



American Center Newsletter

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American Center

Colombo

November 2008

Barack Obama Wins Historic Election Victory Democrat will be first African-American U.S. president



Barack Obama, 44th President of United States

On November 4, Americans elected Illinois Senator Barack Obama the 44th president of the United States.

Addressing supporters in Chicago November 5, the president-elect said, "To all those who have wondered if America's beacon still burns as bright, tonight we've proved once more that the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth, but from the

enduring power of our ideals: democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope."

Obama said that through their votes, Americans sent a message "that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states. We are and always will be the United States of America."

"A new dawn of American leadership is at hand," he said. "To those who would tear the world down, we will defeat you. To those who seek peace and security, we support you."

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U.S. Ambassador encourages literacy for all Sri Lankans



Ambassador Blake reads to students at the National Reading Month literacy camp.

October 31: U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Robert Blake was guest of honor at a reading camp and awards ceremony held by the National Library and Room to Read in honor of National Reading Month 2008 in Anuradhapura.

The reading camp, supported by a grant from the U.S. Embassy, brought over two hundred Tamil, Sinhala and Veddah children together to learn the importance of literacy. Ambassador

Blake read a short story in English to assembled students, encouraging them to continue improving their reading skills.

The story, Little Fish Goes to School, was written and illustrated by a young Sri Lankan author through Room to Read's local language publishing project. Assistant Public Affairs Officer Kathleen Fox also read in Sinhala.

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Upcoming Events

Room to Read & the American Center Present a Public Lecture Series On

"Education - Investing in Future Generations"

Inaugural Lecture

"Bridging the Gaps in Education Delivery: Quality and Quantity"

Dr. Tara De Mel

Former Secretary to the Ministry of Education

Ms. Pamela Gray-Bennett

Director of the Commission of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, United States
(linked via Digital Video Conferencing)

Date

November 20th

Time

6:00- 7.30 p.m.

Venue

American Center

Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation supports documentation of Anuradhapura monasteries



Members of the Central Cultural Fund team explain Anuradhapura's cultural heritage to Ambassador Blake.

October 31: Ambassador Blake met with members of the Central Cultural Fund to review their documentation project of fourteen Anuradhapura monasteries, known as the Western Monasteries.

The project, creating a photographic, print and digital record of the remaining monastic

structures, began in 2006 and was paid for with a grant of \$21,000 by the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

The documentation of the monasteries will provide an official record to be used in their eventual protection and conservation for future generations.

Each year, the AFCP provides funding for projects protecting and preserving the cultural heritage of developing nations around the world. The 2008 AFCP for Sri Lanka will provide funding for the preservation of the documentary film collection of the Government Film Unit.

U.S. Embassy Celebrates International Children's Day



Children at the drawing sessions (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

October 1: The U.S. Embassy in Colombo hosted 100 children to celebrate International Children's Day on October 1. For this one-day program, the Embassy hosted 60 students from

the Eastern Province and 40 young people from the Puttalam district. Employees from Room to Read conducted storytelling classes and communication and reading skills workshops in Sinhala and Tamil for the children. The Sri Lanka Army transported the 60 students from the Eastern Province to Colombo for a three-day cultural and educational visit to the capital.

The 40 students from the Puttalam district are participants in Room to Read's "bridging program"—an initiative to provide unschooled youth with the necessary skills to join mainstream classrooms.

English Language workshops for teachers and students



English Language Workshop in Kandy

At South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) on 21 October 2008, English Language Fellow, Daniel Ringold, led a program with 28 students from the Faculty of Arts and Culture. The

On 22 October in Kandy, Mr. Ringold led a professional development workshop for 31 local secondary school English teachers from the Kandy region. The session, "Techniques for an Interactive Classroom," was held at the Kandy Children's Public Library Auditorium.

During the workshop, the active participants experienced and reflected on several activities that could be adapted for various content and English level abilities. Participating teachers expressed their keen interest in the activities and Mr. Ringold hopes to return to the region for additional workshops.

program focused on developing listening and speaking skills in English and included some use of online materials from the Voice of America's Special English website.

Room to Read creates homes for books, and children's learning, in Sri Lanka



Glen de Mel, Country Director of Room to Read Sri Lanka

Glen de Mel, Country Director of Room to Read Sri Lanka, never expected to end up working with children. After attending Ananda College and the Faculty of Law at

University of Colombo, a chance opportunity took him to work with Defender's International on a drug prevention program for youth. The experience saw him make a positive impact on the lives of young people, and led him away from the Bar and into a career in development. The challenge to create innovative programs to change the culture of youth communities – using interactive media like street drama, for example – became his passion.

He went on to develop the Pioneer Youth Movement to form youth groups around the country, then the National Youth Congress to organize all NGOs working with drugs and kids. He was the founding Program Officer for and the Alcohol and Drug Information Center and the first non-government person to receive a Technical Cooperation Award from the British High Commission, traveling to University of Manchester to do education training.

In a move to Save the Children, Glen became more and more focused on issues of children's rights and helped to found the Youth Parliament. He began to see the widespread violation of these rights, but also the participation of children in asserting their own rights. Based for some time in Nepal he conducted a South Asia-wide study on children's civic participation and found that the poor state of education in Sri Lanka and South Asia as a whole was a key issue for children's

development. He was working as a consultant to the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment when he saw an advertisement that brought him to American development organization Room to Read. The more he researched the group, the more he liked them.

American John Wood founded Room to Read after he visited several schools on a trek in Nepal and was amazed by the warmth and enthusiasm of the students and teachers, but also saddened by their lack of resources. John quit his senior executive position with Microsoft and built Room to Read to create solutions to the educational challenges of rural communities in developing countries.

Starting in Nepal in 2000, Room to Read began to build schools and establish libraries. The organization's projects grew to include other countries in Asia. The 2004 tsunami provided a catalyst for entry into Sri Lanka in January 2005 where the group began to rebuild schools in tsunami impacted areas. The first school built was located in the village of Karaitivu.

Glen joined Room to Read as Country Director during their first year in Sri Lanka and enjoyed the creativity encouraged in achieving goals, as well as the authority his team was given to implement targeted projects. Room to Read is committed to maximizing the local country participation and expertise brought to their programs.

Despite the surprisingly high literacy rate, the educational system in Sri Lanka suffers many difficulties, including a lack of quality infrastructure, unequal access for all students through secondary school, and a lack of supplementary educational materials such as children's books.

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Room to Read creates

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In Sri Lankan schools where libraries do exist, they are often filled with old, dusty, books that have little or no relevance for children.

The Room to Read Sri Lanka team quickly discovered that one of the most effective contributions they could make to the educational system was through the construction of preschools and libraries. Educational studies have proven that access to preschool and books makes a significant and positive impact in the educational development of young students. Since 2005 Room to Read has established over 450 libraries established, and built over 150 schools.

With their tsunami projects thriving, Glen and his team moved on to the many areas of Sri Lanka which were not tsunami effected but which suffer the same educational issues as destroyed communities. In many of these villages, there are very few schools, and those that exist are very poor. It is not uncommon for girls to work long hours for low wages instead of going to school. For example, in Wilgamuwa, near Matale, where students are very disadvantaged, there had been years in which no student passed their O level exams.

In towns like this, the Room to Read team began bridging programs for children who have never gone to school before and observe that these children are highly motivated to catch up with their peers. Glen notes that he himself struggled in school when he was young. He was helped through those difficulties by many people, some of whom he didn't even know. He now feels it is his responsibility to give something back, not only to the country that gave him a free education, but to the children of Sri Lanka who will build the future of the country.

In the spring of 2006, Room to Read Sri Lanka

began their Room to Grow Girls' Scholarship Program to fund long-term girls' scholarships to students who would not otherwise be able to attend school. The program has since grown from 50 to 800 girls on scholarship.

Glen and his team also realized a great need for



Glen with Ambassador Blake and Mr. Karunaratne Diulgane, Governor North Central Province at the National Reading Month Program held in Anuradhapura recently.

children's literature that is varied and engaging, including local stories that encourage children to be creative and use their imagination. To this end, they began

publishing local language children's books in Sinhalese, Tamil and English –

some in all three. To date they have published twenty-nine local books for children, eight of them written and illustrated by local children.

Room to Read is not just growing in Sri Lanka. In 2006, they expanded to a second continent by launching Room to Read in South Africa, and began work in Zambia in 2007. Over the coming years Room to Read plans to not only continue, but expand their activities in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Glen's team at Room to Read Sri Lanka is now twenty employees, carrying out projects in towns from Anuradhapura to Galle. They have plans to bring literacy to children of all backgrounds across the island. In 2009 they will start a literacy program for 600 children, including a tribal school for twenty-five Veddah children who have dropped out or never gone to school. Beyond literacy, these students will learn life skills and about their own traditional culture.

Free Group Advising for the Month of November

At US-SL Fulbright Commission Colombo :

3rd, 10th and 17th 2.45 pm

Orientation for undergraduate studies.

For Prospective students for Bachelor's Degrees

(Covers background information, entrance requirements, how to select universities and application process)

Monday 24th 3 pm

Orientations for graduate studies

For Prospective students for Post-graduate Degrees

(Covers background information, entrance requirements, how to select universities opportunities for financial aid, and application process)

Wednesday 19th 3 pm

Essay Workshop

For Prospective students for Bachelor's Degrees

(Prepares students to write an effective college essay for successful admission.)

Thursday 20th 3 pm

Financial Aid Awareness Program

For Prospective students for under-graduate Degrees

(Covers what financial aid is and how to compile a strong application to win the limited resources.)

Admission: Free. Please note that prior registration is necessary to attend the above.

Please contact by visit, phone, fax or e-mail:
United States - Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission
7, Flower Terrace, Colombo 7
Phone: 011 2564176
Fax: 011 2564153
E-mail: advising@isplanka.lk

**At Mahinda College OBA Auditorium Galle :
28th and 29th**

Please contact by phone: 011 2564176 / 011 4718744

At Kandy American Corner :

Friday 14th 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Individual Appointments.

Friday 14th 2:30 pm onwards

Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments

Saturday, 15th - 8.30 am - 10.30 am

Individual Appointments.

Saturday, 15th - 10.30 am - 1.30 pm

Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments.

Saturday, 15th - 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

Special session / Writing a winning application essay / Financial aid awareness program as needed or Individual Appointments.

American Corner,
1st Floor,
D.S. Senanayake Memorial Public Library
Kandy

Did you go to University in America?



Then join the American Alumni Association of Sri Lanka.

AAA is an active group of US University Grads and we're looking for new members!

For information about membership please contact Mukesh Shanker at mukesh@sltnet.lk



Barack Obama Wins. . . .

from page 1

As of early November 5, Obama had won at least 26 states and the District of Columbia with a total of 338 electoral votes, putting him well above the 270 needed to clinch the presidency. Results still were being reported from some states in the early hours of the day after Election Day.



Listening to Obama's victory speech over the screen at the Hilton, Colombo where U.S Embassy Colombo organized the election event on November 5th. More than 500 people attended the event. (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

Obama will become the first African-American president of the United States and also the first person of color to govern a country with a white majority.

The Illinois senator carried all the states won by Democrat John Kerry in 2004, as well as Ohio, Iowa, Florida, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada and Virginia — states previously carried by Republican George Bush.

In his concession speech from Phoenix, Senator John McCain said he had telephoned President-elect Obama to offer his congratulations. He recognized the significance of Obama's victory for African Americans and the "special pride that must be theirs tonight" following a long history of slavery, segregation and discrimination.

He said the United States is now "a world away from the cruel and prideful bigotry of that time," and "there is no better evidence of this" than Obama's election. He also pledged to support the incoming president and urged his supporters to offer their "good will and earnest effort to find ways to come together."

Obama's victory came after a long and difficult Democratic Party primary battle with New York Senator Hillary Clinton, followed by an intense general election campaign against McCain.

The 2008 U.S. presidential election was historic in a number of ways. After the field of Democratic Party candidates narrowed in early 2008, it was

clear that voters would be choosing between the first female presidential nominee and the first African-American nominee.

On the Republican side, McCain's choice of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as a running mate marked only the second time a woman has been on the ticket of a major political party.

Obama Claims Victory

Early November 5, Obama and his running mate, Delaware Senator Joe Biden, addressed cheering supporters in Chicago, and pledged to be the president of all Americans, regardless of whether they had given him support or not. Hundreds of thousands of people, some of whom arrived the



Ambassador Blake addressing the audience gathered at the Hilton Hotel Colombo to view election results (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

day before, celebrated in Chicago's Grant Park.

Obama's rally was especially poignant given that 40 years ago the park was the site of the violent demonstrations aimed at the 1968 Democratic National

Convention. That violence illustrated the rift within the party between younger liberal activists and older conservative stalwarts.

It was also in 1968 that Democratic presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy predicted an African-American could become president in 2008.

"Things are moving so fast in race relations a Negro could be president in 40 years. There is no question about it. In the next 40 years, a Negro can achieve the same position that my brother has ... prejudice exists and probably will continue to ... but we have tried to make progress and we are making progress. We are not going to accept the status quo," Kennedy said May 27, 1968, approximately one week before he was assassinated.

Source (except two photographs)
www.america.gov

In November

Veterans Day Honors Those Who Served in U.S. Military



On Veterans Day, Americans honor those who fought for their country or served in the military. (© AP Images)

The November 11 holiday created to pay tribute to U.S. veterans of World War I has been expanded in more recent times into the annual Veterans Day, honoring all those who have served in the U.S. military.

The earlier, more narrowly focused Armistice Day commemorated the end of fighting in World War I under the armistice implemented at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918 - "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the first Armistice Day just a year later, setting the characteristic tone of the U.S. observances in years to come.

Armistice Day's message of peace and international solidarity was reiterated when the holiday formally received its name in 1926.

Congress passed a resolution asking the president to call for the U.S. flag to be displayed on all public buildings on November 11, and to call on citizens "to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples."

Congress followed up in 1938 by designating

Armistice Day a legal holiday, dedicated to the cause of world peace.

But Wilson's hope that World War I would be the "war to end war" collapsed soon after, with the outbreak of new fighting in Europe. The United States entered World War II in 1941. More than 16 million Americans were to take part; 407,000 of them died, more than 292,000 in battle.

Seeking to pay tribute to those 16 million, and others who had served the nation in any of its wars, Congress and President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954 redesignated the November 11 holiday as Veterans Day. While Veterans Day was among the holidays moved to Mondays beginning in 1971, Congress in 1978 restored the holiday to its original November 11 date.

Thanksgiving Day a Time for Reflection, Gratitude



Volunteers at a Mobile Pantry food distribution in Missoula, Montana.

A variant of the harvest festivals celebrated in many parts of the world, Thanksgiving is popularly traced to a 1621 feast enjoyed by the English Pilgrims who founded the Plymouth Colony (located in present day Massachusetts) and members of the Wampanoag Native American tribe.

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USAID continues to bolster Sri Lanka’s defense against Avian Influenza



October 09, 2008: The U.S. Agency for International Development handed over a real-time Polymerase Chain Reactor machine to the Veterinary

Research Institute of the Ministry of Livestock Development, which will dramatically improve the Sri Lanka’s ability to diagnose quickly any possible outbreak of avian influenza.

“This piece of equipment will dramatically reduce the time it takes to diagnose an avian influenza outbreak,” Ms. Kami Witmer, Economic Officer, U.S. Embassy said at the handover ceremony. “In the event of a real outbreak, the time saved could be the difference between life and death for hundreds, perhaps thousands of Sri Lankans,” she added. Prior to the machine being handed over to the authorities, it took two to four days to diagnose samples. With the new technology, sample diagnosis can be done within three hours.

USAID Assists Sri Lanka’s Local Governments in Sanitation Management

October 1, 2008 - The United States Agency for International Development, Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Water and Drainage, and the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government have sponsored a national workshop in Sri Lanka to disseminate best practices in sanitation management.

Septic tanks are common throughout Sri Lanka, including urban areas like Colombo. Plugged or overflowing septic tanks compromise water quality and are a primary cause of diarrhea, the fifth-leading cause of hospitalization and third-

leading cause of infant deaths in Sri Lanka. USAID has assisted local government authorities to improve environmental services. The launching of a new manual on septage management, developed by USAID in partnership with the municipality of Nuwara Eliya, will improve environmental practices including septic tank maintenance, the use of vacuum trucks for collecting and transporting septage, and the treatment and safe disposal of septage.

The workshop brought together local officials, policy makers and sanitation professionals. USAID’s Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia) program, managed from Bangkok, is leading this effort in cooperation with local partners.

USAID and VTA go green in southern Sri Lanka



Students of Southern Sri Lanka demonstrate their skills to U.S. Ambassador Robert Blake

October 10, 2008— With the opening of Ahangama Vocational Training Center, USAID is promoting a high standard for green design in Sri Lanka as part of its Tsunami

Reconstruction Program.

Built to be a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building, the Ahangama Vocational Training Center meets international green building standards and is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka to receive a silver level LEED certification.

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USAID and VTA go green

Established by the US-based Green Building Council, LEED is the certification of record for sound environmental design worldwide.

The school is designed to get more than 70% of its light from daylight thereby reducing electricity costs, the high-performance glass used in the windows will block heat and help keep the rooms naturally cool, and the school will save water by harvesting rain water to be re-used in toilets and taps. The Center will provide training for more than 200 Sri Lankans a year in the tourism sector to support tourism development in the south.

USAID offers practical education to Southern youth



H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa opened the USAID funded Vocational Training Center in Tangalle

October 26, 2008 - The United States Agency for International Development marked the completion of the new vocational

training center in Tangalle, in the presence of His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa and U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Robert Blake.

The school was built with funds provided by the American people as part of USAID’s Sri Lanka Tsunami Reconstruction Program. The Tangalle Vocational Training Center will graduate 180 students each year who will become masons, plumbers, electricians, mechanics, appliance repair technicians, electronic repair technicians, and IT specialists. All these trades are in high demand in Sri Lanka’s economy and the graduates will be well positioned to find good jobs. In addition to constructing the buildings, USAID and several private sector partners have supplied the schools with all necessary items such as furniture, tools, and other commodities to make them fully functional.

The project was developed in partnership with the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) under the aegis of the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training and implemented by Access International and CH2MHill.

USAID has worked closely with the VTA and with Sri Lanka’s private sector to develop the curricula for the schools. The project’s success is in part due to the model public-private partnership put in place between USAID, VTA and the Chevron Corporation, Prudential, and the Mellon Foundation.

Thanksgiving Day

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Over the years that followed, state and federal governments declared numerous days of Thanksgiving to mark important public events. In 1817, New York became the first state to declare an annual Thanksgiving Day. President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the federal holiday in 1863. In 1941, Congress moved the holiday from the last

Thursday in November to the fourth Thursday, in hopes of stimulating the economy by lengthening (in some years) the Christmas shopping season.

The holiday is typically celebrated at home and remains the occasion for a large and festive meal, and for expressing thanks for that bounty.

My America: Coloring Outside The Lines

A wife and mother describes the diversity of American families : Essay of Jacqueline Morais Easley

Jacqueline Easley lives with her husband and two daughters in Columbia, Maryland. She is a freelance writer.



Jacqueline Easley and her family in their backyard

What do the faces of today's American family look like to you? Do you picture tall, athletic blond parents and their 2.5 children? Perhaps they

stand in front of a pretty house on a well-manicured lawn surrounded by a white picket fence? Inside the home there are McDonald's bags on the kitchen counter, Coca-Colas in the refrigerator, and MTV playing in the background.

Sure, that's one type of American family. And I would be lying if I said I pictured that American family any differently as an 11-year-old girl living in the Philippines back in 1985. When my father came home one day from his job at the Asian Development Bank and announced we were moving to America, I was speechless ... and then exhilarated.

The funny thing was that, at the time, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and MTV were the only parts of America that meant anything to me. And if these three symbols were any indication of what might be available in larger amounts, then how fabulous America must be!

My family made that move to America. And 20 years later, here I am—a little less naïve, a little more savvy to media advertising, now favoring sushi over Filet-o-Fish and a good bottle of red wine over Coca-Cola. I don't even watch MTV anymore. But one thing hasn't changed: I remain a diehard fan of the United States.

I became an American citizen just five years ago when I was pregnant with my first child. I had married my college sweetheart and after a brief stint in Chicago, we were settling down in Maryland.

Today, as I do my best to raise two bold, beautiful, and rebellious little girls, I thank God that I am able to do it in the United States. And I still remember that day of citizenship well—reciting the pledge of allegiance, holding my hand over my heart, feeling both my baby kick inside of me and this overwhelming pride that I was officially becoming an American.

Five years later, the possibilities for my daughters are endless. We are quite aware that they live a comfortable, privileged life. While this is in part due to the hard work of my husband and myself, and our parents before us, it is also certainly due to sheer luck. My husband and I have drawn a fortunate lot in life. We were both born to loving parents who stressed the importance of family bonds, education, hard work, and

commitment to others. These same values are now the backbone of our own little family and they propel us into the future.

My husband and I try to raise our children in ways that help them understand how privileged they are. We teach our girls to appreciate the talents and resources they have and do their best to use them for the betterment of others. If our lives have good food and much entertainment, they are also filled with charity and community service, children's books about different cultures and lifestyles, and endless motherly lectures on tolerance and diversity and compassion.

I applaud the fact that the American Dream is not a hokey, unattainable delusion; it is something that I see not just within my family but among friends, neighbors, and strangers who strive for their version of this dream on a daily basis. To me, the faces of the American family include those blond, athletic parents with their 2.5 kids on their well-manicured lawns I mentioned earlier, but there are many, many other kinds of faces in my own personal spectrum as well.

There are the faces of the families at my co-op preschool: the petite red-headed Irish girl with her African-American husband and gorgeous kids; the two women raising three children together; the single mother who holds two jobs and raises a family on her own.

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My America.

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There are other diverse faces on my neighborhood cul-de-sac: the Iraqi man married to an American woman with their two kids, our babysitter with her Italian father and Iranian mother, the Korean psychologist and his wife. Diversity is alive and rampant—at least in my life.

I cannot help but remember that initial act of rebellion over two hundred years ago that cemented the independent spirit of this future "land of immigrants." Under the umbrella of that independent spirit, millions of immigrants came to this country seeking shelter from intolerance, prejudice, and persecution—craving freedom and longing for the right to live authentic lives that were truly their own.

Sometimes I cringe when I think about the tragic, terrible parts of America's fledgling history. But name me any country, culture, religion, or individual that does not have bad parts along with the good. And of course there are things about this country that make me angry or embarrassed or disillusioned at times. Yet this is true of so many of the good things in life—marriage, parenthood, careers, relatives, friendships.

In the end, what saddens me about America is nothing compared to what amazes me about it: how much this young country has accomplished in so little time; how it champions democracy and human rights around the world; how it has

attained economic superpower status; how it continues to dazzle with "bigger, better, brighter" ideas even as it doles out money to help those in need overseas.

I do question certain superficial values often associated with America and do my best to downplay these with my daughters, but I cherish even more the greater values of independence and diversity and freedom of expression that are alive and well in this country. And you can bet these take center stage as my husband and I navigate the complicated road of American parenthood.

Americans celebrate the individual, and as a result, our country is filled with some truly unique, bizarre, singularly talented, overly opinionated, exceptionally driven, multi-faceted people. My daughters, with their own distinct personalities, are various parts girly-girls, tomboy athletes, bookworms, budding artists, and compassionate citizens of the world. Of course I celebrate all these sides—and the ones not yet discovered—as best I can.

Americans also revere the act of self-exploration—discovering oneself, peeling back the layers to find your true essence, trying anything and everything at least once. Some may find this self-exploration a little indulgent. But when I see my five-year-old daughter coloring outside the lines, I do not try to correct her. Instead I feel a sense of pride

bubbling up inside that she's unwilling to conform or follow the rules ... just yet. I admire her decision to reject borders in favor of something a little more messy, bohemian, and potentially progressive.

OK, it's just a coloring book, but my point is that when Americans strive for the best, it's not just because we are competitive but because we are constantly rebelling, pushing boundaries, taking risks. And we do this because we are encouraged to do this by virtue of the land in which we live and all that it stands for.

We all have the freedom to be shy or extroverted, brainy or ditzy, stylish or schlumpy, old-fashioned or avant-garde. We can worry about what people think, conform, and fit in if we want to. Or we can care less about who's watching, stand up and shout from the rooftops, make waves and push buttons, threaten the status quo. I look forward to seeing what my daughters choose to do. I may cringe at some of the things they take on in the spirit of self-expression. But for now, I'll let them color outside the lines—better yet, I'll cheer them on for it.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Source : America.gov

Regional Library Expert meets with local librarians across Sri Lanka



The presentation in Colombo, October 24th
"Web 2.0 : Library 2.0"

Steven P. Kerchoff, Information Resource Officer with the U. S. Embassy in New Delhi, India visited Sri Lanka from October 14 to October 24, 2008. During his visit he worked with the American Center Library in Colombo

and the American Corners in Kandy, Oluvil and Male', Maldives. While in the American Center, Colombo Mr. Kerschoff gave a presentation to library staff at the Main Library, University of Colombo on "On Beyond Google: Using Electronic Resources for Effective Research" and another at the American Center to library professionals on "Web2.0: Library 2.0".



Kerchoff's presentation to LIS professionals in Kandy, October 22nd.

During Mr. Kerchoff's visits to American Corners in Oluvil, Kandy and Male' he made several presentations including "Librarians in the 21st Century: The Future of the Profession"

There were over two hundred participants at the Oluvil program and 30 participants at the American Corner, Kandy. He was



Hundreds of participants listening to a presentation in South Eastern University in Oluvil, October 21st.

accompanied by Kathleen Fox, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Daniel Ringold, English Language Fellow and Padma Bandaranayake, Library Director. Kathy Fox made a presentation to undergraduates of the South Eastern University on "Higher Education Opportunities in the USA". Daniel Ringold also conducted several popular English Language Teaching workshops in Kandy, Oluvil and Male'.

eJournalUSA

THE CANDIDATES



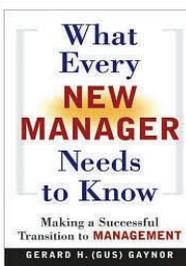
Electronic Journal of the US Department of State

October 2008

Every presidential campaign is dramatic and historic, but as the fervor surrounding the 2008 election continues to build, U.S. voters and the rest of the world will want to consider the candidates' personal histories more closely. What sort of people rise to the top in the U.S. political system, what are their attributes, their sensibilities, and their strengths?

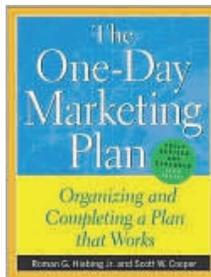
Web access : <http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/1008ej.pdf#popup>

NEW ARRIVALS TO THE LIBRARY



What Every New Manager Needs to Know: Making a Successful Transition to Management

Gaynor (a consultant) outlines the thought processes related to management and applies them to seven key areas of the manager's job--administration, direction, leadership, dealing with people, taking action, stress, and business. The majority of the book concentrates on "people issues" such as staffing and performance evaluation, but the principles are also applied to project management.



The One-Day Marketing Plan

The One-Day Marketing Plan shows entrepreneurs and business owners how to quickly design a marketing plan for any business. Hiebing and Cooper's streamlined, 10-step process guides readers through the development and execution of effective marketing plans,

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November 2008 – Family Life

November 4 - On Golden Pond (1981, 109 minutes)

Writer Ernest Thompson, who came up with the original stage play of "On Golden Pond" and adapted it for film, is lucky to have two giants of the screen give dignity and breadth to his dialogue. Henry Fonda, in his last role, plays a prickly English professor at the disagreeable age of 80. Visiting his summer house by a Maine lake with his wife, the old man forges an unlikely bond with a lonely boy, comes to terms with his daughter, and suffers disorienting effects of mild dementia. Even playing a tired old man, Fonda is an absolute lion of a movie star, and Hepburn brings her special spirit to the part of his worried bride. The onscreen relationship between Henry and Jane Fonda naturally makes one think about their much-discussed difficulties offscreen, but that's a side benefit in a movie that is really just a celebration of simple human decency. This film won 3 Oscars, another 10 wins and 21 nominations.

November 13 - American Beauty (1999, 122 minutes)

Noted theater director Sam Mendes, made his motion picture debut with this film about the dark side of an American family, and about the nature and price of beauty in a culture obsessed with outward appearances. Kevin Spacey plays Lester Burnham, a man in his mid-40s going through an intense midlife crisis; he's grown cynical and is convinced that he has no reason to go on. Lester's relationship with his wife Carolyn is not a warm one; while on the surface Carolyn strives to present the image that she's in full control of her life, inside she feels empty and desperate. American Beauty was also the screen debut for screenwriter Alan Ball. Won 5 Oscars, another 83 wins and 74 nominations.

November 18 - A Family Thing (1996, 109 minutes)

This film features the wonderfully understated duet of Robert Duvall and James Earl Jones, two old pros who know just how to stay out of each other's way while offering superb support. Duvall plays Earl Pilcher, an aging Southerner whose mother dies, leaving him a letter with a startling secret: in fact, she was not his mother, though she raised him--but his father is really his father. His real mother was a black servant whom his father forced himself upon, and she died in childbirth. Even more shocking, he has a black brother in Chicago, Ray (Jones). Stunned to his soul, Earl heads for Chicago, where he finds that Ray not only knows his secret but wants nothing to do with him. Slowly, however, the two brothers find common ground.

November 25 - It's a Wonderful Life (1946, 130 minutes)

Frank Capra's masterwork deserves its status as a feel-good communal event, but it is also one of the most fascinating films in the American cinema. George Bailey grows up in the small town of Bedford Falls, dreaming dreams of adventure and travel, but circumstances conspire to keep him enslaved to his home turf. Frustrated by his life, and haunted by an impending scandal, George prepares to commit suicide on Christmas Eve. A heavenly messenger arrives to show him a vision: what the world would have been like if George had never been born. Capra's triumph is to acknowledge the difficulties and disappointments of life, while affirming--in the teary-eyed final reel--his cherished values of friendship, family and individual achievement. This film was nominated for 5 Oscars and another 4 wins.

