



INFOALERT JUNE 2010

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

IA23 Minard, Anne. **Fading Fast** National Parks vol. 84, no. 2, Spring 2010, pp. 39-47 Available online at <http://www.npca.org/magazine/2010/spring/fading-fast.html>

Light pollution, a problem in many brightly lighted urban centers, is preventing us from seeing the stars distinctly and even having adverse health impacts on humans and animals. The author surveys the research on the subject and discusses what U.S. National Park Service officers such as Chad Moore, who heads Yellowstone's Night Sky Team, are doing to preserve the night environment. Organizations such as the International Dark Sky Association and NASA are among those working to provide data on the effects of light pollution. Individuals can help by restricting outdoor light use and installing fixtures that direct light downward.

IA24 How Much of the World's Electricity Supply is Generated from Wind and Who are the Leading Generators? Energy Information Administration. June 16, 2010. Currently available at: <http://bit.ly/adbkkJ>.

Worldwide wind power generation exceeded 200 billion kilowatthours in 2008, which is equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of over 18 million average households in the United States. Wind generation increased by about 25% from 2007 to 2008, and has more than tripled since 2003. This growth is mostly due to capacity increases in the United States, China, India, and Western Europe. Despite this growth, the world still generated less than 1% of its total electricity from wind power in 2008.

IA25 McQuaid, John. **The Gulf Of Mexico Oil Spill: An Accident Waiting To Happen** Yale Environment 360 May 10, 2010 Currently available online at <http://www.e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=2272>

Recent calls to expand offshore drilling in the U.S. reflected a belief that deepwater oil operations had become so safe and technologically advanced that the danger of an accident was infinitesimal. McQuaid, a journalist specializing in environmental and science issues, writes that the growing volume of crude oil billowing from a ruptured well at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, puts to rest the notion that offshore drilling is a risk-free endeavor. While the exact causes of well blowout, explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon offshore rig may not be known for months, systemic problems are becoming apparent, including lax government oversight, complacency by the oil industry, the reluctance of government agencies and oil companies to consider worst-case scenarios, the fragmentation of tasks among different contractors, and the complexities of drilling miles under the ocean floor in an unforgiving environment.

IA26 Peterson, Scott. 'Haystack' Gives Iranian Opposition Hope For Evading Internet Censorship Christian Science Monitor posted April 16, 2010

Available online at <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0416/Haystack-gives-Iranian-opposition-hope-for-evading-Internet-censorship>

Opposition activists in Iran are beginning to deploy "Haystack" – encryption software they hope will defeat extensive government efforts to block popular mobilization on the Internet inside the country. Haystack is custom-made for Iran in San Francisco by the nonprofit Censorship Research Center and is the first anti-censorship technology to be licensed by the U.S. government for export to Iran. Twitter and Facebook have played crucial roles in helping protesters organize, but Iranian "cyber police" successfully shut down the ability of Iranians to communicate with each other via the Internet. Haystack's encryption data is similar to accessing a bank website. It hides that data inside other normal data streams and makes it look like normal Internet traffic itself, so the original data is difficult to detect and stop. It remains to be seen if this new technology will be able to win the confidence of Iranian activists as well as stay ahead of government counterattacks.

IA27 Freedom of Information as a Tool for Empowerment: Good Institutions, the Public Sphere and Media Literacy. [U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and University of Gothenburg]. April 2010. <http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/30155/12723791613ullacarlssonpaperIBrisbane100423.pdf/ullacarlssonpaperIBrisbane100423.pdf>

The paper extorts the importance of access to information and the ability to share information empower people, regardless of who and where they are. While information can mobilize, increase transparency and accountability, it is also a stimulus to participation, active citizenship, lifelong learning and social change. It compares freedom of information and others rights, the importance of good institutions and describes the importance of empowerment through media literacy. Concludes by showing how crucial information is to ensuring a democratic society.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

IA28 Lewis, Peter. African Economies' New Resilience. Current History vol. 109, no. 727, May 2010, pp. 193-199

Lewis, director of the African studies program at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, writes that there were hopes that Africa, whose national economies are not so intertwined with the international banking system, would avoid the chaos that the financial system's collapse inflicted on the Western advanced economies. Many African countries, whose economies are dependent on income from exported commodities, did suffer from a decline in prices due to a drop in global demand, as well as declining remittances from overseas workers who lost jobs. Lewis notes that, while the effect of the financial downturn varied greatly from one country to another, many African nations have enacted political and economic reforms, resulting in improved governance and transparency, which have enabled them to weather the financial crisis.

IA29 Williams, Neville. Solar Solutions For The Developing World. Solutions. No. 1, January-February 2010 Available online at <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/548>

Williams' experience with solar energy dates back to 1979, when he joined the U.S. Department of Energy. In 1990 he started a successful nonprofit, Solar Electric Light Fund, which brought solar power to the developing world, beginning in Sri Lanka. He relates his experiences, which ultimately

led to his launch of a business, Solar Electric Light Company (SELCO) in India with the help of Harish Hande. The solar technology that works so well in Asia and Africa has the same promise in the United States: "Solar energy is now the fastest growing business on earth," he writes.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

IA30 Brown, Frederick. **Vietnam And America: Parameters Of The Possible** Current History vol. 109, no. 726, April 2010, pp. 162-169

The author, a fellow of the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, writes that the 2008 official visit of Vietnam's prime minister to Washington was a major step in thawing U.S.-Vietnam relations. Brown writes that the Vietnamese leadership have come to realize that their connection with the U.S. could be an asset in their competition with China, despite misgivings among conservative elements in both the Vietnamese Communist Party and in the U.S. foreign-policy establishment. He notes that the regime largely abandoned Marxist economics in the 1980s, and became further isolated from Marxist doctrine in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S.-Vietnam relationship is still colored by the legacy of the Vietnam war and fundamental differences in official perspectives, but Brown believes that both governments have a realistic view of what can be accomplished; he believes that educational exchanges offer the best opportunity for improving relations.

US SOCIETY AND VALUES

IA31 Mix, Elizabeth K. **Art and New Media** Choice vol. 47, no. 8, April 2010, 1411-1412, 1414-1416, 1418-1423

The author, a professor of art history, Jordan College of Fine Arts, Butler University, Indiana, notes that since writers come from a wide range of disciplines, it should come as no surprise that theoretical approaches used in the interpretation of technology-based art are similarly diverse. Each time technology has substantially changed, artistic practice has followed. One example was photography; often connected with modernism, it led to a flatness and focus on formal elements in paintings. Television and analogue video, the technologies first connected to post-modernism, hastened the development of performance art. Today, art forms driven by technology-based elements include internet art, virtual reality, digital video, interactive graphic design, bio/genetic art, cyborgs, digital performance, and online exhibitions. With the terminology associated with new media, it is now possible to provide a framework for understanding how art in its history, theory and practice is changing to keep pace as technologies evolve.

IA32 Davis, Michelle. **The Alternative** Washington Post Magazine. April 11, 2010, pp. 22-29 Currently available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/02/AR2010040202553.html>

Younger students are giving community colleges a second look as a gateway to a four-year degree in a still-tight economy. As job losses rack up and family savings dwindle, more students who saw themselves going directly from high school to a four-year institution are instead enrolling at their local community college. Once known for the night courses they offered to usually older students who were holding down daytime jobs and had other responsibilities, community colleges now maintain daytime programs and specialized courses of study once only available in more expensive degree programs. Nationally, about 46 percent of students on community college campuses are younger than 21, according to a 2007 report from the American Association of Community Colleges, up from 42.5 percent in 2003.