



July - August 2009

U.S. Embassy Sponsors U.S.-Czech Student Multimedia Project



Students working on their solar energy story in Prague
(Photo: Jakub Hornek)

Two dozen students from the University of Miami's School of Communication and Prague's VOSP media school participated in a multimedia project focusing on renewable sources of energy in the Czech Republic for three weeks in June and July. While the U.S. Embassy in Prague sponsored the project and provided the logistics, students created stories throughout the Czech Republic that cover solar energy, hydro-power, biomass, wind and nuclear power plants, geothermal energy and biogas. Executive Director of the project Rich Beckman said, "The long-term goal of the programs was to create lasting institutional ties between U.S. and Czech schools and bolster the quality of on-line journalism." Students learned how to create meaningful stories, contact relevant people, edit their material and translate it into both Czech and English. More about the project on its web site at <http://knight.miami.edu>.

Ambassador Eizenstat at the Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague

Former U.S. Ambassador to the EU Stuart Eizenstat led the U.S. delegation at the Holocaust Assets Conference in Prague. He appealed for establishment of a fund to assist needy holocaust victims. In an interview with the media, Eizenstat discussed the holocaust in current school curricula: "There



Ambassador Eizenstat in residence with Austrian and British Ambassadors Margot Klestil-Loeffler and Linda Duffield (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

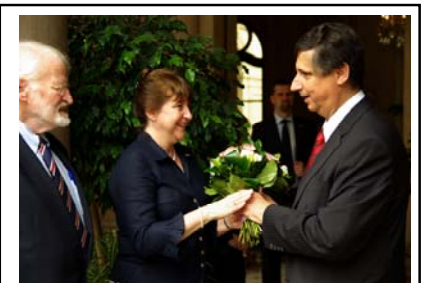
are 27 countries which pledged to include information into educational programs. The aim is to teach students to recognize current genocides such as the one in Darfur. The Nazi

holocaust was the largest genocide ever, and also the biggest theft. It was not only about destroying human lives, but also their culture and everything they had. Therefore it is important to reach justice, albeit imperfect." The Holocaust Era Assets Conference was held in Prague and Terezín from June 26-30. The

conference was hosted by the Czech government in cooperation with the Forum 2000 Foundation, the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II Victims, the Federation of Jewish Communities, the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Terezín Memorial, and the Institute of Jewish Studies.

U.S. Embassy Celebrates Independence Day

A record number of guests including Czech President Vaclav Klaus, Prime Minister Jiri Fischer and other Czech and international dignitaries came to the independence Day celebrations that the U.S. Embassy held in the Ambassador's residence on July 2. Chargé d'Affairs Mary Thompson Jones and her husband welcome Prime Minister Jan Fischer (Photo: Petra Kapesova)



Chargé d'Affairs Mary Thompson Jones and her husband welcome Prime Minister Jan Fischer (Photo: Petra Kapesova)

The Embassy thank all of its sponsors, which included American hotel, food and beverages companies as well as financial donors, for their generous support of the event. On July 4th, 1776 the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

Writers Take Over American Center

During the Prague Writers Festival, the American Center hosted two events with notable writers and cartoonists. On Wednesday June 10th three renowned poets discussed politics, identity and culture. Coming from very diverse regions and backgrounds, American Anne



Anne Waldman (Photo: Michal Stichauer)

Waldman, Palestinian Mourid Barghouti and Chinese Yang Lian were able to connect on topics such as the role of poetry in contemporary art, and their own experiences as refugees from the mainstream and, in the case of Mr. Barghouti and Mr.

Lian, also from their homelands. On June 11 the topic was quite different as the American Center welcomed three very influential underground comics artists – Gilbert Shelton, Aline Kominsky-Crumb and her husband Robert Crumb, who is considered to be the founder of the underground comics genre.

U.S. Embassy Garden Open House for American Citizens

The Embassy opened its doors to Americans living in the Czech Republic on June 22, 2009 for the second annual American Citizens Open House. Embassy sections hosted informational tables in the Embassy garden alongside representatives from the Federal Benefits Units in



Open House party in the Embassy's garden (Photo: Petra Kapesova)

Frankfurt and Warsaw, the Schengen Unit of the Czech Ministry of Interior, the Foreigner's Police, and the heads of a number of expat organizations that assist

Americans overseas. Chargé d'Affaires, Mary Thompson-Jones, greeted her compatriots and expressed the Embassy's desire to support them, emphasizing that "American embassies around the world exist first and foremost to assist American citizens traveling and residing abroad." Visitors to the Embassy were invited to enjoy the view of Prague from the Glorietta and partake of ice cream and other treats.

Whistleblowing in Embassy's Limelight

On July 10, the Embassy hosted a panel discussion on whistleblowing. Whistleblowers often reveal information that is critically important for public life. However, the fear of retaliation often stops employees in the public or private sector from speaking out when they witness fraud or corruption. The discussion at the American Center featured three renowned U.S. experts on the topic - Stephen Kohn (National Whistleblowers Center), Danielle Brian (Project on Government Oversight), and Beatrice Edwards (Government Accountability Project). The panel took place in coordination with a multi-regional whistleblowing roundtable organized by Transparency International in Prague. Whistleblowers and their systematic institutional protection is a concept that is still developing in the Czech Republic.



Chargé D'Affaires Meets Medical Students

U.S. Embassy Prague Chargé D'Affaires Mary Thompson-Jones addressed medical students on July 23 at the Prague Selective Program organized by Dr. Martin Stransky in Prague's Topic Palace. She talked about U.S.-Czech relations, recent Czech history and her job as a career diplomat. "In the past 12 months, Prague has welcomed five cabinet secretaries; 24 generals; two governors; three special envoys and more than seventy members of Congress. And, of course, one President. This is eloquent testimony to the



Chargé d'Affaires talks to U.S. students in Prague (Photo: Jakub Hornek)

value Americans place on this relationship," Chargé noted. Answering a question on how a person becomes a U.S. diplomat, she recalled her path from being a journalist to her current position. The Prague Selective is one of the most important summer elective programs for medical students of its type in the world. To date, over 1,300 students have participated from over 40 medical schools. More about the program on <http://globalhealthedu.org/events/Pages/PragueSelective.aspx>.

From Embassy's Diary...

- August 5 Evening with Astronaut Andrew Feustel, American Center, Trziste 13, Praha, 5 pm
- August 18 Edmund Lambeth: New Challenges for the US media in economic crisis, A.C., 5 pm