



AMERICAN CENTER NEWSLETTER

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American Center

Colombo

June - July 2013

CONTENTS

Page 2

- Ellen Fisher's Sri Lanka Visit

Page 3

- Poetry Slam – Season XI
- English language Workshops

Page 4

- American Center Celebrates Earth Day

Page 5

- U.S. Embassy Booth at LIS
- Social Media Workshops

Page 6

- Fulbright News

Page 7

- USAID in Action

Page 8

- Photography Competition
- Weekend Movies for Children

Page 9

- Film Screenings in July

Connecting the Dots: Photo Exhibition



Ambassador Sison visits the exhibition with other invitees at the opening day reception.

On May 29, the American Center launched "Connecting the Dots: Celebrating the Beauty in Sri Lanka's Diversity", a photography exhibition by Chris Elms, Press and Information Officer of the U.S. Embassy.

Chris explored Sri Lanka during his two year tenure and was struck by the beauty of the country – its

vibrant temples, its profound scenery, and its friendly people. Reflecting on his time here and his photography, he said it was impossible to identify a unified theme for such a varied place. He connected the dots and realized that Sri Lanka's strength and beauty *is* its variety and diversity.

The exhibition was free for the public and was held until the end of June at the American Center in Colombo. It will be presented at the American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna.



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!



In honor of the 237th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America, U.S. Embassy Colombo held a 4th of July event at the Hilton in Colombo on July 3.

Hundreds of invitees and Americans graced the occasion where honorable Minister Anura Priyadarshana Yapa participated as the chief guest.

More photos of the event available on our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/usembassycolombosl

Ellen Fisher's Sri Lanka Visit

Empathetic Camera - Documenting Live Performance Events



Ellen Fisher, workshop participants, U.S. Embassy and UOVP officials

Ellen Fisher, professional dancer, videographer, educator and a Senior Fulbright Scholar conducted a workshop on 'The Empathetic Camera,' sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in collaboration with the University of Visual and Performing Arts (UOVP) held on June 17 and 24 at the university premises.

In this two-day documentary workshop, practical and experimental problems were posed to explore how a dialogue is established between the subject and media. Participants — including university students and students from the College of Journalism — worked together in teams and filmed documentary videos where all aspects of a low budget video production were addressed. During the awards ceremony, Dean of the Faculty of Dance & Drama Prof. Ariyaratna Kaluarachchi expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the workshops for students. U.S. Embassy Colombo's Press and Information Officer Christopher Elms gave the closing remarks and awarded the certificates along with Ms. Fisher and Prof. Kaluarachchi.

Screening of American Dance Films

On June 10, American Center Colombo screened short films featuring American dancers. Ellen Fisher introduced each episode prior to screening and had an interactive discussion with the participants afterwards. Participants included senior dancers, teachers and dance students.

Screening of 'GIRLWALK 2012'

On June 11, American Center Colombo screened 'GIRLWALK 2012' at the University of Visual and Performing Arts. Cultural Affairs Officer Juliana

Spaven welcomed the audience and introduced Ellen Fisher. Ellen talked about the film, screened it, and then led an interactive discussion and dancing practice with the participants afterwards. Participants included students and lecturers of the university.

'GIRL WALK 2012' is a feature-length dance music video and tale of urban exploration that follow three dancers across New York City. They turn the city's sidewalks, parks, and stadiums into an evolving stage as a story of rebellion, love, and discovery unfolds. Shot entirely in public spaces, and funded entirely by crowd-sourcing, 'GIRL WALK 2012' is a statement about the power of community and public space.



A workshop participant in Jaffna receives her certificate from Ellen Fisher

Creative Dance Workshop in Jaffna

A two-day dance workshop conducted by Ellen Fisher and sponsored by U.S. Embassy Colombo in partnership with the Center for Performing Arts (CPA) in Jaffna was held from June 25 – 26. On June 25, Ms. Fisher trained artists, dance teachers and university students; on June 26, she trained Advance Level drama students on creative dance techniques to develop a general framework for the exploration and design of creative movement. A public performance was held by both groups at the end of the workshops. The students enjoyed the creative dance workshop and requested more such opportunities to appreciate different dance forms. Photos of these events available on the [U.S. Embassy facebook page](#).

Open Mic Competitive Poetry Slam – Season XI



Audience and participants at the Poetry Slam – Season XI

The American Center hosted 'Poetry Slam - Season XI' on May 30. The poets who participated wowed the audience with readings and original works. The poets were divided into two categories: 12 & under, and 13 & above. Sixty one participants recited

poetry on various themes; a 'Judges' Choice' and 'Audience Choice' winner was selected from both age categories. U.S. Embassy Colombo's Press and Information Officer Christopher Elms emceed the event. On behalf of the American Center, Christopher Elms presented certificates and gifts to the winners at the end of the program. All performers received a free lifetime membership to the American Center Library in Colombo and to American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna.

The American Center will continue to serve as a platform for talented young Sri Lankans to express themselves freely and creatively by hosting this ongoing series of poetry slam competitions every other month. Youth are encouraged to participate in these events. The American Center will hold the next 'Poetry Slam - Season XII' on July 25th.

English Language Workshops in North



Access students and teachers in Mulaitivu with Jenise and Margaret.

In first week of May, Jenise Rowekamp, a State Department English Language Fellow, and Margaret Miller, International Soft Skills Consultant, conducted three two-day workshops for English teachers during their observation visits to the Access centers in Mulaitivu, Killinochchi and Jaffna. Nearly one hundred teachers from government schools in North participated in these workshop where they learned about new teaching methods. Jenise also introduced 'Trace Effects' (<http://traceeffects.state.gov>), a groundbreaking 3-D

immersive video game for young English language learners.



Above: workshop in Mulaitivu, below: workshop in Killinochchi.

American Center Celebrates Earth Day



Dr. Mrs. Ajantha Perera doing her presentation about trees @ the American Center.

On April 30, the American Center Colombo organized "Eco Comp" in celebration of Earth Day for students to learn about global warming, participate in activities and enter a competition. Well-known environmentalist Dr. Ajantha Perera conducted a lecture on "Trees for Life." The objective of this program was to make students aware of the value of trees and their contribution in the fight against global warming, as well as understanding mans' role in the global warming issue.



Winning logo designed by Kandy students.



Winning poster designed by Kandy students.



Students designed items with waste material learning a practical lesson on recycling waste.

The program was linked via DVC to the American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna.



Students in Jaffna designing logos for the competition.



Join the U.S. Embassy facebook page with more than 93,000 fans and counting. . .

<http://www.facebook.com/usembassycolombosl>

U.S. Embassy Booth at the Learnium International Cultural Day 2013



Children from LIS pose for a picture next to a life-size cardboard cut-out of U.S. President Barack Obama

The U.S. Embassy hosted a special stall at the Learnium International School's Cultural Day on June 6. The stall, which attracted many participants, consisted of a live size cut out of President Obama where participants crowded around to take photographs, and an Embassy representative who did U.S. themed facepainting. A variety of reading material pertaining to U.S. education and culture was on hand, as well as information about the U.S. Embassy's English language programs in Sri Lanka.

A special movie portraying the lives of Muslims in the United States was also screened at the stall.

Social Media Workshops

The Public Affairs Section has been doing a number of Social Media Workshops for journalists, youth organizations and civil society groups. On May 29, Juliana Spaven and Arun Arokianahan from PAS conducted a social media training workshop in Tamil for journalists of the Thinakkural newspaper. The workshop covered Twitter & Facebook fundamentals and best practices, and reviewed how to communicate and connect with audiences in a social media setting. The group learned about the value of using new social media tools to inform and engage.

In June, Prasad Perera from the PAS section hosted three social media workshops: one at the Hatton Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency(SIDA) Center on June 22, one at a commercial hall in Badulla for Badulla youth on June 24, and one at the Hambantota Chamber of Commerce on June 26th. In total, Prasad was able to engage with more than seventy participants during his week-long Island tour. Across the board, the audiences were eager to learn and understand how to connect with the world using Social Media. Despite some language and transportation issues, participants arrived early and stayed late, took notes and raised interesting questions, and had many follow up questions for Prasad afterwards. PAS is delighted at the enthusiastic response from participants and aims to do more Social Media Workshops in the future.



Arun talks on social media for journalists of Thinakkural newspaper.



Prasad demonstrates some social media tools for workshop participants in Hatton.

Fulbright Awards For Sri Lankan Citizens

Fulbright Professional Scholar Awards for 2014-'15

The US-SL Fulbright Commission welcomes Sri Lankan professionals to apply for this year's Fulbright Professional Scholar awards. Applicants in the humanities, fine/performing arts (e.g., music, theatre, writing, painting, design, photography) and sports, journalism, law, sciences, paramedical services and business sectors may apply. This award provides grantees an opportunity to gain exposure (through a project developed by the grantee) to the latest advancements in their respective fields of work in the U.S.

Eligibility:

- Sri Lankan citizenship, continuously residing in

Sri Lanka for a minimum of 2 years up to the time of applying for this award;

- Demonstrate aptitude and accomplishment in the field through professional involvement, awards received, achievements or output;
- Have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the area;
- Demonstrate commitment to developing this field in Sri Lanka and sharing knowledge with counterparts and the public in Sri Lanka;
- Possess a letter of invitation from a host institution in the U.S.
- Duration of award: 3 – 4.5 months (the minimum duration of the grant is 3 months)

Closing date for applications: October 1, 2013. Visit http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.com/?page_id=3722

Fulbright Advanced Research and Lecturing Awards 2014-'15

The US-SLFC invites Sri Lankan scholars who wish to pursue postdoctoral research and/or lecturing at a U.S. university or research institution to apply for this award.

Eligibility:

- Sri Lankan citizenship, continuously residing in Sri Lanka for a minimum of two years up to the time of applying for this award;
- Possess a PhD from a recognized university;
- Demonstrate a clear rationale for conducting the proposed research/ teaching in the U.S.;

- While applicants from all disciplines will be considered, preference will be given to candidates in the fields of humanities and social sciences;
- Age: The age limit has been waived, however, all things being equal, an applicant who is near retirement would not be as strong as one who is several years away;
- Possess a letter of invitation from a host institution in the U.S. (guidelines below);
- Duration of award: 6 months

Closing date for applications: October 1, 2013. Visit http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.com/?page_id=3725 for more details.

Fulbright Master's Student Awards for 2014-'15

The US-SLFC invites qualified candidates for the Fulbright Student Program for the academic year 2014 – 2015 in the following disciplines to apply: Social Sciences & Humanities, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Architecture and Engineering, Commerce and Management Studies.

Eligibility:

- Sri Lankan citizenship, continuously residing in Sri Lanka for a minimum of 2 years up to the time of applying for this award;
- Possess a 4-year bachelor's from a Sri Lankan university. Those with degrees from non-Sri Lankan universities are welcome to apply provided they possess the equivalent of a 4-

year Sri Lankan degree. Applicants with 3-year degrees from Sri Lanka and India are required to possess a relevant post-graduate qualification (for example, a post-graduate diploma in a relevant subject)'

- Be committed to reside in Sri Lanka on completion of the award for a minimum of 2 years;
- Possess a minimum 1 year of post-qualifying experience in the proposed field of study;
- Be below the age of 35 years on the 1st of October, 2013;
- Duration of award: a maximum of 2 academic years.

Closing date for applications: July 30, 2013. Visit http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.com/?page_id=3726 for more details.

U.S. Funds Renovation of Children's Park in Kilinochchi



Ambassador Sison and Minister Karaliyadda explore the renovated children's park.

Ambassador Michele J. Sison opened a U.S. Government funded \$97,925 (12 million rupees) renovated children's park for residents of Karachchi, Kilinochchi on May 4 alongside the Honorable Child Development and Women's Empowerment Minister, Tissa Karaliyadda.

Karachchi suffered heavy damage to its

infrastructure during the many years of conflict. The newly renovated park will provide a venue for recreation and strengthened peaceful co-existence to over 22,000 families in the area, including many resettled or returning families. During her remarks at the opening ceremony, Ambassador Sison said "At a time that Karachchi and its residents are rebuilding, the park will provide space for children, youth and adults to meet, play and build relationships." The park will also benefit tourists and contribute to the revitalization of the Kilinochchi district.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the renovation of the park, which is located in close proximity to a newly constructed market complex in Kilinochchi. Plans are already underway to engage community members and youth groups in Kilinochchi to work together to establish an effective maintenance plan for the park.

U.S. Government Support for Sri Lankan Forensics Laboratory

Ambassador Michele J. Sison visited the new laboratory complex of the Sri Lanka Ministry of Justice Government Analyst's Department (GAD) in Battaramulla on June 6. The U.S. Government — through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Justice — entered into a \$2.1 million (265 million rupee) U.S. Government-funded Forensic Assistance Program agreement with GAD in 2011 to establish a state-of-the-art DNA crime laboratory.

The program will provide Sri Lankan citizens with greater access to justice by enhancing legitimate prosecutions of criminals. The DNA laboratory will develop Sri Lanka's DNA analysis capability and make significant contributions to the technical enhancement of the country's criminal justice system. The grant also included an \$80,000 (10 million rupee) bullet recovery tank for the firearms laboratory to discharge weapons safely and easily, while recovering the bullets and casings for forensic comparisons; and a \$225,000 (28 million rupee) toxicology lab with analytical tools to assist in drug toxicology and trace evidence analysis. The program also facilitated training in the U.S. for 6 Sri

Lankan GAD scientists at Oklahoma State University, which has an internationally renowned forensics research and training program.



Deputy Govt. Analyst Mrs. Sakunthala Tennakoon, Ambassador Michele J. Sison, and Acting Government Analyst Mr. W.D.G.S. Gunatilake tour the new Government Analyst's Department DNA laboratory.

The laboratory will be functional for tests required for court cases by mid-August 2013 and GAD scientists will continue to receive on-the-job technical training from U.S. experts until December 2013.

American Center Photography Competition



U.S. Embassy Colombo conducts monthly photography competitions for students between 12-18 years of age. Winning entries will show creativity, skill, and an ability to capture a subject based on a monthly theme. Both electronic and hard copies of photographs

will be accepted. First, second and third place awards will be given in the following age categories:

- 12-14 years
- 15-16 years
- 17-18 years

Photography Competition – June–August 2013

If interested, please submit photographs on the theme **“Celebrate World Environment Day.”** Along with the photograph, entries must include a brief explanation of the subject and why it was selected. Please send your photograph, along with the coupon given here, with your details certified by your school principal or class teacher to the below address:

Photography Competition: June-August 2013
American Center
44, Galle Road
Colombo 03

You may also send your photograph electronically to the email address amcentersl@state.gov Please include your Name, Age Category, Address, Contact Details, School and Name of the School Principal.

Our panel of judges will assess all entries and then select first, second, and third place photographs for each age category. Winners will receive a collection of American literature, a life-time membership to the American Center Library, and a certificate signed by the U. S. Ambassador. Winners will be invited to attend an award ceremony at the American Center in Colombo.

Rules and Conditions

1. Submitted electronic images must be no larger than 1024 pixels width & 720 pixels in height and are not to exceed 500kb in size.
2. Photographs can be either black and white or color.
3. If sending printed photographs, the size should be at least 4"x 6".
4. All entries must be submitted on or before August 31, 2013.
5. You may enter a maximum of 3 photographs in the competition.
6. Please do not post any photographs that are obscene, discriminatory, or which otherwise violate any local or international laws.
7. The photographer must be the sole author and owner of the photo's copyright entered in the competition.
8. By entering this contest, the photographer agrees that any winning photograph submitted may be used by the American Center/U.S. Embassy Colombo solely for the purposes of this competition or future contests and no other purpose. These uses include: displaying the entries in the American Center lobby, on the official website, on the U.S. Embassy Colombo Facebook page, and cropping and re-sizing the image as necessary to fit pre-defined formats for the competition.

WEEKEND MOVIE SCREENINGS @ THE AMERICAN CENTER

EVERY SATURDAY 3:30 PM

July 13, 2013



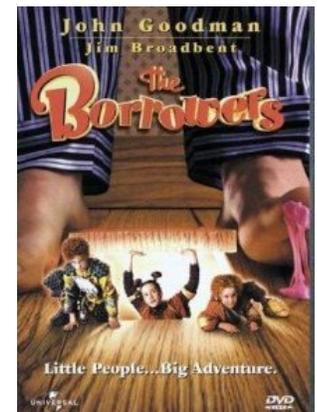
High School Musical 2

July 20, 2013



High School Musical 3

July 27, 2013



The Borrowers

July 2013

July 9 - 1776 (142 minutes)

The story is set during the first Continental Congress, when the Declaration of Independence was drafted by such founding fathers as John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. The script attempts to "humanize" these historical figures by contemporizing them, particularly the character of Ben Franklin. Blythe Danner's character of Martha Jefferson is expanded for the film version to allow for an elaborate outdoor production. Nominated for an Oscar, and another nomination.

July 16 - National Treasure (131 minutes)

A man sets out to steal a lost fortune in order to save it in this adventure drama from producer Jerry Bruckheimer. Benjamin Franklin Gates is an archeologist who is from the eighth generation of a family who has shared an unusual quest. As Gates-family legend has it, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin hid a massive cache of gold during the waning days of the Revolutionary War and left clues as to its whereabouts in the original drafts of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

July 23 - The Patriot (165 minutes)

In 1776, over Benjamin's objections, his oldest son Gabriel joins the fight against the British. Gabriel returns from battle seriously wounded, with Lord General Cornwallis (Tom Wilkinson) calling for his arrest. A skirmish breaks out on Benjamin's plantation, and one of his children is killed as Gabriel is captured by Col. Tavington and sentenced to hang. Benjamin sets aside his vow of pacifism and rescues Gabriel; with the help of his former comrade-in-arms Harry Burwell the father and son form a regiment of Carolina patriots whose cunning and ruthlessness make them heroes among the colonists and wanted men by British troops.

July 30 - Benjamin Franklin: The Founding of a Nation (94 minutes)

Perhaps it is Benjamin Franklin who most exemplifies the definition of an American renaissance man: a writer, a scientist, a politician, a ruthless competitor, a diplomat and a founding father of this great nation. This program explores his key inventions, writings, and political contributions.

Movies start promptly at 6:00pm every Tuesday. Seating is limited and is first-come, first-served. Please contact the American Center at amcentersl@state.gov or at (11) 249-8146 with any questions. Entrance free !

