



What's New – January 2008

Significant E-Documents

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ARTICLES

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Kahn, Jeremy ON THE PROWL (Smithsonian, vol. 38, no. 8, November 2007, pp. 84-92)
The jaguar, the largest feline species in the Western Hemisphere, the third largest in the world, disappeared from the U.S. in the 1960s. Now, several of the animals have been spotted in the wilds of New Mexico and Arizona, but the prospect of a reappearance of this creature raises unexpected complications. Ranchers have been the traditional enemies of large predators; however, a growing number of ranchers now recognize that reestablishment of a jaguar population could bring new recognition to their contributions to land conservation. The intertwined border issues of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and national security also affect the jaguar's fate in the U.S. A proposed fence on the U.S.-Mexican border would likely prevent migration of the known breeding population in Sonora, Mexico from traveling northward. Another deterrent to the cat's resurgence is the expected resumption of mining activity in the U.S. Southwest, as soaring commodity prices and newer technologies make re-opening old mines profitable. Local, state, and federal agencies and advocates are still negotiating their way through this tangle of issues. The jaguar has refused comment. Available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/prowl-200711.html>

Kennedy, Edward THE SUPREME COURT'S WRONG TURN -- AND HOW TO CORRECT IT (American Prospect, vol. 18, no. 12, December 2007, pp. 14-18)
Kennedy, the senior Democratic senator from Massachusetts, argues that Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito, posing as moderates during their confirmation hearings, have shifted positions once they were seated on the U.S. Supreme Court. Now they are moving the Court to the right. The two judges, who advocated judicial "modesty," have been very aggressive in overturning doctrines and statutes, such as curtailing abortion rights. Whether or not it was possible to prevent confirmation of the president's Supreme Court nominees by a Republican-controlled Senate, the confirmation hearings should, at the very least, have informed the American public about the nominees' views on the pressing legal issues of our time. It is no exaggeration to say that the next Supreme Court appointee, which might be nominated by a Democratic president and sent to a Democratic-controlled Senate for confirmation, will have a decisive role in shaping the law on such vital issues as abortion, affirmative action, campaign finance, federalism, and countless other matters. For this reason, both the Democrats and the Republicans need to transcend party politics to work together for reform.

Layton, Charles THE VIDEO EXPLOSION (American Journalism Review, vol. 29, no. 6, December 2007/January 2008, pp. 24-31)
The stampede is on among newspapers to put video on their Web sites; many see it at the key to their survival. Video consumers are younger than the general population, have higher incomes and more education -- exactly the demographic newspapers as well as advertisers covet, writes Layton. But not all stories lend themselves well to video treatment, however, and the quality of current video varies dramatically. Training personnel is all-important. And while an Internet audience might tolerate less than stellar visuals, they demand top-quality audio -- a new criteria for still photographers and writers who normally don't focus on background noise. Video is labor-intensive, even for experienced still photographers. A two- to three-minute video currently requires a minimum of two to four hours of production time. The right equipment is crucial for photographers expected to bring back both still and video. High-definition camcorders make it

possible to extract or “grab” individual frames from the video. But for writers working on short deadlines, producing a printable story as well as a video is nearly impossible. Some writers, however, are making a clean break from print, finding that many stories can be better told visually. Twenty-five-year-old Evelio Contreras, now a video producer at the Roanoke Times of Virginia, a daily newspaper with a 97,000 circulation, made the switch. “I saw it as a way to develop my storytelling skills,” he says.

Reang, Putsata A REPORTER RETURNS HOME (American Journalism Review, vol. 29, no. 5, October/November 2007, pp. 68-69)

Teaching Khmer journalists investigative reporting is hard, even if the instructor is Cambodian and understands the culture and speaks the language, Putsata Reang discovered. Reang’s family fled the Khmer Rouge 32 years earlier and was living in Corvallis, Oregon, when she decided to take an Alicia Patterson Fellowship to spend a year researching Cambodia’s land-grabbing problems in 2005. She then took a job with a non-governmental agency to instruct Cambodian journalists in Western-style journalistic ethics. A former journalist for the San Jose Mercury News, Reang thought she was a perfect fit. But she soon discovered she wasn’t prepared for the “more nuanced challenges” that working in media development in her homeland would present. First among these was forging trust and respect. Being a woman, an American citizen and drawing a relatively high salary from her NGO employer lowered her credibility among her peers. Reang also discovered that the poorly paid Cambodian journalists couldn’t turn down the money they routinely were paid to attend press conferences. In addition to lacking writing and reporting experience, Cambodian journalists operate in a country with no freedom of information law – “a place where telling the truth meant risking their lives,” she writes. Although the program she was supporting did make significant headway and Reang was asked to stay on, she returned to the United States feeling confused and guilty over her “privileged” status. Available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4409>

Ricchiardi, Sherry COVERING THE WORLD (American Journalism Review, vol. 29, no. 6, December 2007/January 2008, pp. 32-39)

The foreign correspondent assigned to a country for a prolonged period with expertise in the local language, culture, history and customs is now a vanishing breed, Ricchiardi writes. But as many U.S. news organizations have backed away from foreign news coverage, the Associated Press (AP) has made worldwide expansion part of its master plan for future growth. Although newspapers around the United States are focusing on local news, buying AP products if and when they see the need, AP is pinning its hopes on new markets opening beyond North America’s borders. AP has recently doubled its reporting power in China, opened an office in Pyongyang, North Korea and will soon open a bureau in Saudi Arabia. “The AP family tree branches out to 243 bureaus in 97 countries, serving news outlets with a potential to reach 1 billion people each day,” Ricchiardi writes. AP is investing millions of dollars to upgrade communications among the bureaus worldwide, with an emphasis on high-speed data links and faster portable satellite phones. More work is also being done to develop a more online-oriented international news product with emphasis on “convergence journalism” – a multiplatform approach to presenting information.

Stern, Todd; Antholis, William A CHANGING CLIMATE: THE ROAD AHEAD FOR THE UNITED STATES (Washington Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 175-188)

“What a difference a decade makes.” When negotiators agreed to the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997, the U.S. Senate was already on record opposing the treaty and the American public and media were largely uninterested. Now, global warming has become a central focus of the international community, not only as an environmental issue but also as an economic and security concern. But direct and serious engagement by the next president of the U.S. will be required to make real progress in improving the situation. In order to build a consensus among Americans and credibility abroad, the new president must show clearly that U.S. policies are grounded in science and that they are workable. The authors write that there is no time to waste on fruitless discussions and negotiations. American diplomatic efforts in this campaign should be anchored in a core group of key countries, since eight countries are responsible for more than

70% of global emissions. The U.S. must also develop a partnership with China on this issue, since it will be impossible to contain global warming without China's concerted engagement. In this way, the U.S. can lead in the development of international agreements which include binding emissions targets with solid commitments from the more advanced developing countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, China, and India. The U.S. and other developed countries must help the lesser developed countries to build their capacity to address emissions.

Stone, Roger TOMORROW'S AMAZONIA (American Prospect, vol. 18, no. 9, September 2007, pp. A2-A5)

The author, president of the Sustainable Development Institute, writes that human incursion into the Amazon is proceeding at a high rate. Large swaths of formerly uncultivated lands are becoming soy plantations and cattle ranches to feed a booming export market; resource extraction, such as logging and oil, gas and mineral exploration are growing. The alarmingly high rates of deforestation are greatly contributing to climate change, greenhouse gas emissions and species extinctions; some fifteen percent of the Amazon's forest cover is already gone. The one positive aspect of this gloomy situation is that most governments now acknowledge the growing reality of climate change, and there is more pressure to protect remaining forests. Some fifty percent of Brazil's Amazon forests are now under some form of legal protection, and the push is now on to encourage sustainable economic activity and to formalize ways to certify that export products were sustainably produced. Stone notes that there is no doubt that there will be some form of compensation to developing countries to keep carbon sequestered by not cutting down forests; all that remains is to work out the details. This article is the introductory piece to a series devoted to the Amazon in this issue of American Prospect.

Western, Bruce DOES MASS INCARCERATION MAKE US SAFER? (Nieman Watchdog, posted November 19, 2007)

Our attempt to increase public safety by relying on imprisonment may be backfiring, according to Harvard sociologist Bruce Western. There are now 2.2 million Americans in prison or jail, and incarceration rates are highest among young black men. Many are imprisoned for nonviolent offenses. The growing reliance on incarceration by lawmakers and criminal justice agencies reflected changes in philosophy and politics through the 1980s and 1990s when policy makers abandoned the philosophy of rehabilitation, Western writes. "While our prisons and jails expanded to preserve public safety, they now risk undermining the civic consensus on which public safety is ultimately based," says Western. Incarceration weakens families, splits poor back communities from mainstream American life, and produces "a combustible mix of racial and class politics." Available online at http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Ask_this.view&askthisid=301

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Chalker, Lynda DECLARING WAR ON COUNTERFEITERS AND PIRATES (African Business, no. 335, October 2007, pp. 46-48)

The author, chair of Africa Matters Ltd, notes that Africa has increasingly become target of those who trade in counterfeit goods. Although the full extent of the problem is not known, as many countries around the world are setting up legal systems to counteract the problem, the East Africa Community has also established an intergovernmental forum to tackle it. Countries from Rwanda to Tanzania are setting up special units in the government to fight counterfeiters and pirates, using methods like bar coding for electronic tax registers. Walker believes concerted efforts by stakeholders, especially consumers, are needed to combat illicit trade. She stresses that it is important to maintain the progress of economic growth in Africa, keeping it free of illegality.

Cui, Li CHINA'S GROWING EXTERNAL DEPENDENCE (Finance & Development, vol. 44, no. 3, September 2007, pp. 42-45)

The Chinese economy is evolving away from being a giant assembly shop that imports components, assembles them and ships out low-tech finished goods, such as textiles and toys. Cui, a senior economist at the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, writes that China's evolution into an exporter of more sophisticated products, such as capital goods and components, has run parallel to the growth of a more complex domestic economy that is able to provide more content for its exports. This means that the Chinese economy is less insulated from external economic shocks than in past years when a decline in exports would be accompanied by a commensurate decline of imports. To keep its economy stable, Cui says China needs to rebalance growth away from potentially volatile exports toward a more sustainable path driven by domestic demand. Furthermore, as China's labor costs rise, lower-income countries in Southeast Asia may take China's place as the international assembly shop.

Dery, Patrick; Anderson, Bart PEAK PHOSPHORUS (Energy Bulletin, August 13, 2007)
In the 1950s, Shell Oil geophysicist M. King Hubbert developed a mathematical model for oil production, in which he correctly predicted that U.S. domestic oil output would peak and decline around 1970. The authors write that Hubbert's methodology can also be applied to any non-renewable resource — in this instance phosphorus, one of several nutrients essential to agriculture. Over the past century, phosphorus has been obtained from finite sources, mainly guano deposits and phosphate rock. Dery tested Hubbert's methods on the South Pacific island nation of Nauru, which at one time was a major source of phosphate, whose production peaked in the early 1970s. Satisfied with the results, he then applied it to the U.S. and the world; the startling result was that U.S. phosphate production peaked and started to decline around 1988, and on a global level around 1989. They note that, as with oil, "trouble begins not when we 'run out' of a resource, but when production peaks. From that point onward, the resource becomes more difficult to extract and more expensive." Fortunately, phosphorus is recyclable, however most of it is wasted, due to fertilizer runoff and in sewage systems. They write that modern society needs to respond to the phosphorus peak by stemming the massive nutrient leak present in modern-day agricultural and waste-disposal systems, and re-create a nutrient cycle. Available online at <http://energybulletin.net/33164.html>

Heinberg, Richard WHAT WILL WE EAT AS THE OIL RUNS OUT? (MuseLetter, no. 188, December 2007)
The author, an author and prominent educator on ecological issues, notes that our present-day mechanized, fossil-fuel-powered agricultural system is a culmination of two centuries of agricultural advances; however, a growing chorus of energy analysts are warning that global production of oil and natural gas is approaching its peak and could soon decline. This has profound implications for the way food is produced and distributed, says Heinberg, noting that the world human population has increased six-fold during this period. A growing world food crisis is brewing, being driven by environmental degradation and extreme weather events, as well as increased production of biofuels. Heinberg believes that the only long-term solution is to return to an agricultural system that is localized, less reliant on fossil fuels, and consisting of intensive, small-scale cultivation relying on crop rotation and composting; he points to the example of Cuba, which was able to avoid massive food shortages after oil shipments stopped after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Heinberg cautions that this will necessitate the fundamental transformation of modern society, and will take decades. He writes that this "does not constitute a distant utopian proposal. It is an unavoidable, immediate, and immense challenge that will call for unprecedented levels of creativity at all levels of society ... what we do now will determine how many will be eating, what state of health will be enjoyed by those future generations, and whether they will live in a ruined cinder of a world, or one that is in the process of being renewed and replenished." Available online at <http://www.richardheinberg.com/museletter/188>

Heineman, Benjamin; Heimann, Fritz ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT (National Interest, no. 92, November/December 2007, pp. 80-87)
Heineman, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Heimann, cofounder of Transparency International, write that in recent years, there has been growing recognition that corruption has had an insidious

impact on developing nations. To counter this, the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions was enacted in 1997 to commit its members to enact and to enforce national laws making foreign bribery by their corporations a crime. At the time, this was considered a major breakthrough, with the participation of 34 leading industrial countries on a wide range of initiatives. Although most of these countries have been unable to stop corruption within their own borders, most now have sophisticated criminal justice systems to prosecute domestic crime, including bribery. However, efforts to stop foreign bribery have had uneven success, even though the convention is drafted and monitored by the OECD Working Group on Bribery.

Tverberg, Gail U.S. ELECTRICITY SUPPLY VULNERABILITIES (The Oil Drum, posted December 6, 2007)

The author, a professional actuary, writes that, due to a variety of simultaneous trends, the likelihood of widespread power outages in the U.S. within the next five to ten years is “uncomfortably high”. Practically all of the baseload generation capacity that has been built in the last two decades is natural gas-fired; however, domestic U.S. natural-gas production is essentially flat, despite greatly increased drilling activity. Canadian gas production is soon expected to decline, and it is unlikely that sufficient amounts of imported liquefied natural gas can be obtained. The U.S. currently imports over 80 percent of its nuclear fuel. In 2006, a quarter of our total nuclear fuel needs were from dismantled Soviet nuclear weapons; our agreement for importing this material will end in 2013, and it is unlikely that it will be renewed. Due to the deregulation of the electric utility industry, the private sector has been less willing to build redundant systems to ensure reliable supplies. The electric grid is aging and in need of more maintenance, in the face of nonstop growth in demand for electric power. Available online at <http://www.theoil Drum.com/node/3316> (print caution: only the first 12 pages are the article, the remainder are posted comments)

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Brown, Harold NEW NUCLEAR REALITIES (Washington Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 7-22)

The author, a CSIS counselor and trustee and former secretary of defense, argues that efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons may be counterproductive; U.S. policy should be directed at the international security issues that underlie nuclear proliferation. Various countries or groups have different motivations for obtaining nuclear weapons — security, prestige, or the desire to inflict severe damage on enemies. It is more likely the perceived threat of U.S. conventional military capability, rather than the U.S. nuclear arsenal, that drives the desire for nuclear weapons. For decades, the Soviets and Americans suppressed proliferation; but while governments can largely be deterred by the threat of annihilation, transnational terrorists cannot. The current situation makes the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons a higher priority than ever. Brown writes that this includes preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by currently non-nuclear states, reducing existing nuclear capabilities, and safeguarding existing stockpiles from transfer or leakage -- “the strongest possible measures to inhibit acquisition of nuclear weapons by nonstate actors are surely justified.”

Campbell, Curt; Chollet, Derek THE NATIONAL SECURITY ELECTION (Washington Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 191-199)

The authors, with the Center for a New American Security, assert that “given the current state of world affairs, it is a wonder that anyone would want to be the next president of the United States.” He or she will have to face concerns about nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea, changing relations with Russia and China, conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, instability in Pakistan, allegations of torture by Americans, privacy concerns, and the deteriorating image of the U.S. abroad. Nonetheless, the number of qualified candidates for the job is inspiring and a bit

surprising, they note; "perhaps more than any presidential contest since 1980 or even as far back as 1968, 2008 will be a national security election." The major contenders have already tried to outline distinct visions of national security issues; questions about national security and foreign policy have received a lot of attention in the debates. The Democrats are talking more about foreign policy than in the past, and the Republicans are "sticking to the playbook that worked well in the 2004 campaign, painting the Democrats as weak on the core issues of national security." There is, however, a strong bipartisan consensus on the need to maintain a strong military, a suspicion of ideological causes, and a greater appreciation for the role of international institutions. "Judging by the richness of the debate so far, it seems clear that the various contenders have a deep appreciation about the importance of national security issues. Just as importantly, this is a debate that the American people want to have."

Gordon, Philip CAN THE WAR ON TERROR BE WON? (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 86, No. 6, November-December 2007, pp. 53-66)

Gordon, senior fellow for U.S. foreign policy at the Brookings Institution, says the right questions to ask first about the war on terrorism concern how, or even whether, people can recognize that the war is won or lost. He said the end won't come on a battlefield where the defeated enemy is forced to accept political terms. "It is essential to start thinking seriously about these questions," Gordon wrote, "because it is impossible to win a war without knowing what its goal is." The war on terrorism resembles the Cold War, a long-term, multidimensional struggle against an insidious and violent ideology. Although terrorists will not be eradicated, the war against them will come to an end once the West demonstrates that their ideology is not worth fighting for -- "when bin Laden's cause comes to be seen by its potential adherents as a failure, when they turn against it and adopt other goals and other means." Currently available online at foreignaffairs.org

Hendrickson, Ryan C. THE MISCALCULATION OF NATO'S DEATH (Parameters, vol. 37, no. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 98-114)

Associate professor of political science at Eastern Illinois University, Ryan Hendrickson, examines the history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although many have predicted NATO's collapse, Hendrickson feels this organization is far from dead. NATO's ability to overcome previous crises, institutional flexibility after 9/11, ongoing expansion as well as the renewed interest in the alliance shown by many of the world's great powers all bode well for NATO's future. This article is currently available on the Internet at:

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/07spring/hendrick.htm>

Lieber, Keir THE NEW HISTORY OF WORLD WAR I AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY (International Security, Vol. 32, No. 2, Fall 2007 pp. 155-191)

World War I, the "Great War," is thought by many to have marked the end of traditional Western civilization and the beginning of modernism. It has often been described by historians as a tragic mistake, arising from misapprehensions and poor communication. The author, professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, asserts that the German leadership of the time didn't stumble into the war, but planned it rationally, knew it would last a long time, and assumed they would ultimately conquer Europe. A new trove of historical evidence, he writes, shows that Germans of the time were preoccupied with the goal of ruling Europe, and had decided a war was inevitable. In addition, they fully understood the nature of modern trench warfare, and knew that such a war would destroy European civilization for decades. In spite of doubts, Lieber notes, the German leadership went ahead and attacked Russia and France, covering up their responsibility with some political maneuvering while hoping England would remain neutral. Previous scholarship concluding Europe blindly blundered into World War I has influenced much international relations theory since, the author notes. A new interpretation of the war emphasizing the aggressive logic of the German general staff may lead to rethinking future causes of conflict.

McFaul, Michael UKRAINE IMPORTS DEMOCRACY: EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON THE ORANGE REVOLUTION (International Security, Vol. 32, No. 2, Fall 2007, pp. 45-83)

The author, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, considers the Ukrainian Orange Revolution in the context of political theory, exploring whether it is possible to export democracy. McFaul writes that the Orange Revolution was the product, for the most part, of domestic factors, with some input into the system from the world community. He concludes that "international assistance in the form of ideas and financial resources was crucial regarding one dimension of the Orange Revolution -- exposing [electoral] fraud." Yet, he concedes the primary factors were internal: competitive authoritarianism [an authoritarian system that is formally democratic and permits elections], an unpopular leader who valued Western contacts, divisions in the armed forces, plus the ability of the opposition to organize popular resistance on the Web. McFaul identifies longstanding democratic inputs into the Ukrainian system, both from America and Europe, from governments and the private sector, that softened the autocracy of the regime and gave guidance for a peaceful leap to democracy. He contends that Colin Powell's condemnation of the falsified election may have been one catalyst for the Orange Revolution.

Shaplen, Jason; Laney, James WASHINGTON'S EASTERN SUNSET: THE DECLINE OF U.S. POWER IN NORTHEAST ASIA (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 86, No. 6, November-December 2007)
Shaplen, a former policy adviser at the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, and Laney, former U.S. ambassador to South Korea, see danger emerging in Northeast Asia. "Three powerful, nationalist states [China, Japan, and South Korea] with a history of hostility between them are simultaneously awakening from a period of quiescence and jockeying for power," they write. The United States needs to change its policies in this transition -- it should help build a security regime among six Northeast Asian countries, create a bilateral security arrangement with China, and participate in multilateral Asian forums as vigorously as China does. The U.S. should also negotiate free-trade agreements throughout East Asia, Southeast Asia, even India. "If it does not move quickly, it will find its stature in Northeast Asia greatly diminished at precisely the time when the region takes its place at the center of the world stage," the authors write. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20071101faessay86606/jason-t-shaplen-james-laney/washington-s-eastern-sunset.html?mode=print>

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

Drezner, Daniel WHEN CELEBRITIES ATTACK! (National Interest, no. 92, November/December 2007, pp. 22-28)

The phenomenon of celebrities appearing before Congressional committees to advocate for causes such as human rights or the environment is not a new one. Drezner, an associate professor at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, notes that celebrity culture has fundamentally changed; star entertainers are now taking an active interest in world politics, and are able to raise issues to the top of the global agenda. In the current media environment, there is an almost symbiotic relationship between celebrities and their causes. Earlier celebrities, such as Shirley Temple and Jane Fonda, were political activists. Temple, became U.S. ambassador to Ghana and Czechoslovakia. The magazine Vanity Fair let U2 singer Bono guest-edit a special issue on Africa, due to his numerous visits to that continent, including a well publicized one with former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill. Princess Diana was in the forefront of the campaign to ban the use of land mines; her death became a rallying point that led to Great Britain's ratification of the 1997 Ottawa Convention. However, not all celebrities are successful; some are quite misguided or have been stung by criticism, as the Dixie Chicks found out when they blasted President George W. Bush on stage at a 2004 London concert.

Gregorian, Vartan A SENSE OF ELSEWHERE (American Libraries, vol. 38, no. 10, November 2007, pp. 46-48)

The author, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, salutes the power of libraries as "launching pads for the imagination", the institution that is most representative of an open

society. Libraries contain a nation's heritage and the tools for learning and understanding -- a place where immigrants learn English and bridge the distances between their "old" country and their new adopted land. In 2001, more than twenty organizations created by industrialist Andrew Carnegie celebrated the 100th anniversary of his philanthropic work. Perhaps his most lasting contribution was his endowment of libraries, an act that created over 1600 libraries in the U.S. and about 1000 in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and Fiji. Today, American libraries have embraced technology and have inspired libraries around the world to follow suit. American libraries were the first to allow circulation of books and periodicals, and to promote the openness of library collections; it was these practices that were successful overseas. In many countries, the most accessible libraries are the Information Resource Centers (IRCs) maintained by the U.S. Department of State.

Kurtz, Patti UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATING FANTASY LITERATURE (Choice, vol. 45, no. 4, December 2007, pp. 571-572, 574-580)

The genre of fantasy literature is difficult to define. Traditionally, the majority of fantasy works have been literature, but since the 1950s, a growing segment of the fantasy genre has taken the form of video games, music, and painting. It is difficult to define the precise 'beginning' of fantasy literature, as such stories have existed in spoken forms before the advent of printed literature. Homer's ODYSSEY satisfies the definition of fantasy, however the genre's more distinct beginnings were in the fairy tales of Europe. As a distinct type, fantasy literature became visible in the Victorian era, with the works of writers such as William Morris, Lord Dunsany, George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll, author of ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND, followed by L. Frank Baum's WIZARD OF OZ. Some assert that J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were seminal to the mass popularization of the fantasy genre, with works such as THE HOBBIT, THE LORD OF THE RINGS and THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA. The global phenomenon of J.K. Rowling's HARRY POTTER series is a testament to the popularity of fantasy literature and to the type of creative and talented writers it now attracts.

Lehman, David ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S AMERICA (American Heritage, vol. 58, no. 2, April/May 2007, pp. 28-41)

British-born director Alfred Hitchcock came to Hollywood because it could accommodate his creativity more easily than England's provincial film industry, says critic David Lehman. Hitchcock, who became an American citizen in 1955, made his greatest films here. In the America of his vision, "paranoia is sometimes a reasonable response to events in a world of menace." Consider Shadow of a Doubt, Spellbound, Strangers on a Train, Rear Window, North by Northwest, Vertigo. "The murderous or perilous coexists with the homely and domestic" in Hitchcock's landscape. Imagine taking a shower at the Bates Motel. But the counterweight to his dark view of humanity is "an insistence on justice, and sometimes poetic justice, and a reiteration of basic American values." Lehman notes how often U.S. monuments turn up in Hitchcock's films and are "invoked for the ideals they stand for." He also cites "Hitchcock's humor and the marvelous way it coexists with the macabre." In a sidebar, George Perry, another British expatriot, tells of his friendship with Hitchcock and says the film director "clearly had a great love for his adopted country and things American, relishing the variety and vastness of the landscape, the diversity and occasional eccentricities of its people."

Ringlero, Aleta MUD WOMAN (American Indian, vol. 8, no. 2, Summer 2007, pp. 18-23)

New Mexico-based Pueblo artist Nora Noranjo-Morse credits her clay sculpture to the generations of the Indian Pueblo "mud women" of New Mexico, who have a long tradition of working with clay. However, much of her work reflects Noranjo-Morse's opposition to the limited expectations of ethnic art and her struggle to break with the commercial art markets that promote the manufacture of trinket art. Her sculptures of the human form have a modern, minimalist style, including a series named Pearlene, which Noranjo-Morse conceived as her alter ego, and used as a protest against the social and cultural conventions limiting women's behavior.

Schwarz, Frederic THE STUBBORN SCIENTIST (American Legacy, Spring 2007, pp. 11-12)
Percy Julian was the only black student at the time, when he entered DePauw University in

Greencastle, Indiana, in 1916, to study chemistry; the school had seen only a handful in its history. When a white student shook his hand on the first day, Julian said later, "my whole life was changed." But upon graduation as valedictorian, he was unable to find a postgraduate fellowship. No top school would touch him. Julian didn't give up -- he taught for two years at a black college and finally was granted a fellowship at Harvard, and later earned a Ph.D. from the University of Vienna. Julian eventually worked for the Glidden Company in Chicago, where he became one of America's best chemists. He was a pioneer in the chemical synthesis of medicinal drugs from plants, including testosterone, progesterone and cortisone. He was the first African-American chemist inducted into the National Academy of Sciences. When he bought a house in Oak Park, Illinois, it was subjected to an arson attack and a dynamite bombing. Today, Oak Park, where he started his own company, boasts a Percy Julian Middle School. "With a boundless supply of stubbornness and persistence, he was able throughout his career to rise above racism and show that he was better than the people holding him back," says Schwarz.

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