



# Bridges

## Lessons of Vietnam



Volume XII, Issue 1

Fall 2010



## A Window into the Life of a Pakistani Teenager

By Madison Cavalchire

It is my pleasure to introduce Millbrook's very own Babur Farid who has traveled here all the way from Peshawar, Pakistan. Participating in the U.S. Department of State's Youth Exchange Program, Babur first stepped foot on American soil on August 3. I was pleased to meet him at the second *Bridges* staff meeting when Ms. Poling introduced the two of us in hopes that I would conduct an interview with him. Immediately, I saw Babur as a kind young man who was very interested in taking advantage of all that Millbrook High School has to offer. Once we sat down to talk, I learned a great deal about Babur's personal views, as well as his ideas regarding global understanding and cooperation:

**Q. What do teens our age do for fun in Pakistan?**

A. We often go out to restaurants with friends or visit with relatives.

**Q. How are schools different?**

A. Schools are much different. Students are divided in respect to grade. Students remain in the same class all day and the teachers walk up to the classroom to teach. Teachers are stricter in Pakistan than they are at Millbrook.

**Q. Are there after-school activities for teens in Pakistan?**

A. It depends on the school, but most schools are small and extra activities are rare.

**Q. How do Pakistanis view the United States?**

A. We view it as a developed, fast, and busy country.

**Q. What is their general view of American people?**

A. The people are thought to be decent and educated. They seem like they are always having fun.

**Q. Is it peaceful in the area that you come from?**

A. Small militant groups show up, but our developed army controls them.

**Q. Do you think that other Pakistani teens should travel to the U.S.?**

A. Yes! It is great to learn about the world and acquire a good education.



Madison and Babur discuss how life is different in the United States.

**Q. How are the students at Millbrook treating you?**

A. People are very nice and helpful. They all want to know about my culture and country.

**Q. How can the United States strengthen ties with Pakistan?**

A. I think that the U.S. Department of State's Youth Exchange Program that has been introduced to Muslim countries is an excellent step. I think that more exchange programs should be introduced to develop cross-cultural understanding. All the American families play an important role in these programs as they open their homes and hearts for teens like me.

**Q. How do you attempt to educate others on objectives you have learned from your experience here in the U.S.?**

A. I want to strengthen friendship ties with the U.S. by telling people about my country, and when I return, I will tell my people about America. Many people are unaware of the broader global community, and I intend to inform them about what is out there.

With that, we shook hands and continued walking down the halls of Millbrook, discussing much lighter topics, such as academics and sports. With the interview still fresh on my mind, I began to wonder how my views of Pakistan could change so quickly. Here in America, we tend to possess somewhat negative views about Middle Eastern countries. Babur shed a positive light on Pakistani-American relations, proving to me that there are harmonious areas within the country of Pakistan. He showed me that the young people in Pakistan consider themselves friends with the United States.

During our short interview, Babur was able to open a window through which I was able to view his country. Yet, that small glimpse caused me to better understand my own misconceptions about Pakistan and its teenagers. Perhaps we should all take the time to glance through "the window" to view a different culture when given the opportunity to do so. Clearly, it can provide us with a better understanding of the world community in which we all live.



## Celebrating our Twelfth Year!

Welcome to the Fall 2010 edition of our *Bridges* Newsletter. *Bridges* is entering its twelfth year, and we have had an amazing turnout of talented writers and exquisite artists.

We invite you to turn the page and enter into an edition filled with topics relating to global affairs, domestic challenges, and LOV interactions. As a staff, we have worked hard compiling this issue, and we look forward to the year ahead.

We would like to give a special salute to all of our Veterans on Veterans Day. Enjoy!

Lauren Brand, Editor

## Bridges Staff 2010-2011



## Can Good Come from Oil Giant's "Near Death" Experience?

By Kayla Gibson

This year has witnessed the largest disaster in the petroleum industry's history. On April 20, 2010 a bubble of methane gas caused an explosion at the Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig in the Gulf of Mexico, triggering a sea-floor oil gusher. British Petroleum owned the rig, and by July 15, 4.9 million barrels of oil had been released into the ocean. Although there is progress in cleaning up the spill, there is still a long way to go before life in the Gulf returns to normal, both economically and environmentally.

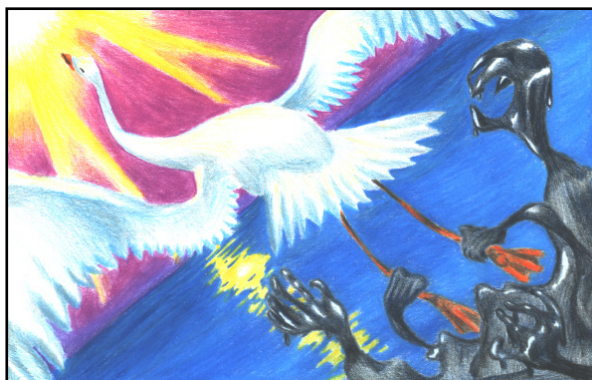
Major monetary and socioeconomic costs have occurred. Since the explosion, hundreds of lawsuits have been filed against BP and Transocean—the well operator. Jobs have been lost in seafood restaurants, hotels, fisheries, and processing plants because of the oil's effect on the ocean water and its sea life. The oil soaked beaches will take years to clean, costing local governments hundreds of thousands of dollars. So far, \$1.4 billion of government funds have been spent to handle the oil spill and the resulting damage.

The first phase of the disaster ended when workers drilled a relief well into the damaged one by driving a cement stake deep into it which permanently plugged the gusher. On September

20, 2010, Admiral Thad Allen, the U.S. official in charge of the response, proclaimed the gusher "effectively dead." However, with 172 billion gallons spilled, the second phase—the clean up—will take much longer.

The spill has impacted air quality, water quality, and sea life. The deep water ocean is the world's largest habitat and thus the largest area susceptible to ecological damage. Toxic to many organisms, the oil will most likely spread to South America, Africa, and Europe. It can interrupt the food chain at the lowest level, and trickle upward. The Gulf is home to 207 species of saltwater fish, most used for human consumption. The environmental and ecological damage is generational.

This event has sparked a rise in environmentalism. With media hype as a contributing factor, many anti-business concerns have been voiced. The disaster almost brought down an oil giant. BP's "near death" experience has been costly. But good can only come from this experience if the oil industry improves its knowledge of the deep sea, invests in more research, and undertakes extensive contingency planning to prevent such a disaster from repeating itself in the future.



Artwork by Kiet Tran

## Earthquakes Rock Haiti, Floods Soak Pakistan

By Jordan Holmes

Imagine North Hills in rubble, your home swallowed by the earth, and the neighborhood school reduced to a pile of dust. This is the reality for the victims of the earthquake that devastated the impoverished island nation of Haiti. On January 12, 2010, approximately 200,000 people were killed or reported missing after the ground ceased to move. Soon after, lawlessness ran rampant with increased levels of violence, looting, and robberies.

Almost instantly, aid poured in from every corner of the globe. Foreign leaders and diplomats visited Port au Prince, the demolished capital. The United Nations dedicated ten million dollars from the world's emergency funds to increase aid, and the United States, in an effort to help expedite relief efforts, was handed control of the island's main airport to receive and distribute aid more easily. The American Red Cross alone sent nearly \$150 million to earthquake victims in the first six months of relief efforts. Part of that would include water, shelter, and food for the victims. The aid this country received from not only the United States, but the world, was nothing short of incredible.

Sadly, only a fraction of the aid pledged to help reconstruct the country has come through. The billions promised by the United States for rebuilding collapsed buildings and homes has hit a snag in Congress. Bureaucracy has been the biggest enemy of the bill in this situation. For example, one senator kept the bill from being authorized by pointing out an aspect of the bill he called "wasteful." When the final bill was passed, the provisions declined from \$1.15 billion, to \$917 million. Without the final step of how and where to spend this money, all of it remains in the U.S. Treasury.

Fast-forward to July 2010 when the monsoon season ripped through Pakistan. Rain pounded the country, putting an end to the record low rainfall that left some farmers on the brink of financial ruin. The floods affected millions of people and killed around 1,500. Entire villages were washed away.

As in Haiti, millions of people needed aid; unlike Haiti, the

international response was not as positive. The flooding did not draw as much international attention as the earthquake in Haiti, so the United Nations was forced to notify member countries of the devastation in the South Asian country. Helping to rectify that is actress Angelina Jolie, the United Nations' Goodwill Ambassador. To turn the spotlight towards the floods, she visited displaced refugees in Peshawar to witness the losses experienced by the Pakistani people with her own eyes. What she saw was widespread hardship and devastation.

So why has Haiti received all the attention? The small island nation's proximity to the United States worked in its favor. Because Haiti was closer to the United States, aid was transported more quickly. Practically half a world away in Pakistan, delivering relief supplies to those in need is much more difficult for several reasons. Topography poses a challenge for the transportation of these supplies. Additionally, a rocky political landscape poses problems. Although officially Pakistan is an ally to the U.S., there are concerns over how serious its government is about driving the militants out from the safe havens along its border with Afghanistan. Also hindering the relief effort is the Pakistani government's insistence that its army—and not the U.S.—administer the internal delivery of supplies to the people.

So far, the U.S. has poured \$261 million into the relief effort in Pakistan. Civilians and military leaders alike have given their time and effort to organize and distribute *halal* meals (Muslim-friendly meals), undertake pre-fabricated infrastructure projects (such as steel bridges), and provide air support to deliver more aid relief supplies throughout the devastated country.

Even as al-Qaeda thrives within its borders and Osama bin Laden hides within its caves, Pakistan—much like Haiti—is benefitting from American generosity. Despite our own troubled economic times, our country continues to devote the time, effort, and money to help those victimized by disasters around the world.

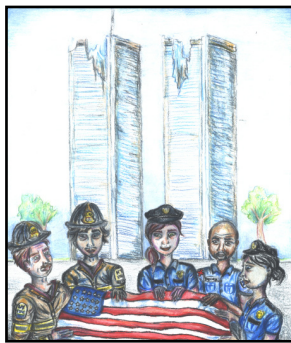


# Remembering 9/11

By Chris Dudley

"That September day, we came together as a nation. The test before us is to sustain that unity of purpose and meet the challenges now confronting us." (*The 9/11 Commission Report*) With 2,819 deaths, 1,506,124 tons of debris removed from the site, and 20% of the American population knowing someone who died, our country experienced one of the most devastating events in history. This was nine years ago; yet, it is still fresh in the minds of Americans. We remember it as "9/11."

Recently, I had a chance to speak with a couple who lived in New York City during the time of the attack. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Winsch remember their traumatizing experiences. "I saw the World Trade Center disintegrating and heard people scream," said Mrs. Winsch. When the first plane hit, Mr. Winsch was across the street in his office. He witnessed people "hanging out of the windows of the building, waving white pieces of cloth to get attention." After living through these experiences, both have come



Artwork by Rose Dorn

to cherish what they have and value life more fully. They believe Americans "should not take our safety and our freedom for granted." Being so close to the destruction caused Mr. Winsch to reminisce about "all the innocent people who were simply sitting at their desks just doing their jobs that morning, just like I was...The experience taught me how uncertain life can be." This act of terror made the couple reevaluate living in a metropolitan area, and that is the reason they moved to North Carolina three years ago.

9/11 not only significantly changed Mr. and Mrs. Winsch's lives, but the lives of all Americans. That day, Americans demonstrated their resilience. Thousands of people gathered around the World Trade Center to donate blood, food, supplies and other items to the injured, while rescuers and policemen focused on saving the lives of victims trapped in the debris, at the risk of their own. These actions symbolize the heart and soul of America.

## Learning the Lessons of Vietnam

By Pamela Kass

Anticipation awaited rising seniors all summer who were eager to begin their LOV experience. Each student was assigned to interview a family member, friend, or teacher who lived during the Vietnam Era. By doing this, students learned more about their interviewees' most vivid memories of that crucial time period. This assignment was a rewarding and refreshing experience that has helped each individual student make a connection to the Vietnam War on a personal level. It also helped us prepare for meeting the guest speakers who come to our class, as well as communicate with our pen pal links.

LOV/RIR gives students an insight into the past, which helps them better understand the important foreign policy issues of today. Because the Vietnam War was a complicated, challenging, and emotional time for those who experienced it, we were especially interested in studying their responses to the question, "What should we teach our children?"

*"The only long term solution to peace around the world is through education. We have to help educate Third World countries so they can understand the value of life and peace."* ~ **MHS Dad/ ARVN Veteran**

*"There are people in this world who don't have the same opportunities and rights that we do. Democracy is worth fighting for!"* ~ **MHS Mom**

*"We need to teach our kids to understand the issues that people face in other parts of the world and to understand the differences of other cultures...we should teach them not to force our type of democracy on other cultures."* ~ **MHS Grandfather**

*"It doesn't seem like what we have learned from Vietnam has been acted upon in a proper manner in the thinking of our leaders today."* ~ **MHS Family Friend**

*"Be tolerant of others and open to new ideas. The people that hate you only wish they had what you have."* ~ **MHS Uncle**

*"We should teach our kids that war should be a last resort... because the Vietnam War was so significant, it is important that the generations to come are aware of all that happened during the war."* ~ **MHS Aunt**

*"Debate and challenge yourself to find out whether Vietnam was a just or unjust war."* ~ **MHS Grandfather**

*"The biggest lesson we should teach future generations is to respect soldiers whether you support the war they are fighting or not."* ~ **MHS Grandmother**

*"History repeats itself. It should be studied and learned by all."* ~ **MHS Dad**

## President Obama Faces Crucial Challenges

By Leslie Carlucci

The first two years of Barack Obama's presidency were filled with economic worries, wars overseas, healthcare reform, and a hideous oil spill. 2011 may not prove to be much different. These challenges, and a few more, will continue to test President Obama and our nation.

Since major employment cuts took place in the past few years due to jobs being sent overseas and the recession, our unemployment rate rose significantly from about six percent to over nine percent. Luckily, however, that number has not drastically changed in the past year and is hovering at about 9.7 percent. President Obama extended unemployment benefits, but citizens are still yearning for work. In a speech at the University of Wisconsin in September, he unveiled a \$50 billion dollar plan for jobs, including building roads, railways, and airways, but Congress will have to support this.

As job loss has directly affected our economy in recent years, our downward economy returned the favor. (Hopefully, new employment plans for Americans will aid in turning it around in the near future.) The United States experienced the worst economic status since the Great Depression. However, home prices went up 3.6 percent in the past year and stronger retail sales signal an economy that is on the rise.

With combat troops finally out of Iraq, President Obama can give more focus to the war in Afghanistan and other major foreign policy issues. General David Petraeus continues to lead efforts in building a stable nation to withstand the Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. China is now becoming a world superpower due to increased manufacturing and a growing economy. There is also the challenge posed by Communist North Korea, where dictator Kim Jong Il has ordained his son, Kim Jong Un, to succeed him. Then there is Iran and the threat of nuclear weapons to consider as well.

To say that President Obama has a plateful of challenges in 2011 is an understatement. If challenges build character, President Obama is in store for quite a building program next year.



President Barack Obama



## Afghani Bank Gets a Helping Hand But No Hand Out

By Violette Moore

On August 31, a three-man quick response team of the Treasury Department stationed full time in Afghanistan collected information about Kabul Bank's possible improprieties. U.S. officials worked with the Afghan Central Bank governor, Abdul Qadir Fitrat, this summer to try to take corrective action. Fitrat worked out a plan to get control of Kabul Bank, which led to his request in mid-August for Washington to send help to Kabul. Kabul Bank is Afghanistan's largest, most politically potent and freewheeling bank.

Officials of the Treasury Department found reports of the Banks questionable activities, but left the responsibility to take direct action to the Afghan Central Bank. The Treasury Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, say it was their job to focus on training Afghans to do that work. The Afghan Central Bank did, at times, try to decrease Kabul Bank excesses, but its efforts were in vain, so some still wonder 'what pushed Kabul Bank to a possible collapse?'

Kabul Bank had executives who allegedly spent about \$160 million on villas at the Palm Jumeirah island resort and other risky Dubai real estate. Overall, Kabul Bank has suffered \$300 million in losses. Dubious dealings also involved concealed loans to Kabul Bank's own shareholders that were well beyond the legal limit. Mahmoud Karzai, the President's brother, says that in July, Sherkhan Farnood, the Chairman of Kabul Bank, came to the American Embassy in Kabul and "told them everything," even facts about off-the-book loans to Marshal Mohammed Fahim, the brother of Afghanistan's Vice President. Farnood called Karzai

"a rat" who thought the United States would side with him in his issues with Khalilullah Fruzi, the Bank's former chief executive. It was also Mahmoud Karzai, one of the bank's biggest shareholders, who asked the U.S. for a bailout.

Fortunately for American taxpayers, the U.S. Treasury Department says U.S. funds will not be used to bailout Kabul Bank. "This is an Afghan issue. They are taking immediate steps to ensure the stability of Kabul Bank," said Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin. "No American taxpayer funds will be used to support Kabul Bank."

The American public has been upset by the bailout of U.S. banks. Rescuing an Afghan bank caught up in corruption undoubted would add fuel to the fire.

The U.S. will lend a hand to Kabul Bank, but that hand will not contain bailout funds. Instead it will come in the form of financial advice on how to bail itself out of a mess of its own making.



Artwork by Peyton Long



## The World Cup Shines a Light on South Africa

By Clayton Johnson

There is no doubt that the World Cup captures the world's attention every four years. Qualifying nations come together, put aside their differences, and battle it out on the pitch. "Football" has become the world's largest sport, and its influence has reached beyond that of any other. Danny Jordaan, Head of South Africa's Organizing Committee, exclaimed, "[Soccer] became the platform to build the struggle against apartheid." (*TIME* magazine 6/14/10). Apartheid was the racial segregation of Africans by the English from 1948 to 1994, and it all started when the inmates requested

the opportunity to play football in Robben Island Prison. This was a game that showed on the field there was no difference between two men but the sweat, talent, and passion they had for the sport. The World Cup can help unite nations around a soccer ball.

It is a World Cup tradition that after the games, players will exchange jerseys and congratulate each other on their team performances. In many sports today, sportsmanship is a lost virtue, and in this

past World Cup, I saw a very high demonstration of respectable competition. These games showed that soccer has a diplomatic side to it, and that the players represent a more peaceful and respectful way of engaging in friendly confrontation. Rather than funneling pointless arguments and blame at each other, differences are put to the test in a diverse, more beneficial approach. These effects are seen most obviously in the host countries and those that are struggling.

South Africa, the World Cup host, was greatly benefited by soccer this year, as 715.1 million watched the World Cup around the world. South Africa suffers in many ways. 5.7 million have HIV/AIDS, and the unemployment rate is 35.4% (*TIME* magazine 6/14/10). Proof that a light shines at the end of a dark tunnel is that almost 75% of international visitors said it was their first time visiting, while 94% said they would happily recommend a visit to their family and friends. South Africa is now seen in a new light internationally because of what she did to prepare for the World Cup—building grand new stadiums, improving public transportation and promoting tourist attractions.

As early as the first Olympics in 776 BC, the Greeks embraced sports as a vehicle for unifying the civilized world. More than two and a half millennia later, it is a much more complex world in which we live. However, if sports worked to bridge political differences for the Greeks back then, perhaps soccer can play a similar role for the world community today.



Artwork by Brigitte Mourning



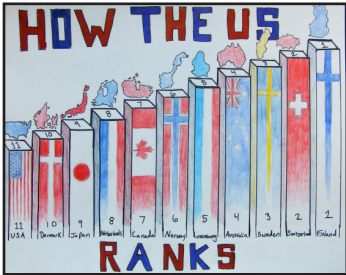


## How Nations Stack Up

By Katherine Kristoffersen

As American citizens, we often consider ourselves to be without peers. After all, we live in the United States, land of the free! Our country has long been a world power and leading example for other nations. Yet, the United States is not the only country boasting equal opportunity for its citizens. *Newsweek* recently ranked the top 100 countries based on education, political environment, economic dynamism, healthcare, and quality of life. Coming in first place was Finland, followed by Switzerland, Sweden, Australia, and Luxembourg. Not even making the top ten, the U.S.A. ranks No. 11.

Finland was noted to be the best high-income country in these areas: superb educational system and best small country. With the



Nordic countries all among the top ten, one might ask what they have in common. Small and cold, these countries offer their citizens safety and opportunity for prosperity—although there are many factors that define a nation's prosperity. Differences can be so varied within various categories, it can often be difficult to compare conditions.

For example, how does one compare countries having dissimilar populations, climates, and political systems?

My cousin, Malin Hatling, a 16 year-old who lives in Norway, plans on becoming an exchange student in the United States next year. She explained to me her view on the ranking of the Nordic countries. "I would have never guessed Finland would have come in first place. I really thought Norway was considered a better country to live in than Finland. In the economic category, I thought Norway would score better because of all the money we have made from oil and gas. I think Finland and Sweden use their money to make the roads and cities better, but Norway continues to save and debate on which areas our money is to be spent."

A country's status is largely determined by its residents. However, it is possible for a nation's prosperity ranking to rise and fall based on several factors, such as disease and natural disasters, which are uncontrollable. Our country has fallen short in recent years as we have experienced the worst recession since the 1930's. Surveys show a decline in U.S. students graduating from college; and as a result, President Obama has pledged to focus on improving education.

Will the ranking of the United States rise in the coming years? Only time will tell.

## Bridges Staff

**Editor:** Lauren Brand

**Designer:** Lauren Brand

**Secretary:** Colette Baldelli

**Photographer:** Madison Privette

**Staff:** Madison Cavalliere, Dylan Campbell, Leslie Carlucci, Rose Dorn Chris Dudley, Babur Farid, Kayla Gibson, Jordan Holmes, Clayton Johnson, Pamela Kass, Annalisa Kristoffersen, Katherine Kristoffersen, Peyton Long, Ryan Matthews, Violette Moore, Brigitte Mourning, Hunter Riddick, Lindsey Thompson, Kiet Tran, Lindsey Wall, Kaitlyn White

**Advisor:** Ms. Lindy Poling ([lgpoling@juno.com](mailto:lgpoling@juno.com))

**Advisory Board:** Admiral & Mrs. Emmett Tidd, LTC Jim Zumwalt, Mrs. Mouzetta Zumwalt-Weathers, Mr. Bob Gray, General George B. Price, Mr. Joe Galloway, Mr. Larry Stogner, Mr. Rob Wilson, Mrs. Elizabeth Stevenson, Dr. Ric Vandett, Mr. Robert Nasson, Ms. Vickie Christos, Mr. Phil Beane

## End of Combat? End of Mission?

By Colette Baldelli

On August 31, 2010, President Obama declared, "Operation Iraqi Freedom is over." He announced that the United States has met its responsibilities in Iraq, and he plans for all combat brigades to be withdrawn by the end of August 2010. This withdrawal is a significant milestone in the war, but is it the end to our mission in Iraq?

President Obama has planned to keep 50,000 U.S. non-combat soldiers in Iraq. These forces will advise, train, and support the Iraqi security troops as all US forces transition out by the end of 2011. Tension and violence may erupt in Iraq as the newly elected officials continue to build and organize a new government. The remaining troops, while considered to be mostly advisors and assistants, are still ready for combat if they are called upon. They are also fully equipped to help the Iraqi military fight in counterterrorism missions.

President Obama will continue the Bush Administration's plan made back in 2008, in agreement with the Iraqi government, to pull out all of the remaining 50,000 troops by December 31, 2011. In reality, the young Iraqi government may not be able to completely sustain itself. Some Iraqi provincial leaders are worried that when the U.S. withdraws, their inexperienced army will not be able to contain the militants, and are hoping, if requested, that the U.S. will retain some troops in Iraq.

Critics who agree with the Iraqi governors that a year is not long enough, or that a premature withdrawal will lead to another fight against insurgents,

draw some very similar parallels from the post-Iraq situation to our involvement in South Korea after the Korean War. Close to 60 years after the cease fire between North Korea and South Korea, the United States continues to position at least 30,000 troops in South Korea to guard against a possible attack from the North. Although the United States will most likely not commit to 60 years of troop support in Iraq, there is a high probability the transition in Iraq will take longer than a year. As the combat units start returning home, the transition troops continue honing Iraq's military into a force that can support itself.



Artwork by Lindsey Wall

As Iraq's government starts to arise from the ashes of destruction, there is hope in the prospect that we may have a democratic friend in the region. But there is also the fear Iran may wield its influence over Iraq, ironically leaving Tehran as the sole beneficiary of Saddam Hussein's ouster. As to whether that happens, we will have to heed the advice given by General Ray Odierno, our top Commander in Iraq for the past 4 ½ years, in responding to *60 Minutes'* correspondent Leslie Stahl's inquiry whether the war in Iraq was worth it: "We will have to wait and see...it depends."

## Websites

<http://mhs.wcpss.net/academics/poling/index.htm>

[www.wcpss.net/community\\_in\\_the\\_classroom](http://www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom)

<http://www.nationalhistoryclub.org>