

# Word from the stacks...

## Being Informed During an Election Year

by Robert "Buck" Berry  
Research Librarian for the Social  
Sciences

Election years vividly highlight the importance of being well informed about public policy. It is the hallmark of our democracy that we, the people, are "the primary control on the government," to borrow a phrase from James Madison's Federal number 51. National elections, particularly, make us mindful of the importance of our political role. These events are our opportunity to select responsible leaders; leaders who will represent our diverse interests ably, draft our laws intelligently, respond to crises effectively, and participate responsibly in the community of nations.

Our governments, state and national, identify an informed electorate as an interest of vital importance. Constitutional guarantees of free speech and of a free press go far to promote an informed electorate. But our governments have not stopped there. They have also undertaken a wide variety of specific statutory measures to ensure that voters can be fully informed about the operation of government and about the issues their governments address.

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 was enacted specifically because "[a] democratic society requires an informed, intelligent electorate." The 89<sup>th</sup> Congress had recognized a need to rebalance the "right of the public to know" and the "need

of the Government to keep information in confidence" in some limited circumstances. S. Rep. No. 813, 89th Cong., 1st Sess. (1965), *reprinted at* 1966 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2418, 2423, 2429. The Freedom of Information Act has had a major impact in ensuring public access to governmental records. States have followed the 1966 Act and enacted their own freedom of information laws.

Federal statutes and regulations have also been passed that require broadcasters to provide reasonable access to the airwaves for "legally qualified

*"While few of us have the time to become policy experts, some specific knowledge of salient policy debates is an essential aspect of making an informed choice in the voting booth."*

candidate[s] for federal elective office." The limits of such a provision, 47 U.S.C. §312, were sorely tested when the Carter-Mondale Presidential Committee asked three major television networks to provide time—between 8:00 and 10:30 p.m. on any day from December 4 through December 7 of 1979—for a 30-minute documentary outlining Carter's presidency. The stations refused and the FCC found they had violated federal law. The Supreme Court subsequently upheld the agency's ruling.

CBS v. FCC, 453 U.S. 367 (1981).

There are, of course, many more laws touching on education, transparency in governmental decision making, and so on, that, in their various ways, foster an informed electorate. This impressive foundation of constitutional guarantees complemented with specific laws does not, in and of

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itself, ensure the soundness of our democracy. Responsibility ultimately resides with the voter to cast an informed ballot.

There are many ways of becoming and staying politically informed, but few are as convenient as regularly reading a newspaper with high editorial standards and comprehensive coverage of major political issues. *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post* are three that come readily to mind. All three are available at Ryan-Matura Library in databases that support searching for specific topics. *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* are also available in print.

The World Wide Web provides an opportunity to explore how different news organizations—with varying editorial perspectives—deal with salient issues. Compare the coverage of an important issue on [Fox News](http://www.foxnews.com) (available at <http://www.foxnews.com>), [MSNBC](http://www.msnbc.msn.com) (available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com>), [CNN](http://www.cnn.com) (available at <http://www.cnn.com>), and [The Pacifica Radio Network](http://www.election411.org) (available at <http://www.election411.org>), for instance. Ask yourself which of these organizations elevates entertainment interests over accurate and balanced journalism. Ask, also, which of these organizations elevates ideological interests over accurate and fair reporting.

There is also a wealth of directly relevant information published by governments on the World Wide Web. [GPO Access](http://www.gpoaccess.gov) (available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov>) provides information from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. GPO Access, for instance, provides access to bills, statutes, and the *Congressional Record*, all of which are valuable sources for examining the specifics of federal policy. For example, if one wanted to discover whether Representative Henry Waxman (D. Cal.) has taken a position on defense contracts, one could search the Congressional Record for the current Congress using a query such as: *Waxman AND "defense contracts"*. After reviewing a few search results one would see that Representative Waxman formulated an amendment to a bill entitled the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009. Waxman's amendment "requires agencies to enhance competition in contracting; limits the use of abuse-prone contracts; rebuilds the federal acquisition workforce; strengthens anti-fraud measures; and increases transpar-



1948 Presidential candidate and Governor of New York Thomas E. Dewey (center) welcomed home after a campaign tour. Thomas J. Curran, Manhattan GOP leader, is on the left. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division / World-Telegram photo by Palumbo, 1948.

ency in federal contracting." 154 CONG. REC. D657 (daily ed. May 22, 2008). While not every candidate is a member of Congress, a basic knowledge of the salient debates in Congress will allow you to analyze the statements of candidates in the context of those debates.

A very useful non-governmental site called [GovTrack](http://www.govtrack.us) (available at <http://www.govtrack.us>) will allow you to quickly check the status of federal bills, look at the voting records of members of Congress, or find information on members of Congress. Another useful tool is [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (available at <http://www.regulations.gov>), which includes proposed regulations that are open for public comment, final regulations (which are closed for comment), as well as related documents such as federal agency notices, supporting materials, public comments, and federal agency guidance & adjudications. Yet another source for policy information can be found in the reports issued by the [Government Accountability Office](http://www.gao.gov) (available at <http://www.gao.gov>). The GAO carries out investigations on behalf of Congress. A search for information on our previous example, defense contracts, produces a 2007 report entitled "[Defense Contract Management: DOD's Lack of Adherence to Key Contracting Principles on Iraq Oil Contract Put Government Interests at Risk](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07839.pdf)" (available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07839.pdf>).

While few of us have the time to become policy experts, some specific knowledge of salient policy debates is an essential aspect of making an informed choice in the voting booth. The alternative is to cast a vote based on the superficial and dangerous grounds of ideology, candidate personality, or baseless assumption. Happily basic policy research is inherently interesting and deeply enriching. As the election draws near, readers may also want to consult some of the public opinion tracking sites, such as [Gallup's Political and Government](http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx) site (available at <http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>), the Roper Center's [US Presidential Election 2008](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu) site (available at <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>), and KQED's [Election 2008](http://www.kqed.org/news/election) site (available at <http://www.kqed.org/news/election>), which features an election map.

### Word from the Stacks...

**Editor:**

Lylah Franco

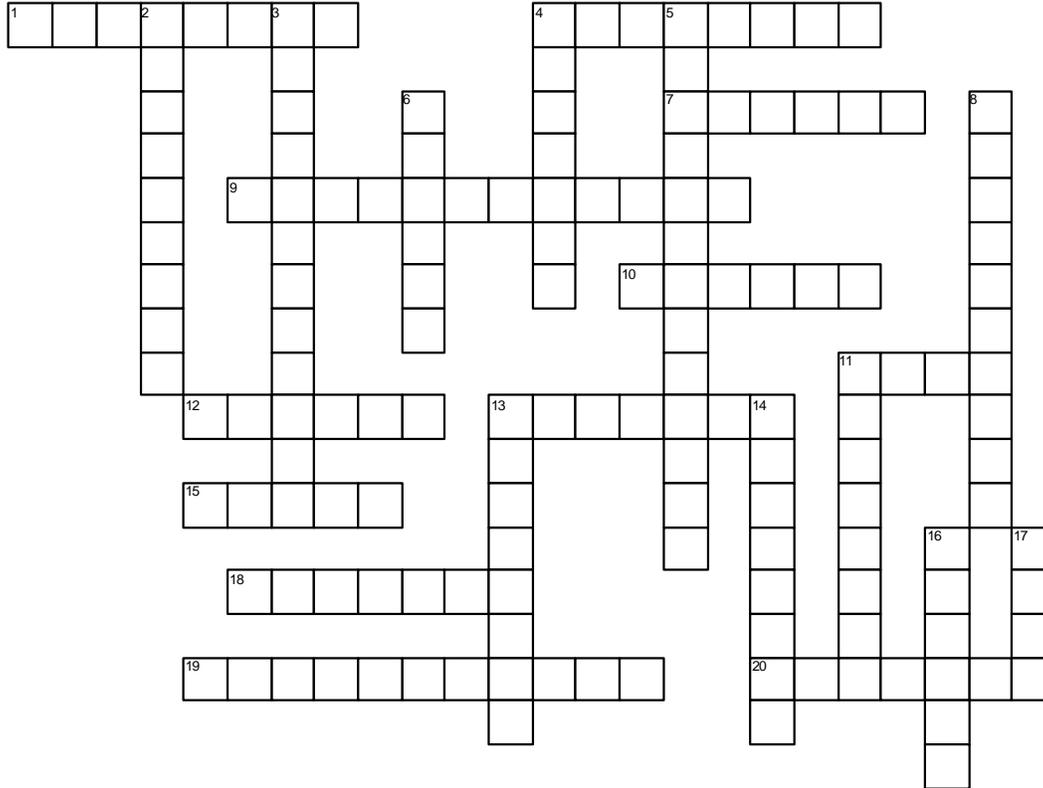
**Design & Layout:**

Lylah Franco

**Committee Members:**

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Kim Macomber  
& Dr. Gavin Ferriby

# Word From the Stacks Crossword Puzzle: SHU Trivia



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

## ACROSS

- 1 Sacred Heart University athletic teams are known as the \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Sacred Heart University started out as this type of school in 1963
- 7 the last name of SHU's first President
- 9 the name of the learning center
- 10 the name of SHU's mascot (2 words)
- 11 the name of the athletic center
- 12 this will be dedicated in the Fall of 2008
- 13 this type of transportation is provided between SHU's main campus and Cambridge, Oakview, the Mall, etc.
- 15 the College of Business was named after this man
- 18 the original purpose of the Administration Building
- 19 the name of the coffee house in Christian Witness Commons (2 words)
- 20 the name of the original school newspaper

## DOWN

- 2 the name of the high school that occupied the original SHU buildings (2 words)
- 3 this dorm is named after Pope John XX111 (2 words)
- 4 the last name of SHU's current president
- 5 club that learns about various aspects of the legal system (3 words)
- 6 Sacred Heart University was founded in 1963 by this Bishop
- 8 the name of the library (2 words)
- 11 the name of the yearbook
- 13 the name of the current school newspaper
- 14 the name of the theater
- 16 the name of the auditorium
- 17 the name of the food service provider

This issue's puzzle was created by *Kim Macomber*.

For the solution to the **Banned Books** puzzle from the last issue of the newsletter turn to page 7.

## Book Notes: The Image Factor



By Lylah Franco

The first time I voted in a United States presidential election was in 1992. It was Bill Clinton's first campaign and he ran against the incumbent, George H. W. Bush. Clinton, the first presidential candidate from the "Baby Boomer" generation, was also the first candidate to appear on MTV and popular talk shows like the *Arsenio Hall Show*. It's interesting to ask how much this had to do with Clinton's sound defeat of the aging and uncool Bush, although a certain unkept promise about "no new taxes" was definitely a deciding factor.

The first presidential election of which I have clear memories was in 1980. A former governor of California and actor in Westerns named Ronald Reagan ran against the incumbent, Jimmy Carter, best known in the media as a peanut farmer from Georgia. Actor soundly defeated farmer, as we all know.

In both cases, to say image decided the election would be a great oversimplification. American voters were angry with both Bush and Carter for reasons that went beyond image. However, it is undeniable that media image has played an important role in each presidential election at least since the Kennedy-Nixon race in 1960, which featured the first televised presidential debates, and it's likely that image was important even before television. More recently, Al Gore and John Kerry both faced criticism for being too stiff and boring to make a good President! And most recently, Barack Obama has been criticized for being a

celebrity of the Britney Spears/Paris Hilton variety and John McCain for being "too old" (I won't even get into the mine field that is Hillary Clinton.)

When making a decision on who will benefit from your vote in a Presidential election, it is obviously important to look beyond image to substantive factors like the candidates' stands and voting records on various issues. Buck Berry's article on pages 1-2 of this newsletter provides an excellent starting point for becoming an informed voter.

It's also interesting to go a little deeper and research the role of the media in politics and public opinion. Ryan-Matura Library can provide relevant resources for those who wish to study this topic.

### The Media and Politics at Ryan-Matura Library

*American Politics in the Media Age*  
by Thomas R. Dye, Harmon Zeigler and S. Robert Lichter; Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1992

*Do the Media Govern?: Politicians, Voters and Reporters in America*  
edited by Shanto Iyengar and Richard Reeves; Sage Publications, 1997

*Mass Media and American Politics*  
by Doris A. Graber; CQ Press, 1984

*The Media and Politics*  
edited by Paul A. Winters; Greenhaven Press, 1996

*The Media in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Campaigns*  
edited by Guido H. Stempel III and John W. Windhauser; Greenwood Press, 1991

*Presidential Polls and the News Media*  
edited by Paul J. Lavrakas, Michael W. Traugott and Peter V. Miller; Westview Press, 1995

*The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-First Century*

by Robert W. McChesney; Monthly Review Press, 2004

*Speech Rights in America: The First Amendment, Democracy, and the Media*  
by Laura Stein; University of Illinois Press, 2004

*Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as a Political Institution*  
by Bartholomew H. Sparrow; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999

### Related Materials

*A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People*  
by Gary C. Jacobson; Pearson Longman, 2007

*Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine*  
by Howard Kurtz; Free Press, 1998

*The Press and the Bush Presidency*  
by Mark J. Rozell; Praeger, 1996 (ebook)

*On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency*  
by Mark Hertsgaard; Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988

*Blue Smoke and Mirrors: How Reagan Won and Why Carter Lost the Election of 1980*  
by Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover; Viking, 1981

*Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes*  
edited by Stanley I. Kutler; Simon & Schuster, 1998

*The Kennedy Obsession: The American Myth of JFK*  
by John Hellmann; Columbia University Press, 1997

*Lylah Franco is Acquisitions Assistant at Ryan-Matura Library. She has a BA in English from Southern Connecticut State University and a Graduate Certificate in Finance from SHU.*

## Ryan-Matura Library on the Web



By Patrick Gavin

Coinciding with the start of the Spring 08 semester, the Ryan-Matura library launched a new site for its home on the web. The web site was a necessary first step in allowing the library greater control over its online content and the organization of that information. The new site, however, was just the first in a number of new applications, resources, and technologies that the library plans to roll out to help the university community better realize their scholarly goals. In order to foster an online community in the library, a library blog that reviews recent book purchases, DVDs, and useful web sites has been created:

<http://sacredheartlibrary.wordpress.com/>.

The four research librarians each maintain a blog that corresponds or relates to research in his or her respective fields:

Arts and Humanities:

<http://shumanities.wordpress.com/>

Business:

<http://shubizblog.wordpress.com/>

Health Sciences:

<http://healthsciencelibrariansblog.blogspot.com/>

Social and Behavioral Sciences:

<http://bwck.wordpress.com/>



While the reference desk is an essential fixture in libraries and provides general research help, each of the research librarians can be reached by email, phone, and now online chat, should you have a question relating to research in a specific field. A chat box can be found on the respective pages for each of the research librarians (links to these pages can be found on the contact, or Ask-A-Librarian page), on their blogs, and on any libguides that they produce.



What is a libguide? Well, I'm glad you asked.

This summer, the library has purchased a subscription to Springshare's Libguides as a platform for presenting the library's subject guides, course-specific guides, and pathfinders. These new guides offer users the opportunity to rate suggested resources and to provide comments that are visible to all. The ability to provide comments and, in some guides, to suggest a resource that will immediately become a part of the guide, allows our library's users to communicate more easily with each other and to become more active in the research process. This platform also allows for better integration with facebook and blackboard as widgets can be produced from guides and dropped into these systems. The most useful aspect of these guides, though, just might be their ability to be used as course-specific research guides. Interested professors should contact their librarian directly to arrange for the creation of any specific guides. Whether you're a student, staff-member, faculty, or simply some interested unaffiliated web surfer, please look for the announcement about Libguides on the library's home page and become an active contributor to these guides as they grow in number and complexity over the coming semesters and beyond.

*Patrick Gavin is Research Librarian for the Arts and Humanities at Ryan-Matura Library. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University, a Master of Arts from Western Michigan University, and an MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh. In his spare time, Patrick enjoys cycling, hiking, reading, writing, and exploring the world with his wife, son, and trusty dog, Zelda.*

## News from the Health Sciences Librarian



By Ellen Burchill Brassil

It's great to be here at Sacred Heart's Ryan-Matura Library working with other information professionals and a wonderful community of students and faculty while we're focusing on the start of the 2008-2009 academic year. As the newest member of the Library's Research Services Department, my area of responsibility encompasses all facets of health sciences related information, including biology, health and disease and the non-clinical aspects of health care. Given the exponential growth and huge volume of scientific information and medical literature, my job is to work with students and faculty to help them connect with the most relevant and accurate information available.

My past experience is in a variety of health sciences settings, including hospital, research and academic medical center libraries, where over the years I have worked with pharmacists, physicians, nurses, health care administrators, and allied health professionals and students. My background includes a bachelor's degree from Drew University and a Masters from Simmons College. I also am a Senior Member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals and am President of the Connecticut Association of Health Sciences Librarians. I help keep up with research and practice in my field as book review editor for the *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries* and serving on the editorial board for the journal *Medical*

*Reference Services Quarterly*.

Given the high stakes of medical information, where incorrect or insufficient information can literally mean the difference between life and death, I promote the use of evidence-based information as well as having a plan for lifelong learning and staying current with new advances in the health fields. Fortunately for everyone, new information technologies makes it easier to directly access reliable information, even at the point of care – and the Ryan Matura Library here at Sacred Heart recognizes the importance of teaching our library users how to use both traditional and emerging technologies to support their information needs.

I encourage all interested students and faculty to contact me with suggestions for new materials, to ask for assistance with online searching, research topics or planning information literacy activities and classroom presentations. Stay tuned for updates posted on my upcoming library blog, or news of resources appearing in LibGuides available through the library's Web site. I look forward to telling you more about our resources and hope you'll stop by the library soon.

*Ellen Brassil is Research Librarian for the Health Sciences and Biology. Ellen holds degrees from Drew University and Simmons College, and is a Senior Member of the Medical Library Association's Academy of Health Information Professionals. She has many years experience working in academic medical libraries and as Library Director in several teaching hospitals. Ellen serves as President of the Connecticut Association of Health Sciences Librarians, and as a member of the New England Regional Advisory Council of the National Network of Medical Libraries. She has published in journals and books and is contributing book review editor for the Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries. Ellen has volunteered for her community's public television station and local youth hockey organizations, and was elected twice to the West Hartford Board of Education.*

### Fall Hours & Numbers

**Monday - Thursday** 8:00 AM - Midnight  
**Friday** 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
**Saturday** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
**Sunday** 12:30 PM - Midnight

**For more information, please call:**  
Reference desk: x7726 (203-371-7726)  
Circulation desk: x7702 (203-371-7702)

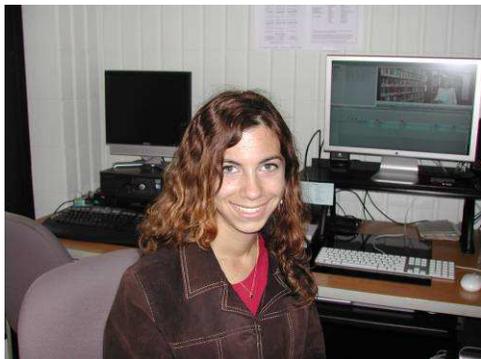
**For a list of special hours please visit our website at**  
[http://www.sacredheart.edu/pages/232\\_ryan\\_matura\\_library.cfm](http://www.sacredheart.edu/pages/232_ryan_matura_library.cfm)

### Cambridge Branch Hours & Numbers

**Monday** 1:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
**Tuesday** 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
**Wednesday** 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
**Thursday** 1:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
**Friday** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
**Saturday** Noon - 4:00 PM  
**Sunday** Closed

**For more information, please call:**  
Cambridge desk: x4872 (203-365-4872)

## New Faces Around the Library



**Alyssa Ferdinando** recently joined the staff of the Office of Instructional Technology as our new Digital Library/Multimedia Specialist. Alyssa is a Sacred Heart alumnus, graduating with a B.A. in Media Studies in 2008. With her degree and background, Alyssa brings her talents in digital media production to the OIT. Alyssa's responsibilities include providing front-line support for students enrolled in online courses at Sacred Heart through the Digital Learning Support Line and the OIT website, as well as consultation to SHU faculty interested in employing digital media in their courses. Alyssa's office is located in the OIT Lab (Ryan-Matura Library, Main Level, L202). Please stop by and say hello if you are in the building.



**Kara Turman** has joined the staff of Ryan-Matura Library as our Evening Circulation Assistant. Kara graduated from Xavier University of Louisiana in 2004 with a Bachelor's degree in English. She is currently enrolled in the Library Science program at Southern Connecticut State University and is also completing courses towards her Master's Degree in English at Fairfield University. Kara is responsible for maintaining our "stacks," the shelves where we house all of our books, media, and periodicals. Kara also supervises Student Library Assistants, checks materials in and out, and maintains our high level of service in the Circulation Department at night. You can find Kara behind the Circulation Desk Sunday through Thursday, 4 p.m. to midnight. Please stop by and say hello.

### Last Issue's Crossword Puzzle Solution

**Across:** 1) Fahrenheit 451 4) Mitchell 6) Willy Wonka 8) Twain 10) Terabithia 15) Anne 17) Solzhenitsyn 18) Shakespeare 19) worms 20) Rushdie  
**Down:** 2) American Heritage 3) Bolsheviks 5) Lee 7) Giant Peach 9) Pentagon Papers 11) Harry Potter 12) Sycatcher 13) Penguin 14) Hoffman 16) Holden

### Editorial Policy

#### Submission of articles or opinion letters:

All submissions of articles or opinion letters must be sent to the editor via e-mail at

[franco@sacredheart.edu](mailto:franco@sacredheart.edu) for publishing consideration.

Submissions must be received by deadline date to be considered for upcoming publication.

Space availability will be considered when deciding whether to incorporate an article. Byline of the author submitting article or opinion letter will be published.

Submissions without bylines will not be published.

Any submissions by a group or a committee must have all the members' names on the piece.

#### Content:

Submitted articles can deal with any number of issues either controversial or not.

The editor reserves the right to deem an article inappropriate for publication, if it is used for personal attacks or complaints.

The editor also reserves the right to edit either the style or length of any submitted article.

### Need to Know!!!

Do your students have problems finding the resources necessary to produce a well-written and researched paper?

Do you have a personal research need that could use the touch of an information professional?

Do you wish you knew just a little bit more about how to navigate resources on the web or in the library?

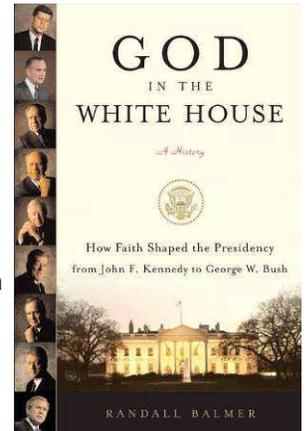
The Reference Desk at the Ryan-Matura Library stands at the ready to assist you and your students with any of your research needs. Call us at (203) 371-7726 or email us at [reference@sacredheart.edu](mailto:reference@sacredheart.edu)

## Coming Soon to Ryan-Matura Library



### Randall Balmer

On September 24<sup>th</sup> the Ryan-Matura Library, the Government and Politics Department, and the College of Arts and Sciences will co-sponsor a discussion/book signing event. The guest speaker will be Randall Balmer, author of *God in the White House*. Mr. Balmer's presentation will consist of giving his audience a tour of presidential religiosity in the last half of the twentieth century. He asks, "How did we go from John F. Kennedy declaring that religion should play no role in the elections to Bush saying, 'I believe that God wants me to be president'?" (Quote taken from <http://www.harpercollins.com/books>)



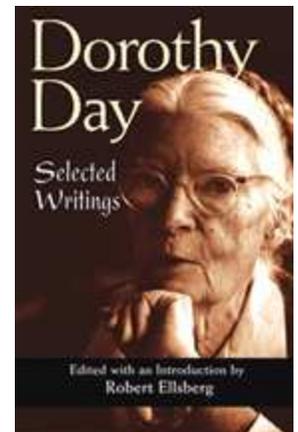
Randall Balmer is Professor of American History at Barnard College, Columbia University, and visiting professor at Yale University Divinity School. He is editor-at-large for *Christianity Today*, and his commentaries on religion in America have appeared in *Sojourners*, *The Nation*, the *New York Times*, and in newspapers across the country. He regularly appears on television and radio to discuss contemporary religious issues in America. Mr. Balmer has published eleven books, including *Thy Kingdom Come: An Evangelical's Lament* and *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, which was made into a three part documentary for PBS. He lives in Woodbury, Connecticut, with his wife, Catherine Randall, also a professor and author.

For further information or to reserve a seat for the event, please contact Renata Cioffi at 203-371-7700 or via email at [cioffim@sacredheart.edu](mailto:cioffim@sacredheart.edu) . Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the SHU Bookstore.



### Robert Ellsberg

On March 19, 2009 the Ryan-Matura Library, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Religious Studies Department, and the Center for Catholic Thought, Ethics and Culture will cosponsor a speaker event. The guest speaker will be Robert Ellsberg, editor at Orbis Books. Mr. Ellsberg is the editor of *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings*. On his visit he will discuss Dorothy Day's diaries, her works and his experience working with her. A review of the diaries can be found in *Commonweal* (135:6) pp. 12-16. A discussion with Mr. Ellsberg can be found at <http://ncrcafe.org/node/1580> .



Dorothy Day (1897-1980) cofounded the Catholic Worker movement in 1933, and remains an inspirational figure. She lived her life helping the poor and devoting her time to neutral pacifism.

For further information for this event, please contact Renata Cioffi at 203-371-7700 or via email at [cioffim@sacredheart.edu](mailto:cioffim@sacredheart.edu) . Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the SHU Bookstore in February 2009.