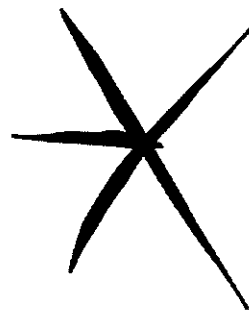


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ORAL CONCOURS 2018 ANGLAIS - LVI

Science Says: Amount of straws, plastic pollution is huge

Cities and nations are looking at banning plastic straws and stirrers in hopes of addressing the world's plastic pollution problem. The problem is so large, though, that scientists say that's not nearly enough. Australian scientists Denise Hardesty and Chris Wilcox estimate, using trash collected on U.S. coastlines during cleanups over five years, that there are nearly 7.5 million plastic straws lying around America's shorelines. They figure that means 437 million to 8.3 billion plastic straws are on the entire world's coastlines.

But that huge number suddenly seems small when you look at all the plastic trash bobbing around oceans. University of Georgia environmental engineering professor Jenna Jambeck calculates that nearly 9 million tons end up in the world's oceans each year, as of 2010, according to her 2015 study in the journal *Science*.

That's just in and near oceans. Each year more than 35 million tons of plastic pollution are produced around Earth and about a quarter of that ends up around the water. "For every pound of tuna we're taking out of the ocean, we're putting two pounds of plastic in the ocean," says ocean scientist Sherry Lippiatt, California regional coordinator for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's marine debris program.

Seabirds can ingest as much as 8 percent of their body weight in plastic, which for humans "is equivalent to the average woman having the weight of two babies in her stomach," says Hardesty of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Organizers of Earth Day, which is Sunday, have proclaimed ending plastics pollution this year's theme. And following in the footsteps of several U.S. cities such as Seattle and Miami Beach, British Prime Minister Theresa May in April called on the nations of the British commonwealth to consider banning plastic straws, coffee stirrers and plastic swabs with cotton on the end.

McDonald's will test paper straws in some U.K. locations next month and keep all straws behind the counter, so customers have to ask for them. "Together with our customers we can do our bit for the environment and use fewer straws," says Paul Pomroy, who runs the fast-food company's U.K. business.

The issue of straws and marine animals got more heated after a 2015 viral video showing rescuers removing a straw from a sea turtle's nose in graphic and bloody detail. But a ban may be a bit of a diversion in the discussions about plastics pollution. Straws make up about 4 percent of the plastic trash by piece, but far less by weight.

Straws on average weigh so little — about 0.42 grams — that all those billions of straws add up to only about 2,000 tons of the nearly 9 million tons of plastic waste that yearly hits the waters. "Bans can play a role," says oceanographer Kara Lavendar Law, a co-author with Jambeck of the 2015 *Science* study. "*We are not going to solve the problem by banning straws.*"

Scientists say that unless you are disabled or a small child, plastic straws are generally unnecessary and a ban is a start and good symbol. These items that people use for a few minutes but "are sticking round for our lifetime and longer," Lippiatt says. Marcus Eriksen, an environmental scientist who co-founded the advocacy group 5 Gyres, says working on bans of straws and plastic bags would bring noticeable change. He calls plastic bags, cups and straws that break down in smaller but still harmful pieces the "smog of microplastics."

"Our cities are horizontal smokestacks pumping out this smog into the seas," Eriksen says. "One goal for advocacy organizations is to make that single-use culture taboo, the same way smoking in public is taboo." Steve Russell, vice president of plastics for the American Chemistry Council, said people can reduce waste by not taking straws, but "in many cases these plastics provide sanitary conditions for food, beverages and personal care."

The key to solving marine litter, Russell says, is "in investing in systems to capture land-based waste and investing in infrastructure to convert used plastics into valuable products." Even though Jambeck spends her life measuring and working on the growing problem of waste pollution, she's optimistic. "We can do this," Jambeck says. "I have faith in humans."

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Britain ignores social mobility at its peril

As mobility has become more important it has also become more difficult to promote

IN 1845, as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, Benjamin Disraeli, a young politician on the make, published a novel, "Sybil", which lamented that Britain was dividing into "two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy". Today, as the information revolution gathers pace, Britain suffers from the same problem. The country is more divided than it has been for decades, with the rich consolidating their power and people who are born in the wrong class or region seeing their chances of getting ahead declining.

Theresa May rightly put dealing with this problem at the top of her agenda when she became prime minister. But on December 3rd all four members of Britain's Social Mobility Commission resigned in protest at the lack of progress. [...]

Social mobility is essential to the working of an advanced capitalist society. For one thing, citizens will accept the inequalities that capitalism generates only if they think they have a fair chance of getting ahead. The notion that the system is rigged can be just as destabilising as economic crises. Secondly, advanced economies can grow only if they make a reasonable job of discovering the hidden Einsteins who might be able to produce the next great invention if they were given the chance.

Britain is failing badly on both fronts. Its decision to leave the European Union was above all a revolt of the left-behind. The Social Mobility Commission discovered that 62 of the 65 parts of the country that it identified as "social-mobility cold spots"—that is, those with the worst education and employment prospects—voted to leave. [...]

As social mobility has become more important it has become more difficult to promote. The reason for this is the paradox of meritocracy. In the first half of the 20th century, when the old establishment ruled the country, opening up opportunities was relatively simple. You forced the establishment to abandon obvious prejudices, such as the fact that the best Oxbridge colleges were reserved for men. You also forced it to build a ladder of opportunity for the poor: the 1944 Education Act raised the school-leaving age to 15, then 16, and the expansion of universities in the 1960s democratised higher education. Today opening up opportunities is much more difficult, precisely because the meritocratic revolution has been so successful.

The meritocratic elite has proved remarkably good at hoarding opportunities. Successful people tend to marry each other. Couples devote themselves to giving their children the best education possible, starting in the nursery. Private schools have also proved to be more successful than state schools at adapting to the meritocratic spirit. Institutions that once turned out flannelled fools and muddled oafs are now obsessed with exam results. To make matters worse, the knowledge economy is a winner-takes-most economy. Superstar firms are pulling ahead of run-of-the-mill ones. Superstar cities are pulling ahead of second-tier ones. This problem is more pronounced in Britain than almost anywhere else because London is so dominant. [...]

The Social Mobility Commission produced a series of excellent reports, which suggested sensible solutions such as better early education for disadvantaged children. This columnist would support a combination of reaching into Britain's past and peering into its future. Britain has a distinguished history of elite institutions doing their bit for mobility: Oxbridge colleges creating feeder schools, and private schools setting aside places for poor scholars. [...] Meanwhile, the very technology that is widening class divisions can also be used to close them. The Israel Defence Forces respond to the lost-Einstein problem by monitoring children's performance in video games, as well as more routine academic tests.

But Britain's two main parties are failing to give this growing problem the energy it requires. The Conservatives are overwhelmed by Brexit. Labour is devoting its intellectual resources, in so far as it still has any, to the old problem of a closed establishment rather than the new problem of the marriage of meritocracy and plutocracy. Thanks to its commitment to intelligent reform, Disraeli's Britain* became the most peaceful, as well as the most successful, country in Europe. The political class may well be about to demonstrate that what intelligence and reform can do, stupidity and stasis can undo.

* Benjamin Disraeli, mentioned in the introduction, served twice as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during the 19th century.

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A Symphony Breathes Life Into 400 Broken School Instruments

PHILADELPHIA — As the garagelike door rolled up at the 23rd Street Armory here on Sunday evening, 400 student, amateur and professional musicians paraded in with just a helping of the broken instruments that have spent years languishing in this city's strapped public school system.

A trumpet was held together with blue painter's tape. A violin, stripped of much of its body, had been reduced to a silhouette. More than one cello was carried in multiple pieces. These were the unlikely ingredients of "symphony for a broken orchestra," a new piece by the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang. It was written as part of a project of the same name to repair more than 1,000 damaged instruments that had been doomed to silence in storage because of severe budget cuts to Philadelphia's public school music programs.

Robert Blackson, the director of Temple Contemporary at the Tyler School of Art, was the project's mastermind and said that teachers around the city had been stockpiling the instruments in case the funding to fix them ever materialized. To Mr. Lang, who said in an interview he owes his career to public school music education, those instruments represent "over 1,000 missed opportunities." The Pulitzer Prize winner David Lang, who wrote "symphony for a broken orchestra," said that he owes his career to public school music education. The teachers often don't have the skills to do the repairs themselves, Mr. Blackson said, and they have had to reckon with the near evaporation of the school district's funding for arts programs, excluding teachers' salaries, which dropped from \$1.3 million in 2007 to \$50,000 this year. The students hit hardest, he added, were almost entirely low-income minorities.

Colin Chen, a 24-year-old music teacher who played a clarinet in Mr. Lang's symphony, said that he tries to make the best of "very little resources" by paying for supplies out of his own pocket. For students, the funding shortfall has meant that they often need to provide their own music books and supplies for basic upkeep, such as reeds and rosin. They also share the remaining instruments that haven't been damaged. Eleanor Martinez, a 16-year-old student at South Philadelphia High School, now owns her own clarinet but for a long time needed to share — which made her uneasy, she said, given the amount of saliva involved with playing woodwinds. If the school district wants to create "a Bon Jovi or Beethoven," Ms. Martinez added, "they have to give us the money to make it happen."

Enter Symphony for a Broken Orchestra, which has allowed people to "adopt" the instruments — around \$237,000 has been raised so far — to cover the immediate cost of repairs and establish a legacy fund for future servicing. [...] The musicians for Mr. Lang's symphony included students in grade school, as well as amateurs and professionals — even members of the storied Philadelphia Orchestra. The youngest performer was a 9-year-old cellist; the oldest, an 82-year-old oboist. It looked like the most diverse orchestra in America.

Mr. Lang's score explored the idea that the hundreds of damaged instruments were "only broken in the Western classical-music sense," he said. In the opening, they were almost silent but gradually awoke with percussive sounds reminiscent of a rainstick. Performers tapped on violin bodies and clicked the valve keys of horns. At one point, a cellist made noise by turning a stringless peg.

For students, it was a drastic turn from easy arrangements of the classical repertoire. Evelyn Mtika — a 16-year-old from the Philadelphia High School for Creative & Performing Arts who played a violin with no A string or bridge, using a bow that had lost nearly all of its hair — said she welcomed the change. "It teaches you a lesson and breaks you out of the box," she said. "You can learn music in a nontraditional way and see that it doesn't need to just be in an orchestra."

[...] On Monday, the instruments were scheduled for delivery to repair shops so they could be fixed and returned in time for the 2018-19 school year. "This was a case where there was something art could do to really solve a problem," Mr. Lang said after the performance. "It just shouldn't have been a problem to begin with."

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Why corruption matters

More than a trillion dollars are stolen from the world's poorest countries every year, which is such a vast sum that it is hard to visualise. That amount of money would get you Apple, with enough left over to buy every sterling-denominated note or coin in circulation. To count out a trillion dollars in dollar bills would take you almost 32,000 years. If the first anatomically modern humans had started counting at the moment they crossed from the Middle East into Europe, they would be getting to a trillion around now. But if you live in a wealthy country, you may be struggling to care.

After all, most of that money ends up supporting jobs in estate agencies, buoying the share prices of luxury goods companies, and taking our politicians on all-expenses-paid trips to Baku, Bahrain, or Bamako. Although corruption is bad for other people, it suits us very well, right? Wrong. Corruption is everyone's problem, and here are a few reasons why you should care about the world's failure to properly address the situation.

Corruption causes bloodshed. [...] All around the world, the people who know best what it is like to fight terrorism tell us their worst enemy is corruption. "For too long, we've focused our attention on the Taliban as the existential threat to Afghanistan. They are an annoyance compared to the scope and magnitude of corruption," said US Marine Corps General John Allen [...] Similar warnings can be heard about Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) in the Middle East, and equivalent movements elsewhere. Corruption angers citizens, making them sympathetic to the state's enemies, even if they are terrorists, while undermining the government's ability to fight back. In the long term, the best way to neuter the threat of terrorism is to provide honest and fair government. This is everyone's problem because terrorism spreads freely across national boundaries - a movement born in Iraq can attack us in Manchester, Paris or Brussels.

In 2017, Russia recorded more than 100,000 new HIV infections for the second year running, taking the total number of cases in the country perhaps as high as 1.5 million. Two percent of Russians in their thirties are infected, which is unprecedented for a European country, and the epidemic's growth shows no sign of slowing. It is spread by drug use, prostitution, and a poor healthcare system - all of which are a result of the country's rampant corruption. Russia is not alone. Corruption has helped rekindle polio in Ukraine, spread multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in Central Asia, and impede the fight against Ebola in Liberia. Viruses and microbes do not respect national borders. If we do not help these countries build effective healthcare systems, we will all be dealing with the consequences, and all be getting sick. [...]

Corruption is threatened by democracy, and corrupt individuals will always seek to undermine the rule of law to protect themselves. If we wish to protect our political systems from infection, we need to fight back. Academic research has shown that flight capital inflates house prices in London, and there is every reason to suppose the same phenomenon - of rich people getting their money out of places where it could be taken away, and stashing it somewhere safe - affects cities all over the developed world. One of the reasons your rent is so high, therefore, is that foreigners are investing money in your country not because they are seeking a good return, but because they want to keep it safe from corrupt officials. Several cities - notably London and New York City, but also Miami, Los Angeles and elsewhere - have seen expensive buildings become an asset class, rather than homes. This has emptied out some neighbourhoods and sparked fury among people who can no longer afford to live in their own cities. [...]

We need public registries of property and company ownership, so we can see where money is coming from. And we need to give our law enforcement bodies the money they need to investigate the world's crooks. Just a few successful prosecutions would drive dirty money out of our countries, thus protecting our economies and political systems, and helping our allies all over the world.

**ORAL CONCOURS 2018
ANGLAIS - LVI****Think real estate prices are high now? Wait until Amazon moves to town.**

As leaders of Miami and 19 other cities celebrate their inclusion in Amazon's short list for a second headquarters, some affordable-housing advocates have a warning: Be careful what you wish for. Amazon is a force behind Seattle's tight housing market, where the online giant's headquarters employs about 40,000 people and dominates downtown's office market. Amazon occupies as much office space as the city's other Top 39 commercial renters combined, and its well-paid workforce is credited with helping boost residential rents faster than in almost any other city in the country. [...]

Worries over rising real estate prices are basically the exact flip side to the enthusiasm for actually landing an Amazon headquarters expected to employ about 50,000 people with an average annual wage topping \$100,000. With 50,000 people on its payroll, Amazon would easily qualify as Miami-Dade County's top employer. That influx of well-paid jobs would boost demand for real estate, too. Higher demand squeezes supply, prompting prices to increase. [...]

The Seattle area can't link its high home prices only to Amazon. The online retailer dominates downtown Seattle itself where it occupies or has plans to take over three dozen office buildings. But other major corporate players — including Microsoft, Starbucks and Boeing — give the kind of Fortune 500 line-up that economic-development leaders dream of elsewhere in the country. That's put pressure on housing prices — great news for property owners, but a challenge for people looking to buy.

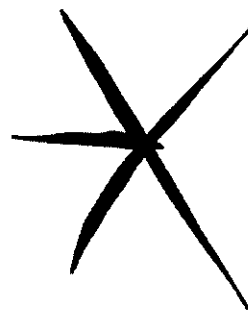
Seattle's experience is the template for predicting what Amazon's HQ2 could mean for other cities. While big companies dominate certain suburbs — such as Google and Facebook in Mountainview, California — Amazon's Seattle presence is the largest of its kind in a city, the Seattle Times reported. Under the headline "Thanks to Amazon, Seattle is now America's biggest company town," the August 2017 article stated: "Amazon now occupies a mind-boggling 19 percent of all prime office space in the city, the most for any employer in a major U.S. city."

Weeks later, Amazon stunned its hometown by announcing plans for a second headquarters somewhere else in the country. For Seattle, the news meant economic anxiety coupled with the possibility of a more hospitable housing market. "Amazon topping out here and growing elsewhere could slow bidding wars for homes as well as the influx of newcomers driving up rents," the Seattle Times reported. Rev. Audrey Warren, an affordable-housing advocate in Miami and pastor at the First United Methodist Church, said the Amazon news brought concerns that the city's struggle to make rents affordable could be getting even harder. But she said the challenges must be addressed with or without Amazon, and that there's no reason to turn away so many jobs over worries about a long-running problem.

"I think Amazon could be collaborating with other organizations to promote affordable housing," said Warren, who is part of the Miami PACT advocacy group. "I think it will be great if Amazon comes." Ken Russell, a Miami commissioner running for Congress as a Democrat, said residents will definitely face higher rents and out-of-reach prices — but not because of Amazon, which he's hoping to recruit. "Miami already has a housing crisis," he said. "Left to market forces here, the city is getting less and less affordable." An analysis by Apartment List predicts the Miami area would see a quickening pace of rent increases should it land Amazon's secondary headquarters. The rental-listing organization predicts rents will increase about 3.6 percent a year in the Miami area without Amazon. Add in Amazon's "HQ2" and Apartment List predicts rents would go up another more than half-a-percentage point each year. That may not sound like much, but it would cost the average renter about \$7,000 over 10 years.

Still, it's not as bad as what the analysis predicts for Raleigh, North Carolina, where the housing market doesn't have the capacity to absorb new residents like Miami does. It ranks first in Apartment List's roster of HQ2 finalists facing rent increases, with the average renter expected to pay about \$15,000 more over 10 years if Amazon calls Raleigh home. Juan del Busto, a former head of the Federal Reserve branch in Miami, all but scoffed at the idea that anyone should worry about housing prices in relation to Amazon considering a move to Florida. "Anything that will create jobs is a positive," del Busto said. "I don't see anything negative."

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**ORAL CONCOURS 2018
ANGLAIS - LVII****World leaders rally against 'protectionism' before Trump gets to Davos**

World leaders speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos have made it clear that they disagree with the anti-free trade rhetoric coming out of the United States. Without always naming the country, the heads of state of Brazil, India, Canada and Italy all said they disagree with what they believe is an anti-free trade stance from the world's biggest economy.

"We know all too well that we live in a world where isolation trends are gaining ground, however, we all know that protectionism is not a solution," Michel Temer, the Brazilian president, told an audience in Davos, Switzerland on Wednesday. "When we are closed within ourselves, we are closed to new technologies, we are closed to new ideas, to new possibilities and we therefore remain closed to actual effective solutions to our shared problems," he added.

President Donald Trump, who will address the Davos audience later in the week, has been a vocal advocate against multilateral trade, criticizing many of the country's partners for supposedly taking advantage of the United States. Speaking to CNBC at the Forum, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, said that it is understandable that the U.S. wants to look out for the interests of its people, but the discussion about trade fairness needs to take place in a framework of openness.

"We, the Europeans, we, the Italians, have to stress the fact that respecting and protecting the interest of the U.S. citizens, which is correct, cannot mean that we discuss the framework of the international trade relations, for example, that has been demonstrated to be so useful for growth," Gentiloni told CNBC Wednesday. "We have to mix, obviously, free trade and fair trade," Gentiloni added.

The White House Chief Economic Advisor Gary Cohn told reporters Tuesday that Trump will deliver a message of openness to investment in America and "remind the world that we are open for business." Then on Wednesday morning, top U.S. officials trumpeted America's commitment to free and fair trade at Davos. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin iterated that his country is "absolutely" committed to free and fair trade. He added that strong U.S. growth was good for the economy and that there was no inconsistency with Trump's "America First" agenda, according to the Associated Press.

But at the same time, the U.S. has closed its doors to an agreement with 11 other nations in the Asian-Pacific region. This strong pro-trade talk comes one day after the 11 countries abandoned by the United States — when it left the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — sealed an agreement to move forward with their own free trade deal. The U.S. has also stopped trade negotiations with Europe and it is still assessing whether to strengthen trade ties with Canada and Mexico.

Speaking at Davos on Tuesday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said: "We are working very hard to make sure our neighbor to the south recognizes how good NAFTA (the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement) is and that it has benefited not just our economy but his economy and the world's economy."

Also on Tuesday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted the current "worrying trend" against globalization. "Forces of protectionism are raising their heads against globalization, their intention is not only to avoid globalization themselves but they also want to reverse its natural flow," he said.

"The solution to this worrying situation against globalization is not isolation. Its solution is in understanding and accepting change and in formulating agile and flexible policies in line with the changing times," he added.

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New platform helps women entrepreneurs raise capital

Mayor Jim Kenney, StartupPHL and iFundWomen, a crowdfunding platform for women-led startups and small businesses with a pay-it-forward model, have announced the iFundWomen Philadelphia Crowdfunding Platform and Pitch Competition.*

iFundWomen Philadelphia is a platform designed to help the region's women entrepreneurs raise the capital needed to get their ideas off the ground. Businesses selected for the Philadelphia Cohort will receive free crowdfunding coaching and have the option to start their crowdfunding campaigns immediately.

"It is undeniable that women, particularly women of color, have gone underrepresented in the world of business for too long," Kenney said in a news release.

"To close the gap that currently exists, we must make deliberate efforts to support more women entrepreneurs, and an important piece of that is increasing access to capital. iFundWomen Philadelphia will allow current and aspiring business owners in our area to tap a national network of funders and receive personalized coaching and resources from the platform's staff."

Campaigns that are fully funded by May 1 will be eligible to participate in the first-ever iFundWomen Philadelphia Pitch Competition. This spring pitch event will give select top-performing crowdfunders a chance to pitch their ideas and raise even more capital and visibility for their businesses.

"We are thrilled to partner with Mayor Kenney and StartupPHL to raise money for local startups and to launch our first-ever Philadelphia Pitch Competition. iFundWomen is committed to supporting female entrepreneurs as they raise their first round of capital to launch and grow their businesses," said iFundWomen CEO, Karen Cahn.

"We are taking our startup funding program one step further with the introduction of this regional pitch competition, encouraging the entrepreneurs who successfully crowdfund with us to then have the opportunity to pitch their businesses for a cash prize."

iFundWomen Philadelphia offers access to one-on-one expert crowdfunding coaching and video production services to help entrepreneurs pitch their concepts and effectively tell their stories. The platform is a one-stop resource for those who want to support and grow women-led businesses through financial contributions of any amount. Backers can discover businesses, choose unique rewards for their support, and track the financial progress of all campaigns featured.

"Since joining the City, one of my main priorities has been increasing access to resources for traditionally under-served entrepreneurs," said Francisco Garcia, director of Business Development for Innovation and Technology.

"Our partnership with iFundWomen is a positive step towards providing women-owned businesses with a fair chance at launching and growing in Philadelphia."

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Entrepreneurs interested in applying for iFundWomen Philadelphia should visit www.beta.ifundwomen.com/philadelphia and fill out the application form.

*An opportunity to present their project to interested parties

ORAL CONCOURS 2018 ANGLAIS - LVII

MPAA* head says movie theaters will survive rise of streaming sites

Two film industry leaders told theater owners Tuesday that they are optimistic about the movie and theatrical exhibition business despite concerns about declining attendance and competition from streaming services. New MPAA chief Charles Rivkin and John Fithian, the president and CEO of the National Association of Theater Owners, delivered a state of the industry speech at CinemaCon, saying the strength of the movies being released will dictate box-office sales. "Our business rises or falls on the movies in our cinemas," Fithian said.

CinemaCon is an annual gathering of theater owners and exhibitors, during which they get a look at upcoming films from major Hollywood studios and a preview of some of the latest and greatest in theatrical technologies and even concession options.

Rivkin, who recently took over the position at the MPAA from Christopher Dodd, said that 263 million people went to the movies at least once in North America in 2017 — more than three quarters of the North American population. He noted that while the box office was slightly down from the record in 2016, it was on par with the 2015 record. He says he believes the market will always move between record-high or near record years.

He also stressed that he would continue to fight to protect intellectual property with anti-piracy efforts. Film and television account for \$16.5 billion in exports, he said, and that the industry supports 2.1 million jobs and \$139 billion in wages every year. Rivkin was previously the president and CEO of The Jim Henson Company and also served as the U.S. Ambassador to France and as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

"Let's always deliver on the promise of our creative industry: high quality stories that speak to the hopes and dreams of our audience, and will continue to do so for generations to come," Rivkin said.

Fithian also applauded filmmakers and distributors for "taking significant steps to achieve more diversity and positive representation on the big screen," which he says their consumers are demanding. "We are optimistic that 2017 and 2018 will one day be viewed as a turning point on this front," Fithian said.

Fithian also spoke to some of the major fears of the movie business and said that younger audiences are still passionate movie-goers. According to comScore, movie-goers ages 18-44 constituted 63% of the total box office in 2017, up from 61% in 2016.

Fithian said that disruption, whether it's streaming or shortened periods during which films are shown exclusively in theaters, will not kill the theatrical business. He wondered if "Black Panther," "Get Out" or "Wonder Woman" would have been cultural landmarks had they gone straight to streaming.

"I have worked with (theater owners) for 26 years. I can't begin to tell you how often reporters have asked me if the movie theater industry is dying. Every downturn in admissions is a sign of decline, every innovation or improvement is intended to 'save' the movie theater business," he said. "There has been a lot of hype about the next 'disruption,' " he said, listing off advancements ranging from VHS to the advent of films releasing in theaters and home services the same day. "Yet we never die but remain a strong business in the face of disruption everywhere else in the entertainment landscape."

***Motion Picture Association of America**

ORAL CONCOURS 2018 ANGLAIS - LVII

New career paths for the internet age

The news commentary game is changing. With the internet and social media platforms, anyone can have a dumb opinion these days, anyone can rant and rave, anyone can be a blowhard, anyone can be a columnist.

I need to look toward the future. I need to be proactive, see what opportunities might be out there. One job that looks interesting is that of troll. Definitely an ever-growing field. So that's a plus.

Nor do you have to have any particular expertise to work in the troll business, which is also a major plus. Granted, the internet troll does not enjoy a good reputation. In general, they are seen as angry, disruptive people who offer their often strident views and comments while hiding behind the anonymity of the computer screen. Kind of like newspaper editorial writers.

There are, of course, different types of trolls. Russian trolls are getting a lot of attention at the moment for interfering in the 2016 presidential election. Some of the trolls indicted by the Robert Mueller investigation were said to have worked on "troll farms," while others were said to have worked in "troll factories." If I were going to get into the troll business, I think I would prefer to work on a troll farm. It just sounds healthier. I wonder if they have organic troll farms?

Another job you hear a lot about is hacker. A hacker is a person who uses his computer skills to gain unauthorized access into someone else's computer. Even if gaining unauthorized access into other people's computers were something that had appeal, I don't think it would work for me as an occupation. For one thing, I think to be a hacker you have to know a lot about computers. If I can remember my log-in and password, I'm in my own personal geek zone.

The other thing about being a hacker is the physical component. President Trump describes hackers "as someone sitting on their bed who weighs 400 pounds." I don't know how he knows this, but he's the president and the president always knows stuff we don't. If I decided to become a hacker, I'd have to gain a lot of weight.

Aside from the internet, another job category that has exploded over the past few years is roving TV commentator. Cable news networks abound with shows featuring roving TV commentators, which often rove from one show to the next all day long. To be a successful roving TV commentator, the key thing is to have an opinion that is in step with the ideology of the network you are appearing on. Whether you are right or wrong makes no difference. Being a roving TV commentator is never having to say you're sorry.

One of the obvious differences between print opinion writers and roving TV commentators is attractiveness. You don't have to be attractive to be a roving TV commentator, but if you are you will get to do a lot more roving. Conversely, you don't have to be unattractive to be a print opinion writer, but it does seem to work out that way. OK, so I'm thinking roving TV commentator may not be a good fit, either.

I don't know, maybe I should look into job opportunities in the "person" field. You know, like being the person who is the "person close to the investigation." The only danger with being a person is that you could end up being a "person of interest."

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A deathly silence: After the massacre in Las Vegas, nothing is set to change But do not despair. Some progress on gun laws is possible in America

AFTER the worst mass shooting in recent American history, in which 58 people were killed and 489 wounded, both the president and the majority leaders in Congress sought to keep talk about new gun laws to a minimum. In Vegas that kind of reticence is called a tell. Had Stephen Paddock used a new technology—an armed drone, say—to kill from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel, or had he been an immigrant from the Middle East, lawmakers would be rushing to legislate or tighten borders. But he was a retired white man who used some of the 49 guns he owned, so it is the price of freedom.

There is a weariness to America's gun debate and the familiar ritual after mass shootings, which are more frequent than in any other rich country. One study counted 166 of them in 14 countries in 2000-14; 133 were in America. Yet, nothing happens, partly because the National Rifle Association (NRA), which has evolved from an armed version of the Boy Scout movement into the foremost mouthpiece for a view of America in which everyone must be armed for their own protection, has a veto in Washington—including over banning "bump stocks" which make semi-automatic guns more lethal.

If America could not overhaul its gun laws after Sandy Hook, when 20 children aged six and seven were shot at school, then what chance is there now? And even if tighter laws on new guns were introduced tomorrow, there would still be a stock of 300m firearms to reckon with.

Such despair is unworthy of this week's victims. There are plenty of down-is-up arguments about guns, but the Las Vegas shooting, in addition to being the most deadly, has shown up the old NRA line that the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun as the most deceitful of the lot.

Granted, America has chosen permissive gun laws for itself. But the body count does not have to be as high as it is today. Research into murder and suicide suggests that making it just slightly harder to get hold of a weapon can reduce the number of killings, many of which are spontaneous and unplanned.

It ought to be possible to write laws that respect the right to bear arms while banning weapons and modifications that make it astonishingly easy to kill a lot of people quickly. Most Americans favour such laws and would like universal background checks on gun purchases, too (though support for gun control is less fervent than for gun rights). Such a regime would still leave America with an unusually high number of murders, suicides and fatal accidents involving guns, but the disparity with other countries would be less glaring.

Tired of waiting for Congress, some cities have introduced their own laws. In upstate New York, where plenty of people hunt, gun laws are permissive. In New York City those laws do not apply. Anyone who wants to carry a gun down Fifth Avenue must first obtain the permission of the NYPD.

[... In] a country with 30,000 gun deaths a year, even small improvements would save a lot of lives. A rough calculation suggests that in the time between the Las Vegas shooting and the publication of this article, a further 320 Americans lost their life to a bullet.