



American Center Newsletter

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American Center

Colombo

October 2008

American Center In Action

US Education Exhibition a great success



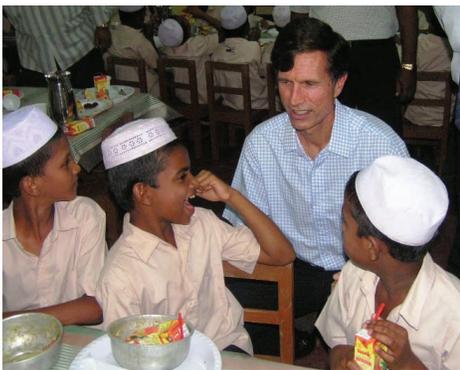
Hon. Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Education officially opens the exhibition as Ambassador Blake and others look on. (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

The U.S. Embassy organized a highly successful and well attended U.S. University Education Fair at the Hilton Hotel in Colombo. Twenty-two U.S. colleges and universities participated, holding seminars and offering informational material to prospective students. Over 3000 students and parents attended the two day fair. Over 2,500 Sri Lankans study in the United States and the fair aimed to introduce even more Sri Lankans to

higher education opportunities in the United States. The U.S. Embassy plans to organize a similar fair next year.

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US Embassy hosts Ifthar dinner for children in Beruwela



Ambassador Blake talks to children during the dinner (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

Ambassador Robert Blake visited Isha Athul Islam Orphanage in Dharga Town, Beruwela on September 18, 2008. Over one hundred children joined with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Orphanage M.Z.M. Badiuddin, Secretary Vice Chancellor Husain Ismail, and other Board Members to welcome the Ambassador. At sunset, the Ambassador joined the

children of the orphanage in the customary breaking of the fast. Ambassador Blake then toured the facility, visiting the dormitory, vocational training unit, computer training room, library and Mosque. The Ambassador and the residents later enjoyed a dinner, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. After the meal, Ambassador Blake thanked the residents, staff and directors of the center for their hospitality. He encouraged the children to work hard to achieve their educational goals and to consider someday studying in the United States.

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US Embassy
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Colombo 3
Sri Lanka

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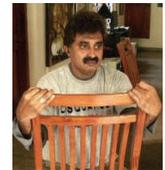
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Upcoming Events

Artist of the Month Exhibition



Raja Segar

Raja Segar will display his paintings at the American Center from October 7-31, 2008.

Raja Segar, one of the promising artists in Sri Lanka and has been painting for the past 25 years.

He began painting cards in a novel way by sketching in a semi abstract style. As a self taught artist Segar has made head way with his own efforts by observing and studying others' work.

Segar's paintings according to a critic are unusual visual experience in that they work with combination of realistic and abstract.

Segar says, "in a painting the artist has to keep in mind the theme, colours and composition of the figures or objects he wants to paint"-

His works are in oil, water and mixed media.

US Education Exhibition

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Hundreds of students flock to the Fulbright Commission's booth to speak with Education USA advisors. (Pic. by Finton Fernando)



Participants were given a chance to discuss their questions on study in America individually with University representatives. (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

US Embassy joins Room to Read to celebrate International Literacy Day.



Puttalam children enjoy story reading on International Literacy Day

The U.S. Embassy joined Room to Read Sri Lanka at the Mundalama Sinhala Vidyalaya in Puttalam district to celebrate International Literacy Day on September 8th. This year's celebration marked the culmination of a two-week literacy

skills program for one hundred school drop-outs and underperforming children from underprivileged areas around Puttalam - a collaborative effort with the Zonal Education Office and the People Help Foundation, Room to Read's implementing partner for the Puttalam

area.

The day's events included story telling sessions at the Reading Room model library for primary students and a popular exhibition of posters and student artworks. Students participating in the literacy program sang songs, read aloud, wrote letters and engaged in clay modelling and drawing activities. A Tamil and Sinhala medium cultural show highlighted the children's talent and enthusiasm for learning.

Room to Read Sri Lanka is an American INGO dedicated to providing under-privileged children with the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and take control of their own lives through education. Room to Read currently runs three programmes for creating libraries and training reading teachers in Sri Lanka, titled Reading Room, School Room, and Room to Grow.

Continued on page 11

Press roundtable with Ambassador Mark Lagon



Ambassador Mark Lagon, Director, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State joined in a lively roundtable with the representatives of local media. (Pic. by Finton Fernando)

Public Affairs Section of the American Embassy organized a roundtable participated by print journalists representing

Sinhala, Tamil and English newspapers during the brief visit of Ambassador Mark Lagon – Director of Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, in the State Department.

Journalists discussed issues such as child sex tourism, children as domestic servants and issues of migrant workers and factors affecting trafficking in persons.

Transcript of the discussion is available on the US Embassy website: <http://srilanka.usembassy.gov/tr-4sep08.html> .

Desmond Fernando : Bridging the ethnic divide through the justice system



With a litany of achievements behind his belt, Desmond Fernando is an extraordinary civil rights lawyer living in Sri Lanka. Desmond took part in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Colombo in the early 80s. The IVLP

annually brings to the United States approximately 5,000 foreign nationals from all over the world to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience America firsthand. Thousands of distinguished individuals have participated in this prestigious program since its inception, more than five decades ago. More than 200 current and former Chiefs of State, 1,500 cabinet-level ministers, and many other distinguished leaders from the public and private sectors have taken part in the program. Desmond describes the program as "superb." He said the program changed his views on human rights and enhanced his interest in human rights and talked about his experience in the United States meeting with leading figures in the human rights field.

Desmond studied for a year at the University of Ceylon in Colombo and then went to Oxford University, which awarded him a B.A. and M.A. He was subsequently awarded a Study Fellowship on Legal Institutions and Development by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. He was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1958 and enrolled as an Advocate (or better known as Attorney-at-Law) by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka the same year. He was appointed as the President's Counsel in 1990. The list goes on, but from the commencement of his career and even to this day, he continues to appear without fee in a large number of cases involving human rights issues or where a litigant is unable to secure adequate representation.

In the early 70s, he was the founding member and Secretary of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) of Sri Lanka. This was the first human rights organization in Sri Lanka. He received the Carter Menil Human Rights Prize in 1990. He was the President of the Bar Association for Sri Lanka and the President of the International Bar Association (IBA). In 1995 as Vice-President of IBA, Desmond

helped set up the Human Rights Institute of the IBA which sent missions to several countries in relation to the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession. Later, as President of the IBA, he did follow-up work on the missions both by visits and by correspondence. On numerous occasions, he has been invited to the American Bar Association to speak on human rights and the third world and is a well-known scholar in the field. He continues to fight for human rights in Sri Lanka and talks about his struggle in fighting for victims of conflict including torture victims and on behalf of families of killed and "disappeared" persons in Sri Lanka. Personally, he has taken many fundamental rights petitions to the Supreme Court seeking GSL compensation for clients who have been tortured and has won settlements for most.

He says the discrepancy lies in the fact that the burden lies on the accused where one is guilty until proven innocent, unlike the American system. Despite criticisms of being a reactionary capitalist, Desmond firmly believes in having safeguards to evidence and procedures in a court of law for all victims regardless of race in this country. So in 1994, he became the Chairman of the Family Rehabilitation Center, an organization that looks after victims of torture and families of persons who have disappeared. The center provides medical, psychiatric and legal services for victims of conflict including torture victims and the families of killed and "disappeared" persons in both Southern Sri Lanka and in the North and the East. It has ten outreach centers in the conflict areas.

More impressively, his work expands internationally and he was selected as a Human Rights Monitor by Human Rights Watch in the late 80s and was invited to New York to meet leading Human Rights Activists. He was the Vice President of the International Commission of Jurists and served as a trial observer on missions for Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, The International Bar Association, and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights. Desmond has extensive publications on the civil rights movement of Sri Lanka, Terrorism and Human Rights, and has spoken at many international conferences on the topic of the Rule of Law and Human Rights. By his own right, Desmond is not only a visionary but a legend in the field of human rights and continues to fight selflessly for injustice in Sri Lanka.

Free Group Advising for the Month of October

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)

16th and 22nd 3 pm

Essay Workshop

For Prospective students for Bachelor's Degrees

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

Wednesday 15th 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 :
23rd and 24th**

Please contact by phone: 011 2564176 / 011 4718744

At Kandy American Corner :

Friday 10th 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Individual Appointments.

Friday 10th 2:30 pm onwards

Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments

Saturday, 11th - 8.30 am - 10.30 am

Individual Appointments.

Saturday, 11th - 10.30 am - 1.30 pm

Orientation Program as needed or Individual Appointments.

Saturday, 11th - 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

McCain, Obama Would Fight Terrorism, Enhance Trade in South Asia

Both U.S. presidential candidates pledge to build relationships in region

Mindful that the economy and security are among voters' top concerns in the November 4 American elections, the two U.S. presidential candidates, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama are pledging to build economic and security relationships in South Asia.



Barack Obama, right, meets Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul, Afghanistan, in July.

"India and America will be close and vital partners," McCain writes in an August Indian Express editorial that extolled the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. "India has been a responsible, law-abiding power and it should be further integrated into the global effort to control proliferation of dangerous technologies."

Obama has been less enthusiastic about the pact, but voted for it in 2006. He says he wants stronger

nuclear nonproliferation mechanisms and U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The civil nuclear agreement would allow the United States and India to cooperate in civil nuclear research and development; commercial trade in nuclear reactors, technology and fuel.

"I think that everybody wants the deal," senior fellow at Brookings Institution and South Asia specialist Stephen P. Cohen told America.gov. "Even people who opposed it would rather see the deal concluded sooner than later. They'd rather have this done in the Bush administration, not have to face it in theirs."

The Nuclear Suppliers Group cleared India for nuclear commerce September 9, ending three decades of isolation after India's refusal to sign nuclear nonproliferation treaties and its 1974 nuclear test. The suppliers group decision paves the way for congressional approval of the agreement.

"The deal is important, but by itself it doesn't transform the relationship. It's a major step in that direction." Cohen adds, "The future of the

relationship will depend largely on internal Indian development and reform of the relationship with Pakistan."

Hindustan Times foreign editor Prमित Pal Chaudhuri told America.gov India's "overriding" concern is "what the U.S. policy on Afghanistan-Pakistan is going to be." Other important issues are outsourcing of U.S. jobs, immigration and energy policies, he said.

Terrorism a Mutual Concern



John McCain, left, is briefed by Iraqi and American military commanders in Mosul, Iraq, in March.

Agreement on the need to fight terrorism unites the United States and most South Asian countries. Obama and McCain differ on how and where best to handle terrorism in the region.

Obama wants to withdraw from Iraq and focus on defeating al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

Sumit Ganguly, Tagore professor at Indiana University, Bloomington, said the Pakistani press fueled an overreaction to Obama's statement about going after terrorists in Pakistan, while McCain's "obsession with Iraq and his failure to talk more explicitly about what might be done to stem the tide in Afghanistan where NATO is really straining right now" opens him to criticism from South Asia.

"[McCain] seems to be much more preoccupied with debating the question of withdrawal or staying and victory in Iraq rather than focusing on the critical issues involving the stability of Pakistan," Ganguly told America.gov.

Cohen said the terrorism debate is just getting started in Pakistan, where terrorist attacks are on the rise. At the same time, Pakistanis have made an extraordinary political transition.

"McCain and especially Obama are a bit impatient regarding provocations that have come out of Pakistan," Cohen said.

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Both U.S. presidential candidates

Both McCain and Obama favor greater security cooperation with India.

"We are both victims of terrorist attacks on our soil, and our counter-terrorism partnership is based on a shared interest in defeating the forces of extremism," Obama told India's Outlook Magazine in July.

Obama's policy toward Pakistan would "emphasize support for democracy and social and economic development, not only for counterterrorism." Obama wants to help resolve differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan and encourage India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir.

Economic Priorities

Both Obama and McCain advocate strong trade links with South Asian countries, particularly India, the region's economic powerhouse. Their positions speak to an Indian-American constituency that is politically active and includes many individuals who retain strong personal and business ties to India.

"We live in a more competitive world, and that is a fact that cannot be reversed ... but we must find a way to make globalization and trade work for American workers," Obama told Outlook.

McCain said American workers' concerns should be addressed "by helping them to adapt and compete, not retreat into isolationism and protectionism." He also opposes farm subsidies to large agribusiness.

Obama anticipates jobs in renewable energy industries and wants major investment there; offsetting climate change is a significant part of his platform. McCain favors alternative energy development, but advocates drilling for oil in American territory.

Climate Change

In addition to economic and security issues, more U.S. engagement with India, Pakistan and China on climate change could benefit all, Cohen said. "If we made that a higher priority ... we'd have agreements on a whole range of issues which otherwise will lead to conflict between all these countries, and that includes Nepal and Bangladesh."

A proposal posted on Obama's Web site calls for

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creation of a "Global Energy Forum — based on the G8+5, which includes all G8 members plus Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa." This forum would include the nations, both developed and developing, that consume the most energy and would focus exclusively on global energy and environmental issues.

McCain also "believes that there must be a global solution to global climate change. McCain says, as president, he would provide immediate incentives for India and China to participate in programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while negotiating individual agreements on low-carbon energy production and clean-technology partnerships with each nation.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE



Presidential electors in the state of West Virginia unanimously cast their votes for George W. Bush for president at the state capitol in Charleston on December 18, 2000. (AP Photo/Bob Bird)

As prescribed in the U.S. Constitution, American presidents are elected not directly by the people, but by the people's electors.

The Electoral College was created by the framers of the U.S. Constitution as an alternative to electing the president by popular vote or by Congress. Each state elects the number of representatives to the Electoral College that is equal to its number of Senators—two from each state—plus its number of delegates in the House of Representatives. The District of Columbia, which has no voting representation in Congress, has three Electoral College votes. There are currently 538 electors in the Electoral College; 270 votes are needed to win the presidential election.

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In October - Columbus Day

Holiday commemorates explorer Columbus' landing in the New World in 1492



A model of the "Santa Maria," one of Christopher Columbus' three ships, is pulled up New York's Fifth Avenue in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral during the Columbus Day Parade. (© AP Images)

Columbus Day is the annual U.S. commemoration of explorer Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World (at San Salvador Island, also known as Waitling Island, today part of the British Bahamas) on October 12,

1492. Columbus was not the first European successfully to cross the Atlantic. Viking sailors are believed to have established a short-lived settlement in Newfoundland sometime in the 11th century, and scholars have argued for a number of other possible pre-Columbian landings.

Columbus, however, initiated the lasting encounter between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

A number of nations celebrate this encounter with annual holidays: Discovery Day in the Bahamas, Hispanic Day in Spain, and Día de la Raza in much of Latin America. In 1971, Congress moved the U.S. holiday from October 12 to the second Monday in October, to afford workers a long holiday weekend. In the United States, Columbus Day is typically a celebration of Italian and Italian-American cultural heritage, Columbus generally being considered a native of Genoa.

Italian immigrants were the first to celebrate the holiday annually in U.S. cities where they had settled in large numbers, in part as a celebration of their heritage, since Columbus was believed to be Italian. In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed Columbus Day a national holiday, then held every October 12 and now on the second Monday in October.

Electoral College *From page 6*

Several weeks after the general election, electors from each state meet in their state capitals and cast their official vote for president and vice president. The votes are then sent to the president of the U.S. Senate who, on January 6 with the entire Congress present, tallies the votes and announces the winner.

The winner of the Electoral College vote usually is the candidate who has won the popular vote. However, it is possible to win the presidency without winning the popular vote. The most recent case occurred in the 2000 presidential election when President Bush won the Electoral College vote—271 to 266—after losing the popular vote to then Vice President Al Gore. Two other presidents—Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 and Benjamin Harrison in 1888—became president without winning the popular vote. In the 1824 election between John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, Jackson won the popular vote but neither won a majority of Electoral College votes. Adams secured the presidency only after the election was decided by vote of the House of Representatives, a procedure provided for in the Constitution when no candidate wins a majority of the Electoral College. *Source: www.america.gov*

Videos on Presidential debates 2008



The presidential candidates shake hands at the start of their first debate.

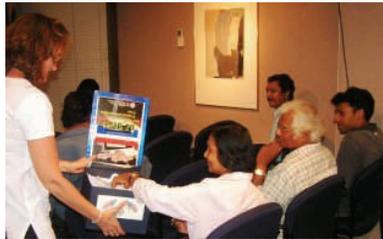
The bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) is sponsoring four debates for the 2008 presidential general election. The first debate was held on September 26, 2008 at the

University of Mississippi.

Other three debates will be held at various locations around United States during October. Three of the debates will involve the presidential nominees, and the vice-presidential candidates' debate is scheduled for October 2nd, 2008.

Recorded video of the first debate is available at the American Center's library for members to view; all other debates will also be made available at the library as they take place.

Raffle drawing at the American Center



The film viewers picking up 100 winners
(Pic. by Dhaminda Manampeeri)

The American Center Library offered 100 free annual memberships to use library resources among the participants of the American Education Fair held in September at Colombo Hilton. Those who visited the American Center stall at the

Education Fair filled the coupons for this raffle. Out of thousands, 100 winners were selected during the film screening event last week.

On-line Research Databases available at AIRC :



EBSCO Research Databases:
Academic and business articles from more than 9000 sources.



ProQuest Research Library:
From business and political science to literature and psychology, ProQuest Research Library provides one-stop access to a wide range of popular academic subjects. The database includes more than 3,950 titles—over 2,700 in full text—from 1971 forward.



LexisNexis:
Popular searchable archive of content LexisNexis™ from newspapers, magazines, legal documents and other printed sources. LexisNexis claims to be the "world's largest collection of public records, unpublished opinions, forms, legal, news, and business information" while offering their products to a wide range of professionals in the legal, risk management, corporate, government, law enforcement, accounting and academic markets.

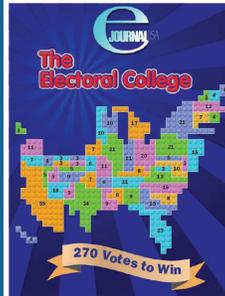


JSTOR :
Provides full-text searches of digitized back issues of several hundred well-known academic journals, dating back to 1995



Gale Academic OneFile :
Premier source for peer-reviewed, full-text articles from the world's leading journals and reference sources. With extensive coverage of the physical sciences, technology, medicine, social sciences, the arts, theology, literature and other subjects.

eJournalUSA



THE ELCTORAL COLLEGE

Electronic Journal of the US Department of State

October 2008

More than 100 million voters are likely to cast ballots in nationwide U.S. elections November 4. But only 538 men and women will elect the next president of the United States, and those elections will take place in 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C., December 15. This indirect election system, called the Electoral College and devised in 1787 by the framers of the Constitution, puzzles Americans and non-Americans alike. It reflects the federal governing system of allocating powers not only to a national government and to the people but also to the states. We hope that this issue of eJournal USA will improve your understanding of the historical reasons for the Electoral College system and how it functions.

Web access : <http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0908.pdf#popup>



DynEd English Language Learning Program

If you want to improve your spoken English, the award-winning DynEd New Dynamic English program accessible through the American Center Library's computers. DynEd is ideal for English language learners who:

- have the ability to study independently
- need to improve their knowledge of English grammar quickly
- plan to take the TOEFL® or TOEIC® exam soon
- need to improve their listening and reading skills quickly for international conferences
- are unable to attend regular English courses
- simply enjoy learning English and working with computers

Early American and Colonial Period

Native American, British traditions influenced U.S. literature



The First Thanksgiving, 1621," by J.L.G. Ferris, depicts celebration of a bountiful harvest. (Library of Congress)

The foundation of American literature begins with the orally transmitted myths, legends, tales, and lyrics (always songs) of Indian cultures.

Native American oral tradition is quite diverse. Indian stories glow with

reverence for nature as a spiritual, as well as physical, mother. Nature is alive and endowed with spiritual forces; main characters may be animals or plants, often totems associated with a tribe, group, or individual.

The Indian contribution to America is greater than is often believed. The hundreds of Indian words in everyday American English include "canoe," "tobacco," "potato," "moccasin," "moose," "persimmon," "raccoon," "tomahawk," and "totem." Contemporary Native American writing, discussed in chapter 8, also contains works of great beauty.

The first European record of exploration in America is in a Scandinavian language. The Old Norse Vinland Saga recounts how the adventurous Leif Eriksson and a band of wandering Norsemen settled briefly somewhere on the northeast coast of America – probably Nova Scotia, in Canada – in the first decade of the 11th century.

The first known and sustained contact between the Americas and the rest of the world, however, began with the famous voyage of an Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, funded by the Queen of Spain, Isabella. Columbus's journal in

his "Epistola," printed in 1493, recounts the trip's drama.

Initial English attempts at colonization were disasters. The first colony was set up in 1585 at Roanoke, off the coast of North Carolina; all its colonists disappeared. The second colony was more permanent: Jamestown, established in 1607. It endured starvation, brutality, and misrule. However, the literature of the period paints America in glowing colors as the land of riches and opportunity. Accounts of the colonizations became world-renowned.

In the 17th century, pirates, adventurers, and explorers opened the way to a second wave of permanent colonists, bringing their wives, children, farm implements, and craftsmen's tools. The early literature of exploration is made up of diaries, letters, travel journals, ships' logs, and reports to the explorers' financial backers.

Because England eventually took possession of the North American colonies, the best known and most anthologized colonial literature is English.

It is likely that no other colonists in the history of the world were as intellectual as the Puritans, most of them of English or Dutch origin. Between 1630 and 1690, there were as many university graduates in the northeastern section of the United States, known as New England, as in England. The self-made and often self-educated Puritans wanted education to understand and execute God's will as they established their colonies throughout New England.

Puritan style varied enormously – from complex metaphysical poetry to homely journals and crushingly pedantic religious history. Whatever the style or genre, certain themes remained constant. Life was seen as a test; failure led to eternal damnation and hellfire, and success to heavenly bliss.

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US Ambassador Robert Blake poses with students at Kaluwanchikudy Vocational Training Center. (USAID photo)

USAID boosts job opportunities for youth in Eastern Sri Lanka.

September 24, 2008 - USAID is constructing four vocational schools in tsunami-affected Ampara and Batticaloa Districts

as part of USAID's Sri Lanka Tsunami Reconstruction Program. This week marked the official opening of the schools in Ninthavur and Kaluwanchikudy.

The two centers are truly unique. The Kaluwanchikudy Vocational Training Center will specialize in information technology and is part of a larger plan to make Kaluwanchikudy a hub for information technology in the East. The new center has attracted huge interest amongst Batticaloa youth, and more than 500 students have been competing for the 143 slots. Ninthavur is the hub for vocational training in Ampara, and the new district center will not only educate students of its own, it will also educate instructors to train at all the other vocational schools.

Together with its contractors, Sierra and CH2MHill, USAID is developing the vocational school program in partnership with the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) under the aegis of the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training. 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.



The Hayleys Group is the sole exporter of gherkins from Sri Lanka, processing more than 8,000 tons a year (USAID photo)

USAID and Hayleys partner to revitalize farming in Eastern Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's Hayleys Group and the USAID have successfully completed a six month pilot project linking

160 farmers in conflict affected Eastern Province to global agricultural supply chains. Together, they have cultivated 20 acres of gherkins, 10 acres of jalapeno peppers, and 20 acres of pineapples, which will soon be appreciated globally by customers of McDonalds, Burger King, Unilever, Subway, Hungry Jack, Loteria, Sanyo and Heinz.

The objective of the project has been to motivate farmers in poorer areas of Ampara and Moneragala to embrace modern agricultural practices and to empower them to improve their incomes substantially from agriculture by switching to cash crops that are in demand.

USAID and Hayleys have enabled 160 farmers to produce new varieties which meet higher quality standards. Since the launch of the project in April 2008, these traditional paddy farming families have earned a substantial additional income. Their relationship with Hayleys provides a direct link between the producers and the buyers without having to utilize intermediaries. "Hayleys' direct links to export markets offers tremendous opportunities for Sri Lankan farmers to make the transition from subsistence to commercial farming.

The partnership with USAID has provided an incentive for Hayleys to expand its supply network in Ampara and Moneragala and develop a new relationship with farmers in the East.

For more details on USAID stories visit : <http://srilanka.usaid.gov>



USAID and LOLC enter agreement to benefit Eastern farmers and small businesses.



Rebecca Cohn, USAID Mission Director, and Kapila Jayawardana, Group Managing Director of LOLC, agrees on scheme to benefit Eastern farmers and small businesses. (USAID photo)

September 18, 2008: The US Mission to Sri Lanka, through USAID/Sri Lanka, signed a portable guarantee agreement of \$ 5 million with Lanka Orix Leasing Company (LOLC), which will serve as a catalyst for LOLC to introduce new financial products in conflict zones as

lending while benefiting eastern businesses, which would be able to access micro loans or leasing at a reasonable interest," USAID Mission Director Ms. Rebecca Cohn said at the signing ceremony. In thanking her, Kapila Jayawardana, Group Managing Director of LOLC told her that, "The guarantee would mitigate the risks for LOLC and increase the access to finance for borrowers in Eastern and neighboring districts."

LOLC plans to use at least \$4 million to on-lend to entrepreneurs in conflict-affected areas in the Eastern Province. The remaining proceeds will be on-lent in the bordering districts of Polonnaruwa, Monaragala and Badulla.

USAID's public private partnership with LOLC will expand lending in the underserved eastern region, and also enable businesses to access loans or leases at a competitive interest rate. The USAID guarantee will be effective for three years from October 1, 2008, to September 30, 2011.

well as leverage additional private financing.

"USAID believes that this agreement will help LOLC to expand its agriculture and microfinance

Native American, British traditions

This world was an arena of constant battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, a formidable enemy with many disguises.

Scholars have long pointed out the link between Puritanism and capitalism: Both rest on ambition, hard work, and an intense striving for success. Although individual Puritans could not know, in strict theological terms, whether they were "saved" and among the elect who would go to heaven, Puritans tended to feel that earthly success was a sign of election. Wealth and status were sought not only for themselves, but as welcome reassurances of spiritual health and promises of eternal life.

Moreover, the concept of stewardship encouraged success. The Puritans felt that in advancing their own profit and their community's well-being, they were also furthering God's plans. The great model of writing, belief, and conduct was the Bible, in an

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authorized English translation. The great antiquity of the Bible made it authoritative to Puritan eyes.

As the 1600s wore on into the 1700s, religious dogmatism gradually dwindled, despite sporadic, harsh Puritan efforts to stem the tide of tolerance. The spirit of toleration and religious freedom that gradually grew in the American colonies was first established in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, home of the Quakers. The humane and tolerant Quakers, or "Friends," as they were known, believed in the sacredness of the individual conscience as the fountainhead of social order and morality. The fundamental Quaker belief in universal love and brotherhood made them deeply democratic and opposed to dogmatic religious authority. Driven out of strict Massachusetts, which feared their influence, they established a very successful colony, Pennsylvania, under William Penn in 1681. *Source: www.america.gov*

US Embassy joins Room to

The organization also has a Local Language Publishing program through which they commission and publish multi-lingual children's books from promising young authors. Room to

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Read Sri Lanka has been celebrating International Literacy Day through similar training programs since 2006.

Every Tuesday at 6.00pm

October 2008 – Great Literature

October 7 - The Wizard of Oz (1939, 101 minutes)

The third and definitive film adaptation of L. Frank Baum's 1900 children's fantasy, this musical adventure is a genuine family classic that made Judy Garland a star for her heartfelt performance as Dorothy Gale, an orphaned young girl unhappy with her drab black-and-white existence on her aunt and uncle's dusty Kansas farm. Dorothy yearns to travel "over the rainbow" to a different world, and she gets her wish when a tornado whisks her and her little dog, Toto, to the Technicolorful land of Oz. Having offended the Wicked Witch of the West (Margaret Hamilton), Dorothy is protected from the old crone's wrath by the ruby slippers that she wears. At the suggestion of Glinda, the Good Witch of the North (Billie Burke), Dorothy heads down the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, where dwells the all-powerful Wizard of Oz, who might be able to help the girl return to Kansas.

Won 2 Oscars. Another 4 wins & 8 nominations

October 15 - Gone with the Wind (1939, 222 minutes)

Gone With the Wind boils down to a story about a spoiled Southern girl's hopeless love for a married man. Producer David O. Selznick managed to expand this concept, and Margaret Mitchell's best-selling novel, into nearly four hours' worth of screen time, on a then-astronomical 3.7-million-dollar budget, creating what would become one of the most beloved movies of all time. Gone With the Wind opens in April of 1861, at the palatial Southern estate of Tara, where Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) hears that her casual beau Ashley Wilkes (Leslie Howard) plans to marry "mealy mouthed" Melanie Hamilton (Olivia de Havilland). Despite warnings from her father (Thomas Mitchell) and her faithful servant Mammy (Hattie McDaniel), Scarlett intends to throw herself at Ashley at an upcoming barbecue at Twelve Oaks. Alone with Ashley, she goes into a fit of histrionics, all of which is witnessed by roguish Rhett Butler (Clark Gable), the black sheep of a wealthy Charleston family, who is instantly fascinated by the feisty, thoroughly self-centered Scarlett: "We're bad lots, both of us."

Won 8 Oscars. Another 6 wins & 5 nominations

October 21 - The Grapes of Wrath (1940, 129 minutes)

The adaptation of Nobel Prize-winner John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of dirt-poor Dust Bowl migrants by 4-time Oscar-winning director John Ford starred Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, who opens the movie returning to his Oklahoma home after serving jail time for manslaughter. En route, Tom meets family friend Casey (John Carradine), a former preacher who warns Tom that dust storms, crop failures, and new agricultural methods have financially decimated the once prosperous Oklahoma farmland. Upon returning to his family farm, Tom is greeted by his mother (Oscar-winner Jane Darwell), who tells him that the family is packing up for the "promised land" of California. Warned that they shouldn't expect a warm welcome in California--they've already seen the caravan of dispirited farmers, heading back home after striking out at finding work--the Joads push on all the same.

Won 2 Oscars. Another 5 wins & 5 nominations

October 28 - The Great Gatsby (1974, 144 minutes)

This third film version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic 1925 novel was one of the most hyped movies of the summer of 1974. Robert Redford stars as self-made millionaire Jay Gatsby, who uses his vast (and implicitly ill-gotten) fortune to buy his way into Long Island society. Most of all, Gatsby wants to win back the love of socialite Daisy Buchanan (Mia Farrow), now married to "old money" Tom Buchanan (Bruce Dern). Calmly observing the passing parade is Nick Carraway (Sam Waterston), Gatsby's best friend, who narrates the film.

Won 2 Oscars. Another 5 wins & 3 nominations

