

## GLOBAL WEB WATCH

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### 10-year Dish toasted

BLOGGER Andrew Sullivan invited readers and fellow bloggers to ``toast or roast'' him to help celebrate 10 years of his Daily Dish. His outspoken and morphing political views earned many roasts, but his pioneering work in online commentary was widely toasted. ``Sullivan is the kind of figure that a lot of us have spent good chunks of time agreeing with, disagreeing with, and ridiculing,'' said one post. His quickness to form judgment doesn't make for consistency, ``but that's not what a blog is or was for. It's more about documenting a moment . . . It's merely a technological irony that makes the medium more easily preserved than any newspaper or book.'' Another says: ``Andrew Sullivan is the blogosphere's Socrates. He prods each of us beyond the easy, lazy politics of our day -- particularly those driven by identity. I don't care that he's a guy. Or that he's gay. Or that he's Catholic. Or even that he's conservative. I care that Andrew uses his uniqueness to champion universal values.'' Another: ``As far as I'm concerned, The Daily Dish is the reason the internet was invented. Congratulations on 10 years.''

[andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com](http://andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com)

### Nobel was a cut Diamond

ECONOMIST Steven Levitt from the Freakonomics blog was delighted to see the Nobel Prize in Economics shared by Peter Diamond, whom he met at MIT nearly 20 years ago. ``He was wearing sandals without socks as he taught a graduate class. I remember thinking that was odd. As I sit here in my office, I am wearing sandals without socks. Perhaps Peter Diamond influenced me in ways I never imagined.'' Diamond's intellect was legendary, Levitt says. ``He wrote the kind of papers that I would have to read four or five times to get a handle on what he was doing . . . Diamond often would fall asleep in seminars, often for large chunks of time. What was amazing, however, is that he would open his eyes and then make by far the most insightful comment of the entire seminar. He . . . posed tough questions that would undermine the entire thesis of the speaker, and he would provide the speaker the answer to the very question . . . Somehow Diamond was able to work out in his head complex models that would take others days or weeks and reams of paper to solve.''

[freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com](http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com)

Fungus foils war on opium

The National Interest's Skeptics blogger **Ted Galen Carpenter** looks at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's 2010 Afghanistan Opium Survey, and finds it to be ``a classic case of bad news and illusory good news''. The fact that opium production had declined 48 per cent over the past year had nothing to do with anti-drug efforts, but was entirely due to a fungal blight. The blight has reduced supply and means farmers can earn six times as much growing opium as the nearest competitor, wheat. ``The brutal reality is that opium is a huge part of the country's economy'', accounting for a quarter to a third of GDP. ``Such economic realities mean that calls to make anti-drug efforts a higher priority jeopardise the more important anti-terrorism mission'' by alienating informers and political allies who could easily go back to supporting the Taliban.

[nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics](http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics)

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