



BELGIUM: 175 YEARS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS CELEBRATED

U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Sam Fox and Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel De Gucht, along with over 250 guests celebrated 175 years of U.S.-Belgian diplomatic relations and 400 years of people to people connections. The event at

the Palais des Académies in Brussels was highlighted by a moving film and exhibit entitled "From Explorer Ships to Partnerships: A Voyage through 175 Years of U.S.-Belgian Relations." The formal part of the evening was capped by Belgian-American jazz legend Toots Thielemans who gave a touching personal interpretation of the Belgian and U.S. national anthems on harmonica. One of the most important aspects about the opening was the section called "The Relationship Personified" where the U.S. Embassy in Belgium recognized living people who represented the U.S.-Belgian relationship -- all the way back to the American Revolution! The event received wide coverage in the Belgian media, including on the late evening news of Flemish broadcaster *VRT TV* and *VRT radio*, French language *Radio Ciel*, and in Financial daily *L'Echo, FM*.



Ambassador Fox chats with guests, April 8, 2008. [With permission from Filip Van Loock]

TURKEY: NATIVE AMERICAN STORYTELLER CONNECTS WITH THOUSANDS OF TURKISH YOUTH



Rose Red Elk leads a traditional dance at the Ambassador's residence, April 2008. [Atilla Tunali, U.S. Embassy Ankara]

Storyteller and singer Redfeather Woman gave 21

performances in ten days in Turkey, as part of a U.S. Embassy in Ankara-sponsored series of visits by U.S. storytellers. Redfeather Woman (also known as Rose Red Elk and Rose Haywood) performed to over 4,000 high school and university students in eight cities in southwestern Turkey and in Ankara. Her program of song, story, and dance -- which focused on the themes of tolerance, ethnic diversity, and mutual respect for cultural differences -- was extremely well received. Standing-room-only crowds greeted her at nearly every venue, and students stayed after the performances to ask questions and have pictures taken with Rose. The program helped the Embassy counter strong anti-Americanism felt by many Turkish youth and fostered a dialogue about minority issues.

ITALY: U.S. PRESIDENTIAL MOCK DEBATE ROCKS ITALIAN STUDENTS

American-style democracy was the real star of a mock Presidential debate organized by the U.S. Embassy in Rome as part of this year's 2008 elections programming. Two staff members of Johns Hopkins University Bologna brilliantly performed the roles of the Republican and Democratic candidates for 135 university students in the live audience and with six southern Italian universities who participated via live webcast/webchat. The event reached several hundred through media outlets *SKYTG24* and *La7 TV* and two university radio stations.

Students vote at the end of the debate, April 18, 2008. [Monique Quesada, U.S. Embassy Rome]



SLOVENIA: EMBASSY-SPONSORED CHARITY DINNER RAISES NEARLY \$135,000



Chargé Maryruth Coleman speaks with Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, ITF Director Goran Gačnik, and Canadian Ambassador Pierre Guimond at charity dinner, March 27, 2008. [Albert Kraaimoore, U.S. Embassy Ljubljana]

In support of demining efforts, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Slovenia Maryruth Coleman and Canadian Ambassador to Slovenia Pierre Guimond co-hosted the eighth annual Night of 1,000 Dinners charity event for the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF). The American Chamber of Commerce organized the charity dinner, which succeeded in raising more than \$66,000 -- an amount that was doubled by a matching donation from the U.S. Government. The proceeds will go to the USA-UNA Adopt-A-Minefield Program and will be used for demining activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ITF has raised more than \$240 million in donations, helped to clear nearly 64 million square meters of mines, and assisted more than 900 victims since its inception. Nearly half of the money raised by ITF in the past decade is from U.S. Government matching donations.

MOLDOVA: EMBASSY SPONSORS FREE DENTAL TREATMENT

Three dentists and five dental students from the U.S. provided free treatment for Moldovan children, and shared professional experience with their Moldovan colleagues in a visit organized by the Bilateral Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau. The team, headed by Drs. Burton Horwitz and Glen Reside from the University of North Carolina Dental School, examined and treated approximately 90 children from Chisinau and a rural orphanage. The dentists also conducted several lectures for the students and faculty of the Moldovan Medical University and visited dental clinics in various hospitals in Chisinau, Straseni, and Cahul. The visit generated much media interest and the dentists were interviewed by both TV and radio.



American dentist and dental students provide treatment for Moldovan child, March 31-April 3, 2008. [Sharon Ketchum, U.S. Embassy Chisinau]

GEORGIA: JAZZ DIPLOMACY IN THE CONFLICT ZONES



Dan Tepfer signs poster made by Natalya Lazarishvili with Ambassador Tefft during his April 6th performance, April 6, 2008.

In an intimate concert at the Sukhumi Music School in the break-away region of Abkhazia, Dan Tepfer, a young American jazz pianist and composer, used music to break through the audience's reserve and connect directly with the people of Abkhazia. For many of the teenagers and children in the audience this was their first exposure to an American musician, or even to an American. In a master class the next day, Dan and Joel Harrison, the Artistic Director of the American Pianists' Association, worked with a number of young, classically-trained pianists, further strengthening people-to-people ties. Up to 50 young Gali residents in southern Abkhazia crossed the line of control at the Enguri Bridge to attend the concert in Zugdidi while the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi worked with the Mayor of Tbilisi and the Minister of Refugees to bring 80 school children from the Georgian-administered territory of South Ossetia to a special music appreciation event hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft.

RUSSIA: NAVAJO CONNECTS WITH RUSSIAN FAR EAST

U.S. State Department Speaker Radmilla Cody shared the beauty of the Navajo Nation with over 500 students, professionals, and indigenous peoples during her visit to Vladivostok and the Kamchatka peninsula. Ms. Cody delivered an uplifting message of tolerance, diversity, and respect for the environment through her presentation, which included Navajo songs, jewelry, and artifacts. The American Corner in Petropavlovsk (Kamchatka) and the landmark Arsenyev Museum in Vladivostok hosted events that included the participation of native groups from the Itelmen, Aleutian, Koryak, and Udege. Ms. Cody also met with representatives of five local non-governmental organizations and social science majors and gave a talk about domestic violence, inspiring trainers who address this issue in Russia. Ms. Cody's program generated much media in both cities, with television, print, magazine, and internet coverage, reaching over 4 million.



U.S. Speaker Radmilla Cody explains the Navajo culture to students in Kamchatka, April 7-18, 2008. [Bridget Gersten, U.S. Consulate Vladivostok]

LITHUANIA: STUDENTS CONNECT WITH FRIENDS IN LOS ANGELES



Students from Mazeikiai talk about democracy, March 26, 2008. [Jurgita Jonutiene, U.S. Embassy Vilnius]

The U.S. Embassy in Vilnius hosted 55 students and 12 teachers from the Vilnius Pedagogical University and high schools in Vilnius, Mažeikiai, Elektrėnai and Radviliškis for a videoconference with students in Los Angeles. This event was part of a five-year international project called "Deliberations in Democracy" sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and was the fourth of this annual series to build connections between Lithuanian and American students. The students conversed with their peers in Los Angeles and exchanged ideas on various topics related to democracy. They expressed their opinions on the importance of voting in a democracy, the idea of mandatory voting, and the upcoming presidential election in the U.S. and parliamentary elections in Lithuania.

BULGARIA: EIGHT AMERICAN SHELVES DOWN, THREE MORE TO GO

The crushing media attention couldn't dissuade a group of Bulgarian youngsters from greeting U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria John Beyrle with their version of the hokey-pokey as the Ambassador opened Bulgaria's eighth American Shelf in Stara Zagora this week. The U.S. Embassy in Sofia is opening a series of eleven American Shelves around Bulgaria to create a network of small-sized reference desks in a number of Bulgarian public libraries that will provide reference services on American issues. Each donation features a collection of 100 reference books about U.S. history, politics, art, film, literature, music, society, and culture -- as well as a computer, so library users can find more information on the Internet, and the Bulgarian libraries can strengthen their connections with partner libraries in the United States. Also in April, the U.S. Embassy launched its newly-renovated American Youth Center at a downtown Sofia library.



A welcome greeting by Bulgarian children for Ambassador Beyrle, April 2008. [Plamen Ivanov, U.S. Embassy Sofia]

CYPRUS: U.S. EMBASSY LAUNCHES SOCRATES CAFÉ FOR YOUNG ALUMNI



Socrates Cafe provided a safe forum for meaningful dialogue between the participants, April 20, 2008.
[John Rhatigan, U.S. Embassy Nicosia]

How do you bring together youth from a divided country? Through open and respectful dialogue at the Socrates Café! The U.S. Embassy in Nicosia sponsored a “Socrates Café” at Chateau Status restaurant in the U.N. patrolled Buffer Zone in Nicosia for thirty Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot university and high school students. The students are all alumni of the Bold Leaders Summer Camp in Denver, which is organized by Critical Mass Leadership Education and sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia's Bicommunal Support Program and Cyprus Fulbright Commission. With a view to promoting debate on pertinent philosophical issues within a trusting environment, the Socrates Café provided a safe forum for meaningful dialogue on different topics chosen by the participants themselves including religion and science, smoking, and truthfulness. The dynamic conversations spilled over into the breaks and onto an online blog created previously by the Bold Leaders.

GREECE: U.S. SPEAKER PARTICIPATES IN AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

U.S. State Department Speaker, Political Science Professor G. Calvin Mackenzie of Colby College, addressed the U.S. Embassy in Athens-sponsored annual American Studies Seminars in Athens and Thessaloniki, engaging more than 250 university students, faculty, journalists, and young professionals in examining the 2008 presidential elections in a historical context. Mackenzie captivated his audiences with his knowledge, eloquence, and candor in six lectures at the seminars, two media interviews, a discussion with prominent academics and journalists at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, and a successful program with international relations majors at the University of Piraeus. Most importantly, Mackenzie’s visit and his academic focus on the popular and timely subject of U.S. presidential elections became an opportunity for the U.S. Embassy to connect positively with the University of Piraeus, an institution with a growing number of international relations students. Mackensie was featured in the daily center-right *Eleftheros Typos* and the Thessaloniki-based local *Macedonia*.



Professor Mackenzie addresses students at American Studies Seminar 2008, April 2008. [Georgia Galanopoulou, U.S. Embassy Athens]

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