



# American Center Newsletter

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American Center

Colombo

April 2009

## American Center In Action

### American Center hosts reading camp for Eastern students



U.S. Embassy and Room to Read officials pose with a section of students who participated at the event.

March 20, 2009: The American Center Colombo hosted a reading camp and day out for 80 Tamil medium students, ages 12-16 years, from eight schools in the Batticaloa district of the Eastern Province. The visit was part of a 4-day educational visit to Colombo and Kandy organized by the Sri Lanka Army to promote peace and reconciliation and to allow the children to

experience the opportunities available for all Sri Lankans.

The American Center, in collaboration with Room to Read Sri Lanka and the National Library of Sri Lanka, organized various activities such as a book readings, a film screening and book donations to entertain the students. The Deputy Chief of Mission James R. Moore and other officials from the U.S. Embassy attended the event.

### Digital Video Conference (DVC) on Management of Education



The audience included approximately 50 students, academics, journalists, and senior education officials.

March 16, 2009 - US Embassy Colombo organized the fourth installation of its ongoing DVC series on education.

Dr Jayantha Balasooriya, Deputy Director Education at the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka, joined Dr Mark Elgart, President/CEO Advanced, for the

presentation. Dr. Balasooriya, who spoke in person at the American Center in Colombo, and Dr. Elgart, connected via DVC, discussed Sri Lankan and U.S. perspectives on Management of Education.

Following the event many participants commented on the value of the discussion and the education series, remarking that it provides opportunities to look at education challenges and opportunities with different perspectives, gives attendees to form connections with American educators. ETV carried excerpts of the event on its broadcast and several print publications also reported on the event.

Further presentations are planned for the upcoming months.

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### "Carving 60 Years of friendship"

U.S. Embassy is organizing a sculpture competition to mark the 60th anniversary of the American Center.

We invite local artists to submit sculptures under the theme: Carving 60 years of Friendship.

Selected entries will be displayed in an exhibition at the American Center. A panel of Sri Lankan and American judges will select the winning entry.

The winning sculpture will be displayed permanently at the American Center and the artist will receive an award of Rs. 100,000 and a certificate signed by the U.S. Ambassador.

*Continued on page 4*

## Digital Video Conference (DVC) on raising awareness on peaceful applications of nuclear technology

Dr. Kent Williams of Ridge National Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy gave expert comments on nuclear technology use in power generation, agriculture, medicine, sterilization and food irradiation



Introduction by Mr. Jeffrey Anderson, Director Press and Cultural Affairs, American Center. Inset, Dr. Kent Williams.

linked via DVC at the American Center on March 11, 2009. The discussion, moderated by Mr. Jeffrey Anderson (Director Press and Cultural Affairs of the American Center), was focused on giving a broad U.S. perspective on the benefits of nuclear technology. The DVC program overseen by Dr. W. Abeyewickreme, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority was initiated by the Youth Nuclear Society of Sri Lanka (YNSS) in collaboration with the American Center to raise awareness among Sri Lankan youth on peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

The audience consisted of school students, undergraduates, academics and professionals.

## American Corner, Kandy participates at the Literary Festival of the University of Peradeniya



The American Corner in Kandy, participated in the Literary Festival organized by the Peradeniya Students Union of the

University of Peradeniya on March 7 - 8, 2009. The stall/exhibit managed by M. Imthiyas, the American Corner Coordinator was visited by around 4000 people including school students, undergraduates, graduates, parents, school teachers, professionals and the public. The material which attracted much interest included education in the U.S., TOEFL iBT preparation kits/bulletins, college hand books, international student handbooks, magazines, U.S. Maps and flags. Items distributed included information leaflets on resources and programs of the American Corner,

*Continued on page 8*

## U.S. Embassy launches Facebook Page

March 6, 2009: Ambassador Robert Blake launched the [U.S. Embassy Facebook](http://www.usembassy.gov) page at the American Center with the participation of U.S.- Sri Lanka Fulbright scholars, US -Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission Student Advisor, Nelum



The U.S. Embassy Facebook being launched by Ambassador Robert Blake with the participation of U.S.- Sri Lanka Fulbright scholars and Mrs. Nelum Senadira, Student Advisor, U.S.-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission.

Senadira, and Director of Press and Cultural Affairs, Mr. Jeff Anderson.

Ambassador Blake said that the Facebook page is a forum for Sri Lankan youth to share their views and perspectives. Visitors may also use the site to ask the Fulbright Commission questions about studying in the U.S. Mrs. Senadira said the Facebook page will help Sri Lankans learn more about U.S. higher education. Mr. Anderson highlighted that the Embassy will share information with the Sri Lankans about its upcoming events, monthly newsletter and will feature a discussion forum on topics of interest.

The Facebook page also contains a wealth of information and provides links to the American Center library, the US-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission, visa information, the American Chamber of Commerce, and the American Alumni Association.

## A passion for clean energy



### **Matthew Mendis** **C-Quest Capital, LLC**

Matthew Mendis says he is “passionate about the environment, clean energy and development”. He has dedicated his career to developing innovative financial solutions for implementing clean energy projects throughout the globe. As an internationally recognized leader in promoting the development, financing and implementation of alternative energy and energy efficiency projects, Matthew has worked in over 40 countries during the past 27 years.

Matthew was born in Malaysia to parents of Sri Lankan origin. His mother’s family migrated to Malaya during the colonial period, and his father grew up in Sri Lanka, ending up in Malaysia during the Japanese occupation. He went to the United States for the first time at the age of 13, when his father was posted to Washington, D.C., as a diplomat. After finishing high school in the U.S., he continued his studies at the University of Maryland, completing a BSc in Environmental Engineering.

He returned to Malaysia following his studies in 1973, eager to start work in his field, but found that opportunities were limited because environmental engineering was still a very new concept for most people. Matthew ended up returning to the University of Maryland to complete an MA in Natural Resource Economics and then joined the World Bank. Of his nine years with the World Bank, Matthew says that the highlight came in 1990, when he launched an initiative that resulted in the creation of the Bank’s Asia Alternative Energy Unit and a subsequent renewable energy loan for \$350 million, the first for the Bank, to support solar, wind and hydropower development in India.

In 1991, Matthew jumped over to the private sector and launched Alternative Energy Development, Inc., which brought him back to Sri Lanka to help develop small-scale renewable energy sources. As a contractor, he assisted with the design of the World Bank-funded Energy Services Delivery Project (ESDP) which stimulated

investment in hydropower by creating standard power purchase agreements between the Ceylon Electricity Board and energy producers. The solar component of the project provided microcredit loans to individual households, enabling those not connected to the electricity grid to buy solar systems that they could then repay through their savings on battery charging, kerosene, etc. By Matthew’s estimation, over 100,000 households in Sri Lanka have solar home systems today, many of which got their start through ESDP.

In further pursuit of his passions, Matthew and business partner Ken Newcombe (former head of the World Bank’s Carbon Finance Unit) launched C-Quest Capital in 2008. C-Quest Capital (CQC) originates and develops carbon offset projects, invests capital in carbon-leveraged opportunities, and trades carbon credits over-the-counter and on secondary-market exchanges. Headquartered in Washington, DC, with regional offices in Australia, Malaysia and India, CQC has quickly grown to 20 full-time employees with industry leading carbon finance, investment management and commodities trading expertise.

Matthew’s close connections with Sri Lanka continue in his current position as President of C-Quest Capital, which has been working since its inception on a number of renewable energy projects here. Matthew explains, “Power generation capacity expansion is an urgent issue in Sri Lanka.” According to Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) statistics, energy demand in the country has grown by 7-8% per annum over the past 20 years and is expected to further accelerate over the next decade. At the same time, the portion of the national energy supply provided by hydropower sources has been decreasing, down from 94% in 1995 to 36.8% in 2004. The CEB has determined that social and environmental impacts will make it increasingly difficult to develop new large hydro resources. However, small hydropower projects offer an appealing alternative, as they do not cause any emissions and have significantly fewer negative social and ecological ramifications.

*Continued on page 4*

**A passion for clean energy. . . .**

*From page 3*

At Belihula Oya and Assupiniella, C-Quest Capital is assisting in the processing of the “carbon credits” associated with the operation of these run-of-river mini hydropower plants. “Both plants,” says Matthew, “support the Sri Lankan government’s strategy of supplying the country with cost-efficient power by utilizing indigenous, renewable energy resources which reduce pollution and emissions, while also lessening the nation’s reliance on imported oil.” CQC is also supporting the application for carbon credits of other biomass and hydropower projects in Sri Lanka. By displacing the consumption of diesel or fuel oil, these projects are able to reduce the net greenhouse gas emissions of Sri Lanka and claim carbon credits that can be traded in international markets to support their financial viability.

Through Matthew’s ties to Sri Lanka, C-Quest Capital is also working with Sri Lankan company EcoPower Limited to capture the carbon credits associated with small hydropower projects in Uganda, where UNDP estimates that only nine percent of the population has access to electricity. EcoPower’s Ishasha Small Hydropower Project will develop a 6.5 MW small hydropower station in an

impoverished district along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, a largely undeveloped, mountainous area. Carefully designed to maintain the natural flow of the river, the Ishasha project will generate clean, renewable power, displacing the burning of oil for electricity and thereby resulting in approximately 20,000 certified emission reductions (CERs) annually from 2010 to 2021. CQC will market these CERs to buyers, generating revenue which will help to ensure the economic viability of the Ishasha project for EcoPower Limited. In turn, the project will bring electricity to over 41,000 households, as well as 145 schools, a teacher training college, a public hospital, and 22 health clinics. CQC expects that having a reliable source of energy will also stimulate local entrepreneurship and provide opportunities for industrial growth.

C-Quest Capital is growing rapidly, and Matthew is always on the lookout for opportunities to help promote alternative energy and energy efficiency projects. For more information about C-Quest Capital’s work in Sri Lanka and around the globe, visit: [www.cqllc.com](http://www.cqllc.com)

**Carving 60 Years of friendship. . . .**

*From page 1*

**Theme: Carving 60 years of Friendship**

Closing date 14 June 2009 at 5:30pm

By 14 June applicants must submit the sculpture, form below, and a CV to Aruni/Chamalie at the American Center between 8:00am – 5:30pm (Mon- Thu) and 8:00 am to 12:00pm (Fri). The exhibition will take place in August 2009.

**Sculpture Competition**

Name: .....

Permanent Address: .....

Telephone Number: ..... E-mail: .....

Name of the sculpture:

Short description of the sculpture and the medium used: .....

For further information you may contact Chamalie/ Aruni on 2498106 or 2498163 or email us on [amcentersl@state.gov](mailto:amcentersl@state.gov)

## USAID Program for Training Unemployed Youth



The ASAP Program trained 8,000 youth and school leavers in important skills such as IT, English language, and work ethics

March 20, 2009 – The Ministry of Education announced it will provide workforce readiness training to thousands of Sri Lankan youth, thanks to funding from the Asian Development Bank. The Accelerated Skills Acquisition Program, a program started with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide the training using a specialized curriculum that targets unemployed youth, ages 15 – 25.

To better prepare young people to find jobs and be successful in their careers, the Ministry of Education considered a wide range of job skills programs, finally selecting the USAID-funded ASAP. The Ministry of Education chose ASAP because of its success in working with young

people, especially school leavers, and its strong relationships with the private sector. ASAP's close collaboration with the private sector has ensured that the training curricula teaches the skills youth need most to be successful in the workplace.

Under the Asian Development Bank-funded Education for Knowledge Society Project (EKSP), Ministry of Education activities will empower selected students who have completed their Advance Level (A/L) exams and who come from economically disadvantaged families. ASAP will support the acquisition of post-secondary, career-oriented soft skills that are essential for finding gainful employment, especially in the emerging ICT and service sectors of the Sri Lankan economy. As 2009 is the "Year of Information Technology and English," EKSP will support successful initiatives in alignment with the Ministry's objectives to strengthen IT and language skills.

The ASAP Program focuses on building "soft" skills such as English language and computer literacy training, interviewing skills, good work ethic, and productive attitudes. Curriculum designers worked closely with the private sector to develop training programs so that youth are ready to step into the private sector successfully. ASAP also links trainees to employers and vocational training centers, especially in rural areas.

## U.S. Government donates medical supplies for hospitals in Sri Lanka's North



Deputy Chief of Mission James R. Moore symbolically presents five medical kits to Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Minister of Health Care and Nutrition.

March 30, 2009 – USAID donated equipment and basic medical supplies to the Ministry of Health to treat 50,000 civilians at hospitals in the North. James R. Moore, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy, made the symbolic

presentation to Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Minister of Health Care and Nutrition.

The U.S. donation, valued at \$79,865 (Rs 9.19 million), includes five kits with basic medical care items such as bandages, medicines, supplies and equipment. The kits are approved by the World Health Organization and each contains enough supplies to provide primary care to 10,000 patients. The Ministry of Health will distribute these supplies to hospitals in Vavuniya, Mannar and Padawiya, where the recent influx of IDPs has strained hospital resources.

USAID, the development agency of the U.S. Government, made the donation to Medical Teams International (MTI), as part of USAID's small-grants programs administered by United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). MTI is a global health organization that carries out disaster relief, long-term development, and community health programs in collaboration with local partners.

**Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission donates valuable Graduate Study Book Collection to American Corner**



Mr. Jeff Anderson, Director American Center receives book donation from MS. Nelum Senadira, Student Advisor, Fulbright Commission .

The U. S. - Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission recently donated the latest edition (2009) of a series of education advisory resources titled "Graduate Programs by Peterson's" to the American Center Library in Colombo.

Peterson's guides are recognized as some

of the most respected and informative guides to higher education in the United States.

This series covers:

- Graduate and Professional Programs: Overview
- Graduate Programs in the Biological Sciences
- Graduate Programs in Business Education, Health Information Studies, Law and social Work
- Graduate Programs in Engineering and Applied Sciences
- Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
- Graduate Programs in the Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Agricultural Sciences, the Environment and Natural Resources

The collection, available to library patrons now, is a valuable addition to the library and serves as a useful source for students who seek educational opportunities in the United States.

**Free Group Advising for the Month of April**

**At US-SL Fulbright Commission Colombo :**

**6th and 20th, 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 27th, 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)

**F1 Visa Seminar – Guest Speaker- Consular Officer, U.S. Embassy, Colombo\***

\* Date to be announced later

**At Galle Mahinda College Old Boys' Union Auditorium :**

**Thursday 23rd – 11:00 am – 5:00 pm**  
**Friday 24th - 8:30 – 3:00 pm**

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

**At Kandy American Corner :**

**Thursday 2nd 11:00 am - 1:30 pm**

Individual Appointments.

**2:30 pm onwards**

Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments.

**Friday 3rd 8:30 am - 10:30 am**

Individual Appointments.

**10:30 am - 1:30 pm**

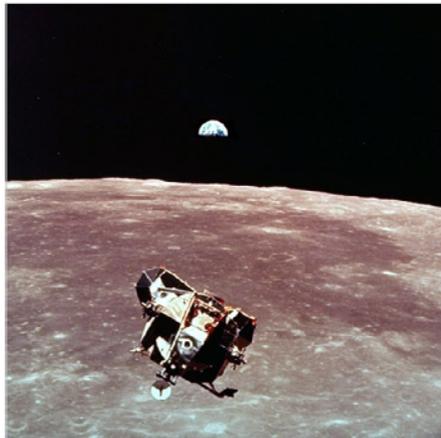
Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments.

*Continued on page 9*

## Society, Science Enriched by Science Fiction

Science fiction ignites public interest in science, offers avant-garde ideas

Shooting up toward space from the sunny U.S. state of Florida, a three-man crew bravely undertakes the first space mission to the moon. The year: 1865.



The *Apollo 11* lunar module rises from the moon's surface for docking with the command module and the trip back to Earth, July 20, 1969. The Earth can be seen rising in the background. (© AP/WWP)

In many ways, French writer Jules Verne's science fiction book *From the Earth to the Moon* closely parallels the first Apollo missions to the moon more than a century later. Both left from Florida, with three passengers, and both were to splash down

into the ocean after re-entry. *Columbia* was the Apollo command module, while Verne called his the *Columbiad*.

Like many works of science fiction, Verne's story indirectly helped space missions become a reality by igniting public interest in the seemingly implausible idea and engaging future scientists with the concept of space travel.

The reason for science fiction's important relationship with science, said Margaret A. Weitekamp, a curator with the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum's division of space history, is that good science fiction authors look at the current scientific research and ask the "What if?" question. These are some of the same questions that researchers, and often the public, are asking, she said in an August 9 interview with the *Washington File*.

Science fiction authors can make these issues dramatic and seemingly more relevant to readers, Weitekamp said.

For example, American Michael Crichton's 1969 book, *The Andromeda Strain*, is based on a then-real fear among scientists. They worried that,

during the first moon missions, some organisms from the moon might return with the astronauts and decimate the world's population, akin to what had happened centuries earlier with European diseases in the Americas. Crichton examined how that possibility might play out in real life, making the idea accessible even for those without a scientific background.

Verne's book, on the other hand, looks at an exciting possibility rather than a frightening one. Originally written in French, the book soon was translated into English, Russian and other languages, attaining international influence.

In the story, members of the Baltimore gun club, with no pressing duties at the end of the Civil War, construct a cannon to fire a capsule to the moon. Based on the limited science of the time, many of Verne's calculations and predictions are surprisingly accurate. He tackled issues such as what materials to use, how to create an effective air-filtering system and how to absorb the shock from the blast of liftoff -- some of the same problems that scientists later faced.

Although science fiction at first was merely popular literature, by the beginning of the 20th century, people with a scientific interest in space travel began reading it as well, said Weitekamp.

Robert Goddard, called "the father of modern rocketry" for his experiments with liquid-fuel rockets in the 1920s and 1930s, marked up his copy of Verne's book in an effort to see if the fictional vision could be made real. He made notes in the margins and corrected some of the equations.

The most recent addition to space travel also has some roots in science fiction. *SpaceShipOne*, the first manned, privately built spacecraft, received much of its funding from Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. As a child, Allen read science fiction and played with children's rocket sets. "He very quickly ran through his interest in what those [toys] could do," said Weitekamp. So he cut off the hollow aluminum leg of his parents' patio furniture, filled it with homemade rocket fuel and got ready to set it off.

He forgot, however, to check the melting point of aluminum, and his rocket did not get off the ground.

*Continued on page 8*

Vice Chancellor of Colombo University speaks on Women's Issues at the American Center



Professor Hirimburegama delivers her presentation (left), a section of intellectuals attended the presentation (right)

In honor of International Women's History Month and International Women's Day, the American Center organized a presentation titled "The

Socioeconomic Contribution by Women in Sri Lanka" on March 31, 2009. The speaker was Professor Kshanika Hirimburegama, Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. Professor Hirimburegama discussed the topic in regards to her experience working with rural women in Sri Lanka at the Weligatta-Hambantota Agro-technology and Community Service Center Project.

The lecture was well attended by university academics, students and women activists representing Women's NGOs in Sri Lanka.

Society, Science Enriched by Science Fiction. . . .

From page 7

*SpaceShipOne* had greater success, reaching space twice and winning the \$10 million Ansari X prize in 2004.

Some scientists have realized the strong pull that science fiction can have on the public's imagination. German-born Wernher von Braun, one of the leaders of the U.S. space program, collaborated with *Collier's* magazine in the 1950s for a series of articles discussing the possibilities of space travel. The articles were based on science, although some of the accompanying illustrations were slightly dramatized, said Weitekamp.

The *Collier's* series appeared just before the opening of the first Disneyland theme park in California. Disneyland contacted von Braun for help with Tomorrowland, one of the park's sections, and he jumped at the opportunity, writes Mike Wright, historian at the NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama, in an article entitled "The Disney-Von Braun Collaboration and Its Influence on Space Exploration."

Disney and von Braun also worked to put together the TV show *Man in Space*. The 1950 movie *Destination Moon* merged entertainment with science as well, winning an Oscar for best special

effects. These partnerships helped both parties gain greater prominence -- and money.

Speaking on the use of fiction to arouse public interest in science, Weitekamp said, "Before you get Congress passing acts that will fund [science programs], what you need is people who are excited about it."

However, science fiction also reflects existing public opinion. Weitekamp cited the character Spiderman as an example. The original Spiderman gains his superhuman powers when bitten by a radioactive spider -- a reflection of the nuclear fears of the 1950s. In the most recent version, it is a genetically engineered spider, reflecting today's concerns.

Recent science fiction has revisited space travel -- the topic that Verne helped pioneer. However, with space travel now taken largely for granted, the question is where to go next. Said Weitekamp: "Movies like *Armageddon* or *Space Cowboys* ... are in many ways about NASA being at a crossroads, trying to find its new direction. As the shuttle program is aging, as the space program is aging, trying to think about what the new direction for space exploration [is] going to be."

Source [www.america.gov](http://www.america.gov)

Participation at the Literary Festival . . . .

From page 2

issues of "Muslim life in America" and a USAID funded booklet by Cybil Wettasinghe titled "Dushanaya Palawaharimu". The dissemination of information by the American Corner stall afforded

a large number of youth in the hill capital of Sri Lanka to learn about education opportunities in the U.S. and resources available to them at the American Corner in Kandy.

**Monthly Essay Competition**



**Learn about  
America**

**ESSAY COMPETITION**



**Essay Competition for School Children on the theme of Learn About America**

The American Center has organized an essay competition for school children which is publishing in Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer.

The monthly essay topic is given under three age categories 12-14 years, 15-16 years and 17-18 years.

Each age group is given a monthly topic related to the United States of America and are asked to write an essay with minimum word count. The students can conduct research for their essay at the American Center Library in Colombo, at American Corners in Kandy and Oluvil, or from other sources like the Internet. [America.gov](http://www.america.gov) is a very good internet resource with lots of information on the United States, its culture, history, literature, politics, tourist attractions and much more.

The first three winners in each age group will be given a selection of American books, as well as lifetime membership to the American Center Library as well as a certificate signed by the U.S. Ambassador. A prize giving ceremony will be held at the American Center Colombo every two months.

Essay topics for April are as follows :

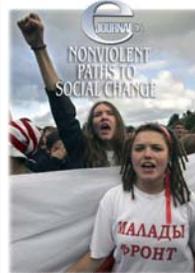
**12-14 years** : Why I would like to visit the United States of America. (500 words)

**15-16 years** : Sri Lankan youth learn from the non-violent ideals of the United States' civil rights movement. (750 words)

**17-18 years** : How are the societies of the United States and Sri Lanka similar in their multicultural diversity? (1000 words)

Please see the Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer for more details.

**eJournalUSA**



**Nonviolent Paths to Social Change**

**Electronic Journal of the US Department of State**

**March 2009**

The past 30 years have seen a surge of nonviolent, "people power" movements around the world advancing human rights and toppling repressive rulers. This edition of eJournal USA demonstrates that nonviolent actions can be more powerful than armed insurrections in bringing about social change.

**Web access** : <http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0309ej.pdf#popup>

**Free group advising. . . From page 6**

**2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

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

American Corner,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
D.S. Senanayake Memorial Public  
Library  
Kandy

Phone: 081 222 3716

**Please contact by visit, phone, fax or e-mail:**

United States - Sri Lanka Fulbright  
Commission

22, Flower Terrace, Colombo 7

Phone: 094-112-564176

Fax: 094-112-564153

E-mail: [advising@isplanka.lk](mailto:advising@isplanka.lk)

Web: <http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.com>

Every Thursday at 2.30pm

*Entrance free!*

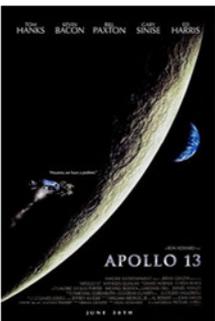


**April 2**

**Music of the heart** (1999, Running time: 124 minutes)

The true story of a young teacher who fights against the board of education in her bid to teach underprivileged kids in a Harlem school the beauty of music through the violin. In her struggle she loses everything as the system comes down on her with all their might but her determination for the kids happiness helps her to battle back with wonderfully inspirational results.

Nominated for 2 Oscars. Another 5 wins & 9 nominations.



**April 13**

**Apollo 13** (1995, Running time: 140 minutes)

Based on the true story of the ill-fated 13th Apollo mission bound for the moon. Astronauts Lovell, Haise and Swigert were scheduled to fly Apollo 14, but are moved up to 13. It's 1970, and America have already achieved their lunar landing goal, so there's little interest in this "routine" flight.. until that is, things go very wrong, and prospects of a safe return fade.

Won 2 Oscars. Another 17 wins & 26 nominations.

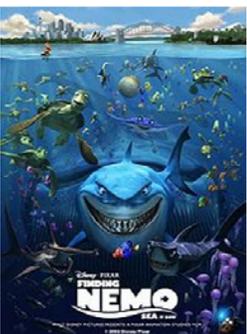


**April 23**

**National treasure** (2004, Running time: 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 (Nicolas Cage) 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. With no firm proof that it actually exists, Gates sets out to crack the code that will lead him to the fortune, which, as a member of the Gates clan, he is sworn to protect from wrongdoers.

1 win & 7 nominations.



**April 30**

**Finding Nemo** (2003, Running time: 100 minutes)

Nemo, a boy clownfish, is stolen from his home in the Great Barrier Reef and winds up in an aquarium in a dentist's office. His timid father Marlin must embark on a dangerous trek to rescue his son, who has daring plans of own to return safely home. Won Oscar.

Another 34 wins & 35 nominations.

*Reviews drawn from MSN movies, All Movie Guide and IMDB*

*For more details about after school movie screenings : Tel: 2498146 E-mail : amcentersl@state.gov*

## Film Screenings at the American Center

American Center Newsletter  
April 2009

**April 2009 - Science Fiction Films**      **Every Tuesday at 6.00pm**

**April 7 - 2001: A space odyssey** (1968, 141 minutes)

A mind-bending sci-fi symphony, Stanley Kubrick's landmark 1968 epic pushed the limits of narrative and special effects toward a meditation on technology and humanity. Based on Arthur C. Clarke's story *The Sentinel*, Kubrick and Clarke's screenplay is structured in four movements. At the "Dawn of Man," a group of hominids encounters a mysterious black monolith alien to their surroundings. To the strains of Strauss's 1896 *Also sprach Zarathustra*, a hominid invents the first weapon, using a bone to kill prey. As the hominid tosses the bone in the air, Kubrick cuts to a 21st century spacecraft hovering over the Earth, skipping ahead millions of years in technological development. U.S. scientist Dr. Heywood Floyd (William Sylvester) travels to the moon to check out the discovery of a strange object on the moon's surface: a black monolith. As the sun's rays strike the stone, however, it emits a piercing, deafening sound that fills the investigators' headphones and stops them in their path.

Won Oscar, another 10 wins and 6 nominations.

**April 15 (Wednesday) - The Day the earth stood still** (1951, 92 minutes)

*The Day the Earth Stood Still*, science-fiction motion picture about an alien who visits Earth after World War II (1939-1945) to warn people against nuclear devastation, based on a story by Harry Bates. Released in 1951, the film won a Golden Globe Award for promoting international understanding and has been selected for registry by the National Film Preservation Board. When Klaatu (played by Michael Rennie) and his robot sidekick Gort land at the Mall in Washington, D.C., soldiers attack them and wound Klaatu. Gort fights back and reveals his immense power. Klaatu prevents him from destroying Earth. Klaatu disguises himself as a human and goes to live in a boarding house in order to learn more about human life. The alien demonstrates that he could kill all humankind and warns humanity against destroying itself with nuclear weapons.

Won Golden Globe, another 1 win and 1 nomination.

**April 21 - E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial** (1982, 115 minutes)

Both a classic movie for kids and a remarkable portrait of childhood, *E.T.* is a sci-fi adventure that captures that strange moment in youth when the world is a place of mysterious possibilities (some wonderful, some awful), and the universe seems somehow separate from the one inhabited by grown-ups. Henry Thomas plays Elliott, a young boy living with his single mother (Dee Wallace), his older brother Michael (Robert MacNaughton), and his younger sister Gertie (Drew Barrymore). Elliott often seems lonely and out of sorts, lost in his own world. One day, while looking for something in the back yard, he senses something mysterious in the woods watching him. And he's right: an alien spacecraft on a scientific mission mistakenly left behind an aging botanist who isn't sure how to get home. Eventually Elliott puts his fears aside and makes contact with the "little squashy guy," perhaps the least threatening alien invader ever to hit a movie screen. As Elliott tries to keep the alien under wraps and help him figure out a way to get home, he discovers that the creature can communicate with him telepathically. Soon they begin to learn from each other, and Elliott becomes braver and less threatened by life. *E.T.* rigs up a communication device from junk he finds around the house, but no one knows if he'll be rescued before a group of government scientists gets hold of him. In 2002, Steven Spielberg re-released *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* in a revised edition, with several deleted scenes restored and digitally refurbished special effects.

Won 4 Oscars, another 38 wins and 27 nominations.

*Reviews drawn from MSN movies, All Movie Guide and Encarta*

An epic drama of  
adventure and exploration

