Challenges and opportunities. This month’s editorial, by Chilean physician and member of UEA’s governing board, José Antonio Vergara, alludes to the 100th anniversary of the First World War as Esperanto was getting started and speaks of the challenges and opportunities that face the movement at the beginning of the third millennium—especially its potential role in helping promote world peace.

Fifth African Esperanto Congress (Cotonou, Benin). The Fifth African Esperanto Congress took place in Cotonou, the largest city and commercial capital of Benin. The article features a colorful picture of a musical interlude featuring indigenous instruments during the Congress. The event was prepared by three organizations working together: The Africa Commission of the Universal Esperanto Association, the Association of Benin Esperantists, the national association of the UEA and Scio Sen Bariloj (Knowledge Without Barriers), a non-governmental organization created in 2009 by a group of Benin and Swiss citizens, mainly Esperantists, whose president is Privas Tchikpe, of Cotonou. One of those attending, Augustin Houessinon, the Vice-Mayor of Cotonou, expressed the view that it would be very desirable for the international establishment to become interested in Esperanto to avoid the enormous expenditures in translation and interpreting that are incurred in their institutions. The debates and program were guided by the president of the African Commission (AK) of the UEA, Adjévi Adj, of Togo. Other members of the AK taking part in the Congress were Kaarlo Alofa of Benin, Emile Malanda of Congo RDC/South Africa, and Jérémie Sabiyumva of Burundi.
Esperanto and business: Just for the few. An article about people who make their living by working in companies which make substantial use of Esperanto is aptly headlined “Nur por malmultaj” (Just for the few). One of those featured is a Brazilian, Aldrin Speck, now working in China in an international commercial enterprise that uses Esperanto in parallel with English in its business. And the other is a Slovakian, Katrina Nosková, who has been working since 2009 as a project manager and translator, for E@I, where the internal language of communication and that of many projects is Esperanto. Mr. Speck notes that in China active and fluent Esperantists are found in every large city and in some villages. And he notes that the language level of the young Esperantists there is remarkably high.

Bavarian International Festival—the 30th is not the last. A very popular international gathering of Esperantists held this past holiday season in Bavaria’s city of Nördlingen from December 27, 2013 to January 4, 2014, was not the last as announced last year. Nördlingen has an unusual site. It is located in a meteorite crater—luckily the meteorite that created the site hit some 15 million years ago. Those attending were happy to hear that the popular festival will continue with the 31st edition to be held in Jülich, near the Dutch and Belgian borders. This year’s festival had attendees from places as widespread as Iceland, Japan, Russia, Israel, Korea, Dagestan, Italy, and the Ukraine.

Esperanto in Beatle-Town. The title of this article may bring some nostalgia for lovers of the popular music of the sixties and seventies. It headlines an article about a three-day Esperanto seminar at the University of Liverpool in England. In the year 1930 the physician John Buchanan left funds to the University for the promotion and instruction of Esperanto. This legacy has facilitated the organizing of Esperanto events at the University since that time. The three-day events held each year cover Esperanto language, literature, and culture. The sessions on language and literature are aimed at students of the university who are curious about the language or about its literature and are held in English, while the session on culture is conducted in Esperanto. The instructors are Hilary Chapman (language), Paul Gubbins (literature) and Malcolm Jones (culture). The upcoming session will be held from March 26 to 28. Details about Buchanan and his legacy are available in the English-language book of AngelaTellier: Dr. John Buchanan – An Esperanto Legacy to the University of Liverpool (Barlaston: EsperantoUK, 2013), available from the UEA’s bookstore.

Esperanto-Town, Herzberg am Harz, Germany. The town of Herzberg in Germany flies a large Esperanto flag on days connected with the Esperanto movement, including the birthday of founder Ludwig Zamenhof and days when Esperanto events take place, such as the Esperanto conferences and other important meetings often held in the town. Aside from a Zamenhof monument in the town center, Herzberg is an information and cultural center for the German Esperanto Association and acts as a training center for the Association of German Esperanto Teachers, itself a national branch of the International League of Esperanto Teachers (ILEI).
Esperanto, language of ideas and ideals. This is the theme of the first Iranian Esperanto Congress (IREK), which will be held in Tehran from the 24th to the 26th of March, 2014. The congress will feature seminars, lectures, discussions, and short courses. In the evening cultural programs of art and music are planned, and excursions for the last day of the congress. An interview with Hamzeh Shafiee, an Iranian Esperantist, is also included in this issue of the Esperanto Revuo (see below).

70th Congress of TEJO, the international youth organization of Esperanto. The 70th Congress of TEJO, the youth organization of Esperanto (the initials stand for Tutmonda Esperantista Junulara Organizo), will be held this year from July 18 to 25 in Fortaleza in northwestern Brazil.

The leap forward. Several articles in this month’s issue are devoted to the idea of having the Esperanto movement make a substantial leap forward. The first of these articles gives an array of suggestions and thoughts in regard to this sent in from Esperantists around the world. Another article gives the views of the editors of the journal as well as of the leaders of the UEA, the Universal Esperanto Association.

Excursion from Katmandu. Nepalese Esperantists organized the first “Excursion from Katmandu” in 2013, and its success has led to plans to make this a yearly event. The article is adorned with a spectacular picture of the landscape of the Himalayan country. The 2nd international excursion is planned for October 29 to November 11, 2014. Non-Esperanto speakers are invited also; the article notes that they can easily learn the few Esperanto words that would be useful for the trip. Since Nepal has 60 ethnic groups who speak about 100 different languages, Esperanto seems like a useful way of bringing those groups closer together.

Sustainable development and us. A full-page article by Mark Fettes, the new president of the UEA and professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, speaks of the need for “sustainable development” in the Esperanto movement. He gives a brief review of Zamenhof’s ideas in this connection.

Seven questions to Hamzeh Shafiee. In connection with the first Congress of Esperanto to be held in Iran, the editors of Revuo Esperanto asked seven questions of Hamzeh Shafiee, vice president of the Iranian Esperanto Association. In the course of the interview Mr. Shafiee notes that Iran may be the only country that had an artificial language invented five hundred years ago. He notes that the Esperanto movement is substantially more developed than in the other countries of the Middle East. This first congress is the fulfillment of a long-time dream of the Iranian Esperantists. He feels that the Iranian Esperantists could have a major impact not only in the West Asian region but throughout the world.
Looking at the world through Esperanto eyeglasses. An interesting headline for a language invented by an ophthalmologist! The article, by regular columnist Simone Zoppellaro, points out some reasons why Esperanto is still important more than a century and a quarter after it was first presented to the world – among them the prescience of its creator, who linked his language to a different internationalist and democratic mindset from the rampant globalization that is leaving behind “those who live at the edges of society.” Zoppellaro quotes the renowned linguist Roman Jakobson, who said that languages differ primarily in what they are obliged to communicate, not in what they are capable of expressing. Esperanto, he suggests, is free to convey a different message from those tied to the status quo.