us," the president said. ♦

U.S. Gender-Equity Law Led to Boom in Female Sports Participation . . .

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Enterprise Institute, a conservative-leaning policy research organization in Washington.

She says that schools that are unable to attract equal numbers of men and women to participate in sports often drop men's teams to avoid government censure, funding cuts and lawsuits.

A recent report by the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education found "stunning progress," but also states that "much remains to be done, for the evidence shows that girls and women continue to suffer discrimination in many educational activities, although it is usually in a more subtle form than it was before Title IX

was enacted."

The report also maintains that, "contrary to the critics' claims, boys' and men's opportunities to play sports have continuously increased since 1972, albeit at a slower rate than that of girls and women -- who had so few opportunities before Title IX."

Participation in sports is far from a trivial issue. Research has shown the benefits of such participation are significant and long-lasting.

A study published in 2007, for example, showed that playing on a high school sports team increased a young woman's chances of graduating from college by 41 percent.

"If the goal is for girls to get a higher education, our findings favor the idea of girls playing high school sports," said Mikaela Dufur, a sociology professor at Brigham Young University in Utah and co-author of the research.

A study in 2002 showed that athletics help student academic performance in high school more than any other extracurricular activity. Decreased drug use, improved health, better grades, increased confidence and other benefits also have been found by various researchers.

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