

The Media as Change Maker by Beth Brownson

Freedom of the press is given top billing in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights because of the power of the media to speak the truth, to advocate for the weak, and to look critically at whether the U.S. is headed in the right direction. The press is considered an essential "Fourth Estate" in our system of checks and balances (the legislature, judiciary and executive being the three official branches established under the Constitution). In our history, the wisdom of preserving freedom of the press has been proven time and again.

The Federalist Papers

Before the Constitution was even ratified, the media played a pivotal role in rousing public support for the ratification of the new charter for our democracy. Opponents to the creation of a strong centralized government filled newspapers with articles criticizing the usurpation of state or individual rights into a central government, but a series of 85 countervailing articles known collectively as *The Federalist Papers* was carried in major newspapers and helped convince the citizens of the new country to adopt the Constitution as drafted. Mass distribution of these articles helped convince citizens to come together for a strong, enduring government and gave them confidence that personal rights would be protected.

The Civil Rights Movement

If a girl child is abused, and no one knows about it, how will she ever be saved? It is only by knowing about a wrong that we can rally in support. This individual principal was taken to a very public level when the abuses against African-Americans were exposed through the media in the 1950s and 1960s, fueling the civil rights movement. Media coverage of racial tensions, the nonviolent protests as well as race riots and brutal acts of racism by the Ku Klux Klan and other violent bigots awoke America to the ugly truth in their midst and changed the nation's thinking.

Bringing Down the President

Exceptional investigative journalism by Bob Woodward and Carl

Bernstein of *The Washington Post* revealed that what at first appeared to be a simple burglary attempt at Democratic National Headquarters actually turned out to be part of a larger plot that implicated people in the FBI, the CIA, and ultimately, in the White House. Constant pressure by these reporters produced a string of stories exposing corruption that eventually led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. Change was not instantaneous. Although the story started to break in 1972, it took two years for the depth and breadth of the scandal to come out. In 1974, Nixon resigned when faced with the prospect of impeachment.

(Continued on page 2)



Laura Ling, an American journalist who was arrested in March 2009, after allegedly crossing into North Korea from China, gets emotional as she reads a statement after she and fellow journalist Euna Lee arrived at Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, California, August 5, 2009. Former President Bill Clinton listens. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

The American Center

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E-mail: mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov; Website: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday through Friday)

H O L I D A Y S

May 27: Buddha Purnima
May 31: Memorial Day

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Dear Readers,

At the American Center, our mission is to carry out President Obama's desire to touch the hearts and minds of those in our host country, to let them know about Americans and America. The American Center is the official home of outreach services from the U.S. Consulate General, bringing speakers to the universities, professional associations and other organizations across our five-state district. We sponsor programs on a wide variety of issues, from economic empowerment and women's empowerment, to art and literature, sharing information about how to study in the U.S. or things to see and do when you visit the U.S. We look to share new and interesting facts or traits about Americans, from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to the President's Special Representative to Muslim Communities, to college professors, to our own consulate officers.

In India and across the globe, we want to communicate with people in whatever language is most effective for them. In March, we hosted a reading, in Marathi, by our staff members, of excerpts from President Obama's book *Dreams from My Father*. The Consulate also has American officers who speak Gujarati, Hindi, and Urdu.

In addition to the "official" outreach functions, consulate officers are engaged in a more personal way to touch the hearts and minds of Indians. This month, consulate officers treated girls at the WeCan orphanage in Mahim to an Easter egg hunt and also took them to learn about the business of clothing design and construction at Tehzeeb Couture in Bandra. We hosted girls from Sharanam orphanage in Dharavi at a five-star hotel to learn about careers in the hospitality industry, and are working on plans to take other children to learn about careers at a hospital. What every one of these kids will learn, is the belief that if you study hard and apply yourself to a goal, you can achieve whatever you set your mind to.

All the best of success to you, in whatever your dreams are.



Beth Brownson
Public Diplomacy Officer

(Continued from page 1)

Influencing Individual Acts

While the power of the media can bring down a president, it is equally useful in lifting up a society. U.S. broadcasting rules require that TV stations air Public Service Announcements

(PSAs), as a condition of being granted exclusive use of a limited resource – the broadcast bandwidth. To meet their legal obligations, broadcasters, together with the National Ad Council, devised and aired an array of PSAs that changed the way Americans think. A campaign by the American Cancer Society taught the nation that most cancers, if detected early, are treatable and can reduce cancer deaths. The antismoking PSAs, such as "Kissing a Smoker is Like Licking an Ashtray" reduced the number of people taking up smoking, convinced many to quit, and reduced cancer deaths. The antilittering campaigns helped clean up America by changing behavior.

There is a great responsibility that comes with that power to create change. As journalist Abhay Mokashi noted, reporters can fuel a fire of violence or enlighten the public, depending on the way they cover an issue. If media refers to a man as a "wife beater," instead of saying that he is accused of beating his wife, there is very different public perception. The media has to use its power carefully and not play the role of judge and jury, convicting someone in the media before they have had their day in court. In the U.S., the media found that by putting the picture of a defendant on camera, he became publicly known as guilty of the crime charged and even if acquitted of the charge, his reputation was forever sullied. When the press showed pictures of individuals accused in urban crimes – often African-American men – it created or fed a perception that African-Americans were criminals so the media no longer show the photographs of those accused of crimes. The choice of words and the choice of photographs are incredibly powerful in influencing public opinion.

Beth Brownson works at the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai



Dr. Judea Pearl, center, father of American journalist Daniel Pearl, who was killed by terrorists in 2002, listens to legendary violinist Ida Haendel on April 15, 2007, in Miami Beach, Florida. Pearl's son was honored at a Holocaust memorial ceremony during Yom Hashoah, the annual time of remembrance. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

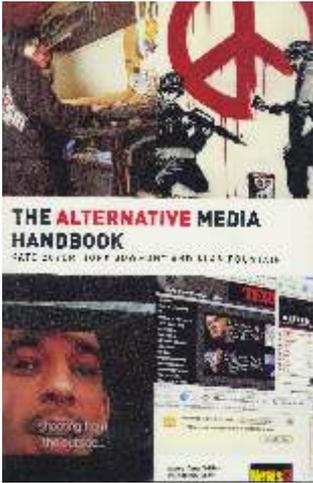
NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Select Resources Available on Mass Media and Communication

The Alternative Media Handbook

by Kate Coyer et al
Routledge, 2007

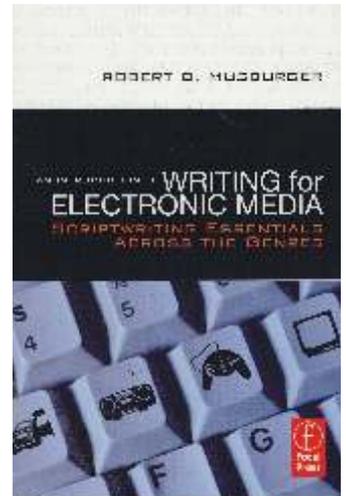
This book gives brief histories of alternative radio, video and film, press and activity on the Web, which provide both theoretical and practical approaches and information. Included are sections on podcasting, blogging, and culture jamming, among others.



An Introduction to Writing for Electronic Media: Scriptwriting Essentials Across the Genres

by Robert B. Musburger
Elsevier, 2007

Writing for Electronic Media presents a survey of the many types of electronic media one can write for, and explains how to do it. It focuses on understanding the skills needed to write for animation versus radio, and TV news versus corporate training.



All News is Local: The Failure of the Media to Reflect World Events in a Globalized Age

by Richard C. Stanton
McFarland & Company, Inc., 2007

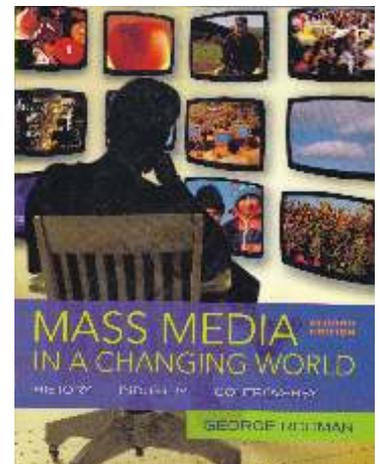
This book is an investigation of the 300-year-old model of global journalism used by the Western news media. It argues that the current model of news gathering and reporting requires rethinking. It also provides an outline of a new model that can sustain the Western news media as competitive agents in global democracy.



Mass Media in a Changing World: History, Industry, Controversy

by George Rodman
McGraw-Hill, 2008

This book analyzes the ways in which mass media is being used to change the world. The book has a unique three-part narrative structure that enables the reader to understand the way industry practices are developed historically, and how those practices have resulted in today's issues.



Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at libref@state.gov for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

**Journey to America:
Growing Up with the Amish
Discussion led by Joan Bower**

Monday, May 17 **6:00 p.m.**
American Center Auditorium

Rolling hills, beautifully landscaped farms, horse-drawn buggies, and one room schools. Take a journey through Amish history from Europe to America. Who are the Amish, why do they still drive horse-drawn buggies, and live without electricity and modern amenities? The speaker will share with the audience Amish history, and her own experience growing up with the Amish.

Joan Bower is a Foreign Service Specialist in the Executive Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai since 2007. Joan joined the State Department in 1986 and was earlier posted to the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Pakistan, Bahrain, South Korea, and China. She holds a B.S. degree in Management. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Joan worked for the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service. She and her husband Ron welcomed the arrival of their second grandson in February. Joan is an avid sports fan and loves being a grandma!



Saturday, May 8	11:00 a.m.	Dumbo (64 mins) Age: 6+
Saturday, May 15	11:00 a.m.	The Aristocats (78 mins) Age: 6+
Saturday, May 22	11:00 a.m.	The Wizard of Oz (101 mins) Age: 6+
Saturday, May 29	11:00 a.m.	E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (115 mins) Age: 6+

**American Center Auditorium
First-come, First-served**

Children under age 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian

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**American Center Auditorium
3:30 and 6:30 p.m.**

Friday, May 21

Up Close and Personal
(1996, 124 mins)

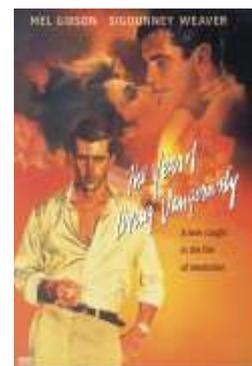
Loosely based on the life of late TV news anchorwoman Jessica Savitch, this romantic drama stars Michelle Pfeiffer as an ambitious journalist who, with skill, determination and help from boss and lover Robert Redford, becomes a star TV reporter in Miami and Philadelphia. With Stockard Channing, Joe Mantegna and Kate Nelligan.



Friday, May 28

The Year of Living Dangerously
(1983, 115 mins)

Directed by Peter Weir (*Witness*), this romantic drama follows a novice journalist (Mel Gibson) as he becomes swept up in the 1965 Indonesian revolution. Determined to cover the turmoil within the Sukarno government, he enlists the aid of a half-Chinese dwarf cameraman (Linda Hunt in an Oscar-winning performance) while wooing an enigmatic embassy aide (Sigourney Weaver).



**The American Center
presents selections from the
American Documentary Showcase**

Wednesday, May 12 3:00 p.m.
A Fair to Remember (2007, 59 mins)

A roller-coaster ride chronicling the history of the great state fair of Texas from its inception in 1886 to its present status as the largest fair of its kind in the country.

Tuesday, May 18 3:00 p.m.
A Man Named Pearl (2008, 78 mins)

A bigoted remark made in 1976 dissuades Pearl Fryar from moving into a white neighborhood. Told that "Black people don't keep up their yards," Pearl creates an extraordinary topiary garden, which receives over 5000 visitors a year.

Admission to American Center programs, restricted to persons over 14, unless otherwise specified, is on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.