

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



**A**n Indian woman attends a U.S. university on a sports scholarship? Why not? A math and science whiz with U.S. colleges beating down his door picks the one that will let him take poetry and piano classes? A young woman considering the medical field spends her first four university years reading only the world's great books? Some of the brightest and best American graduates put off engineering, business, medical and legal career paths so they can teach at the country's neediest schools for two years? What's going on? It's the new world of different choices and different roads to education. And we are celebrating this diversity of ideas and opportunities with articles by young Indians and Americans in SPAN's annual education-focused issue.

Americans and Indians share a passionate commitment to education. We realize it opens all the doors of the future for us, our children and our nations. We believe it is desirable that every child is educated and yet, in both of our countries, that is not yet happening. This is why we've opened this issue with articles on the Teach For America program, which has its counterpart in the recently born Teach For India. The program lures graduates with top academic credentials to compete against each other for the chance to share their valuable knowledge with kids who have had fewer opportunities. To give back to their country, to gain some maturity before making major life choices, to learn something different about conditions outside their experience and to impact someone else in a positive way are among the attractions. Wendy Kopp developed the idea for Teach For America as part of her senior thesis at Princeton University, then got corporate and philanthropic sponsors, and help from a governmental organization, Americorps. She is sharing these new approaches as a member of the executive board of Teach For India.

We explore another kind of alternate route in "America's Oddball Museums" and "Roadside Curiosities," travel articles written with humor by Lauren Monsen. The road trip, an icon of American culture representing the enjoyment of space and freedom, is celebrated in books, literature, poems and songs.

Americans are about to make some big choices on who will be running our government for the next four years. To acquaint you with the two principal candidates for president, Domenick DiPasquale has written profiles of John McCain and Barack Obama, while Michelle Austein has explained the history of vice presidents, and Caitlin Fennerty tells about the roles of Indian Americans in the elections to be held in November.

We hope you'll read all the articles in SPAN, and let us know which ones you like best and why. Send us your comments on the card just before this page and you might win a prize!