

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

MAY 2016



**THE NEXT ADVENTURE**  
LIFE AFTER THE FOREIGN SERVICE

**IDENTIFYING VITAL INTERESTS**



**ON POKHARA LAKE**



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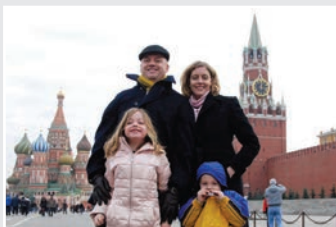
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# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

May 2016  
Volume 93, No. 4

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**On the Cover:** After the Foreign Service—clockwise, from top left: Brian Carlson, pilot, and his Cirrus SR-22 airplane; Juan Becerra, front left, on assignment as a re-employed annuitant in Brazzaville; Robert H. Curtis, at right, karate instructor; Diana Page, cook, reader and opinionated citizen resident in Maine and Chile, with her husband in the Atacama region of Chile; W. Gary Gray, United Nations official in East Timor; and, Deborah Hart, a certified permaculture designer and primal blueprint expert, doing volunteer work with Interfaith Food Shuttle. All photos courtesy of the named individuals. Some of the retired FS members pictured here do not have essays in this issue; their stories will appear in Part II of "What We're Doing Now" in the July-August *FSJ*.

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# Structuring the Conversation

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

Writing a year ago in the May 2015 edition of the *FSJ*, Director General Arnold Chacón described a vast and complicated foreign affairs landscape filled with a proliferation of actors and unprecedented threats—in short, a landscape that will require an American Foreign Service performing at the very top of its game.

“More than ever, we need the very best people: the ones who see past the horizon, who are curious, innovative, tenacious; who show initiative, judgment, resilience, adaptability and perseverance. We have always had those employees, but it’s more important than ever to attract and prepare a workforce for the future, bearing in mind that such attributes are often best learned and honed through real life experience,” he and co-author Alex Karagiannis wrote in one of the most-read *FSJ* articles of 2015.

I could not agree more, both with the DG’s assessment of the challenging environment and with the imperative that we continue to attract the best and brightest. I also agree that, for the most part, we learn best through real life experience.

Last month, I shared concerns about the potential impact of the increase in demand for consular adjudicators on the career path for new Foreign Service officers. We must never take for granted

the fact that each year more than 17,000 Americans compete for one of the fewer than 400 entry-level FSO positions available.



*Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.*

## These conversations will help fulfill my campaign promise to actively engage a broad range of members.

We must continue to attract and retain America’s best and brightest—and most committed—to carry out our vital and increasingly challenging mission.

AFSA has since weighed in with management in two letters. The first embraces the use of the limited non-career appointment (LNA) provisions of the Foreign Service Act as the best way to ensure State provides high-quality visa services while avoiding disruption of the career paths for new Foreign Service officers.

As the Bureau of Human Resources refines and improves the Consular Fellows program, more LNA consular adjudicators will come on board, alleviating the entry-level staffing gaps. For those struggling with the impact of these gaps, hang in there—relief is coming.

The second letter aligns AFSA firmly behind the Director General’s goal of ensuring that at least one of the first two tours for new FSOs be in cone.

AFSA believes that a strong Foreign Service in the 21st century requires a personnel system that continually produces a deep bench of experienced, seasoned leaders. We build that deep bench when officers gain on-the-job training, starting early in their careers—hence our strong support for “one tour in cone.”

Over the coming months, supported by the new Professional Policy Issues directorate at AFSA, I will be holding a

series of structured conversations to get a better understanding of how members are experiencing the Foreign Service.

Given concern from numerous quarters that it may be members in the mid-ranks whose commitment and engagement are most imperiled, we intend to begin the effort by engaging with that cadre.

These conversations will help fulfill my campaign promise to actively engage a broad range of members, not just wait to hear from you when you have a problem.

And turning to our seniors, this edition of the *FSJ* is devoted to life after the Foreign Service. One of the realities of our competitive, up-or-out Service is that some—maybe many—members reach time-in-service limits before they are fully ready to leave the Foreign Service.

I want to urge those facing these realities, which can feel harsh, to stay connected with AFSA after you leave active duty. Yes, AFSA can help you with networking and retiree benefits, and, yes, I hope you will participate in AFSA’s amped-up outreach efforts.

But most of all I want to encourage you to think of AFSA as your home base after your service, as the way you stay connected to the Foreign Service community. If you lose touch, we’ll miss you.

So for the sake of our community, your community, please stay involved and don’t be strangers. ■

# Here's to Life After the Foreign Service

BY SHAWN DORMAN

I begin with a spoiler alert for this special focus: There *is* life after the Foreign Service. This is true whether you leave before you have to or with the gentle nudge or push out the door on reaching age 65 or some earlier threshold you do not cross. The “up or out” system can be unkind (cruel?), but it can also lead to grand new opportunities whenever that “out” comes along. And, for those who stay in for 20 years, that afterlife is funded by a full pension. That is no small thing.

We begin with the practical, “Retirement Planning 101,” written by John Naland, a recent Foreign Service retiree and former AFSA president. As a former director of the Office of Retirement, John knows what he’s talking about, and shares valuable advice on what to consider when approaching retirement.

Then we move to the inspirational, hearing from recent retiree Dean Haas about his choice to leave early, while his Foreign Service career was still going strong, to pursue other passions and dreams. FS retiree Ann Sides shares her personal journey “From Consul General to Police Volunteer,” discovering—as many have—that consular career skills can be highly relevant for completely new lines of work.

Larry Cohen, a former AFSA vice president for retirees, explains how to play

the rehired annuitant game. What has long been known as WAE hiring (While Actually Employed)—a system for hiring Foreign



*Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.*

**We hope you’ll find inspiration in these stories, as well as some practical advice on how to navigate the post-FS waters.**

Service retirees for short-term (up to 1,040 hours in one year) assignments—is now named the Re-Employed Annuitant (REA) program. Many retirees find great employment options through this program—from working on declassification of documents or editing the annual Human Rights Report to serving as a temporary chargé or filling in on the visa line. The trick is that finding the jobs is just about completely based on your network and your relationship with a home bureau.

In a close look at a growing trend—aging in place—journalist Martha Thomas tells us about community-based “Villages” around the United States in which volunteers support people who want to stay in their homes as they age. These Villages can be an excellent fit for FS retirees who decide they want to “never move again.”

We are excited to share Part I of “Life After the Foreign Service: What We’re Doing Now,” a compilation of responses to our request for input from former Foreign Service members. In this issue, we share 25 of the 45 essays, and will feature more in an upcoming issue. I offer sincere thanks for the generosity with which members of our community have shared their stories and their advice for fellow travelers.

We celebrate those who have served in the U.S. Foreign Service and who continue to serve in so many ways in retirement. We sail off to sea with Edmund Hull, pilot a

plane with Brian Carlson and protect wild horses with Charlotte Roe. We become mayors and attorneys and disaster relief workers and consultants and volunteers and academics and writers. We hope you’ll find inspiration in these stories, as well as some practical advice on how to navigate the post-FS waters.

Elsewhere in the issue, retired FSO Raymond Smith (another sailor) speaks out on U.S. policy toward Syria and the so-called Islamic State group. In “Hippocrates and Hobbes, Assad and ISIS,” he argues that for other than life-and-death matters, the Hippocratic oath might be a better guide to foreign policy than the urge to do good.

And, in another take on the problems of foreign assistance, retired USAID FSO Barry Hill shows the benefits of involving agribusiness and trade associations in agricultural development work in Africa.

In an extended Reflection, retired FSO Jeffrey Glassman takes us to a forgotten cemetery in Vienna. We’ve loosened the word-count limit on Reflections to allow for longer essays and the inclusion of photos, and we’re looking for more of them. Please send your 650- to 1,200-word Reflection to [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

Next month, we take a dive into corruption as a foreign policy issue and open a window on the subject of support for FS kids with special needs. As always, we welcome your feedback. ■



## Protecting the Career Path

Thanks to Ambassador Barbara Stephenson for her March column (“Protecting the Career Path”). Nice job!

I support her efforts to protect “the Foreign Service from anything that erodes this unique competitive advantage.”

I take great pride in telling people that I am a Foreign Service officer, and that pride has been a great motivator throughout my 16-year career. Keep up the good work.

*Roy Perrin*

*FSO*

*Deputy Consul General*

*Consulate General Erbil*

## Nontoxic Workplaces

If Morgan Liddick’s March letter to the editor is right in saying that the vision of the Foreign Service as a “collegial service of intelligent, creative people working together” is inaccurate, then neither do I recognize it as a “toxic workplace.”

Our working environments are all different, and given the assignment process we usually don’t get to choose our superiors or they us. Yet most of my supervisors were supportive, wrote reasonably constructive EERs and focused on getting the job done.

I did not expect (or get) constant expressions of appreciation for doing my job or worry about petty office intrigues (yes, there were some). Differences with my bosses were usually aired—and then we moved on.

Also, thank you for the March articles on women in the Foreign Service. Things have improved a lot in recent decades, but sexism isn’t dead yet.

*Bonnie Lincoln*

*FSO, retired*

*Fort Myers, Florida*

## Leadership Tips for All

I found Erin Soto’s March article, “Ten Leadership Tips for Aspiring Women,” packed with wise career recommendations for both women and men.

However, I believe that addressing it specifically to women perpetuates the gender differences that the Foreign Service is trying to eliminate as if, somehow, men do not need the advice.

A more inclusive title would have been better, something like, “Ten Leadership Tips for Aspiring Entrepreneurs.”

*Rosi Duenas*

*Foreign Service family member*

*Windhoek, Namibia*

## Mental Health Care Beginnings

I read with interest Dr. Sam Thielman’s article in the January-February *Journal*, “The Evolution of State’s Mental Health Services.” He is correct that the overseas program began in Kabul in 1974 with the assignment of Dr. Richard Westmaas, and that the success of Dr. Westmaas’ work there sparked the inauguration of the regional mental health program.

But Dr. Thielman does not mention the originator of the program, Dr. Frank Pettinga. He was assigned to Kabul in 1973 as the medical officer serving a large official American family of more than 600 people, including men, women and children.

I was then our ambassador there, and Dr. Pettinga asked me if I would support his plea to the State Department that a mental health specialist be posted to Kabul to help with the plethora of mental health issues facing this community.

We had a good discussion that resulted in his sending his recommendation to Washington with my support. Dr. Westmaas’ assignment was the result.

Frank Pettinga had a distinguished Foreign Service career, including as direc-

tor of State’s Bureau of Medical Services.

In 1979, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance presided over a ceremony at the State Department celebrating the new mental health program, which can be viewed on YouTube at [bit.ly/1MNI8M](http://bit.ly/1MNI8M).

I should add that another wonderful consequence of Dr. Westmaas’ assignment to Afghanistan was that his daughter and my son, classmates at the American International School of Kabul, met there and a few years later married.

Dr. Westmaas died on April 2, 2016, at his home in Cadillac, Michigan.

*Theodore L. Eliot Jr.*

*Ambassador, retired*

*Sonoma, California*

## Remembering Sam Lewis

It is an unusual honor, indeed, when a retired American ambassador is praised by a constituent of the country in which he served, as my friend Sam Lewis was praised in the January-February *FSJ* by Israeli professor Yoav Tenenbaum (“Samuel Lewis in Israel, 1977-1985”).

But then Israel is an unusual country for American diplomats, and Israelis have a longer memory than many others.

I served under Walworth “Wally” Barbour, the longest-serving American ambassador to Israel, in the mid-1960s. Barbour stayed for 11 years, but Sam Lewis’ eight are still an amazing stretch.

I remember Sam as the strongest student in our class at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies in the early 1950s. He made it clear in his oral history interview that he actively sought assignments (e.g., in USAID economic development) that would prepare him for a wider role in diplomacy.

On one such occasion, after I had returned from my service in Israel, he asked me to include him in a lunch so that he could meet someone then working on

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Arab-Israeli affairs in the White House.

Sam went as ambassador to Israel just as the right wing led by Menachem Begin made its historic breakthrough, winning the 1977 general election. His advice that the United States would be wiser to treat Begin with honey rather than vinegar was par for the course for any new ambassador facing an unprecedented new government.

And, no matter how critical some of Sam's Arabist colleagues may have been, that was probably the only viable course given the American political scene.

Finally, I applaud Professor Tenenbaum's obvious affection for Sam, whom he describes as "warm, accessible and charming."

Those sentiments are shared by Sam's many friends, myself included. When Sam volunteered as "producer" on the Christmas play I was directing at SAIS, a friendship with him and his loving wife, Sallie, began that continued through the years until his truly untimely death.

*George B. Lambrakis*  
Senior FSO, retired  
Paris, France

## Evaluating Public Diplomacy Programs

In his December Speaking Out, "Proving Public Diplomacy Programs Work," James Rider makes very important points about measuring outcomes and not (only) output (i.e., process measures).

His recommendations about needing to increase evaluations and carry out some reorganization are also appropriate. I hope someone (from the administration and from congressional appropriations committees) is listening and acting.

However, the evaluations described by Rider fail to have any "controls." Without that there is only a before/after measure of the action or intervention, and no comparison to similar areas or situations where

no intervention/action was attempted.

Take the example of testing a new drug: one looks at the before and after in the study population vs. a group that has been given a placebo. One may be able to show "improvement" of patients from use of the drug in the study population; but is that better than doing nothing, or using some other existing medication?

I know that a diplomatic "intervention" is not the same as taking a pill, and that it is not typically feasible to have "all other things controlled or identical" except for the diplomatic intervention in a group.

But speaking as a specialist in the sociology of organizations, the study of program evaluation and organization change, I believe that it should be considered.

*Coralie Farlee*  
Organizational Sociologist  
Washington, D.C.

## Love As an Alibi

In 1989, when I was editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*, we received the devastating news that an FSO named Felix Bloch was being accused of espionage. The story broke on the July 21, 1989, broadcast of ABC Nightly News, with John McWethy reporting from the lobby of the State Department, foreign flags hanging in the background.

Within days, ABC was castigated for offering as real photojournalism a simulated video of one man handing over a briefcase to another, both later revealed to have been ABC News employees. Though the network apologized for its ethical lapse, the leaked allegation of espionage was not similarly decried.

Instead, the American public was regaled with hypotheticals to explain why the FSO had spied, with "allegedly" often dropped from the question.

One explanation dangled was disgruntlement over being bypassed for promo-



tion. A July 30, 1989, *Los Angeles Times* article offered that “Bloch was disappointed that his prospects for being named an ambassador seemed slim.”

Discussing personnel dissatisfaction was nothing new at AFSA in 1989, but hearing it offered as a motive for espionage was. I learned that “disgruntlement” is considered one tick on the standard profile for a spy’s potential motives.

As explained in “Espionage Against the United States by American Citizens 1947-2001,” by Katherine L. Herbig and Martin F. Wiskoff, disgruntlement as a motive for espionage “usually refers back to the workplace, where disappointment, anger, frustration, or alienation can arise from interactions among co-workers or between employees and supervisors.”

As I research the Bloch case, I am outraged that the difficulty of the “up or out” Foreign Service personnel system was presented in a questionable media story as a primary excuse for espionage that was never proven.

Despite the tarnish of being selected out, all the FSOs I knew who had to go through the painful career-severance experience consistently spoke about the dedication they felt to their profession.

As Albert Camus said, “It is necessary to fall in love—the better to provide an alibi for all the despair we are going to feel anyway.” The State Department needs to develop antidotes to the potential for such despair, the way they inoculate personnel going into areas where vulnerabilities to health and well-being can be anticipated.

State can do this through an ongoing commitment to building resilience via personnel training that helps employees and their families overcome the potential need for love as an alibi. ■

*Ann Luppi*  
*FSJ Editor, 1988-1990*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



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## Commerce Department Dispatches Digital Attachés

The Department of Commerce is piloting a network of “digital attachés” to promote digital market access around the world. Six Foreign Commercial Service officers assigned to ASEAN, Brazil, China, Japan, India and the European Union will be designated as digital trade officers to help U.S. companies increase exports, access the global online marketplace and navigate digital economy challenges.

The digital attachés will amplify current FCS work helping American businesses navigate complex foreign regulations and requirements concerning e-commerce and international data transfers and tackle digital market barriers.

In announcing the program, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker said: “These officers will enhance efforts to advance commercial diplomacy, and they will work to ensure that U.S. companies can participate in the global digital economy and reach markets worldwide.”

According to the Department of Commerce, the value of U.S. digital exports in 2014 totaled \$400 billion.

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Assistant*

## Global Connect Initiative Aims to Close the Digital Divide

On April 14, World Bank President Jim Kim and Secretary of State John F. Kerry hosted a conference at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., to discuss steps to advance the State Department’s new Global Connect initiative.

Launched in September 2015, Global Connect seeks to bring 1.5 billion people around the world online by 2020 and establish the idea that Internet access is critical for economic development.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State John F. Kerry speaks on the Global Connect initiative from the World Bank Executive Board Room on April 14.

“The Internet is not a luxury, but a necessity,” Secretary of State John F. Kerry told international finance ministers from 27 countries, technology and nongovernmental organization executives, heads of multilateral development banks and others.

“When we talk about infrastructure today, we have to include the Internet, right alongside roads and ports and bridges and dams and airports and the power grid.”

Kerry noted that Global Connect is the international equivalent of Franklin Roosevelt’s electrification program 80 years ago, when there was “a conscious effort by the government to say we are going to connect Americans to electricity; we are going to change life.”

“For every 10-percent increase in Broadband access, a developing country can see up to a 2-percent increase in Gross Domestic Product,” the Secretary stated, citing a the World Bank’s 2016 World Development Report.

On launching the new initiative last fall, Under Secretary of State for Eco-

nomics Growth, Energy and the Environment Catherine A. Novelli, a former vice president of Worldwide Government Affairs at Apple Computer, stated that U.S. development agencies would prioritize Internet access in their work and partner with other governments as well as private industry to come up with innovative solutions and country strategies.

Currently, nearly three dozen countries support 65 initiatives that promote connectivity and access to affordable broadband.

World Bank President Kim noted in his address that Global Connect will be financed through government loans, public-private partnerships, fair taxation, structural efficiencies and financial incentives in the affected countries.

—Ken Fanelli, *Publications Specialist*

## Are Embassies Still Relevant?

According to the Lowy Institute’s new Global Diplomacy Index (see Site of the Month on p. 16), the world’s 42 most powerful countries have 6,000



diplomatic posts in 660 cities around the world. Yet a March 14 article from *Foreign Affairs* questions whether the traditional embassy is still relevant.

Author Alex Oliver, a critic of the “modern” embassy, writes that many foreign ministries have been slow to adopt social media as a mechanism for carrying out “digital diplomacy.”

“Governments now communicate directly with their counterparts, and some world leaders have become prodigious users of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, speaking to huge domestic and foreign audiences without even telling their embassies,” Oliver writes.

Embassies are also behind local and international news media—and even the average civilian—in gathering and relaying information.

But the biggest threat to the relevance and efficiency of embassy work, in Oliver’s view, is increased security. “Even in less dangerous countries,” he writes, “embassies are mired in security protocols that restrict access by locals and often confine embassy staff and diplomats to semi-safe green zones—hardly a way to get an accurate picture of events on the ground. Some embassies, particularly American ones, resemble elaborate military bunkers more than diplomatic outposts.”

Oliver’s point is not that embassies are no longer important. They continue to be the crucial face and point of contact for their countries overseas, he writes, but their functions may have to shift.

He offers several recommendations. Instead of providing up-to-the-minute information, embassies should focus on providing context to news and information, helping their governments sort out relevant information from the media noise and identifying key potential partners.

Governments must also accept that

risk is inherent to the diplomatic profession and allow diplomats to interact with locals directly, Oliver states.

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Assistant*

## ISIS Actions Declared “Genocide”

Secretary of State John Kerry announced on March 17 that the State Department, and by extension the Obama administration, has determined that the actions of the so-called Islamic State group, ISIS, in both Iraq and Syria against minority groups, including Yazidis, Christians and Shiite Muslims, meet the criteria to be designated “genocide.”

The House of Representatives unanimously voted for a genocide designation on March 14, giving the State Department a March 17 deadline to decide on a declaration of its own. The decision comes on the heels of a prior declaration by the European Union parliament, which delivered a similar unanimous vote on Feb. 4.

The United Nations Convention on Genocide defines genocide as “the intentional destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.”

As media and nonprofit investigative reports have shown, ISIS is responsible for systematically executing thousands of Yazidi and Christian men and elderly women, and kidnapping thousands of younger Yazidi women and girls, holding or selling them into sex slavery.

This is only the second time the United States has recognized an ongoing genocide. The first was in 2004, when Secretary Powell called attention to Darfur in Sudan, but very little of significance was done in the wake of that declaration.

Studies show, however, that events labeled “genocide”—rather than “crimes against humanity” or “ethnic cleansing”—have elicited more forceful action from governments historically, despite the fact



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that there is no international legal obligation to act.

As ISIS loses ground, more and more mass graves are being uncovered in the villages they leave behind.

In his announcement, Secretary Kerry

stated that the United States will help provide evidence of ISIS' atrocities at future criminal tribunals. There has been media speculation that, if all U.N. Security Council members agree with the designation, any captured perpetrators could be

referred to the International Criminal Court.

One complicating factor could be that neither Iraq nor Syria is party to the Rome Statute that laid the groundwork for the ICC in 1998.

## 50 Years Ago

### Foreign Service Journal Editorial: The Management Crisis

What does all the talk about "management" mean? Civil Service Commission Chairman Macy devoted most of his AFSA luncheon talk to it. Deputy Undersecretary Crockett rarely gets to his feet without stressing "management," and the FSI runs regular seminars on the subject.

There are indications that the average FSO who has served as chief of mission in one or most posts is perplexed. He blithely assumes that he has been effectively "managing" his posts, and that it is ridiculous to think that he needs an MA in "management" to perform such an elementary task.

He may well be right. But the department has been forced to conclude reluctantly that "it ain't necessarily so." In recent years it has become increasingly clear from inspection and other reports that too many otherwise competent officers simply do not know how to run a "taut, happy ship."

In this day of increasingly complicated overseas missions it is no longer enough to be only a good negotiator, analyst, reporter, linguist, or even manager. A successful chief of mission must be all these. But he must be a "leader," as well, if he is to do the job in the age we live. Indeed an FSO must be a leader if he and the department are to take the role in Washington to which they aspire and which the president clearly wants them to take. They must be prepared to lead at a truly national level, as in fact Foreign Service officers of the United States, and not from

any narrow and parochial service or departmental bias.

Perhaps part as the trouble is in the use of words. To many generalists the word "management" connotes housing, pay and allowances, transportation etc.—the accepted job of the administrative officer. Some even suspect that the talk about "management" is a plot to make all ambassadors administrative officers or, conversely, only administrative officers ambassadors. But this view misses

the point. Messrs. Macy and Crockett are talking about broad leadership qualities that include a sure knowledge of how to manage men and programs, as well as to direct negotiations and reporting.

The FSI "Management Seminars," which have gone "on tour" thanks to the generosity of ambassador Raymond Guest, and the intriguing Airlie House "sensitivity" seminars are both bold efforts to do something about the problem. Obviously they provide only partial answers. Whether leaders are born or are made, it is clear that unless an officer has a chance at "command" assignments on his way up the ladder, he may arrive at class 2, or even 1, so case in

the concrete of his specialty that he can't even manage his secretary regardless of how many management courses he takes.

The Board of the Foreign Service Association has appointed a special committee on "career principles." They are a distinguished group of colleagues who will in the months ahead be working on proposals in this field. We hope they will give careful attention to the problem of developing leadership. It may be the most critical problem facing the department and Service today.

—From the April 1966 Foreign Service Journal



## Contemporary Quote

“ I want to tell you that you are not alone. ... You know the pain of having left behind everything that is dear to you and not knowing what the future will bring. Many others like you are also in camps or towns, waiting, hoping to build a new life on this continent. We have come to call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution. We hope that the world will heed these scenes of tragic, and indeed desperate, need, and respond in a way worthy of our common humanity. ... ”

—Pope Francis addressing migrants living at the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos on April 16.

Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) introduced the Religious Persecution Relief Act shortly after the State Department's announcement. The RPR Act would confer priority status on religious and other minorities affected by ISIS in the asylum application process, and dedicate 10,000 spots exclusively to persecuted minorities fleeing Syria.

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Assistant*

## Ambassadorial Appointments Down Under

AFSA's ongoing interest in ambassadorial appointments led us to look at how the process works in other developed countries.

It has been easy for us to look across our northern border to Canada, as the Canadian press writes about this issue regularly and with great interest, and AFSA maintains a good relationship with PAFSO, our Canadian counterpart.

Suffice it to say, ambassadors from outside the Canadian career Foreign Service are fairly rare, and those who are selected are subjected to significant media scrutiny.

But how about another close ally—Australia—which, by the way, routinely has non-career appointees sitting in the

U.S. embassy in its capital city?

Despite the fact that Australia is a constitutional monarchy, the process of appointing chiefs of mission for its embassies abroad is, in effect, like that in the United States in that the prime minister has the greatest say in who is appointed.

Australia has a number of non-career chiefs of mission. Similar to U.S. practice, there are certain embassies abroad where such appointees are likely to be placed, such as London, Rome and Brussels. Also, non-career appointees are generally dispatched to locations where you do not need a second language, like Washington, D.C.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull recently came under criticism for his appointment of former treasurer Joseph Hockey—someone from outside the Australian Foreign Service—to the position of ambassador to the United States.

But while the Australian and U.S. chief-of-mission appointment processes operate similarly, in Australia non-career diplomats comprise less than 7 percent of all chiefs of mission, compared to more than 30 percent in the United States.

One explanation may be the fact that it is less expensive to run an election

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### SITE OF THE MONTH: Global Diplomacy Index, the Lowy Institute: [www.loyyinstitute.org/global-diplomacy-index/](http://www.loyyinstitute.org/global-diplomacy-index/)

**T**he *Global Diplomacy Index* is an interactive site created by a leading Australian think tank, The Lowy Institute for International Policy. The site maps and ranks the diplomatic networks of 42 countries.

All countries examined are members of the Group of 20, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or both. Users can compare the reach and strategic placements of posts around the world by viewing spidery webs of influence or points representing individual cities.

The Index includes nearly 6,000 posts in 660 cities and covers 3,936 embassies, 1,586 consulates, 303 permanent missions and 98 other representative posts.

Users also have access to a set of country rankings showing which countries project

the most diplomatic power. In terms of number of posts, the top 10 countries examined are the United States, France, China, Russia, United Kingdom, Turkey, Brazil, Germany, Japan and Spain.

Users can examine full rankings, and compare up to five countries or cities in terms of post placement by embassy, consulate, mission or all three. The map is just as revealing about host cities as diplomatic networks, and viewers may download a complete infographic listing the statistics for each country.

—Shannon Mizzi,  
Editorial Assistant



campaign in Australia. In the 2012 election, President Obama spent roughly \$1 billion campaigning, whereas in Australia's 2013 federal election, the Liberal Party spent roughly \$24 million.

The lower cost of winning an Australian election means there is less pressure on parties to obtain major private-sector donations and, consequently, fewer promises of chief of mission positions in return.

As of this writing, all current non-career Australian chiefs of mission are either former public servants or ex-politicians. None are campaign donors or "bundlers." (To learn more about Australia's Ambassadors, visit [bit.ly/1NCmUqZ](http://bit.ly/1NCmUqZ).) ■

—Briar Blount,  
Communications Intern

# Hippocrates and Hobbes, Assad and ISIS

BY RAYMOND SMITH

Many scholars and practitioners view the current international system as the embodiment of Thomas Hobbes' assessment of the state of nature: anarchic at its core. In such a world, survival is the central value, and enhancing one's own security relative to others the guiding maxim of behavior.

The words "first, do no harm," although not actually in the Hippocratic oath, are widely considered a legitimate guiding principle for physicians. They rarely appear in the lexicon of statesmen, however, though President Barack Obama's foreign policy injunction, "don't do dumb things" (sometimes rendered more earthily), might be considered a variation on the theme. Unlike the physician, the diplomat's primary concern is not to avoid harm to others, but to himself and his fellow citizens.

Fortunately, most international transactions do not occur within a Hobbesian system, because they do not involve the kind of life-or-death decisions that we usually refer to in the international sphere as vital interests.

In this commentary, I will use the terms "Hobbesian system" and "Hobbesian rules" as shorthand for, respectively, the state of nature and the human behaviors

resulting from it that Hobbes posits in *Leviathan*.

## Identifying Vital Interests

If vital interests are involved, Hobbesian system rules presumably apply. But what rules apply when the interests involved are not vital? This is an issue that Ted Galen Carpenter recently discussed with regard to U.S. policy toward authoritarian regimes ([bit.ly/23IdeBh](http://bit.ly/23IdeBh)).

Carpenter posits a spectrum of interests ranging from vital to barely relevant, then suggests that U.S. standards for relationships with dictators should grow increasingly strict as interests move down that spectrum. Only on the very rare occasions when genuinely vital U.S. interests are involved should we enter into alliances with regimes that have odious human rights practices.

Putting this principle into practice poses some practical problems, however. The first of these involves reaching agreement on where particular interests lie on Carpenter's spectrum. The second involves deciding just how odious particular regimes are.

U.S. policy has generally been less ethical and more pragmatic than Carpenter advises. Washington engages with dictatorships and authoritarian regimes when it

believes that significant national interests require it to—and it has defined "significant" to include interests that Carpenter sees as barely peripheral.

For instance, the United States supported Hosni Mubarak in Egypt for three decades. It supports even more brutal regimes in Saudi Arabia and in the Persian Gulf states, to name just a few. It seeks to engage the Chinese leadership, not isolate it. It asks all of them nicely—generally behind closed doors—to moderate their policies around the edges, but does not expect any of them to take steps that would threaten their hold on power.

The hope, one supposes, is that over time, out of this process of moderation, will emerge constitutional monarchies, à la Great Britain. That faint hope is the ethical underpinning for an engagement policy that narrows the universe of principles to resources and interests.

It is a policy that is easy enough to administer in quiet times, because ethical principles take second place to the recognition of power realities. But these priorities are frequently stood on their head when what appears to be a genuine moderate reform movement arises and then begins to be violently repressed by an authoritarian regime, as happened repeatedly during the Arab Spring.

In such times, the urge to do good, to uphold ethical principles, may become the dominant influence in policymaking. The same inflated view of U.S. interests that led it to support authoritarian regimes may lead it now to advocate or support their overthrow.



*Raymond Smith served as an FSO with the State Department from 1969 to 1993. His many Foreign Service assignments included tours as political counselor in Moscow and director of the Office of the Former Soviet Union and Eastern European Affairs in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. A longtime international negotiations consultant, he is the author of *Negotiating with the Soviets* (1989) and*

*The Craft of Political Analysis for Diplomats* (2011).

## The Nature of the Beast

This is exactly the point at which a kind of Hippocratic oath for statesmen might be a better guide to policy than the urge to do good. Is the nature of the regime in the respective country a matter of vital interest to the United States, or is it not?

My personal view is that the essence of vital national interest is defense of the homeland against armed or economically crippling attack from abroad. A regime that undertakes or advocates such attacks, or harbors and supports those who do, is operating in a Hobbesian system, and should be treated accordingly.

Short of such a threat, however, domestic developments in a foreign country will rarely affect American vital national interests. Thus, actions to effect regime change should not be undertaken unless there is reasonable certainty that they will not do more harm than good.

There is a certain inherent legitimacy in acting with appropriate force to defend one's vital interests. There is no inherent legitimacy in using force to overthrow an established government, even a bad one.

Before undertaking such an action, three questions need to be answered satisfactorily: (1) How will the action be made legitimate? (2) Are those undertaking it able and willing to bring enough power to bear to achieve the overthrow expeditiously and with limited harm to the general population? (3) What is the probability that the people of the country will be better off, rather than worse off, as a result?

Legitimacy in such cases is what I would call "process" legitimacy. The United Nations is the institution that can provide it, and a Security Council resolution the means. An essentially unilateral "coalition of the willing" will not do.

Getting such a resolution will generally be difficult, and it should be. The grounds must be weighty enough to overcome the

presumption that states do not interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

It would be irresponsible to seek such a resolution unless one were certain of being able to bring sufficient power to bear to accomplish the objective without inordinate loss of life among the people affected. A people may be fully justified in overthrowing a corrupt, authoritarian regime, but encouraging them to assume the risks of doing so gives the outside power some responsibility for what follows.

The United States never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union during the Cold War, but it was responsible enough also to never let them think that it would be able to help them break away.

The greatest uncertainty may lie in trying to predict whether the result of regime overthrow will leave the population better off or worse off. But the question cannot be answered if it is not asked, something the United States has often failed to do.

There is enough expertise available here and in other countries to address such questions, and to put together a course of action that leads to the reasonable conclusion that the affected country can be left better off.

But the question needs to be asked in advance, not during or after the event. And if the answer is not affirmative, the outside powers need to have the integrity to step back, lest they do more harm than good.

## ISIS and Syria: Paved with Good Intentions

In Syria, the Obama administration did the opposite of doing no harm. It declared publicly in 2011 that Assad must go, while greatly underestimating his ability to resist; overestimating the strength, cohesion and morale of the moderate opposition; and failing to appreciate the danger posed by the radical opposition.

That opposition, in the form of the so-called Islamic State group (ISIS), has emerged as the genuine threat to fundamental U.S. interests that Assad never was. ISIS has amply demonstrated that it is willing to organize attacks on the U.S. homeland, or at least to harbor or support those who would.

America's ineffectual support for the overthrow of Assad did not create ISIS; but together with its failed democracy-building effort in Iraq, Washington did help create the power vacuum into which ISIS moved.

The United States now faces increasingly hard and unpleasant choices in Syria. Its preferred outcomes—defeat of ISIS and removal of Assad—are potentially mutually contradictory and can only be achieved by bringing a lot of force to bear. There is little stomach in the United States for any substantial ground force involvement in this civil war, in no small part because there is little confidence that such involvement would produce a desirable outcome.

America's preferred proxies, the moderate opposition to Assad, are unable or unwilling to fight ISIS, and will be crushed by any likely successor regime in Syria. The Assad regime is willing to fight ISIS, but equally determined to fight the other groups opposing it.

In aligning itself with the Kurds in Syria and Iraq, Washington has found a group that is willing to fight ISIS, and capable of doing so effectively—but only in the context of advancing the Kurdish desire for a homeland, if not a state of their own.

This desire for self-determination sets up a direct conflict with Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian interest in preserving their territorial integrity. And our provision of military assistance to the Kurds puts the United States on a potential collision course with the vital interests of a NATO ally.



In this situation, invoking a moral principle such as “A ruler who barrel-bombs his own people cannot be allowed to stay in power” is not ethical, but rather fatuous and self-indulgent.

### The Preferred Option

Assad’s fate is not a matter of significant U.S. interest. We do not have process legitimacy in attempting to overthrow him. Nor are we willing to bring to bear the necessary force to accomplish the objective.

Moreover, the chances that his overthrow would improve the lives of the Syrian people are pretty low. If he can be negotiated out of office, fine; but that should not be a precondition for building an alliance against the real threat.

The fate of ISIS, on the other hand, is a matter of vital U.S. interest; as such, Hobbesian rules apply.

ISIS gains support and followers through its success in acquiring territory and taking on the attributes of statehood, not by its invocation of an obscurantist interpretation of Islam that most Muslims disavow. The United States cannot “do no harm” by allowing it to continue to exist. On the contrary, its very existence will increase harm.

For practical and political reasons, the preferred option is to destroy ISIS as a geographic entity by using air power and local forces on the ground. That option had some success in recent months. If the effort stalls or is reversed, U.S. ground forces may have to be employed.

That is not a recommendation made lightly, as successive administrations since the early 1990s have provided case studies in how not to use military power to achieve national objectives. On the other hand, the American military showed in the first Iraq war that, when the country’s political leadership provides the necessary resources and does not allow military success to lead down a slippery slope of ever more grandiose objectives, it can carry out a clearly defined, limited mission and then withdraw.

Allowing ISIS to continue to exist with the attributes of statehood would satisfy neither Hippocrates nor Hobbes. Ensuring that it does not won’t solve the problem of international terrorism, but it is a necessary step in the right direction. ■



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# Retirement Planning 101

Life after the Foreign Service begins with planning. Here's how to get started.

BY JOHN K. NALAND

**W**ho in their late 20s to early 50s, preoccupied with the demands of work, family and daily life, has time to plan for a retirement that is many years away? The answer is that we all had better make time

for that if we want to be well-positioned to enjoy life after the Foreign Service.

I know you're all busy, so here is a quick guide for early- and mid-career employees who realize that retirement planning is important, but have not yet gotten started.

## Show Me the Money

Many Foreign Service members have only a vague idea of what makes up their retirement package. That, obviously, makes it impossible to do even basic planning. So here is an overview.



*John K. Naland's 29-year Foreign Service career included an assignment as director of the Office of Retirement, as well as tours in Colombia, Mexico and Iraq.*

*He twice served as president of the American Foreign Service Association and is currently president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation. This is an updated version of an article that first appeared in the September 2007 Foreign Service Journal.*

This article focuses on those of us who joined after 1983 and are thus enrolled in the "new" Foreign Service Pension System. Employees who fall under the "old" Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System should consult the Department of State Office of Retirement website (<https://RNet.state.gov>) for information on that plan.

Once FSPS participants qualify for retirement, here is what we receive:

**Pension.** Our annuity is based on our "high three" average salary and years of service. The salary is calculated by adding average basic pay (determined by multiplying each salary by the number of days that it was in effect) for our three highest-paid consecutive years and then dividing by three. Basic pay includes regular pay, domestic locality pay and overseas virtual locality pay, but excludes allowances, differentials and overtime.

This "high three" salary is then multiplied by 1.7 percent for each of the first 20 years of service, plus 1 percent for each additional year. For example, an employee retiring with 25 years of service and a "high three" salary of \$100,000 would qualify for an annual annuity of \$39,000. That amount, however, provides no benefits to a surviving spouse after the annuitant's death. Providing the maximum survivor benefits reduces the annuity by 10 percent to \$35,100.

**Social Security.** FSPS members pay into Social Security throughout their careers and thus qualify for Social Security benefits, which can begin as early as age 62 for those willing to take reduced payments in return for a longer benefit period. However,





because most Foreign Service members qualify to retire before age 62, federal law affords FSPS members an annuity supplement until that milestone. This supplement is calculated by dividing your years of federal service by 40 and then multiplying that by the Social Security benefit you would receive at age 62. You can use the Social Security Administration website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) to generate an individualized estimate of your own figure.

**Thrift Savings Plan.** As you can see, no matter how many years you serve, your FSPS annuity plus Social Security will not come close to replacing your pre-retirement income. Thus, the Thrift Savings Plan must be a key part of your retirement planning. Contribute up to 5 percent of your salary and Uncle Sam will match it—“free” money that no one should pass up. To position yourself well for retirement, you should contribute at least 10 percent of your salary to TSP.

Those who can afford it should contribute an amount as close as possible to the annual maximum (\$18,000 in 2016) and take advantage of post-age 50 “make up” contributions (up to \$6,000 in 2016). You can use calculators on the TSP website at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) to generate estimates of your TSP account growth and post-retirement withdrawals under different scenarios.

## Reality Check

How much money will you need to retire comfortably? Experts say that most people can continue their current lifestyles into retirement on 85 percent of their pre-retirement gross income. One reason for that reduced need is that deductions

for Social Security, Medicare, TSP and FSPS contributions can consume at least 15 percent of pre-retirement gross income, and those deductions end at retirement. Of course, your retirement income needs may be higher or lower, depending on your desired retirement lifestyle and continuing financial commitments such as children’s college expenses.

You can judge your financial trajectory for retirement by estimating your annuity, Social Security and TSP income as of a target retirement date. If you have no idea when you might retire, then run your numbers based on first eligibility—which, for most FSPS employees, is at age 50 with at least 20 years of service, as established by the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

If the calculations fall short of how much money you desire, then you need to adjust plans. For example, staying in the Foreign Service longer will increase your annuity by raising the multiplication factor and the “high three” average salary. Post-retirement employment is an option exercised by many Foreign Service retirees, but your annuity supplement and Social Security payments are subject to reduction if you go back to work and receive significant wage earnings (in excess of \$15,720 per year in 2016). Other options are to invest more of your take-home pay in the stock market, rental property and/or an Individual Retirement Account.

## Feathering Your Nest

As you plan your future finances, there are several things to keep in mind in order to best position yourself for retirement.



# Employment after Retirement

If you want—or need—to work after retiring from the Foreign Service, the following general rules apply. Send any specific questions to the Human Resources Service Center at HRSC@state.gov.

**Your Annuity.** If you retired on an immediate annuity, it will be paid each month unless you are re-employed in a career, full-time federal position. Thus, you may work in the private sector or in a part-time federal position and still receive your full annuity. But if you take a full-time federal job that is covered by a retirement plan, payment of your annuity will be suspended. In addition, Foreign Service annuitants face a cap on earnings from part-time federal employment. The sum of the part-time salary plus annuity may not exceed the higher of the salary at retirement or the full-time salary of the re-employment position.

**Your Annuity Supplement.** If you are receiving an annuity supplement, it will be paid each month until age 62 unless you are re-employed in a career, full-time federal position. After you reach the Minimum Retirement Age as defined in the provisions for the annuity supplement (between 55 and 57, depending on your year of birth), the annuity supplement is subject to reduction if you make more than a certain amount in wage income (\$15,720 in 2016). Your supplement will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 earned in excess of the exempt amount.

The reduction is applied the year after you have excess earnings.

**Your Social Security.** Once you start receiving Social Security retirement benefits, they are subject to reduction if you make over a certain annual amount in wage income (\$15,720 in 2016). Before you reach your full retirement age (between 65 and 67, depending on your year of birth), your Social Security benefits will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 earned in excess of the exempt amount. After reaching full retirement age, the reduction is \$1 for every \$3 earned.

**Re-employed Annuitants.** Many Foreign Service annuitants seek part-time work as re-employed annuitants (REAs), a category formerly known as While Actually Employed. Regional and functional bureaus both utilize REAs to fill short-term staffing gaps and meet workload surges. The first step is to get your name on the centralized registry by contacting the HR Service Center at (866) 300-7419 or the bureau coordinator (a list can be found at <https://RNet.state.gov>) where you want to work. The next step is to network and lobby, since bureaus usually turn first to annuitants who are “well and favorably known” by bureau hiring managers. It is advisable to start networking at least six months before you retire.

—John K. Naland

**Risk vs. Reward.** How you manage your TSP savings will have a major effect on your retirement finances. Because many current employees will need to draw on their TSP savings 30, 40 or even 50 years from now, most experts recommend investing in funds with relatively high average rates of return (the C, S, I and the long-range L funds) to increase the chances that your TSP savings will be around as long as you are. Conversely, keeping all your money in bond funds (the G and F funds) may not generate gains in the coming decades that out-pace inflation.

**Save, Save, Save.** While saving for retirement is vital, doing so can be difficult depending on your cash flow situation. To increase savings, some experts urge cutting back on frequent small splurges that add up over time—for example, that daily

gourmet coffee. Others say to cut back on big purchases, such as buying a luxury car. Most experts endorse the tactic of “pay yourself first” by signing up for a large TSP payroll deduction so those funds never enter your take-home pay for discretionary spending. If you receive a hardship differential or an inheritance, consider investing a chunk of it in retirement savings.

**Location, Location, Location.** Where you retire can affect your net income. The Internal Revenue Service taxes annuity payments, TSP withdrawals and Social Security, but some states do not. Thus, retiring to certain states can raise your after-tax income. For a state-by-state analysis, see the AFSA Tax Guide published each January in *The Foreign Service Journal* and posted at [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org).

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## With any luck, you will spend longer in retirement than you did in your working career.

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**Health Insurance.** As long as you are enrolled in a federal health insurance plan for the five years prior to retirement, you may keep that coverage after retirement. The government will continue to pay its portion of the premium just as it does while you are employed.

### Take Charge of Your Retirement

With any luck, you will spend longer in retirement than you did in your working career. To prepare for that crucial transition, review online guidance like what the Office of Retirement offers at <https://RNet.state.gov>. Pay special attention to guidance on steps to take from one to five years before retirement to ensure that your final retirement processing goes smoothly.

And during your career, please make time to take the Foreign Service Institute's excellent retirement planning courses: the two-day Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar, when you are more than 10 years from retirement eligibility, and the four-day Retirement Planning Seminar within 10 years of retirement.

Once you do retire, maintain your AFSA membership to support the association's efforts to protect your hard-earned Foreign Service retirement benefits from potential future cuts.

### Live Long and Prosper

This article has focused on the financial aspects of retirement, because that is what most pre-retirees consider to be the key to a happy retirement. By contrast, surveys of current retirees show that they consider health care to be the most important factor. After all, having lots of money can only do so much for someone who is in chronically poor health.

Obviously, little can be done about genetics or bad luck with accidents and diseases, but steps such as maintaining a healthy weight, eating well, keeping fit and not smoking are keys to a longer, healthier retirement.

Here's wishing you a happy retirement! ■



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# Retiring Early and Finding Your “Ever After”

**Early, voluntary retirement can open the door to pursue your dreams.**

BY DEAN J. HAAS

*So time is a river rolling into nowhere  
I will live while I can  
I will have my ever after*

\*

**T**his lyric, from “The Finer Things” by Steve Winwood, was blaring from my car radio on a freeway in San Diego at the instant I decided to accept State’s offer to join the Foreign Service in March 1987.

And, quite consciously, it was also the first song I played after crossing the Mexico-U.S. border from Juarez in late

July 2011 as I drove into my retirement.

Words matter and have power.

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*Dean J. Haas, a Foreign Service officer from 1987 to 2011, served as deputy chief of mission in Ljubljana, principal officer in Ciudad Juarez and executive director of the Bureau of Consular Affairs among many other assignments. He currently serves as a retiree representative on the AFSA Governing Board, is a leadership coach and training consultant at the Foreign Service Institute, and maintains a private coaching and consulting practice.*

Before I share some reflections about “life after the Foreign Service,” including the value of retiring as soon as you’re eligible, finding a new path and chasing new dreams, let me offer a few facts up front:

- I was inspired to retire at age 50 by two other colleagues whom I admire and saw move away from the Foreign Service successfully as soon as they were eligible.
- I wanted to leave the Foreign Service feeling positive about my career experience and ready to continue contributing to State in a new way.
- I am single with no children, making the financial side of this decision somewhat less fraught with nervousness or guilt. (But do know that the FS retirement package provides a life-long cushion, the true monetary value of which too many people underestimate, particularly the health care benefit.)
- I left the Service as a Minister Counselor, with 10 years of time in class remaining. So the decision to retire was mine alone, not made for me.

## **Saying “No”—and “Yes”**

So, what’s the deal here? What would possess me to walk away from a successful career and consciously choose a new path?

For me, it was about passion and the need to find a new calling—not unhappiness with my Foreign Service assignments.



I honestly never had a bad job, and I enjoyed a truly wonderful set of supervisors, mentors and role models from the very beginning of my career. They inspired me and showed me what success looks like. They led from the heart and were personable. They revealed themselves and were approachable.

Still, as I approached the age of 50, I realized there were basic things about the career that I was ready to say ‘no’ to. Things like moving. And bidding (it gets harder, not easier). And stress-inducing difficult conversations (necessary, and frequent, when you manage many employees).

To be a successful senior FSO and leader, I think one must be able to embrace all three of these realities with energy, eagerness, optimism and drive. Instead, I found myself wiped out at times from the huge highs and lows of the experience.

So as age 50 loomed on the horizon, I parsed through my last few assignments to assess what I was still willing to say ‘yes’ to. What I most enjoyed. The answers came easily: mentoring, coaching and teaching, and working with and learning about people from all backgrounds.

I wanted to walk away from (i.e., say ‘no’ to) the aspects of the bureaucracy that I felt got in the way of good work. I saw too many decisions being taken by peers and senior leaders that were fundamentally different from the decisions I thought I would

make in their roles. Too often, I saw bureaucratic timidity when bold, brave and heart-centered decision-making was essential.

### Finding the Dream

Perhaps I could be helpful and add more value if I reimagined and redesigned myself. Could I use my experience, my network and my love for the State Department and its people to train and coach the next generation of leaders? How might I help people listen to their hearts, pursue their passions and lead from where they are?

Around Christmas 2010, I made my final decision to retire. I actually realized it was final when the struggle in my mind was over how to draft the emails to bosses and mentors about the decision rather than mulling over the decision itself. Yes, I worried about my colleagues’ reactions, but I knew my decision. I wrote to them from the heart, and I gave six months’ notice to smooth the transition.

Know that your colleagues are going to be gracious and generous and a bit envious, and more supportive than you might imagine, even if you surprise them. I am so grateful for the kind and generous replies I received. Yes, there was one significant effort to talk me out of my decision. And that conversation was cordial, thoughtful and unconvincing.

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## For me, it was about passion and the need to find a new calling—not unhappiness with my Foreign Service assignments.

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You will need to come to grips with the word “retirement.” As you read the literature, you’ll see a lot of references to the importance of retiring to something. The thought of not having to get up for work can seem incredibly attractive at first, but you’ve still got to have a plan for this new, great (and potentially very long) chapter in your life.

Answer the following questions: What’s my vision for the rest of my life? What’s my dream? What does my new ideal world look like? Where do I want to try living? (Be careful, by the way, about certainty on where you retire before you’ve tried the place out for a while.)

### Reconnecting to FSI

My own answers to those questions pointed me to a yearlong set of courses and practical training at the Coaches Training Institute, leading to a professional coaching certification. When the first question posed to students on the first day of coaching class was “What’s the dream?” I knew where my heart and my future were headed.

I wanted to ask people those big questions and then witness them connecting their dots, personally and professionally. I wanted to be there to listen and intuit, and acknowledge and champion, and observe and point them forward on their new paths.

When I talked to a very senior and influential mentor about maintaining my connection to the State Department, she was in a position to offer me a part-time position in the Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute. That was fortuitous because I had maintained a connection to FSI ever since I worked there as a trainer in the late 1990s.

I felt comfortable in the classroom, in aspects of training

design and adult learning, and as a subject-matter expert on the Foreign Service experience. I was first assigned to the Deputy Chief of Mission/Principal Officer course and the Senior Executive Threshold Seminar, and then moved into Fundamentals of Supervision and Intermediate Leadership Skills. I also joined FSI’s roster of leadership coaches.

Classroom training and work as a leadership coach for State Department clients became the first part of my dream realized. And, there was more for me to do.

### California, Here I Come!

I’m a native Californian whose heart has always stayed connected to the West Coast. I wanted to spend more time in San Diego (my hometown) and work from there for part of each year. This has evolved into me spending between a third and a half of each year living by the Pacific Ocean. It’s still amazing to awaken each morning hearing and seeing the waves crash (which is happening as I write this).

A typical day for me includes a couple of coaching calls (both State Department and private clients); answering some State Department email and interacting with FSI; taking a long daily walk with my audiobooks (a huge new part of my retirement!); and socializing with longtime local friends. Family connections are important to me: I live about a 30-minute drive away from my active, vibrant 80-year-old mother.

I have found in the last year or so that the word “retired” has faded from my vocabulary. My life is different from when I worked full time, yet I am not “retired.” Not close!

This is the message I want most to be heard by those contemplating an early, voluntary departure from State: realize you have this enormous gift of an annuity and paid health care, find your passion and calling for the next chapter and follow your dream. Make the world yours. It’s possible. You will soar.

### And, Know When to Go

Never forget that the Foreign Service’s “up or out” structure will tell you when to go if you don’t decide for yourself. I have seen too many colleagues stay too long because they don’t see (though others often do) that their trajectory may have peaked. Sometimes unhappiness and even bitterness creep in. Sometimes they aren’t aware that they are blocking the advancement of others to leadership positions. So know when to go.

Here are some tips on making the decision:

1. Take the superb pre-retirement courses that FSI offers, as soon as possible. Learn about ways to prepare yourself, your family and your finances for a new life.



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## The Foreign Service's "up or out" structure will tell you when to go if you don't decide for yourself.

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2. Run your numbers. The Office of Retirement offers online resources to help you get an idea of what your monthly annuity will be. Do not forget the value of the health care benefit; it's huge!

3. Focus on the things at work you really love. What aspects of your job turn you on and engage you consistently? Are those things you want more of in your daily life? What's possible?

4. Breathe and step back. Envision a future outside of a daily routine. What's your ideal day? What's your calling? What's the dream?

5. Consider some coaching sessions with a State Department coach (we have about a dozen available) to run through your ideas and your decision-making process. You'll be amazed how a few powerful questions combined with hearing yourself talk about your future can propel you forward. (See Leadership Coaching on the FSI/LMS website or search "Leadership Coaching" in Diplopedia for more information and to apply for a coach.)

6. Assess why you are staying in the Foreign Service. What will be enough in this career? How will you know when you are satisfied? What more do you want to accomplish? This must be your answer for you, not a promotion board's opinion of you.

7. Once you have decided to exit, enroll in the Job Search Program at FSI. It is absolutely superb, and an amazing departure gift from the institution.

And if you decide you aren't ready to retire, if you have more to do, then please continue to thrive in your great work on behalf of the American people, their values and our country's interests. This career is an extraordinary opportunity, presented to very few. Make it your own best and most extraordinary moment.

Live while you can and enjoy an "ever after" that you create. ■



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### Networking

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# From Consul General to Police Volunteer

**Police work offered me a way to keep on watching that endless parade of human experience that I loved as a consular officer.**

BY ANN B. SIDES

**"P**olice volunteer? Why on earth would you want to do that?!"

I'd met my fellow retired ladies for lunch, a monthly ritual. I was looking forward to telling them I'd at last found a volunteer program that excited me. I hadn't expected such a skeptical response.

"I thought it sounded interesting," I said. "I like working with people."

"Will you be able to make arrests?"

"Will you wear a gun?"

"How will you feel if you have to see a dead body?"

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*Ann B. Sides was a Foreign Service consular officer from 1983 to 2011. Her overseas assignments included Niamey, Dakar, Oran, Belgrade (twice), Zagreb, Dublin, Sarajevo and Athens, where she served as consul general from 2004 to 2008. She is the author of Maggie Minds Her Business (CreateSpace, 2014), a consular-themed mystery novel set in Africa.*

In my career as a consular officer, I'd already seen my share of dead bodies, but it's not a fact I talk about at the table with my lunch buddies.

Since becoming a Raleigh, North Carolina, police volunteer I haven't viewed a single corpse, but I've had satisfying, responsible, varied assignments. I was drawn to police work because it offered me a way to keep on watching that endless parade of human experience that I loved as a consular officer. Most important of all, to me, is that I've been able to continue being a public servant and use many of the skills I acquired in 28 years as a Foreign Service officer.

## **A Natural Transition**

Right now, I'm assigned to the Family Violence Intervention Unit. Every time a patrol officer files a report on what the cops call "a domestic," a uniformed officer or detective from my unit follows up. Some "domestics" are very serious, leading to complex investigations, arrests for felonies, trials, protection orders and relocation of victims. They require many hours of the police officer's time. Others concern conflicts that may be distressing to the people involved, but don't land the participants in the

hospital or in jail. That's where I come in. I do most of my work on the phone, contacting the complainant and finding out if the problem is ongoing or resolved and whether there is anything further the police department can do. The idea is to try to prevent domestic violence, rather than just respond to it.

For example, I'll connect the teenage son of an alcoholic with an Alateen group, the daughter of an aggressive dementia patient with a caregiver support circle, or the parents of a difficult teenager with a family counseling service. If my inquiries suggest the domestic conflict is escalating, I'll take my notes to one of the uniformed officers or detectives I work with for further action.

Some of my cases are banal, some unbearably sad—especially if children are involved—and a few are just downright weird. With every case, I prepare a brief written record. It may be used in court and must be clear, concise and factual. As in consular work, I'm often eliciting personal information from people who may be scared, defensive or embarrassed. I have to be patient and tactful.

Raleigh isn't the only American city with a police volunteer program: Provo, Utah; Bellevue, Washington; Huntington Beach, California; Clearwater, Florida; and dozens of other American municipal and county law enforcement bodies have volunteer organizations. They tend to be found particularly in places that have embraced a "community policing" approach to law enforcement, as Raleigh has.

### Varied and Interesting Work

Police volunteers aren't cops. Although the City of Raleigh supplies our uniforms, we receive no financial benefit. Those uniforms are different from the uniforms of the sworn police officers with whom we work, and we have no more authority than any other citizen. Volunteers don't carry weapons on duty, even if they have a permit to do so. We volunteers are, however, expected to look and act professional, be courteous to the public, respect confidentiality and use common sense.

When I joined the RPD volunteer program, I received 30 hours of classroom training. I spent an afternoon in the 911 center, watching the dispatchers coolly respond to all sorts of emergencies. My initiation also included riding an evening shift with a patrolman in one of the rougher parts of Raleigh. Before the shift ended, we'd responded to a serious accident. Nobody was badly hurt, but untangling it all took hours. While the cops took statements and sorted out the resulting traffic jam, I got a broom from the trunk and swept up the broken glass and debris.



COURTESY OF ANN B. SIDES

**Ann Sides, left, and Heidi Priu, a former Secret Service agent, enjoy their work as volunteers with the Raleigh Police Department.**

Before my assignment to Family Violence, I worked in a burglary unit, helping detectives by making follow-up calls to victims: "Anything else turned up missing? Did your neighbors notice anything?" I've also walked a beat at parades, helped keep order at concerts—I once danced an exuberant drunk back to his seat—and role-played for police training scenarios.

When I trained as a consular officer, I gained a lot of confidence practicing prison visits and visa interviews with role players at the Foreign Service Institute. As a police role player I've acted the part of rape victims, rioters and witnesses to crimes. In my least-favorite role I played a corpse, doused with fake blood and crumpled on the floor of an abandoned building among hundreds of dead cockroaches. That performance didn't challenge my acting skills, but I did gain a close-up view of new police tactics as the officers rehearsed an "active shooter" response.

### Force Multipliers for the Community

At the Raleigh Police Department, volunteers work in the records section, help with evidence storage, call shut-ins to check on their welfare, and provide extra manpower on special





COURTESY OF ANN B. SIDES

Raleigh Police Department volunteers served on the Christmas Parade detail in 2015. Ann Sides is at center foreground.

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## Being a police volunteer may not be as exciting as “NYPD Blue,” but it offers fascinating insights into the collision between law and the human condition that cops, like consular officers, encounter on the job.

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occasions such as New Year’s Eve, a POTUS visit and official ceremonies. Several volunteers are able to interpret foreign languages. Some of my colleagues patrol in specially marked RPD volunteer vehicles connected to the police communication system. They search for missing people and call in traffic accidents, road hazards and erratic drivers.

Two of my fellow volunteers rescued a stray toddler they found wandering down the middle of a busy four-lane road; and then they located his frantic mother. Another volunteer spotted a burglary in progress, called it in, observed as much as he could about the suspects and briefed the responding officers before they moved in for the arrest. Some of my colleagues put in long nights helping out at checkpoints set up to combat drunk driving. Being a police volunteer may not be as exciting as “NYPD Blue,” but it offers fascinating insights into the collision between law and the human condition that cops—like consular officers—encounter on the job.

The RPD volunteer program now has a spinoff for lovers of the outdoors—the Greenway Volunteers. They patrol the city park system’s paths and trails, helping keep these leafy refuges safe from muggers, flashers and other pests.

Raleigh’s police volunteer program is open to all adults who can pass a background check, not just senior citizens. Right now all 40 slots are filled, and there’s a waiting list. My colleagues include retired and active business executives, realtors, health-care professionals, teachers, office workers, IT specialists, students, veterans and homemakers. At least two others besides me are former federal employees—one is retired from the CIA, and another is an ex-Secret Service agent.

Captain Tim Tomzak, who oversees our program, says of the volunteers: “They are more than extra eyes and ears. They provide service excellence to our community, in effect, a force multiplier. They’re a vital part of our police department family.” ■

# Playing the “REA” Game FS Work in Retirement

**Re-employment as an annuitant is an important option for retirees.  
Here’s how it works.**

BY LAWRENCE COHEN

**I**n return for devoting many years of challenging, often dangerous, service to the nation, Foreign Service members are eligible to retire while still young, healthy and up to date with professional skills. This allows us to pursue second (or third) careers, go back to school, take on part-time work, volunteer, chill out—or any combination thereof.

Following that last office retirement party, many former members of the Foreign Service want or need to continue working in some capacity. Specifically, many choose to use their personal and professional connections to line up annuitant work with the Department of State.

With that in mind, State created the When Actually Employed (WAE) program, which has now been renamed the Re-Employed Annuitant (REA) program. Recently, the Department of Com-

merce Foreign Commercial Service announced it would launch its own re-employed annuitant program, modeled on the State Department program. In this article I use the new term, REA, to refer to the State Department’s annuitant employment program.

## Returning to Work

Eligible Foreign Service retirees may return to work, either overseas or stateside, in one or more positions for up to 1,040 hours in a year (the equivalent of half a full-time position), without any reduction in one’s pension. The one-year limitation begins on the date you start work as an REA. There is also an annual monetary cap (based on a calendar year): REA earnings plus annuity payments in any year must not exceed your final Foreign Service salary. Because annuitants receive no job benefits they may be considerably cheaper choices for State than active-duty FS members to fill vital personnel gaps.

These assignments may last anywhere from a few days to six months and can be personally, professionally and financially rewarding. As a bonus, they also help retirees maintain the government security clearances vital to securing other governmental employment opportunities (as a contractor, for example). The bureau that places the candidate on its roster is responsible for



*Lawrence Cohen, a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1980 to 2007, served as AFSA’s vice president for retirees from 2013 to 2015. Since retiring from the Service, he continues to work for State part-time as a re-employed annuitant both overseas and in Washington, D.C.*



COURTESY OF LAWRENCE COHEN

**Lawrence Cohen, at right, chats with Iraqis at Mam Halil's chai shop in Erbil Bazaar during his WAE assignment to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region in 2013.**

getting the clearance revalidated.

An REA posting enables retirees to serve at their convenience within a Foreign Service environment. These experienced personnel are also well-equipped to guide and mentor current Foreign Service members, including locally employed staff at overseas posts.

For all these reasons, a good REA assignment delivers both short-term achievement and positive long-term impact on the Foreign Service as an institution.

### **It's Not What You Know...**

While annuitant work is often a win-win proposition, the program is primarily designed to meet temporary, intermittent Foreign Service personnel gaps; and this is where FS retirees sometimes run into roadblocks.

In the State Department, each bureau manages its own roster of retirees through an REA coordinator. However, placement on a register does not mean an assignment will ever be offered. Moreover, retirees can only be on one bureau's register at a time.

For retirees already on a bureau's registry, this mechanism generally works smoothly—as long as funding is available when staffing needs arise. This is especially true for candidates who are willing to take assignments at hardship and danger-pay posts, or have a skill set or language ability in high demand. Overseas, short-term needs often arise in positions that affect a mission's overall operations and have to be filled by capable people. Office

management specialists, General Services officers and other management-coned specialties are in particularly high demand.

In addition, because staffing needs tend to surface unexpectedly or with little advance notice, bureaus are more comfortable with their own people and prefer to manage the process in-house. As a result, the bureaus have differing reputations for REA hiring. The Bureau for Consular Affairs, for example, reportedly has an effective, well-run program to fill numerous overseas vacancies and a strong roster of former consular-coned officers.

Retirees not on a bureau registry frequently express frustration with the current system. They cite a lack of transparency in the identification and selection process, the apparently arbitrary nature of placement on a bureau register, and the lack of any information about possible REA opportunities.

### **A Good Idea, but Needs Work**

In an attempt to obviate these issues, State's Human Resources Service Center maintains a centralized REA registry. Any State or FCS retiree, even if already listed on a bureau's register, can sign up with the Service Center. This can be done by telephone in a few minutes.

Names on the HRSC register are available to all bureaus. However, since bureaus already maintain their own REA teams, they will look for candidates from their own register first. Even when an appropriate candidate for REA assignment is not available from within, bureaus may reach out to each other before going to the HRSC register.

After nearly three years since its establishment, HRSC's central registry is still neither electronically accessible nor Internet searchable. Nor does it contain a curriculum vitae (CV) or employee profile database. HR does not appear to be encouraging bureau coordinators to consider retirees listed there, and there have been few examples of matchmaking success.

To be fair, the REA program is not intended to replicate the Foreign Service bidding process. It is not designed to eliminate selection bias or provide a level playing field for all—much less to offer all interested retirees part-time employment. The system's primary constituents are State Department bureaus and posts, and it serves them well.

Still, there is plenty of room for improvement. Creating a more robust central registry, one that makes retiree CVs easily accessible to bureau coordinators, would be a good place to start. At a minimum, the central registry should feature a searchable, keyword-driven résumé or profile system of the type common to the HR divisions of corporations, multilateral institutions and nongovernmental organizations everywhere.



The failure of the central registry to gain better traction is a disservice to both the Foreign Service and FS retirees. Highly skilled, experienced and motivated Foreign Service retirees will continue to be lost in the REA shuffle until that is fixed.

### A Few Tips

In the meantime, here are some practical suggestions to maximize your chances of finding an REA assignment:

- ▶ Do not wait until your last day on the payroll to begin networking with REA coordinators in former bureaus. Many more potential candidates are available than there are REA opportunities, so being proactive is essential. Get your name out there.
- ▶ Try to link up with a bureau as early as possible to ensure that appropriate clearances do not lapse.
- ▶ Once on a bureau register, stay in touch with the bureau's REA coordinator. Admittedly, visits to the department become more difficult after you have turned in your building access

badge to Diplomatic Security, but a retiree badge will give you limited access.

- ▶ Consult the Career Transition Center's Job Search Program and RNet for guidance in navigating the REA system.
- ▶ Be flexible about when and where you will work, without regard to rank or level of job responsibility.
- ▶ In addition to cultivating a relationship with the bureau where you want to work, sign onto the HRSC central registry. Even though REA opportunities via this mechanism may be slim, there is no downside to at least placing your name with HR. But put most of your energy toward working the bureau assignment.
- ▶ If you have questions or need contact information, consult AFSA's "Re-Employed Annuitant Program Fact Sheet" at [bit.ly/1SVvUZj](http://bit.ly/1SVvUZj).
- ▶ Finally, do not look at REA work as a retiree entitlement. It most definitely is not. Instead, consider it a potential backup, Plan B or C, while you follow through on your Plan A. ■

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# It Takes a Village

**A growing trend helps Foreign Service retirees to finally settle down.**

BY MARTHA THOMAS

**D**olores Boyer worked in the Foreign Service for 32 years, completing four overseas tours with the U.S. Agency for International Development and four with the U.S. Information Agency. She lived in Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand, Ghana and Sri Lanka. By the time she retired in 1997, she states, “I said to myself, ‘I’m not moving one more time.’” In the 19 years since then, Boyer proclaims with pride, “I haven’t filled out a single change-of-address form.”

Job appointments with the Foreign Service “were like putting your hand in the cookie jar and not knowing what cookie you were going to get,” Boyer says. She loved learning about new countries and cultures. She liked the social interactions and the sometimes radical beauty of the settings—from the architecture of Prague to the colorful markets in Ghana.

Now Boyer, 80, lives in an apartment in Arlington, Virginia, and keeps up with local art exhibits and theater, continues to travel and enjoys entertaining houseguests.

Recently, she joined the Arlington Village, an

organization of like-minded seniors with about 150 members. The Village helps its members with transportation to medical appointments and other tasks—from changing a light bulb to picking up groceries or setting up an email account—that can become more difficult with age.

“The Village came along at just the right time for me,” says Boyer. She sees it as an “insurance policy” to thwart the need to make what is often an older person’s final move—into an assisted living or continuing care facility.

The Arlington Village, which started in 2013, is one of close to 200 organizations nationwide (with about the same number now in formation). While the Villages can vary dramatically in structure, cost and membership, most share a common goal: to support older adults who wish to age in place.

## Service and Social Connections “In Place”

It isn’t just the dream of never moving again that makes the Village concept tailor-made for those who have spent their careers living abroad. Most Villages host book clubs and guest speakers, potluck suppers and field trips. Boyer enjoys Arlington Village’s Dining Around program at local restaurants and gatherings for Met Opera Live performances.

“Those of us in the Foreign Service are used to new experiences. We like to have teas and invite people for dinner,” points out FS retiree Marguerite Cooper, a volunteer for the Pasadena Village in southern California. “It’s a good fit.” Cooper, who



*Martha Thomas, a freelance writer and editor who lives in Baltimore, Maryland, has written about the Village concept for AARP The Magazine.*

spent 31 years in policy planning and research, with postings in India, Libya, Pakistan and Japan, among others, has a large family in the Pasadena area.

She knows she can call on one of her four nieces if she has a health problem, but figures she will join the Village at some point. For now, she volunteers, driving members to medical appointments, shopping centers and museums.

According to AARP, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons, 87 percent of people age 65 and older want to age in place. But many don't have family members nearby, or may live in communities that provide little interaction with neighbors. Enter the Village.

The first, Beacon Hill Village, was established in 2001, when a group of residents of that well-heeled Boston neighborhood decided to band together to keep an eye on each other. They ended up forming a nonprofit and went on to share their success story with others.

### Capitol Hill Village, For Example

One afternoon in 2006, Mike and Judy Canning were on a stroll in their Washington, D.C., neighborhood when they ran into a friend, who stopped to chat about an idea. The friend, Joe Lewis, whose mother had died unhappy in an assisted living facility, was determined to avoid the same fate.

"He'd seen an article in *The New York Times* about Beacon Hill Village and asked if we'd like to get together and talk about it," Mike recalls. A group of neighbors met in the basement of a local bookstore. "We bonded immediately," says Canning, a retired USIA officer, and Capitol Hill Village was born.

The organization offers daily social programs such as trips to the movies or walks in the park, says Molly Singer, executive director. It invites experts in wellness, current events or technology to conduct seminars. It emphasizes volunteering among its members. "We encourage seniors to keep engaged. Some volunteer at local elementary schools," says Singer.

The able-bodied might join a neighborhood snow-shoveling brigade or visit the homebound after a storm. Capitol Hill Village's many retired Foreign Service members get it immediately, according to Singer. "They've built a career on exploring the world and having new experiences. The Village is a continuation of that."

Most Capitol Hill Village members pay annual dues of \$800 for a household or \$530 for an individual membership. Subsidies are available to the 10-15 percent of members who are low-income. The dues pay for office space and minimal staff to coordinate services, many provided by members themselves.

## The Village to Village Network

Village to Village Network (VtV) is a national peer-to-peer organization ([vtvnetwork.org](http://vtvnetwork.org)). Its mission is to enable communities to establish and effectively manage aging-in-place organizations initiated and inspired by their members, whether in large metropolitan areas, rural towns or suburban settings.



VtV Network links together nearly 200 existing Villages and another 200 that are under development across the United States, and in Australia and the Netherlands. There are at least 10 Village organizations in Washington, D.C., and some 30 in the greater Baltimore-Washington area. Through a map and search function on the website you can find out if there's a Village in your area and how to contact it.

VtV provides a forum for Village members to share best practices and explore new initiatives, as well as offering extensive resources.

The "Village 101 Toolkit," for example, includes a history of the Village concept, the core principles of a Village and various business models for the organization, as well as—for members—detailed step-by-step guidance on each phase of Village development.

The network sponsors an annual "gathering" and advertises numerous forums around the country where anyone interested can come to learn or get involved. The 2016 gathering, "The Village Movement: Making Your Future a Good One," will be held Oct. 17-19 in Columbus, Ohio.

The network also offers members access to the content of forums and webinars on such topics as Village websites, fundraising and marketing, and research related to Villages, as well as to VtV's Document Library.



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The model, much like tiered retirement communities, depends on people joining when they are able to contribute.

Just in case, Capitol Hill is starting what Singer calls an "urgent membership," a higher-priced option for those who wait to join until their need for assistance kicks in. Arlington Village, with annual dues of \$500 for an individual and \$750 for a couple, addresses the same issue by offering tax-deductible memberships to younger members who don't use services but are free to participate in cultural programs.

At 75, Mike Canning says that he and Judy "have provided more services than we've used," in their 10 years as members. Even so, he expects, "when we're in our 80s, we'll be getting a lot of rides."

## A New Social Network

The Cannings bought their 1870s row house in 1965 and mostly rented it out, knowing they would eventually settle in Capitol Hill. Twenty-five moves later, they took occupancy of the two-story house and hope to never move again.

The Village, says Mike, helps. "It's our new social circle; we had no idea all these people were nearby. There's the scientist down the street. The novelist next door."

As co-founders of the Village, the Cannings often visit other parts of the country to talk about their experience and mentor nascent groups. "We always highlight the social connections," says Mike. "That's more important than getting rides to the doctor or getting your dog walked or your sidewalk shoveled. The real psychological boost is the social network." ■

# What We're Doing Now

**W***e began preparing this issue of The Journal in January, with a broadcast message to retired and former members of the Foreign Service requesting input on the "afterlife." We asked members to reflect on what they wished they*

*had known earlier about retirement and what advice they would give their younger selves on planning for it. We asked what they wish they had known before joining the Foreign Service. And we asked them to tell us about their interesting post-FS lives, including advice for others who may want to take a similar path.*

*The response was quick and abundant. We received more than 45 thoughtful essays—far too many to publish in one month, so we have included some here and will feature the rest in an upcoming issue.*

*We thank all those who took the time to write. As you will see, these fascinating commentaries are testimony to the great variety of meaningful paths open to individuals who have made a career in the Foreign Service.*

*Whether you just joined the Service, are paddling along at mid-level, or negotiating the senior threshold—you are sure to find these stories inspiring and insightful. Enjoy!*

—The Editors

## Volunteering for Disaster Response

BY EARL MANNOIA

**A**fter retiring in 2000, I was still doing work for the State Department four years later when my wife, Breda, and I began doing volunteer work for the American Red Cross. We were fascinated by the work, and felt it would provide us with the challenges and opportunities we wanted in retirement.

We were living in our new home at Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia. Within six months we were the Disaster Action Team leaders for our county. In that capacity we



Earl Mannoia

COURTESY OF EARL MANNOIA

responded primarily to house fires and provided families with their first assistance in the form of housing and money for clothing.

Our first national disaster response was Hurricane Katrina. We served two three-week tours in Mississippi, where we had some of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of our lives. We were hooked. We are both in Red Cross leadership positions now and have responded to many national disasters. I am on the Virginia state leadership team and have responsibility for Red Cross government liaisons statewide.

Breda also volunteers at the local American Cancer Society thrift shop, and I do a fundraising golf tournament for the Red Cross each year. We are both involved in other activities such as golf, gardening, jewelry making, motorcycling, singing in a barbershop chorus; but it is the Red Cross that gives us a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

I feel like I'm having a second career that is as satisfying as my time in the Foreign Service.

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*Earl D. Mannoia was a management officer from 1975 to 2000. He served in Islamabad, Amman, Düsseldorf, Djibouti, Vienna, Washington, D.C., Bern and Bonn. In retirement, he has done While Actually Employed and contract stints in Belgrade, Hamilton, Dublin, Frankfurt, Peshawar, Cairo, Dubai, Dushanbe and Washington, D.C.*

## From Consular Officer to Immigration Attorney

BY RUSS WINGE

I welcome the opportunity to share my story of life after the Foreign Service. I chose the consular cone and during my career concentrated on learning as much as I could about immigration law because I believed it offered a skill set that would be most easily marketable upon retirement.

While assigned to Vancouver, I had personal contact with many immigration attorneys. When word got out that I would soon retire, I received several offers to work at law firms as a legal assistant. I realized I knew as much or more about immigration law as most attorneys.

I then began considering law school. First I needed to know if I could get into one, so I took the law school admissions test (LSAT) and applied to three law schools in the Northwest. To my surprise, all three welcomed me!

After some in-depth planning with my wife, Aileen, we decided to go for it, and I retired. At my retirement luncheon in Vancouver, a young vice consul asked me if I thought I might be a bit old to be going to law school. I told him, perhaps, but I would give it a shot, practice law for a while, and if I didn't like it, I might try medicine!

I matriculated at Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon. While I studied, Aileen worked for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Portland. She had taken all the correspondence courses offered by State and by INS, and she was a most welcome employee.

After I graduated, I set up a law practice and Aileen came to work with me. Her work at INS made my future presence there as an attorney presenting cases much smoother. Furthermore, her in-depth knowledge of INS and State Department requirements and procedures was instrumental in guiding clients through the process.

My law practice was very successful. I managed to earn far more than I could have earned



Russ Winge at his graduation, Senior Citizen Class of '88, from Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon.



at the highest levels of State, and was able to put my children through university debt-free and meet all the other financial goals I had set. I eventually sold my practice and retired debt- and mortgage-free to a lovely home on the Fall River in Oregon.

I truly enjoyed my Foreign Service career and my law practice. In full retirement, I now enjoy fly fishing, club chess and learning to fly on my highly sophisticated flight simulator. My wife approves of the latter activity in lieu of real flying because the worst that can happen to me would be to fall out of my chair!

To consular officers, I say: there is a use for your skills in retirement if you are willing to make the effort. It is the visa function, in particular, that offers opportunities in retirement either as a legal assistant or as an attorney.

To those of you who play the “I’m too old” card, I assure you that you are not. Law school was time-consuming but not difficult. I treated the experience as a full-time, eight-hour-a-day job, complete with coffee and lunch breaks. When not in class, I was in the library. As a result, I was able to spend evenings and weekends with my family. I am proud of my “second effort,” and I tell you this—if I could do it, so can you.

Best regards to my retired Foreign Service friends.

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*Russ Winge, a retired consular officer, was posted to Maracaibo, Havana (twice), Panama, Frankfurt, Manila, Ciudad Juarez, Madrid, Barcelona, Wellington, Mexico City, Washington, D.C., and Vancouver.*

## Network and Cultivate Mentors

BY CAMERON MUNTER

**J**ust as it’s important to have mentors during your Foreign Service career, it’s important to have them for the afterlife. I noted that many colleagues in the retirement course seemed oddly puzzled, kind of bereft, when they realized they were leaving a system in which, for decades, they’d known to whom they should turn.

Don’t fall into this trap. You’re still part of a network if you choose to be. Who did you admire when you were an officer? That consul general or deputy chief of mission is probably working out in the real world somewhere and can give you good advice.

In my case, I went to a venerable Foreign Service legend who

lives in New York. He said: You have three choices. You can get a job somewhere in business. With any luck you’ll make good money, work very hard. Option two: You can buy white shoes and move to Florida and learn to golf.

Option three (clearly the right answer, as far as he was concerned; don’t forget, we’ve all written action memos presenting a principal three options): You can build a “portfolio retirement,” in which you have a base and can expand your work from there as you wish.

In this third option, for example, you can be an adjunct professor or a leader of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) or do some other job that probably won’t make you enormously wealthy but will bring satisfaction and an office where you can display your tokens of appreciation from the Karachi Chamber of Commerce.

These jobs, he said, are easier to swing the farther you are from Washington, D.C. Then consult based on your Foreign Service expertise, spending as much time consulting as you wish based on your need for money or the time available. That means your public life need not end suddenly but can continue as long as you want it to.

I took adjunct professor jobs (actually, “professor of practice” positions), first at Columbia Law School and then at Pomona College; I joined the Washington consulting firm Albright Stonebridge, as well as a couple of London-based investment firms. And I had the pleasure of working on such projects as polio eradication in Pakistan (with the Gates Foundation), private telecommunications development in the Balkans (with KKR), and even various attempts to settle the longstanding Budweiser trademark dispute (between the government of the Czech Republic and InBev, the owner of Anheuser-Busch).

After doing this for a couple of years, I ended up taking the position of president and CEO of the East West Institute in New York, going back to a single job, but one engaging diplomatic skills in international conflict prevention.

As for what I wish I had known before I joined the Foreign Service: I wish I’d studied dramatic arts. Sure, it’s nice to be conversant with international relations, history, literature and economics. But it’s even more important to learn, as early as possible, about how to play your part, demonstrate sincerity on stage and understand the roles that others play.

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*Cameron Munter joined the Foreign Service in 1985. He served in Warsaw, Prague, Bonn and Washington, D.C., including at the National Security Council. After 9/11, he served in Mosul, Baghdad and, ultimately, as ambassador in Belgrade and then Islamabad before retiring in 2012.*

# Becoming a Minister, According to Plan

BY LOIS AROIAN

**M**y “retirement” has been a journey into joy. My plan had been to retire at age 65, but circumstances intervened. While serving as consul general in Quebec City in 2000, I led worship occasionally at local English-speaking churches. A friend suggested I go to seminary and become the pastor at her church.

Three years later, while serving in Washington, D.C., I parachuted into a local seminary I’d never even visited. One course at a time, I became a candidate for ministry in the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA).

That meant that when I retired in 2007 after a 23-year career that included tours as deputy chief of mission in Mauritania and

Botswana, my progress toward my next career as a Presbyterian minister was already well underway.

While enrolled at Wesley Theological Seminary in D.C. following my retirement from State, I went to work in the declassification office that scans volumes of the prospective Foreign Relations of the United States after the books are compiled by the Historian’s Office. What a wonderful job, linked to my pre-Foreign Service training as a Middle East historian and author! I loved reviewing historical documents from presidential libraries and new FRUS volumes.

The higher income also gave me an opportunity to volunteer as an evaluator for the Future Leaders Exchange program bringing high school students from former Soviet republics to the United States. I could have stayed in that office forever, as most people who work there do.

However, in 2010 I accepted a call as pastor of a small church in rural Willow Lake, South Dakota, on a PCUSA program to match recent seminary graduates with rural churches.

Our Presbytery appointed me immediately to the Synod committees on racial-ethnic ministry and self-development of peoples. This broader engagement led me to attend the PCUSA General Assembly in Detroit in 2014, as well as the upcoming 2016 GA in Portland, Oregon.

In November 2015, I was called as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in East Jordan, Michigan. I told the committee that my long-term plan was to retire at 80, as my dad had done. I feel very blessed that this wonderful congregation was willing to take a chance on someone well past the usual retirement age.

Ever since surviving meningococcal meningitis in my 20s while doing my doctoral research in Egypt, I have felt the importance of making each day count and of helping others.

I have no regrets. I went to college at age 16 planning to become a Presbyterian minister.

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*Lois Aroian entered the Foreign Service as a political officer and served from 1984 to 2007 in Sudan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Kenya, Seattle (with the Boeing Company), Mauritania, Canada and Botswana, in addition to tours in the bureaus of International Organization Affairs, African Affairs and Intelligence and Research. She also graduated from the National War College of the National Defense University in 2002.*



Lois Aroian in the First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall after her installation.

COURTESY OF LOIS AROIAN

# Two Truths

BY MARC E. NICHOLSON

I retired fairly early and with no financial worries, so my comments relate to the social side of life. I “sort of” knew two truths when I retired, but they became more vivid over time.

First, in middle age our friendships and social life are overwhelmingly obtained through our work life, so when one leaves the job, the room can become very quiet very soon unless one develops other associations and organizational affiliations that put one in contact with other people. And that human contact is essential to mental health and happiness.

Second, while at first in retirement we want to “clean up” various projects that had been postponed, it is important to shift soon if one has an aspiration to acquire a new talent or skill or one has a new career ambition. The longer you postpone it, the more you will feel that it’s too late in life to pursue it and reap sufficient benefit from your efforts. I was tempted on retirement to learn to play classical piano, but did not, and now regret that it may be too late.

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*Marc E. Nicholson, a political officer, joined the Foreign Service in 1975 and retired in 2000. He served in Bangkok (two tours), Brasilia (two tours) and Lisbon, and spent half his career at the State Department in Washington, D.C., working on political-military affairs.*

# Mr. Mayor: Still Keeping Promises Three Terms On

BY JIM CASON

Little did I imagine as I boarded the plane in Asuncion at the conclusion of my three-year stint as U.S. ambassador that I would end up as the mayor of Coral Gables, one of America’s most beautiful small cities.

My plan was to take the retirement seminar and move to Florida to begin a life of leisure after 38 years with State. The seminar suggested many ways to keep busy, but running for local



COURTESY OF JIM CASON

Jim Cason (at right), the mayor of Coral Gables, Florida, presents the “Key to the City” to Jose Soria, Spain’s minister of commerce.

office was not on the menu. I thought I might do some part-time work as a consultant after getting settled in a new home.

My wife and I had long had our eyes on Coral Gables as an ideal retirement community. Located just south of Miami, the “City Beautiful” of 47,000 residents is home to the University of Miami, many consulates and trade offices, and some 135 Latin American corporate headquarters. It was planned in the 1920s by George Merrick, who envisioned creating an international theme city from 3,000 acres of pine trees and fruit orchards.

Today it is renowned for its tropical foliage, well-kept homes, cultural attractions, and the linguistic and ethnic diversity of its inhabitants, most of whom have university degrees. *USA Today* and Rand McNally have named Coral Gables the second most beautiful small town in America.

The city is 58 percent Hispanic, a majority Cuban-American. I spent most of my career in Latin America, and served as chief of mission in Havana from 2002 to 2005. I realized that many people knew of me from Havana, where I had a reputation of creatively working with the opposition movement. Cuban-Americans began urging me to run for state or county office. However, I was more interested in getting acclimated and developing a circle of friends.

By mid-2009, some 18 months after moving to Coral Gables, I began to grow restless. The State Department Office of the Inspector General invited me to become a senior inspector, and I took assignments in Amman and Baghdad. But as I settled into my new city, I began to realize that Coral Gables voters were looking for new leadership. After months of delving into city records and talk-



ing with the manager, I decided to make a run for mayor. The odds were very much against a complete newcomer, but I won.

There is a role for diplomacy in municipal government. Being mayor requires empathy and good listening skills, as citizens bring their problems to me for resolution. Given the breadth and depth of my Foreign Service experience, I could see options for solutions that others may not have considered. Running a commission requires tact and courtesy, compromise and, at times, firmness. And as the city's ambassador, I get out to meet my constituents, explain what we are trying to do and seek support and understanding of the financial constraints facing the municipality. Above all, I am accessible and available to all who want to see me.

Taking office, I promised to be a full-time mayor, to tackle pension reform and to lower the tax millage rate. Three terms later, I continue to keep those promises.

While most FSOs won't have the advantage of the support base that I had, you can win a local election. I think many smaller communities would welcome the fresh perspective we bring, our linguistic and public speaking skills, our ability to understand others' views, and our flexibility and management experience.

Take a chance; reinvent yourself, and have fun!

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*Jim Cason is three-time mayor of Coral Gables, Florida. He served as ambassador to Paraguay and chief of mission in the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba and deputy chief of mission in Honduras and Jamaica. He also served in Portugal, Italy, El Salvador, Panama, Uruguay, Bolivia, Venezuela and Washington, D.C.*

## Thinking about What's Next

BY TED CURRAN

**A** key bit of advice for Foreign Service employees planning for retirement is to begin thinking about post-service life opportunities well before you leave the Service. The following questions should be posted on your "What's Next?" chart.

- Are there institutions you have worked with in the Foreign Service such as think tanks, educational institutions or U.S. businesses with offices abroad with whom you have had contact? (These are excellent resources for job opportunities.)

- During your time in the Service did you pick up a language at level 3 or above that would be helpful to colleges or businesses located overseas? (It is still remarkable how few employees in China or Latin America speak the local language with any facility.)

- If married, does your spouse have language or personal ties that both of you can use as entry points for jobs? (The Ford Foundation, for example.)

Increasingly, U.S. colleges and universities are promoting study in the United States. These institutions are looking for "counselors" to find and support students from abroad. Assuming that FSOs are retiring to university towns, there are (paid) opportunities to be involved in the foreign student programs.

Seek an interview with a professional search firm. Their staffs are usually good, and there's no charge!

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*Ted Curran served in the Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs with overseas postings that included Berlin, Amman, Taiz, Rabat and Kabul. He is fluent in German and has a "2+" in Arabic.*

## Keeping Wild Equines Safe and Free

BY CHARLOTTE ROE

**G**oing from FSO to wild equine caretaker and advocate wasn't my plan. I'd grown up riding and had livestock on a small ranch in Ohio, but thought I'd left that part of my life behind when I entered the Foreign Service.

As intended, immediately after retirement I moved to Colorado, where my three sisters live in the mountains, and where I'd done my undergraduate studies. I became active in the Colorado Celtic Harp Society and combined my part-time music career with the ancient art of storytelling. I got involved in Spellbinders, a national organization that trains volunteers to tell stories in public schools and libraries, and I joined Northern Colorado Storytellers. Telling animal stories from all corners of the globe to children and adults is a great way to spur learning and pass on traditional knowledge. My specialty is bilingual story-weaving in Spanish, which my husband, Hector, and I speak at home.

Our first home in Colorado had a barn, an irrigation well and an

acre of pasture. We thought about getting goats to mow the field. Instead, because of our two large dogs, we chose donkeys. These highly intelligent animals don't run away or panic when faced with would-be predators. They stand guard and assess the situation. We discovered Longhopes, the only globally sanctioned donkey shelter in the United States, and adopted a mother-daughter burro pair that had come from a wild herd range in the Sonoran Desert. Later Longhopes offered us a young gelding they had acquired from a local "kill pen" run by brokers who buy up unwanted equines

and sell them for slaughter in Mexico and Canada. The three won our hearts with their alert ears, soft eyes and savvy ways.

One thing led to another. We moved to a five-acre, semi-abandoned farm and began barn-building and restoring and fencing pastures. It was then that an older Andalusian-Appaloosa who needed a home galloped into my life. A powerful steed with a dominant attitude, he challenged me to begin retraining in natural horsemanship. Next we adopted a young "wild" mustang mare from Oregon who had been a star performer in an Extreme Mustang Makeover competition in Loveland, Colorado.

Then something big happened. My husband and I doubled up on riding to keep both horses in shape. The mustang and her burro friends breathed fire into me. What had previously seemed a romantic, somewhat remote quest—the fight to keep wild horses and burros safe and free on their native lands in the West—had come home. I delved deeper into the situation. In 1971 Congress unanimously passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to protect these free-roaming creatures that were being slaughtered for the pet food industry. Today, they are still threatened.

This is not an issue that lends itself to simple solutions. The question of who benefits from our public lands is fraught with



Mustang mare Carmelita has a conversation with Charlotte Roe shortly after her adoption. Carmelita is saying: "I'm still getting over the roundup and being separated from my band. ... Will you be my forever family?"

conflict, deception and misunderstanding. I have reached out to scientists and specialists in wildlife biology, wildlife fertility control and animal ethics. I connected with national and grassroots organizations. I'm publishing articles and op-eds and interpreting the story of Velma "Wild Horse Annie" Johnston, one of America's greatest unsung heroines. I joined the Board of Longhopes Donkey Shelter and recently became an adviser to The Cloud Foundation, which works to preserve wild horses and burros on our public lands. With other horse and burro fans and adopters, I founded a network called the "Wild Equid League of Colorado" to promote education and informed action on this issue.

My advice for those considering retirement is this: Don't over plan. Get engaged, because those who run the world are those who show up and roll up their sleeves. Everything you learned and applied in the Foreign Service will come into play. Albert Einstein said it well: "Those who have the privilege to know have the duty to act."

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*Charlotte Roe served as political/labor officer, environmental policy officer, science attaché, political counselor and senior labor adviser from 1983 to 2004. Her overseas posts included Bolivia, Chile, Israel, Colombia and Hungary.*

# Setting Sail: A New World of Challenges and Adventures

BY EDMUND HULL

I abbreviated my Foreign Service career at age 55. Three factors influenced that decision. First, in 2004, any future path for an Arabic-speaker led through Iraq and, like many in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, I saw our invasion as a mistake fraught with tragic choices. Second, I had an excellent academic job waiting that would last at least a year. Third, I had long wanted to sail seriously, and I thought best to undertake that challenge physically fit.

On occasion, I regretted my choice. I saw colleagues pursue more fulfilling diplomatic careers despite or because of their Iraq service. Good friends assumed leading roles in the State Department, and I calculated that I would have fared well in the “D” committee. In retrospect, I felt that I left a lot of power and prestige on the table.

My compensation was great, however, because after two years of teaching, I did, indeed, embark upon a true adventure that would have been difficult, if not impossible, in later life. I bought a sailboat and with it a new world of challenge.

My experience was not that of the boating magazines—smooth sailing under blue skies in crystal clear tropical waters. The first couple years on the Chesapeake Bay were dedicated, literally, to learning the ropes—how to set sails, including big head sails like a gennaker; and, more importantly, how to douse them when a sudden thunderstorm leaves you seriously over-canvassed on a boat veering out of control. Even more challenging, for a policy wonk like me, was learning how to keep a diesel engine operating reliably. Both physically and intellectually, I was well out of my comfort zone.

In 2008, after a couple of years of making mistakes on the Bay, I decided to try an offshore passage to Bermuda, then on



Retired FSO Edmund Hull aboard S/V Panope in Gibraltar after his 2011 transatlantic passage.

COURTESY OF EDMUND HULL

to Maine. With me was Len Hawley, an experienced sailor, with whom I had worked on peacekeeping and counterterrorism at State. We made it half way before head winds, fuel shortage and a fresh water leak dictated a new strategy. We hove to for two days waiting for a weather break so we could recross the Gulf Stream, and then headed northwest to Montauk. With little fuel, our sailing skills were severely tested over the next three days. In the Montauk channel, our starved engine actually sputtered before a slight grounding pushed the last bit of fuel from the tank and into the engine.

I would subsequently make Casco Bay in Maine, Bermuda on my second try, the Bahamas a couple years later, then Bermuda-Azores-Gibraltar. In 2011, the western Mediterranean; and,



finally, in 2014, the eastern Med to our second home in Cyprus. The challenges from weather, waves, navigation, cooking, heads, coral reefs and more were constant and varied. Costs also added up: I stopped calculating in dollars, and adopted “boat units” (\$1,000) as currency.

What rewards could justify the costs?

First, the satisfaction of following a challenging career with a challenging retirement. Declining the safe and comfortable in favor of calculated risk and mastering, or at least surviving, elemental nature and ever-changing problems with sails, lines, engines and electronics. Second, my passages offered opportunities to former State colleagues, family members and friends. That crew not only enabled my passages, but also created a camaraderie that substituted well for the rush of a country team in crisis.

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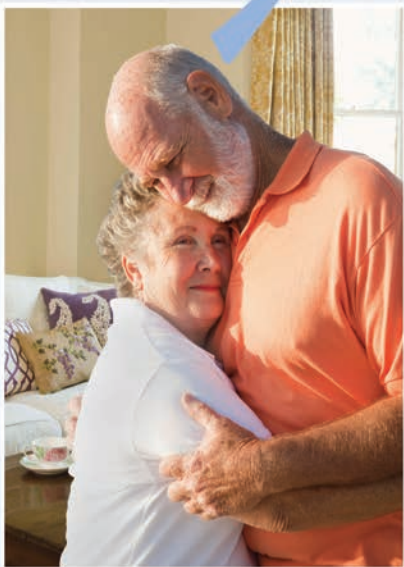
*Edmund J. Hull served as ambassador in Yemen (2001-2004) and as Princeton University's first diplomat-in-residence (2005-2007). His book, High-Value Target: Countering Al-Qaeda in Yemen won the*

*American Academy of Diplomacy's Dillon Award for Distinguished Writing on American Diplomacy in 2011. Blue Water Sailing magazine published his article, "An Ionian Passage: A Cruising Dream Realized in the Wake of Odysseus" in April 2015.*

## Finding the Perfect Retirement Work

BY SONNY LOW

**R**etirement started for us on July 5, 2005, when we boarded a flight to London to start a “Grand European Tour” for three weeks. The tour took us from England to France, Monaco, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Germany and back to Washington, D.C.



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**Sonny Low found his ideal retirement job working in the Gardening Department at Home Depot.**

Fully decompressed, my wife, Mirian, and I boarded Amtrak for our cross-country trip. On Aug. 1 we arrived at my hometown where, after a 10-day visit with my sister's and brother's families, we packed up our sturdy Honda CRV for the 1,200-mile drive down to

Chula Vista, California, to start this newest adventure in our lives.

Long before retirement, the frigid winters and humid summers of Washington, D.C., were important in our decision to move west. Moreover, the prospect of working in an office pushing papers had lost its appeal. International travel to complete complex assignments under strict deadlines and under constant stress was no longer exciting. I wanted something completely different in life!

Hence, in 2000, we went to San Diego, where I had lived during the 1970s, to look for a suitable property to rent out before converting it into our retirement home. We found a town house that was affordable, and we found a fantastic property manager. In August 2005, we arrived to reclaim it.

We spent the first year of retirement furnishing the new house and settling in. Because the house was in walking distance of a community college, I began taking classes in travel and tourism and to update my computer skills. For a time, I considered starting a new career in the travel industry. I also took out a membership in a local fitness center and enjoyed daily walks in the neighborhood.

In the travel classes I discovered ocean cruising. Starting with a weeklong cruise to Hawaii in 2006, we have made these annual vacations. On cruises to Alaska, up and down the Pacific Coast in Mexico, through the Panama Canal, and with stops at different ports in Central and South America, we have visited friends and family and met fantastic people with whom we've stayed in contact over the years.

I continued searching for the ideal retirement activity. I spent a year learning the insurance industry. I completed the training course and was state-certified, but concluded that it was not right for me. What I really wanted, I discovered, was a part-time job that would get me out of the house to meet people

and give my wife time for herself. That led to a five-year stint as a part-time "security guard" certified by the State of California. I received security training—never in firearms, which I detest—but worked in crowd control and ushering people who attend sports and entertainment events at large venues.

Finally, just three years ago, I found my ideal retirement job—as an associate with Home Depot. Working in the Gardening Department three to four days a week on four-hour shifts keeps me constantly walking, bending and stretching to water plants and load bags of rocks and fertilizer. I've shed 25 pounds, brought my pants size down two inches, and stayed fit. Also, I use my Spanish to help customers who prefer that language. And the Met Life dental insurance offered by Home Depot to its part-time employees beats what I left the federal government with 10 years ago!

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*Sonny Low volunteered with the Peace Corps in Chile from 1968 to 1970, and was associate director for programs and training in Colombia and Costa Rica from 1974 to 1979. He joined USAID in 1979, and during a 25-year Foreign Service career served in Washington, D.C., Panama, Honduras, Ecuador, Guatemala and Poland.*

## Volunteer Work: Bigger Opportunities in Smaller Towns

BY MARK LORE

I'd suggest that those approaching retirement begin to develop interests not connected to the Foreign Service. For a few years after my retirement at age 59, I traded on my FS background. I taught at FSI and Shenandoah University, gave talks to adult education classes and service clubs, and wrote several articles for the *FSJ* and other publications. Gradually, however, these "gigs" vanished. Unless you are actively engaged on a daily basis with the issues, your usefulness to others inevitably atrophies. One should have a Plan B.

For me, the fallback has been community volunteer work. In this, I was fortunate to have settled in small-town America (Winchester, Virginia) where the competition is less but the opportunities can be surprisingly diverse. I have directed a local

film society and served on city boards that oversee historic preservation and downtown revitalization. I've also been on a variety of nonprofit boards, as well as taking an active role in my local Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Volunteer activities can be more challenging than one might think. Successfully leading others in a no-pay environment can arguably be more complicated than dealing from a position of authority in an embassy or a departmental bureau. I've drawn often on some of the management tools I learned in the Foreign Service, particularly from the deputy chief of mission course. Unlike in the FS, however, the payoff is that you can build something from beginning to end and take personal ownership of it. A taste for fundraising is usually critical, as is a willingness to stay reasonably up-to-date with fast-evolving communications technology.

So unless you have the credentials and contacts to remain active in foreign affairs, identify your other pursuits early on. If these suggest further study or training, make the investment as soon as possible. It can be hard to gear up once you're in your late 60s and 70s.

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*Mark Lore served in the U.S. Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1965. He served in Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Luanda, Rabat and Brussels in citizen protection and visas; general administration; political representation; and reporting on local political and economic conditions and host government attitudes. He later served as counselor for economic affairs in Lisbon, as director of the Office of Brazilian Affairs in Washington, D.C., as deputy chief of mission in Brasilia and as a professor at the Naval War College in Rhode Island. He retired in 1997.*

## Back in Academia After an “Interlude”

BY JAMES F. CREAGAN

**I**n joining the Foreign Service, I never intended to stay “for life.” It was to be an interlude, perhaps five years, in the life of a professor. I thought that some Foreign Service experience would be useful in teaching foreign policy and international relations to future students. That five-year interlude turned into almost 35 years for me and for my family. It went by in a flash.



COURTESY OF JAMES CREAGAN

James Creagan discusses the work of a diplomat at the Vatican with a student in the course “The Holy See and World Affairs.”

I had imagined myself a minor Kissinger, who could enter government and return to Harvard as a full professor unscathed by the government experience—even ready for another Department of State stint at some point. I dropped out after tours in Mexico City and San Salvador to return to where I thought the action was in the early 1970s, the campus. I tried to quit the Foreign Service, but my terrific ambassador, Bill Bowdler, convinced me to take leave without pay instead.

After a year at Texas A&M, I was ready for the world again. So off we went, Gwyn and I and the children, to successive posts in Rome, Lima, Naples, Lisbon, Brasilia, Vatican City, São Paulo, New York City, Rome and Tegucigalpa. It was a long run, with an ambassadorship and the fun and grind of running two embassies in Italy and a consulate general in Brazil. We spent only two years out of 34 in Washington, D.C. It was the old Foreign Service, and the focus was on the foreign.

Along the way, I was lucky to have had the opportunity to teach a course or to lecture at universities in several countries. After I retired, the Board of Trustees at a private university in Rome lured us back to Italy. Six-plus years as university president there meant that we had lived 18 years or so in Italy. Tough duty.





COURTESY OF ROBERT CURTIS

Robert Curtis, at right in this series of photos, demonstrates techniques for responding to a certain kind of attack by grabbing the attacker's hand and wrenching his arm or elbow to break it (1), performing a classic arm bar (2) and delivering a kick with a heel to the ribs of the attacker (3).

During the last 10 years I have been a professor in San Antonio and have now returned to St. Mary's University as professor of diplomacy—where I taught 50 years ago and where I met my wife of 50 years, Gwyn. The circle of life. I am honored to hold the professorship named for an old friend and late colleague, Ambassador Eugene Scassa, a friend of many of us veteran diplomats and a great mentor to a whole cohort of this century's Foreign Service officers.

My advice would be to not plan your entire career. Think of five years, and see what happens. There is lots of life after the Foreign Service. In the meantime, go for the experience and for the great opportunity to serve our country and, through diplomacy, improve our world.

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*Jim Creagan began his career at USAID before joining the State Department Foreign Service in 1966. He held positions as chargé d'affairs and deputy chief of mission in Italy and the Holy See, consul general in São Paulo, political counselor in Brasilia and Portugal, and consul in Naples, as well as serving in Lima, Mexico City, San Salvador and Rome. He was named U.S. ambassador to Honduras in 1996, and in 2009 served as chief of mission in Bolivia. He retired formally in 1999, and became president of John Cabot University in Rome.*

## Karate Anyone?

BY ROBERT H. CURTIS

People say that happiness and satisfaction in retirement require that you have goals and interests to keep you busy. It is never too early to begin thinking about what you will do when you retire.

For me, retirement after 34 years of government service provides the opportunity to focus on gardening, reading, studying in college-level courses, teaching a course at George Mason University and teaching traditional adult-focused Okinawan self-defense karate—my lifelong passion.

I have been a student of an Okinawan Karate Grand Master, now a 10th Degree, since 1979. In spite of the challenges of a Peace Corps assignment in rural Paraguay and four overseas postings along with Washington assignments in the Foreign Service, I continued to practice and teach karate.

When I began studying the martial arts I was unconcerned with, and probably unaware of, the long-term physical benefits it provides. Older masters refer to karate as the pathway

between self-defense and self-discovery, because it develops both your body and your mind. Unlike competitive sports, practicing the martial arts continues to improve your mental focus and physical movement efficiency as your skill levels continue to increase.

My 84-year-old instructor holds an annual national training seminar where most of the senior instructors, now in our 60s and 70s, gather with our students. Surprisingly, the younger and stronger competitive black belts are hard-pressed to keep up physically with us old guys. We have been doing this for decades, and our physically efficient techniques are much faster than their attacks and defenses.

When I first moved to Washington, D.C., with a master's degree from Michigan State University, my instructor, now an internationally renowned Okinawan Karate Grand Master, told me to teach a few students wherever I went. Teaching karate to others would force me to relearn and improve my skills over and over again.

Each new assignment required starting a new school—securing adequate space and then finding interested students, too! While overseas, I regularly instructed fellow FSOs, members of the local Marine detachment and local security personnel. While in the United States I normally focused on building a more stable student base.

In 2008, I was promoted to 7th Degree, Karate Master, by the Okinawan Shidokan Shorin Ryu Karate Association.

With retirement, I changed my small “club” karate school format to a more commercial format. I had to learn how to set up a business plan, rent space, run marketing campaigns and comply with local business laws and regulations. The learning curve can be steep and painfully expensive (I can provide gory details of seemingly brilliant marketing campaigns that failed to provide even a single new student).

Are the martial arts for you? Basically, if you can walk, you can practice the martial arts. We have all seen slow graceful movements of morning Tai Chi practitioners in Chinese parks. Most of these folks seem to be of retirement age, or older, and many only started practicing in the last decade or so. One of my newer students began karate practice after nearly 40 years of government service. This individual in his mid-60s quickly adapted to our practice and became one of our regular class members, and younger students now often ask him for karate assistance as well as life guidance.

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*Robert H. Curtis served as a Foreign Agricultural Service officer in Washington, D.C., Buenos Aires, Santiago, Milan and Vienna.*

## Travel with a Purpose

BY WILLIAM  
MCPHERSON

**W**hen I went through the retirement seminar at the end of my Foreign Service career, I learned a lot about taxes and estates and all of the other formalities of retiring. But the thing that stuck with me most is when the instructor asked us during one session to list three things that we would be doing after retirement. This got me thinking about what I was really interested in. I thought about travel, of course, and possible use of my experience in some academic setting.

What worked out best for me, however, was the following:

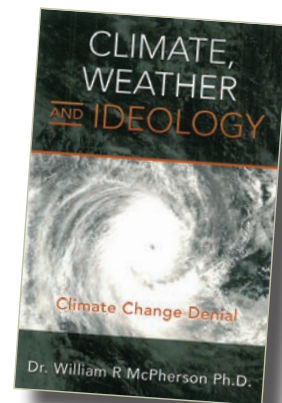
- **Volunteer Work.** In the Foreign Service, I had become interested in the use of technology in the State Department and, in fact, had a short Foreign Service Institute assignment on the use of personal computers in diplomacy. After retiring, I found volunteer work with SeniorNet, a nationwide computer instruction service for seniors. I am now working with the Seattle Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens on their “Seniors Training Seniors” computer program.

- **Part-time Conference Reporting.** I am not a good tourist, but I did enjoy travel with a purpose: reporting on more than 25 environmental conferences around the world for Earth Negotiations Bulletin. This kept me current with international negotiations on the environment, particularly climate change.

- **Writing.** It is perhaps a cliché that we are all writers, but I did put my writing experience to work to publish three books on climate change. (They have been listed in “In Their Own Write” in *The Foreign Service Journal*.) I found the experience of writing to be a very satisfying activity, made much better with the availability of the Internet for research. It is also an opening wedge for entrée to the academic world, where I have been able to participate in seminars.

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*William R. McPherson spent 21 years in the Foreign Service, serving in Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Switzerland, among other locations. In retirement he has worked on international environmental issues, and is an activist working with the Sierra Club on climate change and coal exports.*





COURTESY OF DEBORAH HART

Deborah Hart attends to chickens as part of her volunteer work with Interfaith Food Shuttle in Raleigh, North Carolina. She frequently volunteers with local food security nonprofits.

## A Passion for Environmental and Life Design

BY DEBORAH HART

**T**o be honest, I have never thought about retirement as a goal. What do I wish I had known earlier about retirement? I can't really say... maybe, how much fun it would be. So far, I don't have any regrets about how my "retirement" has proceeded. I am surprised that I am so much busier than I have ever been in my life. My younger self might have been surprised about that, but I am not sure that knowing it would have made any difference!

The first third of my Foreign Service career was spent as a consular officer and I relished the opportunity to develop sys-

tems to improve customer service as well as effectiveness and efficiency. However, the second third was spent trying desperately to change my cone to what became my true love—public diplomacy. Fortunately, I finally was able to reach my goal and become a public diplomacy officer. I wish I had known more about the cones before I joined the Foreign Service!

Right now is a very exciting time of my life because I have been able to delve deeper into some lifelong passions that revolve around personal health and the health of the environment. Since retiring I have become certified in permaculture design and as a primal blueprint expert. I have developed

a holistic approach to lifestyle design known as PermaPaleo, which employs the complementary approaches of permaculture (or restorative agriculture, if you will) and primal/paleo to help me live a life that supports my health and that of our earth.

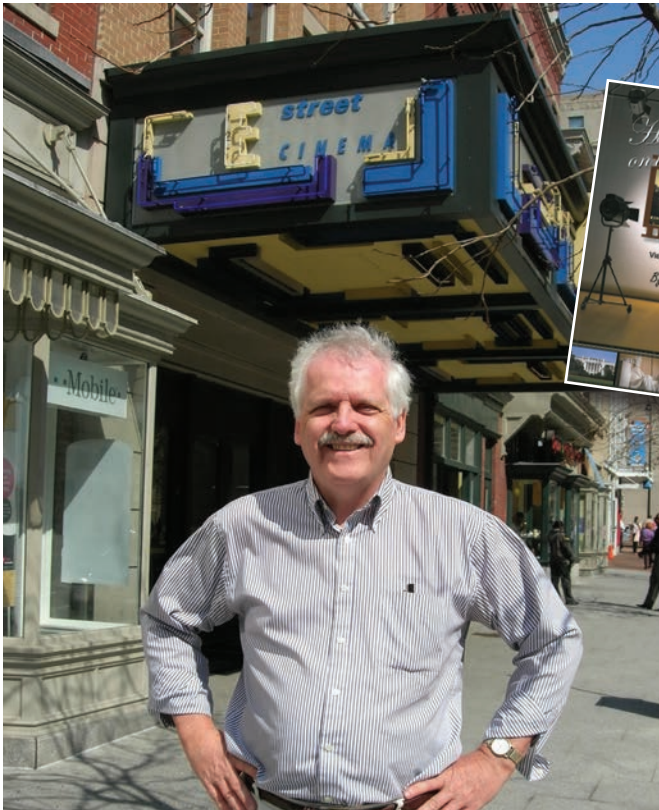
The same social media skills that I practiced in the Foreign Service serve me well—I am still a bit of a geek and an early adopter of whatever is the newest way to communicate. My latest love is Periscope and live video using my smartphone.

My advice to the newly retired? Keep learning! Check out programs like the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. There is probably one near you. Never miss a chance to learn something new, and you will enjoy every day.

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*Deborah S. Hart-Serafini served in Liberia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq (Kirkuk and Baghdad), New York, Kuwait, Oman and Egypt from 1998-2013. She held political-military positions, was a nonimmigrant visa section chief, deputy principal officer, provincial affairs officer, cultural affairs officer, Middle East Partnership Initiative coordinator and public affairs officer.*





Mike Canning at Landmark E Street Cinema in downtown Washington, D.C., where he sees many of the movies he reviews.

## Act Two: Movie Reviewer

BY MIKE CANNING

**W**henever I tell people I review movies, they invariably exclaim: “Hey, you are so lucky; how can I get that job?” In my case, by answering an ad.

In 1993, after 28 years in the Foreign Service with the U.S. Information Agency, I was attending the State Department’s retirement course and wondering what was next. While reading a local Capitol Hill newspaper, I noticed a classified ad for a “movie reviewer.” I applied and was hired, and have been writing about motion pictures ever since, thus indulging a desire I have held since I was about four. One is hardly born a movie reviewer, of course; one starts as a movie-lover.

As one of the last pre-television kids, my youthful entertain-

ment in Fargo, North Dakota, was the picture show. Then, at the university in my hometown, I discovered foreign-language films and was captured by their exoticism, an enthusiasm further stimulated by graduate study in Germany. After Germany, motivated in part by foreign climes that the cinema had shown me, I entered the Foreign Service with USIA. There, as a press and cultural officer, I was able to indulge my film bent, finding ways to program and write about movies of all types.

At that retirement seminar, I was relaxed about what came next. My whole life had mostly been one of blessed serendipity and acceptance—as with Charles Dickens’ Mr. Micawber—“in case anything turned up.”

With a good pension and a settled domestic life, I didn’t feel I had to work at something that paid, as did some anxious colleagues in the seminar.

When I started reviewing in 1993, I was looking forward to nailing some cinematic turkeys with blistering put downs. What I found out, however, was that the hard knock might be fun, but it was also facile and fleeting. I quickly came to focus on films that moved me or interested me, and thus might interest those for whom I was writing.

I was so lucky. I have kind editors who allow me to ruminate in my monthly column; I write about what interests me. I don’t write about the Hollywood blockbuster of the week but prefer to do riffs on the quirky independent effort or the intriguing new foreign flick. In discovering any good movie for myself, I aim to trigger interest in it for my reader.

If I were looking back on my callow self, how would I advise myself on a life after the Foreign Service? Probably this way: Embrace variety and change. My whole career was comprised of such change and I thrived on it. The passion that the Service nurtured—new environments, cross-cultural communications, and crafting analytical critiques—led me, in a way, to my second act, my film life. And it’s been a great gig, just like the first one.

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*Mike Canning spent 28 years as a press and culture officer with the U.S. Information Agency, serving in eight countries on four continents before retiring in 1993. He headed USIA operations in Kampala and Buenos Aires, and was deputy chief for U.S. Information Service operations in Brazil. He also served in Nicaragua, Peru, Kenya, Iran and was press officer in Rome. Since retirement, Canning has reviewed movies for Hill Rag in Washington, D.C., for more than 20 years. He is also a freelance writer on film, politics and public affairs. His combined interests in film and national politics led to the publication of his 2012 book, Hollywood on the Potomac.*



COURTESY OF BRIAN CARLSON

Pilot Brian Carlson volunteers with Pilots 'N Paws, a national organization through which pilots volunteer their time and airplanes to fly dogs and other animals from euthanasia shelters (mostly in the southern states) to new homes with adopting families (mainly in the northeast).

## The Joy of Flight

BY BRIAN CARLSON

In the 1970s' Embassy Caracas, a generous ambassador allowed embassy families to ride on the mission's airplane when it went to nearby countries. The fare was free, but the destination and timing were unpredictable. Our first trip in the DC-3 to Bogota and Quito included a weather diversion to Guayaquil.

It was the beginning of a Foreign Service career enlivened with aviation. In addition to the Pan Am flights to and from posts in South America and Europe, there were small airliners to places like Canaima's dirt landing strip. (The pilot turned circles over Angel Falls so everyone could see it!) During the Cold War days, I felt liberated every time a sparkling, modern Austrian Airlines DC-9 lifted off from a dingy Warsaw Pact airport. In the early 1990s, I felt a little shiver of trepidation when boarding doubtful-looking Aeroflot TU-134s in the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union.

But the best were flights in small aircraft, close to the ground. For a Cold War parliamentarians' tour, a U.S. Army helicopter flew 500 feet above the ground, doors open, up the fortified border between West and East Germany. In Norway I experi-

enced float plane flying—taking off and landing on breathtakingly beautiful lakes and fjords—which cost less than using an airport. In Latvia, in a Soviet-design MI-8 helicopter, the Minister of Defense marveled that a few years before it would have been unthinkable to take the American ambassador across a countryside then dotted with Soviet military installations.

When I retired, I learned to fly. Piloting challenged me to use long-neglected skills. Acronyms, numbers and rules must be memorized to pass Federal Aviation Administration tests. The Foreign Service never required much math, but even simple calculations of wind and compass deviation certainly do. I learned to use hand-eye coordination in new ways, not to mention steering with my feet. Navigation by “dead reckoning” is as treacherous as it sounds.

It was a thrill not only to pass intermediate checkrides, but to fly solo and, eventually, to receive a private pilot, single engine, land certificate (PP-SEL) from an exacting examiner. An eight-man partnership in a 1967 Beechcraft plane made flying affordable. Then I got my instrument rating, which means I can fly not just in daylight visibility, but also in clouds and darkness with air traffic control's help—just like the big jets. (Well, not as fast, not as high, etc.)

A few years ago I partnered in a Cirrus SR-22—a newer, faster and more comfortable airplane. Then I got my FAA commer-



cial pilot certificate (meaning I could, in theory, get paid to fly), as well as complex and technically advanced aircraft endorsements. Recently I qualified in tailwheel airplanes and, with a friend, bought a Super Decathlon aerobatic airplane. We lease it out to people who want to fly loops and rolls, or just fly low and slow with the doors off in summer.

Why fly in retirement? Of course, it enables fun travel. I can lecture and attend conferences. I love the ever-changing view of America from four or eight thousand feet. And aerobatics are more fun than a roller coaster!

But best is the community of flying enthusiasts. These people don't know what an FSO is, and their backgrounds are vastly different from ours. But they all enjoy the challenges of being pilot-in-command (PIC), planning adventures and introducing newcomers to the joy of flight.

As we like to say, "If you build 5,000 feet of highway, you can go about a mile. If you build 5,000 feet of runway, you can go anywhere."

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*Brian E. Carlson served more than 36 years in the Foreign Service, including as ambassador to the Republic of Latvia (2001-2005). Other postings took him to Spain, England, Norway, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Venezuela. From 2006 to 2010, he was the State Department's liaison with the Department of Defense on strategic communication and public diplomacy, and he led OIG inspection teams in the Middle East and Washington. Currently he represents the nonprofit InterMedia Research on defense, diplomacy and strategic communication. His Cirrus SR22 and Super Decathlon are based at Leesburg Executive Airport.*



COURTESY OF GARY GRAY

Gary Gray, at left, during a visit to Marobo village in East Timor with a representative of New Zealand.

## The East Timor Guy: Area Expertise Paves the Way

BY W. GARY GRAY

I retired from the Foreign Service in 2002 at age 51, long before I needed to, having another 10 years or so before any time-in-class (TIC) issues would arise. At the time, I was bored in my pleasant but relatively routine job in Kuala Lumpur, having been spoiled by a series of remarkably fortuitous right-place-at-the-right-time assignments where dramatic political transitions were taking place (Pretoria, Moscow, Maputo, Jakarta, Dili).

As the first chief of the U.S. office in East Timor (2000-2001), I had perhaps peaked too soon as a de facto chief of mission and



calculated that at my grade level it would be many years, if ever, before I could get back to that level. Most critically, East Timor maintained a special hold over me, and I was offered an opportunity to go back in a challenging position as chief of political affairs at the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

I nevertheless agonized for a couple of months over the decision. Australian and Canadian colleagues were able to take extended leaves of absence (up to 10 years in some cases!) to make similar moves, but State's system offered no such flexibility: I had to make an all-or-nothing choice. Seeking advice from all quarters, I found some of my FSO friends envious, while a few others (including, most relevantly, my wife) expressed serious concern about me giving up a secure career with such good benefits.

As it turned out, I was fortunate that my first peacekeeping job continued for three years into 2005. Then I traveled to various U.N. peacekeeping missions with a new nongovernmental organization attempting to encourage the use of local procurement to boost post-conflict economies. I ended up back in Dili from 2006 to 2007 as a When Actually Employed chargé at the embassy after the new country again descended into conflict.

Following 2008 and 2009 WAE stints back in Kuala Lumpur (now more interesting with the opposition threatening to unseat the long-ensconced government), I returned to Dili in senior management positions with the new U.N. mission through 2012. I finished my more than six-year U.N. career in South Sudan in 2013, having reached the organization's mandatory retirement age of 62, and returned to Dili in a contract position as an adviser with the embassy from 2013 to 2014.

Had I known in 2002 what I know now about how precarious, unpredictable and difficult the employment situation outside the Foreign Service can be, I may not have taken the leap. U.N. peacekeeping jobs are not tenured positions, but six-month or one-year renewable (or not) contracts. All of the jobs I actually ended up taking were the result of close contacts approaching me. During 2007 and 2008 I was more proactive, scanning listservs for international jobs, hooking up with Beltway bandit contracting firms and applying for U.N. positions, but little came of that. I did turn down opportunities to work in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other seemingly solid offers fell through at the last minute.

Watching friends and former colleagues advance to the senior ranks, I still sometimes wonder how my career would have developed had I remained in the Foreign Service; but I have no regrets. My subsequent jobs have all been challenging and rewarding. And being able to exert more control over where I wanted to be and for how long has provided better work-life balance with more opportunities for travel, attention to family issues and serious work on

my tennis game. In any case, continuing to maintain contacts with FSO and FSN friends over these years provided the opportunity to come back into the State Department at some key junctures and maintain the comforting feeling that I never really left.

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*W. Gary Gray served in the Foreign Service from 1985 to 2002 with assignments in Bucharest, Pretoria, Moscow, Maputo, Jakarta, Dili, Kuala Lumpur and Washington, D.C.*

## A Logical Next Step: Defense Department Contracting

BY MARY ANN SINGLAUB

I entered the Foreign Service shortly after graduate school (an M.S. from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service) and did not give much thought to life after the Foreign Service, much less retirement. For me, Foreign Service was a desirable career path to follow after growing up as an Army brat, but not one I had planned much ahead of time.

On reflection, perhaps the most useful advice I could give my younger self about serving in the Foreign Service and planning for life beyond, is this: networking is the key. I constantly underestimated this as I breezed through my Foreign Service assignments, leaving both good friends and excellent contacts, but also questionable Foreign Service supporters, in my wake.

Never being one to bow to authority for the sake of it, I questioned my superiors' decisions and almost always expressed my opinion. This is not helpful etiquette for an FSO in terms of promotions and assignments. Add to that some health issues and a Level 2 Medical Clearance, and I was suddenly no longer "worldwide available." Despite entering the Foreign Service with fluent German and Italian, without that string of senior officers willing to recommend me without reservation, it was often a struggle during bidding time.

When I was selected out in 1999 as a tenured FS-3 (how embarrassing!), I did not bother to go to the Foreign Service Grievance Board. They would not allow me to "grieve" from my fabulous posting in Bern, so my thought at the time was just to get out and see what other jobs I could find. Luckily, I was

able to take advantage of my political-military experience and Top Secret security clearance to embark on a second career as a Department of Defense contractor.

Between contracts providing international security and policy support to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, and the Navy and Army, I used the networking skills I had developed all my life to find my next contract. Networking is crucial in the Foreign Service and also in the defense contracting arena.

I would encourage anyone in



COURTESY OF MARY ANN SINGLAUB

Mary Ann Singlaub at a Society for International Affairs holiday party at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in Washington, D.C., in 2015. SIA is the premier U.S. association for training in export and import licensing, one of the skills Singlaub developed as a defense contractor after leaving the Foreign Service in 1999.

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the Foreign Service to continue to develop outside interests and contacts both overseas and stateside. One never knows when that seven-year window might creep up, or one of those “Areas for Improvement” required on every employee evaluation report will haunt you in the next promotion review or assignment cycle.

My political officer background is always a topic of interest in job interviews, and has served me well in my new obsession with Toastmasters International, the worldwide public speaking and leadership organization. Serving as resident of a Toastmasters Club in McLean, Virginia, teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages and remaining active in networking associations in the international field are all part of a logical progression from my Foreign Service background.

There is life after the Foreign Service, and it goes far beyond that part-time gig as While Actually Employed (WAE) that so many retired FSOs rely on. Step away from the department, and you will discover excellent opportunities to utilize those diplomatic and networking skills you displayed in the Foreign Service!

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*Mary Ann Singlaub served as a political officer in the State Department Foreign Service from 1981 to 1999. She served in Naples, Kingston, Bridgetown and Bern, as well as in many positions at Main State.*

## You Need a Vocational Focus

BY ANN GAYLIA O'BARR

**W**hat do I wish I had known earlier about retirement? How few Americans are interested in foreign affairs or what goes on in other countries or the fact that the United States is not the center of the universe to everyone on the planet.

*What advice would I give my younger self about planning for life after the Foreign Service?* Take a few months to decompress, read, think and enjoy activities you haven't had time for before. But avoid getting stuck in this mode. Plan to enter another career, not necessarily full time or involving a lot of stress, but you need a vocational purpose after leaving FS life.

*What do I wish I'd known before joining the Foreign Service?* How important language is to the job of an FSO. I wish I'd learned more languages and taken more courses in college before I was under the stress of language training and examinations.

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Take a few months to decompress, read, think and enjoy activities you haven't had time for before. But avoid getting stuck in this mode.

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As for my post-Foreign Service life, writing remains my first love. I wanted to be a foreign affairs correspondent, combining my desire to experience foreign cultures with writing. I've done what I wanted in two steps: first living in foreign cultures and now writing articles and novels, marrying the experiences with literary undertakings.

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*Ann Gaylia O'Barr was a Foreign Service officer from 1990 until 2004. She served in Saudi Arabia (twice), Tunisia, Algeria, Canada and Washington, D.C. She has also been a computer programmer, historic preservation planner and full-time writer. Her novels and blogs reflect and are influenced by her years spent overseas. She has written eight books and runs the blog "Writing for the Spiritually Attuned News Junkie."*

## A Full Second Career: International Corporate Executive

BY JOEL BILLER

**W**hen I retired in 1979, there still were relatively few opportunities in the private sector to work internationally. I was lucky enough to find one.

After a first tour as a consular officer, I spent my entire career in the economic cone. At one time or another I worked on international finance, trade, economic development, transportation and labor. I spent nine years working on European affairs, mostly hav-



ing to do with what was then the European Economic Community, and then six years in Ecuador, Argentina and Chile as economic counselor, with a second hat as assistant director or director of the local U.S. Agency for International Development mission.

My last assignment was in the department as a deputy assistant secretary in what was then the Bureau of Economics. During those days the State Department managed the commercial attaché network, and that was one of my responsibilities. It was not a happy job because the Department of Commerce chafed about not having an independent foreign commercial service. But it had a happy result for me. During the five years of that tour, which turned out to be my last, I came into contact with a large number of companies engaged in international business. When I retired, I found that I had a very useful contact list.

One of the companies on that list was Manpower Inc., a Fortune 500 corporation in the personnel staffing and management business. About 80 percent of its business was in Western Europe and Latin America, and it was headquartered in Milwaukee, where my wife and I had grown up and still had family. It was a perfect match. I spent the next 30 years as an international corporate executive.

I drew heavily on my Foreign Service experience. I had to learn the language of corporate financial statements, shareholder relations and a little bit about marketing, but after that it was analysis, negotiation and representation. Most of my time was spent negotiating acquisitions and joint ventures and opening new markets.

Some of my time was spent doing almost exactly what I had done in my last few years in the Foreign Service. When I was in EB I had participated in U.S. delegations to United Nations specialized agencies like the International Civil Aviation Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization and International Maritime Organization. With Manpower I found myself a U.S. representative on the employer delegation to annual meetings of the International Labor Organization. For the five years before I finally retired I was president of an international industry trade group headquartered in Brussels.

I have never regretted the time that I spent as a Foreign Service officer. I relish the memory of those years: the friends, the places, the experiences. I love living abroad, and I was fascinated by life in Washington. But I never regretted leaving when I did, still young enough to have a full second career.

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*Joel Biller joined the State Department Foreign Service in 1955. He served overseas in LeHavre, The Hague, Quito, Buenos Aires, Santiago and Washington, D.C.*



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# From Diplomat to Solar Cooking Fanatic

BY PATRICIA MCARDLE

**D**uring entry-level officer training, new diplomats are often asked to ponder the challenge we all face at some point during our careers—what to do when you disagree with a policy you are required to defend. Retirement frees us from that conundrum and allows us to speak truth to power without risking our jobs or our pensions.

My primary activity since returning from a 2005 tour of duty in northern Afghanistan and retiring nine months later has been the promotion of a renewable energy technology—solar thermal cooking. Over the past decade I’ve demonstrated solar cookers in Sudanese refugee camps, on the Navajo reservation, in Nepali villages, central Mexico, Morocco, India, Guyana and all over Washington, D.C. In 2007 I organized the first in a series of annual solar cooking demonstrations in the center courtyard of the Pentagon.

How did this retired grandmother become a solar cooking fanatic? Afghanistan’s abundant sunshine, its vanishing forests and the sad processions of small children I saw everywhere hauling mounds of brush back to their villages for their mother’s cooking fires reminded me of a solar cooker I’d made as a Girl Scout. This memory inspired me to build a new one and demonstrate it when I accompanied NATO military observation teams on peacekeeping patrols in northern Afghanistan.

The first time I boiled a pot of water with a cardboard and foil solar cooker for a group of astounded Afghan villagers, I was hooked. I assumed that USAID and State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration would share my enthusiasm when I came home. They did not. Ten years later, the U.S. government continues to spend millions of dollars improving and promoting biomass-burning stoves and even liquefied natural gas stoves but still almost nothing on solar cookers, the cleanest of all cook stoves.

One of my initial “political” acts after retiring was to join the first 1,000 volunteers selected for Al Gore’s Climate Project training. After attending sessions in Nashville, we fanned out across



Sudanese women in the Iridimi refugee camp in eastern Chad have been constructing simple solar cookers like the one shown here for distribution to refugee families for years.

COURTESY OF PATRICIA MCARDLE

the country to give presentations based on his film, “An Inconvenient Truth.”

My personal politics included more than a concern about global warming. On Sept. 11, 2001, I was looking out a window at FSI and saw a black mushroom cloud billowing into the cloudless blue sky after American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon. While I supported our initial military actions in Afghanistan, I was horrified at the unprovoked invasion of Iraq in 2003. I knew that when I returned from Afghanistan I could not in good conscience accept another overseas assignment, since I would be required to defend this disastrous war of choice. I chose to leave the service early, albeit quietly.

My other passion is writing—and I don’t mean briefing memos and talking points. When I returned from Afghanistan with hundreds of pages of journal notes and a minor case of PTSD (which like many of my colleagues I did not discuss with anyone), I decided to turn my notes into a novel—a literary catharsis of sorts. I entered my manuscript in the 2010 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest and miraculously won a publishing contract with Penguin Books later that year.

I have another novel in the works, and I continue to produce short videos on solar cooking and related topics for my “solar-windmama” YouTube channel. ■

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*Patricia McArdle is a retired FSO and the author of the novel *Farishta* (Riverside Hardcover, 2011), winner of the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.*

# DELIVERING FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL AID TO AFRICA:

## What Works?

The record of U.S. agricultural development assistance in Africa over the years is uneven. Here's how involving agribusiness and trade associations can help.

BY BARRY HILL

**H**ave we ever considered why project assistance has yet to become institutionalized in many host countries? Are our time frames too short for the aid to take root and generate sustainable progress? Have we ignored key technical resources in the United States that could truly lead to success? Have we missed opportunities to increase farmers' skills, provide more structure and increase efficiency in their operations? Have we neglected to help build up business relationships among farmers and the supply chains necessary for long-term success?

These questions arise from the uneven record of USAID agricultural interventions over the years. In the following discussion centered on three case studies, I offer some suggestions and

guidance for future programming based on my own experience as a USAID Foreign Service officer, observer and evaluator.

### A Look at the History

USAID has traditionally used three entities to carry out its agricultural assistance programs: private-sector contractor firms based in Washington (popularly known as the Beltway Bandits), the U.S. Land Grant Colleges that conduct agriculture research, and a covey of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Leading this amorphous group were the highly trained, direct-hire USAID agricultural development officers.

Toward the end of the 1980s there was still a skilled and qualified staff of agricultural specialists on USAID's rosters. As the 1990s opened, however, the administration decided to take foreign aid in a different direction. "Democracy and governance" became the priority emphasis in foreign assistance.

Confusion reigned at USAID as the agency's leadership struggled to understand what was expected of it under this new paradigm. Technical personnel began departing the agency as their tasks were marginalized and funding for technical activities diminished. Policy wonks came to predominate. Within five years, the agency had been cleared of the majority of its technical staff. USAID's credibility—especially overseas—took a nose dive, and a lack of quality project tracking and serious technical errors in judgment and planning came to the fore.

Today the powers that be seem to have realized that the



*Barry H. Hill, a retired USAID FSO, served as chief of the agriculture and rural development divisions for USAID in Tanzania (Dar es Salaam and Arusha), Lesotho and Tunisia. Previously he worked for the University of Hawaii in aquaculture and international fisheries development and education. His interest in international agriculture was sparked during service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone.*





COURTESY OF BARRY HILL

Building solid relationships between farmers and exporters was the key to project success.

typical farmer in Africa is not going to be able to practice any kind of “democracy and governance” if they (1) cannot eat, (2) have poor health that prevents them from working, and (3) don’t have the basic education and practical training needed. As it struggles to field meaningful and workable assistance programs overseas, USAID has initiated new efforts to hire technical staff, yet it faces formidable opposition from Congress over the needed budget.

In this context, a 1991 proposal by the author and a colleague, then in USAID’s Africa Bureau, may hold promise for more effective agricultural development programming. Tasked at that time with devising, presenting and defending an alternative strategy that involved the private sector (agribusiness) in the African overseas development process, we developed the Africa Bureau Agribusiness Strategy. It consisted of different scenarios for development assistance delivery that involved private-sector agribusiness and agribusiness trade associations.

### The Case Studies

The brief case studies that follow describe three of the projects using our strategy and their results: (1) informal grant funds utilized in unique ways through U.S. agribusiness

associations (Tunisia); (2) forward contracting for production of a single commodity in Eastern Africa, with funding from a European private sector agribusiness (Tanzania); and (3) a USAID-funded large-scale, longer-term effort to create and support privately based farmer associations and engage in forward contracts with European buyers for high-value specialty horticulture products (Egypt).

### Case Study 1: U.S. Agribusiness Trade Associations Help Tunisian Producers Increase Output and Marketing

**The Setting.** I was assigned to Tunisia as an agriculture and resource development officer, arriving in late 1992. A new project had just been approved for immediate implementation, but budget cuts were expected. Our mission director was told by USAID’s Near East Bureau that funding was not only going to be cut, but that the highly sought project would, in fact, be cancelled.

Noting the resulting deterioration in the political climate between the two countries, my mission director and I began to explore possible alternatives. Working closely with the director of the Africa Bureau Technical Group, and with the support of the deputy assistant administrator for the Near East at USAID, we got approval to use \$1.5 million of the remaining funds in non-project assistance.

**The Case.** Tunisian producers of tomato paste, olives and olive oil, fish and fish products, and milk products were vertically integrated, allowing for smoother melding of production and marketing of the commodities, but in each area there were problems. The Americans were interested in supply chains. Numerous contacts we had made with American agribusiness associations while working on the agribusiness strategy were interested in helping us as we worked closely with Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture field officials.

We made contact with the U.S. National Pizza and Pasta Association (which is no longer in existence), and they sent out a marketing expert who quickly diagnosed that the tomato paste can labels were of such poor quality that no one would buy the product. In response, the American association identified another expert in canning and labeling who was quickly able to suggest easy and cheap solutions to the problem. Similarly, olive oil and canned and bottled olives were not selling well—either locally in the Sahel, or in Europe. We contacted an olive oil processing association in California, and they dispatched a representative expert. She quickly diagnosed the problem, which was very similar to the can label problems of the tomato paste producers, and worked closely with the bottlers and canners to solve it.

Although Tunisian waters produced one of the favorite French-preferred species of fish—popularly called the “loup”—the Tunisian-caught fish were not selling well in Europe. We suspected the root cause was packaging, but we also knew that cold storage issues were a problem. We contacted the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses, which sent an expert.

He identified three problems: (1) the refrigeration systems the producers used were outdated and not dependable; (2) there was no capability to provide the individually quick-frozen fish popular in Europe; and (3) packaging was of generally poor quality. Another Seattle-based fisheries association sent a representative to work on the packaging and individually quick-frozen issues; while the refrigerated warehouses expert advised new, more efficient and less costly methods to improve the performance of the old refrigeration systems.

That expert also discussed the problems milk producers had maintaining milk freshness. Again, outdated refrigeration systems were at fault, and the consultant suggested the same approach as prescribed for the fishermen. This consultant pointed us to the Food Processing Machinery and Supplies Association, which sent out a representative who was quickly able to help solve the problems, including introducing the production of long-life milk requiring no refrigeration. He also suggested that the Tunisian producers look into cheese production to utilize their excess milk product.

Note that for all the above activities we arranged practical training courses—especially in European import-export protocols and regulations—for the participating producers, as needed.

**The Results.** The tomato paste producers got new labels on their cans and doubled production and marketing in the next year. The olive oil producers had similar results. The fishermen and processors tripled their export of “loup” to France in the first year, and the milk producers took the association’s advice and installed new, modern refrigeration equipment that solved their major problem with freshness and marketing timing and doubled their deliveries. They also started a new long-life milk production program.

What did all this cost? We had \$1.5 million to start. After

operating for a year—the time limit on our budget—we had spent only a third of the funds: about \$200,000 for air travel and per diem for the consultants, and about \$300,000 for training courses. Notably, many of the trade associations paid the airfare and per diem for their professionals.

### **Case Study 2: Dry Bean Seed Production in Tanzania under Forward Contracting with Private European Agribusiness**

**The Setting.** Soon after my arrival as agriculture and resource development officer in USAID’s northern Tanzania office in the Arusha region, I learned that a representative of the Royal Dutch Seed Company had recently canvassed the region to assess the potential for growing dry bean seed, and I had the opportunity to observe the development of that project.

**The Case.** The Royal Dutch Seed Company had been experiencing severe problems with disease vectors at its other sites, in Asia, and was searching for a “disease-free” site. Earlier visits to the Arusha region had found no bean diseases present, and the company decided to invest its own funds to grow disease-free seed.

A seed agronomist arrived in the region and, working with the support of the Arusha regional director, was quickly able to identify the “master farmers” in the growing areas that interested him. The Dutch expert set up and developed a training syllabus that detailed the parameters and restrictions for growing the seed locally. In addition, the expert hired and began training a local Indian-Tanzanian businessman in processing, selecting and bagging the seed.

The program grew like wildfire. Soon, the local farmer count had grown to more than 50, two Dutch agronomists were onsite in Arusha supervising the activities, and eight master farmers were fully engaged. The Indian-Tanzanian entrepreneur set up a unique operation using a conveyor belt system to pass the seed in front of female pickers.

**The Results.** More than 60 local farmers and 50 women workers were eventually hired and paid directly by a foreign agribusiness. All these farmers were well-taught in approved agronomic practices that would stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Meanwhile, the Dutch company reported

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**In any project, we need to find the master farmers and involve them directly in developing the technical approach to be adopted for cropping activities.**

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COURTESY OF BARRY HILL

Egyptian women sort and pack green beans for export to France.

that the germination rate for the Arusha-grown seed exceeded 85 percent—an unprecedented figure for the company.

### Case Study 3: Egyptian Farmers Forward Contract with European Buyers to Grow and Export Specialty Products

**The Setting.** This case involved a large USAID four-year, \$11 million agriculture project awarded to CARE/Egypt in 2003. The objective was to develop private, service-oriented, independent smallholder farmer associations for the export of high-value crops to Europe under forward contracts, like similar projects undertaken by CARE dating from the early 1990s. The project was undertaken in Upper Egypt where unemployment was high and incomes were low. At the time, the region had 37 percent of the country's total population but 77 percent of its poorest citizens (UNDP Egypt Human Development Report, 2005). I was team leader for a five-person team fielded in 2007 to perform the final evaluation of this project.

**The Case.** Prior cropping emphasis and patterns in Upper Egypt had depended almost solely on growing sugarcane. When introduced, this project raised the usage of labor to unprecedented levels. Growing green beans and tomatoes took

more than three times as much labor as sugarcane; and cantaloupe, more than two times. The total returns for raising green beans, cantaloupe and tomato were 50 percent higher than returns from sugarcane.

Facilitating payment to individual farmers was a very important factor in this project. The buyer made only one direct payment to a single farmer association, which then dispensed the funds to the individual growers. In addition, through the training and technical assistance provided by CARE staff to the associations, they carefully noted price movements and were increasingly able to use their own information resources to find alternate local markets for products that were not exported.

**The Results.** This project more than paid for itself. Millions of dollars of high-value crops were grown and exported (i.e., French green beans, cantaloupes, table grapes, pomegranates and bell peppers), increasing the incomes of 12,500 poor farmers. The formation of 103 farmer associations was the culmination of village-level efforts by the farmers themselves. Thousands of new jobs were also created for women and landless farmers.

Over the life of the project, more than 160 million Egyptian Pounds (or \$27 million) worth of products were grown—\$16 million more than the project cost the United States. Of this, \$13 million was exported—over 30 percent more than projected—while, unexpectedly, \$14 million was sold on the local market.

One of the truly impressive outcomes was the unanticipated impact of the project on rural women linked to the farmer associations' members through family relationships. Hundreds

of women became directly involved in post-harvest picking, cleaning, boxing/bagging, weighing and storage of products for transport.

A final result of this case that truly astounded the evaluation team was the wide acceptance and support by the government for the project, in helping the farmers

develop market linkages for sale of products that significantly raised incomes and increased employment for the landless.

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**One of the truly impressive outcomes was the unanticipated impact of the project on rural women.**

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### Lessons Learned

These and other projects implemented under the Africa Bureau Agribusiness Strategy yielded many valuable practical lessons that are still very relevant today. Among the most



important, are the following:

➤ Good things and results take lots of time. Case 3 was the third in succession of a 10-year linked effort of project activities. We know that in the United States significant time is required for farmers to accept and use modern farm management practices. Both American and African farmers follow the simple adage: “Don’t tell me. Show me.”

➤ Many African farmers have problems accessing needed inputs and using them correctly. Donors need to recognize that growing products under forward-contracting arrangements must involve the buyer in providing a minimum list of farm inputs and guidance from a skilled agronomist or horticulturist. After that, just leave the farmers alone to get to work.

➤ African farmers can readily adapt sophisticated agroeconomic and horticultural practices (if they are convinced they work) to local constraints and conditions. All the donors and experts have to do is *listen* and learn and adopt and demonstrate.

➤ Women represent the majority contributors to the agriculture production and marketing process. No project large or small should ever be undertaken without the full participation of women.

➤ For larger efforts (such as the Egypt project), helping the farmers create community-based farmer organizations should be a top priority. These associations must be created by the farmers themselves (with assistance from donors, as invited).

➤ In any project, we need to find the master farmers and involve them directly in developing the technical approach for adoption in cropping activities.

➤ USAID, and other aid agencies as well, should investigate the use of non-project assistance where warranted.

Our strategy was based on the assumption that American agribusinesses and agribusiness trade associations offer powerful tools and capability to assist rural poor farmers overseas. Subsequent project implementation, as presented here, not only proves that to be true but offers insight on how to make best use of those tools and capabilities.

We learned, for instance, that it is optimal to involve agribusiness and trade associations as early as possible in the project, preferably in the design phase. We also learned that donor funding for the creation of local farmer associations is tremendously beneficial; such associations empower the farmers to efficiently organize production and marketing of the product. And, finally, we found that keeping a project running long enough to give it a chance to succeed—10 years at a minimum, if not longer—is essential. ■

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## Chiefs-of-Mission Breakfast



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

On March 15, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson kicked off AFSA's new inreach initiative in an early morning breakfast with roughly four dozen chiefs of mission (COMs), who were in town for the Global COM Conference. During the course of one action-packed hour, this dedicated group of Foreign Service leaders tackled the multifaceted issue of how to build a stronger Foreign Service equipped to lead America's foreign policy in the 21st century. AFSA thanks the FS champions who attended and significantly contributed to AFSA's efforts to fashion constructive solutions to today's workforce challenges: family member employment, mentoring, diversity, bidding and others.

## USAID Administrator Smith Calls for Full OCP

On March 15, USAID Administrator Gayle Smith asked the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs to restore full Overseas Comparability Pay for members of the Foreign Service. Administrator Smith is pictured here with AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne following Smith's testimony on the Fiscal Year 2017 foreign assistance budget.



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

## CALENDAR

May 1-7  
Public Service  
Recognition Week

May 4  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

May 5  
11:15-12:30 p.m.  
Luncheon:  
141st Specialist Class

May 5  
Annual Scholarship  
Reception

May 6  
Foreign Service Day/AFSA  
Memorial Plaque Ceremony

May 11  
12-1:15 p.m.  
Luncheon:  
186th A-100 Class

May 12  
2-4 p.m.  
Seminar:  
"The Coordination of  
FEHB and Medicare"

May 22-26  
AFSA Road  
Scholar Program:  
"The Middle East: Conflict  
and Controversy"  
Washington, D.C.

May 24  
2-3:30 p.m.  
AFSA Book Notes:  
*The Wolf of Sarajevo*  
by FSO Matthew Palmer

May 30  
Memorial Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

June 1  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

June 5-10  
AFSA Road Scholar  
Program: "U.S. Foreign  
Policy for the 21st Century"  
Chautauque, N.Y.





## Avoiding the Overpayment Hassle

If it hasn't happened to you already, it might at some point—the dreaded letter announcing you've been overpaid and the department wants its money back.

Not a big deal when it's a small amount, but if it reaches thousands of dollars, it can impose a financial burden (and stress).

The good news? With careful attention, you can reduce the chance of being hit with such a hefty surprise.

The most common cause of overpayment is when an employee who is receiving allowances and/or differentials departs post for a period of time that, in turn, changes the basis for payment of the allowance or differential.

If the employee does not notify the human resources or financial management offices (HRO/FMO), or if post delays reporting the departure to the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services in Charleston, the employee continues to receive the higher rate of pay instead of the reduced one.

For example, an employee in a 25-percent hardship and 25-percent danger-pay post travels to the United States for three weeks of leave. The employee's supervisor knows of the employee's absence, but the HRO/FMO does not. Consequently,

the employee continues to receive an extra 50 percent in pay over what is permitted for the three weeks.

### Actively Manage Your Paycheck

Arrival or departure of family members can also change post allowance (cost-of-living or COLA) payments, so be sure to inform the HRO/FMO of any such changes.

Employees can mitigate overpayments by taking an active role in their pay:

- **Notify your HRO/FMO each time you or your family members arrive at or depart post** and make sure the HRO/FMO notifies CGFS promptly. A minor delay may occasionally occur, but proactive steps should prevent large-scale overpayments.

- **Use Employee Express ([www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov)) to review your earnings and leave statement's "earnings" section**, which itemizes allowances and differentials, to ensure your pay is accurate.

- **If you believe you have been over- or underpaid, contact Payroll Customer Support at PayHelp@state.gov or 1 (877) 865-0760 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday, except for American holidays.**

Mistakes or delays resulting from administrative errors by the department

### Employees can mitigate overpayments by taking an active role in their pay

are not grounds to waive repayment. The department allows employees to repay overpayments interest-free by lump-sum payment within 30 days of notification or by installment salary deductions.

### Useful Details

With the caveat that the Department of State Standardized Regulations are the authoritative source, you may find useful the following details regarding the starting and stopping of post allowance, post differential and danger pay.

**Post Allowance (COLA):** **Starts** the date you arrive at post; the date your family arrives at post, if your arrival is delayed; or the effective date of transfer, when you are already at the post to which you are transferred. **Stops** when you leave post on transfer orders, when you go on Home Leave, and on the 31st day of any other absence from post.

If you are away from post for more than 30 days, your family size will be reduced by one member. An example of the latter would be if you go to an unaccompanied post, and your family remains behind. (DSSR 220)

**Post Differential (Hardship):** **Starts** when you get to post (if assigned); after 42 days (if on temporary duty assignment or TDY), except for Iraq and Afghanistan, where it kicks in on the 43rd day, but is backdated to your first day at post. **Stops** when you leave post on transfer, on an emergency evacuation or on travel to the United States for training.

It can continue for 42 days if you go to the United States on detail or medevac and an eligible family member remains at post; it also continues until you reach the United States if you take R&R in a foreign country en route to the United States; it continues if you are on family visitation travel from a hostile area; and it continues if you are absent from Iraq or Afghanistan for up to 30 days. (DSSR 500)

**Danger Pay:** **Starts** on arrival at post (must have been at post for four cumulative hours in one day). Danger pay is paid only for hours for which basic compensation is paid, so if an employee arrives at a post on TDY on a Friday evening, danger pay will not start until Monday morning. **Stops** on departure from post for any reason. (DSSR 654) ■



## Federal Student Loan Repayment Program

Following the State Department's recent call for applications to their Student Loan Repayment Program, AFSA has understandably been deluged with inquiries on the status of USAID's SLRP. The last year USAID offered the SLRP was 2013.

Despite numerous meetings with the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management in which AFSA argued that discontinuing the program would be a detriment to morale and retention, USAID announced on Oct. 8, 2014, that SLRP was being put on hold.

HCTM's rationale for doing so ranged from "a lack of clarity on the demand" for the program to "the workload was too much to administer." The notice stated that USAID would evaluate the program and invest in automation to reduce errors and improve efficiency.

Many of the approximately 800 new USAID officers hired in recent years are paying off student loans. Thanks to member feedback, we know that USAID members highly value the SLRP, and that demand for the program is undeniable.

The Office of Personnel Management continues to support federal agencies' use of student loan repayment programs to recruit and retain a world-class workforce to serve the American people.

Although it is true that

### We know that USAID members highly value the SLRP, and that demand for the program is undeniable.

OPM also encourages agencies to establish metrics to demonstrate the value of using SLRP and other discretionary incentives to ensure that taxpayer money is being used wisely, nowhere does it suggest discontinuing the program while such metrics are developed.

#### Where Is the Money?

To make matters worse, the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management advertises SLRP as a benefit, and AFSA understands that the office still receives \$3.5 million for the student loan repayment program in their budget.

The job announcement (see solicitation BS-21 FS-05/04 FEB 2016 to hire foreign private enterprise officers) clearly states that USAID offers numerous benefits, including "assistance with repayment of student loans."

It is not clear to AFSA where this money is going and what progress has been made toward reinstating the program.

Federal agencies' authority to establish the SLRP incentive to recruit or retain highly qualified personnel comes from 5 U.S.C. 5379 and 5 CFR part 537. Agencies must sub-

mit an annual report to OPM by March 31 on their use of student loan repayment funds during the previous calendar year.

The report must not only address the number of recipients, their positions and the total dollar amount awarded; it also must include information regarding best practices, lessons learned, program effectiveness, metrics developed to measure program success, program impediments and ways to improve the student loan repayment program.

Because SLRP is an incentive and not technically a "benefit," its provision is not required; however, if an agency chooses not to provide an SLRP, it must still submit a report stating whether it intends to establish one and, if not, indicate the primary reason(s) why not.

#### The OPM Report

According to the 2013 OPM report to Congress on SLRP, USAID reported that it awarded \$2.3 million in student loan repayment benefits to 279 employees.

State reported its numbers for the same year and elaborated, stating that "as a result of the growth in participation and because of employee

feedback, State believes the program is having a positive impact in supporting both recruitment and retention efforts."

Why USAID doubts this would be the case at the agency—even when its own FSO cadre are telling them the program is needed—is beyond me.

AFSA has asked numerous times for an update on the evaluation and reinstatement of SLRP at USAID and has received the same reply every time: "No further updates due to the HCTM transformation."

Attempts to get at answers by asking what will be submitted to OPM by March 31, what was sent last year, and what stage the SLRP evaluation is at resulted in yet another non-response: "All programs and initiatives are being reviewed through the lens of the Human Resources transformation, so currently there are no updates."

These basic questions could have easily been answered.

AFSA welcomes HCTM's push for more accountability throughout the agency; the SLRP is a prime example of an area where it is needed. AFSA supports student-loan repayment for career appointments, regardless of backstop, as a way to assure diversity, fairness in hiring and retention of USAID's most valuable asset—its workforce. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP. Contact: mark.petry@fas.usda.gov or (202) 720-2502

## Self Help

It is easy to focus on the union aspects of AFSA because we face numerous pressing issues.

However, it's important not to forget the professional association aspects that AFSA also represents, for it is our professionalism and drive for self-improvement that truly define our members as the leaders of the foreign affairs community.

Fortunately, I am pleased to report on the resurgence of interest in and support for changes that will boost professionalism in FAS.

First, I am happy to report that we have established a collaborative effort with management to update the FAS performance management criteria and to eventually negotiate their inclusion into the FAS AFSA collective bargaining agreement.

Surprisingly, one of the biggest problems has been that FAS's performance management criteria are outdated. This means that officers lack objective information about the skills and competencies expected of them at every level and,

therefore, what is needed for success.

The document now under discussion borrows liberally from State's performance management criteria and incorporates FAS-specific knowledge and skill areas. I want to specifically acknowledge the work done several years ago by previous FAS AFSA working groups to develop these criteria.

Considering the positive and cooperative work between AFSA and management, I hope to be able to report on the final success of this initiative later in the year.

Updated performance management criteria will go

a long way in providing the guidance we need to collectively articulate what success looks like in FAS.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge management's positive response to AFSA's call to arms on strengthening FAS's esprit de corps. As a result, we are working on new initiatives designed to improve mentorship and to mandate more rigorous leadership requirements.

All of these reforms to FAS's professional culture will further strengthen our ability to field the best team to provide the services that our constituents need and deserve. ■

## AFSA Honors 2015 Sinclair Language Awards Recipients

Foreign language proficiency is a vital skill in the work of the Foreign Service—for professional development, as well as personal security and success at post.

Each year, the American Foreign Service Association recognizes outstanding accomplishment in the study and utilization of difficult languages and their associated cultures through the Matilda W. Sinclair Language Awards program.

AFSA established this program in 1982, thanks to a generous bequest from former Foreign Service Officer Matilda W. Sinclair, who sought "to promote and reward superior achievement by career officers of the Foreign Service...while studying

one of the Category III or IV languages under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute."

Since the program's inception, more than \$260,000 has been awarded to those Foreign Service members who have been recognized for their superior language skills.

Any career or career-conditional member of the Foreign Service from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Broadcasting Board of Governors or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is eligible for the award.

Candidates may be nominated by language-training supervisors at the FSI School

of Language Studies, language instructors at field schools or post language officers.

Recipients are selected by a committee comprising the dean of the FSI School of Language studies (or his or her designee) and representatives of the AFSA Governing Board and the AFSA Awards and Plaques Committee. Each winner receives \$1,000 and a certificate of recognition.

This year, the pool of nominees was particularly diverse, with a majority of recommendations coming from overseas posts for the first time in the program's history.

We are pleased to announce the 2015 Sinclair Award recipients, all of whom are AFSA members:

- Naomi Anisman**, Hebrew
  - Laura Burns**, Albanian
  - Michael Coker**, Nepali
  - Patrick Connell**, Turkish and Greek
  - Hannah Eagleton**, Mandarin Chinese
  - Neil Gibson**, Japanese
  - Torrey Goad**, Mandarin Chinese
  - Joely E. Hildebrand**, Georgian
  - Will Stevens**, Russian
  - Keren Yohannes**, Arabic
- For more information on the Sinclair Awards, please contact AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green at [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9700 or visit [www.afsa.org/sinclair](http://www.afsa.org/sinclair). ■

—Marcy O'Halloran,  
Awards Intern





## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, March 2, 2015

**Consent Agenda:** On a motion from Retiree Vice President Tom Boyatt, the board approved the consent agenda items. These included (1) the Feb. 3 Governing Board minutes; (2) the appointment of USAID Foreign Service Officer Sait Mboob to serve on the USAID Standing Committee; (3) the continuation of Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray as a member on the Profession and Ethics Committee; (4) the appointment of FSO Marika Zadvá to serve on the PEC; and (5) the Awards Committee's recommended recipients of the 2015 Sinclair Language Award. The motion passed unanimously.

**Legal Defense Fund Standard Operating Procedures:** On a motion by State Representative Peter Neisuler, the board approved standard operating procedures (SOP) defining the types of cases and eligibility criteria for providing financial assistance from the LDF to an AFSA member; the procedures for submitting an application requesting assistance and for evaluating requests for assistance; and the administration of the financial disbursement.

Per the SOP, the fund may provide financial assistance to an AFSA member who is involved in a legal matter that (a) has potentially far-reaching significance to members of the Foreign Service; or (b) involves issues of institutional importance to the Foreign Service; and (c) exceeds the case management capacity of the AFSA Labor Management Staff and/or (d) requires an outside attorney with expertise in a particular area of law not available in the AFSA Labor Management Staff.

Requests for financial assistance from the fund are subject to AFSA approval and may be made by: (a) all dues-paying regular members as defined in AFSA's Bylaws (i.e., current or former members of the Foreign Service as

defined by Sections 103 (paragraphs 1 to 5) and 202 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, or successor legislation); (b) members whose cases meet the criteria outlined in the previous paragraph; and (c) members whose cases relate to the member's performance of his or her official duties or that arise from the member's duty or status as a current or former Foreign Service employee. Financial assistance will not be available to accommodate requests made by members retroactively for legal fees that have already been incurred.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Proposed Legislation on Administrative Leave:** On a motion by USAID Representative Jeffrey Cochrane, the board agreed to table discussion on the S.2450 Administrative Leave Act—which, if enacted, would limit agencies' use of administrative leave—until the board has more information on how the proposed legislation may affect the Foreign Service. The motion passed unanimously.

**Finance, Audit and Management Committee Report:** Treasurer Chuck Ford provided a positive report on the association's investment performance and budget execution in 2015. The FAM Committee is planning to form working groups to look at ways to enhance fundraising and revenue, alignment of expenditures with strategic priorities, performance measurement and the investment policy.

**Consular Adjudicator Gap:** State Vice President Angie Bryan led the board in discussion of basic principles that should govern AFSA's approach to working with the Department of State on options for resolving the consular adjudicator gap. ■

## AFSA Annual Report 2015 Published

The AFSA Annual Report 2015 is now available online at <http://afsa.org/afsa-annual-report>.

AFSA President Barbara Stephenson writes the introduction, setting out the goals

of the Strong Diplomacy Governing Board. This is followed by contributions from each of the constituency vice presidents, as well as AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston. The report details

AFSA's 2015 activities, from awards to scholarships, outreach to advocacy, as well as the work AFSA does on behalf of its members.

To reduce costs and be eco-friendly, we are making

the report available online to all members. To request a paper copy, while supplies last, please email [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org) with the subject line "Annual Report." ■

# RETIREE CORNER

## From U.S. Ambassador to FS Ambassador

On Feb. 23, AFSA Governing Board Retiree Representative and Ambassador (ret.) Patricia Butenis spoke to 35 graduate and undergraduate students at New Jersey's Seton Hall University about the role of the Foreign Service in promoting and protecting America's people, interests and values overseas.



Ambassador Pat Butenis addresses students at Seton Hall University.

Her presentation, which included vignettes from her distinguished career, was part of AFSA's concerted outreach effort to build a strong Foreign Service constituency across the United States. Amb. Butenis was the U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and Maldives, as well as deputy chief of mission in Islamabad and Baghdad. For her service in Iraq, Amb. Butenis received the Baker-

Wilkins Award for Outstanding Deputy Chief of Mission in 2008.

Amb. Butenis is a strong proponent of AFSA's Speakers Bureau, and highly proactive in seeking opportunities to engage with the public in her home state of New Jersey. She has met with middle school and high school audiences, as well as students at her alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania.

Amb. Butenis says she enjoys speaking with undergraduates who are interested in a Foreign Service career,

and to answer their questions about the personal side of the job. She has found that students are interested in hearing about the challenges of raising a family overseas, serving in different cultures and whether you can bring pets on assignments



Ambassador Butenis meets students at Trenton Catholic Academy.



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The anecdotes Amb. Butenis tells at these events include the rewarding, the tragic and the difficult: issuing visas to children being adopted by Americans, running to a bunker when the siren sounded for an incoming rocket attack, investigating human rights abuses and providing assistance after a devastating earthquake. She provides a personal connection for students and their parents who may only have read about such events.

Amb. Butenis also appreciates being able to speak with younger students who may have no idea about diplomacy or the work of the Foreign Service. Providing information about what Foreign Service officers and specialists actually do is an important func-

tion of AFSA outreach efforts.

When talking to students of all ages, Amb. Butenis says, "I link the Foreign Service to the values of tolerance, cultural understanding and respect for other religions and hope the students share those values as well."

She always asks how many of them or their families come from another country. She tells students about her own immigrant grandparents and discusses how America is still admired for its acceptance of diverse cultures. Amb.

Butenis says that she always congratulates students on their interest in foreign affairs and asks that they keep that interest, even if they do not end up pursuing a career in the Foreign Service. ■

—Gemma Dvorak,  
Associate Editor

## AFSA Retiree Newsletter's New Look

AFSA has recently made some changes with the *AFSA Newsletter* with an eye toward improving communication, practicing sound environmental stewardship and responsible use of members' dues.

As of last month, the *AFSA Newsletter* went all-digital and will no longer be distributed in paper form. Look for it in your email inboxes. It will also continue to be posted to the AFSA website at [www.afsa.org/newsletters](http://www.afsa.org/newsletters).

Between the electronic *AFSA Retiree Newsletter*, the Retiree Corner (which will

appear in every other issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*) and the long-established Retiree VP Voice Column, AFSA members can expect to continue receiving robust coverage of issues of interest in retirement. And, of course, AFSA's website will continue to have a dedicated retiree section at [www.afsa.org/retiree](http://www.afsa.org/retiree).

To ensure that you receive the bi-monthly email newsletter, please make sure that AFSA has your email address. Notify us at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org) or (202) 338-4045. ■

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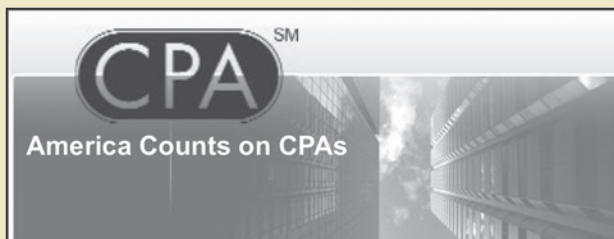
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## Partners in Global Education



AFSA/BRIAR BLOUNT

On Feb. 19, AFSA representatives participated in the Global Education Symposium hosted by the International Research and Exchanges Board as part of its Teachers for Global Classrooms Program—a partnership with the Department of State. Hundreds of teachers and administrators preparing to embark on international exchange programs were in attendance. The event offered an opportunity for GCP participants to meet with organizations, businesses and leaders in the growing field of global education. Pictured (l-r): AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green and Communications and Outreach Specialist Allan Saunders speak with High School Social Studies Specialist Craig Perrier (right) of Fairfax County Public Schools about how AFSA resources, such as *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, Speakers Bureau visitors and the High School Essay Contest, can supplement his lesson plans.

## Keene Scholarship Established

In February, Mrs. Beth Keene, wife of the late Foreign Service Officer Douglas Keene, established the Douglas Keene Memorial/Sharon Papp Financial Aid Scholarship. The award will be bestowed on a college undergraduate dependent of an AFSA member beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year.



Park, Maine, and McLean, Virginia. Mr. Keene passed away in the fall of 2015.

Grateful for the effective legal support that AFSA

General Counsel Sharon Papp provided to Mr. Keene in the late 1990s, Mrs. Keene wished to recognize Papp with this scholarship.

For information on the AFSA Scholarship Program, please visit [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar) or contact Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or [dec@afsa.org](mailto:dec@afsa.org). ■

—Lori Dec,

Scholarship Director

During a 35-year Foreign Service career from 1967 to 2002, Mr. Keene had seven overseas assignments and served as deputy chief of mission in Oman (1986-1989) and Jordan (1991-1994). The couple spent their retirement years in Ocean

## Strengthening Overseas Security



AFSA/JAVIER CUEBAS

On Feb. 29, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (left) and Director of Advocacy Javier Cuebas (not pictured) met with Congresswoman Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) (right) to thank her for helping the Department of State secure Best Value Contracting authority in the Fiscal Year 2016 omnibus bill.

The legislation expands the department's authority, for one year only, to award guard force contracts using the Cost/Technical Trade-Off or "Best Value" Process. Previously, at all but high-threat posts, local guard force contracts were awarded using the mandated Lowest Price Technically Acceptable Source Selection Process. The group also discussed possible legislative vehicles for making the provision permanent. ■

## The Why of Putin

### The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin

Steven Lee Myers, Knopf, 2015, \$32.50, hardcover, 572 pages

REVIEWED BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

When you open this comprehensive biography of Vladimir Putin, you'll see a map of the Soviet Union before 1991. This map is a striking reminder of how much has changed for Russia in 25 years.

If you, like Putin, believe that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century," then the map represents a lost world, something to be remembered and treasured. It's an almost fantastical experience to look back, and then realize that today the Baltic nations not only no longer answer to Moscow, they are members of NATO.

These changes to the world map, whatever one's view of them, are central to Putin's world view and his reign as the new "tsar." That is at the heart of this excellent book by longtime Russia watcher Steven Lee Myers.

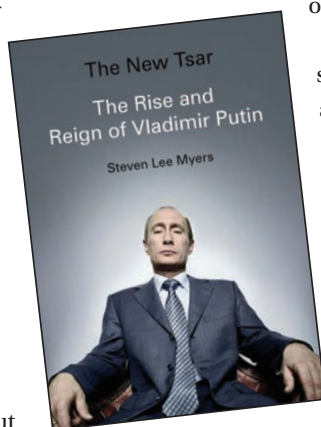
Putin, the son of a World War II fighter, grows up without resources or huge opportunities. He moves from being a low-level KGB operative in Germany to managing the administrative work of the senior politician in St. Petersburg, and then (almost miraculously) becomes Boris Yeltsin's prime minister and successor.

Putin's rise is not predictable or reproducible, but its effects on his reign are significant. He is tied to the people he can trust, those he knows from his days in St. Petersburg (once Leningrad), those who have worked with him or for him for

years. He is not beholden to money men as much as he is tied to them intimately.

He derives much of his political power from his knowledge and insight into everyone's affairs. He manipulates events to further his vision of the country as a strong actor on the world stage. He steps into a position occupied by a seriously ailing drunk, Yeltsin, and exudes a sense

**Putin's move from the presidency to the prime ministership and back to the president's chair is political masterwork, but unthinkable in our definition of a democracy.**



of stability and rigor.

The set-piece photo shoots—Putin bringing amphorae up from the Black Sea, Putin leading migrating birds to their new home, Putin always with his shirt off—demonstrate the cleverly controlled spectacle and vision of the man and his office.

Accountability is hard to find in an atmosphere of deliberate obfuscation. Putin's move from the presidency to the prime ministership and back to the president's chair is political masterwork, but unthinkable in our definition of a democracy. Putin not only has a ghostwriter complete his dissertation, but plagiarizes entire sections; his approach to academics is just as indifferent to Western norms as his approach to war in Ukraine.

It is difficult for Americans to understand Putin or his worldview. We cannot

anticipate action A will lead to response B when we do not see "A" as the same letter.

I appreciate the insights Steven Lee Myers offers. I recommend the book highly for those who have not studied Russia and also just as highly for those who already have Russia experience. The level of detail and discussion of personalities is deep and thoughtful.

Picture the world of 2020—will that map be the same as today's? After reading this book, I am not so certain. With President Putin in his chair for perhaps many more years to come, there is a level of uncertainty that U.S. policymakers must internalize and resolve.

---

*Josh Glazeroff is a Foreign Service officer who has served in Santo Domingo, Durban, New Delhi and Washington, D.C. He previously served on the FSJ Editorial Board and is a current member of the AFSA Governing Board.*

## The How of Soviet Spies

### Near and Distant Neighbors:

#### A New History of Soviet Intelligence

Jonathan Haslam, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2015, \$30, hardcover, 400 pages.

REVIEWED BY JAMES MORRIS

In 2014, Presidential Deputy Chief of Staff Vyacheslav Volodin ominously declared, "There is no Russia today if there is no Putin."

In Western media, Putin can be many things: a KGB spymaster outfoxing the hapless West at every step, a doomed Soviet-era Don Quixote chasing Brezhnev-era windmills or a post-modern Big Brother building an empire of lies. But there is little disagreement among pundits that Putin is central to Russia's current course, and that the two

are inseparable, if not interchangeable.

Putin makes only a handful of appearances in Institute of Advanced Studies Professor Jonathan Haslam's history of Soviet intelligence, *Near and Distant Neighbors*. But if Russia is Putin, and the KGB (where Putin began his career) remains a "state within a state," then a KGB history is also a Putin pre-history of sorts.

For Haslam, Russia's history is rooted in "a primitive political culture originating in medieval despotism." Very little has changed over the course of the Soviet period and into the present day, including the use of political assassination.

The author focuses solely on foreign intelligence, including both political and military intelligence (the KGB and its predecessors, on one hand, and the GRU on the other, known in Moscow as the "near and distant neighbors," respectively, of the book's title).

Lenin created the Extraordinary Committee (or Cheka) as early as December 1917 as a bloody cudgel in Russia's Civil War, and its early tentative efforts in foreign intelligence were directed primarily against "angry and impatient exiles," rather than foreign governments.

In Europe, Soviet spies and White émigrés engaged in reciprocal campaigns of assassination, terrorism and disinformation, with the regime getting the better of the fight. The fledgling Soviet regime prioritized defeating its enemies over relations with the "soon-to-be-extinct-anyway" Western governments (who not surprisingly took umbrage with the targeted killings of émigré guests on their territory).

In these tales of espionage derring-do from a bygone age, Haslam finds continuity with the present, notably in the 2006 poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko in London and Russia's surreptitious military incursions into Crimea and Ukraine.

The intelligence services only rose in importance during the Stalin period, but Haslam finds their successes systematically undermined by paranoia, misguided ideology and internal mismanagement.

Foreign intelligence scored its greatest success against the "main (capitalist) enemy," Great Britain, in the 1930s through the recruitment of the Cambridge Five, but failed to penetrate the inner circles of the Nazi regime.

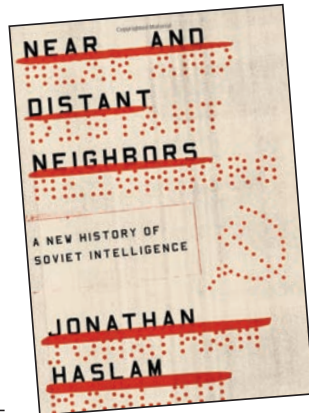
More disastrously, Stalin's purges decimated the intelligence services on the eve of war, setting off internal chaos and leaving prized agents such as the Cambridge Five either cut off from their handlers, or under an inevitable cloud of suspicion. Foreign intelligence never created an analysis cadre to complement operations, while military intelligence analysis was disbanded in the 1930s. The Great Leader presumably did not need the facts to get in the way of a good idea.

In the Cold War era, Soviet intelligence continued to prioritize human intelligence over technical capabilities, where it fell increasingly behind the West. In 1948, Soviet agent William Weisband, who translated Soviet communications at Arlington Hall Station (now the site of

the Foreign Service Institute), notified his handlers that the Americans were breaking nearly all of the Soviet Union's codes.

While the Soviets used this intelligence coup to change their communication systems, they did not invest long-term in the sector. There was no Soviet National Security Agency to counter growing U.S. technical capabilities. At the same time the regime's ideology became increasingly bankrupt in the post-Stalin era, diminishing returns in the field of human intelligence.

The narrative thins out in the late Soviet period and, regrettably, very little attention is devoted to U.S. spies Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen, although these histories have been well-covered by



**In these tales of espionage derring-do from a bygone age, Haslam finds continuity with the present, notably in the 2006 poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko in London and Russia's surreptitious military incursions into Crimea and Ukraine.**

other authors. As Haslam draws mainly on Russian-language sources, we can assume less is available from this period.

The author acknowledges that he relied on Russian sources released during the Putin era, which were intended to glorify the intelligence services. Regardless of the original intent of the sources, Haslam weaves them into a damning account of tactical successes, but inevitable strategic failure in perpetuating one-man rule. Aspiring tyrants take note. ■

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*James Morris has been a Foreign Service officer since 2004. He has served in Moscow, Frankfurt, Kapisa (Afghanistan), Bishkek and Washington, D.C.*



■ **William Garton Bowdler**, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer and three-time ambassador, died on Jan. 19 in Sharps, Va.

Mr. Bowdler joined the Department of State after graduating from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1944 to 1946. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he was a member of the Civil Service from 1946 to 1954. His first Foreign Service post was Cuba in 1956, and he went on to serve at the Organization of American States and in Spain.

He was appointed U.S. ambassador to El Salvador in 1968, to Guatemala in 1971 and South Africa in 1975, before returning to Washington, D.C., in 1978 to serve as the director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He retired in 1980 as assistant secretary of State for Latin American affairs.

Ambassador Bowdler is survived by his wife of 70 years, Margaret Clark Bowdler; a son, Charles Bowdler (and his wife, Mitzi) of Jackson, Miss.; a daughter, Ann Sullivan of Brielle, N.J.; a daughter-in-law, Bobby Jean Bowdler of Sharps, Va.; nine grandchildren: Cal, Kristin, Thomas, Katherine, Andrew, Jonathan, Sarah, William and David; and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, James Calloway Bowdler.

Memorial contributions may be made to Milden Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 31, Sharps VA 22548.

■ **Harold G. "Hal" Davis**, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Dec. 24, in Palm Harbor, Fla.

Mr. Davis was born in Mercersburg, Pa., in 1924. He served for three years in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and saw action in the Pacific theater. Prior to joining the Foreign Service he was connected

to the Department of Agriculture as a project planner from 1957 to 1959.

He then embarked on a career with the U.S. International Communications Agency (the Carter administration's name for the U.S. Information Agency). Based in Washington, D.C., he was responsible for ushering in the computer age at the agency in the 1960s. He was a division chief with the Organization of American States and served on temporary duty at many foreign posts, overseeing computer equipment installation and training for agency staff and foreign nationals.

After retiring in 1980, Mr. Davis resided in Hilton Head Island, S.C., and Pinehurst, N.C., before settling in Palm Harbor. He enjoyed golf and was active in tennis his entire life. He served as a United States Tennis Association official for many years. With three certifications (chair, line and referee), he officiated at many tennis tournaments, including at the U.S. Open in New York City.

Mr. Davis is survived by his wife, Darla Vogel Davis, of Palm Harbor; a daughter and son-in-law, Darlene and Mark Parvin of Pinellas Park, Fla.; a daughter, Deborah Davis Zibolsky of Milwaukee, Wis.; and brothers Gerald Shipp of Chambersburg, Pa., and Norman Davis of Greencastle, Pa.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Macular Degeneration Foundation, P.O. Box 515, North Hampton MA 01061.

■ **Daniel Francis Geisler**, 61, a former Foreign Service officer and AFSA president from 1997 to 1999, died unexpectedly of complications from surgery on Jan. 20 in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Geisler was born on Oct. 3, 1954, in Pittsburgh, Pa., to Carol and Daniel Geisler.

He held a bachelor's degree in math from St. Vincent College and a master's degree in civil engineering from Carnegie

Mellon University.

Mr. Geisler served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo, where he met his wife, Christiane, originally from France. He began his career as a civil engineer at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1985, serving in Zaire, Jamaica and Malaysia, as well as in domestic assignments at the State Department and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

A newly elected State vice president at the American Foreign Service Association in 1997, Mr. Geisler was tapped to serve as AFSA president when the elected president, Al LaPorta, had to leave to become ambassador to Mongolia. During his term, Mr. Geisler testified before House and Senate panels on foreign affairs funding, security matters and government reform legislation.

After leaving the Foreign Service in 1999, Mr. Geisler was a senior adviser to Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and then joined Crowell & Moring International as a director, helping corporations, trade associations and sovereign governments solve problems and take advantage of economic, commercial and political opportunities.

He left CMI in 2006 for a stint as vice president of Eisenhower Fellowships, a privately funded organization that sponsors a unique exchange program for high-achieving global leaders aged 35-45, rejoining CMI in April 2014.

Mr. Geisler is loved and remembered by thousands of people around the world for his kindness, his wisdom and wit, his negotiating talents, his intellect and his drive. His children and family will remember him for his creative, absolute and loving devotion to them.

He volunteered as a reader of books for the blind, held various positions on the board of Friends of Togo, the alumni asso-

ciation for Peace Corps Volunteers in Togo, and gave generously to various organizations empowering women.

Mr. Geisler is survived by his wife, Christiane, of Washington, D.C.; children, Ian of Seattle, Wash., and Sammy of New Orleans, La.; siblings, Jerry of Deep Creek Lake, Md., Michelle of Jekyll Island, Ga., and Scott of Selida, Colo.

■ **Morris “Rusty” Nelson Hughes Jr.**, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on Jan. 9 at home in Naples, Fla., after a long and courageous battle with lymphoma.

Born in Humboldt, Neb., on Sept. 2, 1945, to Calista Cooper and Morris N. Hughes, Mr. Hughes grew up in Cuba, Switzerland, Tunisia, Iceland and France. He attended the Loomis School in Windsor, Conn., graduating in 1963, and went on to graduate from the University of Nebraska in 1967 with a degree in political science.

From 1967 to 1969, he served as a U.S. Marine Corps platoon commander in Vietnam, where he received two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star and the Navy Commendation Medal, both with Combat V designation.

Mr. Hughes joined the Department of State in 1970 as a Foreign Service officer, like his father before him. He retired from the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of minister counselor after a 35-year career, during which he served as the U.S. ambassador to Burundi and consul general in St. Petersburg, as well as at diplomatic posts in Cameroon, France, Belgium, the USSR and Mexico. He also served as diplomat-in-residence at Tulane University. He spoke French, Russian and Spanish.

After retiring in 2005, Ambassador Hughes worked for the Office of the Inspector General in Senegal, Mexico, Haiti, China, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2010, he became captain of his own trawler, *The Cooper*, and he and his wife spent the next four years having adventures. The couple completed the Great Loop, cruised to Montreal, to Maine and circumnavigated Lake Superior. Their next trip was to have been the Down East Loop. He greatly enjoyed skeet and pistol shooting, fishing and his daily cigar and Manhattan.

Friends and family remember Amb. Hughes fondly as a gentleman, a decorated combat veteran, diplomat, husband, father, grandfather, brother and cousin.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Betty de Jong Hughes; his two children, Guy (Kristen) of Geneva, Switzerland and Cassie (Christina) of Berkeley, Calif.; grandchild Hans Hughes; three step-children: James (Jennifer) of Toronto, Joanna (Pascal) of Montreal, and Jason (Shayna) of Hamilton, Canada; five step-grandchildren: Ariane, Andre, Emelie, Courtney and Hailey; and his sister, Mary Solari, of Rocklin, Calif.

■ **Geraldine (Gerry) Frances Keener**, 67, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Feb. 18 in Arlington, Va., after a long illness.

Ms. Keener was born on Aug. 29, 1948. She was a graduate of Lourdes Academy in Cleveland, Ohio, and The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She began her career at the Catholic University Law Library, and moved on to positions at Williams and Connolly, LLP and Lexis.

In the late 1970s, she boldly moved across the country to Hollywood to work in film and television production, and rose through the ranks to become an assistant director. Ms. Keener shaped classic and much-loved American productions including *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *The Naked Gun* and *Matlock*. She also worked on Gore Vidal’s 1982 Senate cam-

paign in California.

In her career as a diplomat, Ms. Keener was responsible for managing media relations, expanding cultural outreach and improving local perceptions of the United States. She served in Washington, D.C., Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, but her passion was for sub-Saharan Africa, where she felt she could have the greatest impact.

In the 1990s, Ms. Keener was among the first U.S. diplomats to work in post-apartheid South Africa. She later managed public diplomacy programs in support of NATO’s missions in Bosnia and Kosovo at the U.S. mission to NATO in Brussels, and served as spokeswoman for the U.S. consulate in Jeddah and the U.S. embassies in Harare and Kigali.

She returned to the Washington, D.C., area in 2009 on retiring from the Foreign Service, and continued to stay in touch with her friends for as long as she was able.

Ms. Keener is survived by a devoted circle of friends from her college years, as well as from her careers in law, film and the Foreign Service.

■ **Gloria Irene (Wasielewski) Kreisher**, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Sept. 24 at her retirement home in Bakersfield, Calif.

Mrs. Kreisher was born into a Polish-American family in Phoenix, Ariz. She graduated from high school at age 16, completed her associate degree in 1944 and attended the University of California at Berkeley, where she majored in Spanish and became fluent in Portuguese, completing her bachelor’s degree in 1946 at age 20.

She was enrolled in the first class at the new American Institute for Foreign Trade (the Thunderbird School) and received her master’s degree in 1947, later earning another, in linguistics, from Georgetown

University while on assignment in Washington, D.C. Before joining the U.S. Information Agency, she worked as a teacher for several years.

Mrs. Kreisher's Foreign Service career began in 1949, when she was offered a grant to serve as director of courses at the U.S.-Brazilian Bi-national Center in Porto Alegre. In 1953, she transferred to the U.S.-Mexican equivalent in Mexico City; and in 1960 was assigned to Caracas. She developed in-service education for teachers through seminars and workshops, at no expense to participants.

During the 1960s she served as assistant cultural affairs officer and English language teaching officer in Ankara, where she met her husband, FSO Noel Kreisher. Forced to resign from the Service after marrying, she continued to work as a contractor in Seoul. Sadly, Noel passed away in 1972.

Mrs. Kreisher rejoined the Foreign Service with the U.S. Information Agency's language division in 1974 and was assigned to Warsaw just before Solidarity burst forth in the Gdansk shipyard, triggering political change across Central and Eastern Europe. Serving until 1979, she wrote one report after another, laboring to keep the strong English-language teaching program alive there.

She returned from Poland to begin a seven-year tour as head of the English-language teaching division in USIA's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Washington, D.C. Her final overseas assignment was Rome. She mastered Italian and received a USIA Meritorious Honor Award for her work in retraining a generation of Italian English teachers.

In 1992 her alma mater, Thunderbird, honored Mrs. Kreisher as one of its "originals," having risen to the highest levels of management in her profession. In its February 1999 issue, *ESL*, the magazine for

teachers of English as a Second Language included her as one of two dozen American pioneers in the field.

Colleagues and friends recall Mrs. Kreisher as a pioneering English-language teaching officer, who set the standard for her profession with immense personal grace and compassion for her associates, foreign and American alike.

■ **Robert F. Krill**, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on Feb. 26 in Lovettsville, Va.

Mr. Krill was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Pittsburgh in 1956, and also received a diploma in English law and Georgian literature from the University of London.

In 1956, he began his career with the *Army Times* Publishing Co., in Washington, D.C., and London. He joined the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in 1958 as a program officer in the Economic Development Institute.

Mr. Krill entered the Foreign Service in 1960 and was assigned to Indonesia. He was transferred to Laos in 1961 and served there for four years as a press officer. He was posted to Italy in 1965 as an assistant cultural affairs officer, focusing on youth and academic affairs.

In 1968, at USIA, Mr. Krill was a career development officer and became the deputy program coordinator in the Office of the Assistant Director for European Affairs in 1969. He served as country director for Italy, Spain, Portugal and Malta until 1970, when he was appointed as a special assistant in the Office of the Associate Director for Research and Assessment.

From 1974 to 1977, Mr. Krill directed the Media Research Division in the Office of the Associate Director for Research and Evaluation.

In 1977, he was sent to Nigeria as press

officer, with the rank of counselor. Based at the U.S. embassy in France from 1980 to 1985, he was the information officer in the Africa Regional Service Bureau. His last overseas assignment was as counselor for press and cultural affairs in Tunisia from 1986 to 1990.

In Washington, D.C., he served as director of the Press Division of the European Affairs office from 1985 to 1990. In that year, he was detailed to the Department of Defense as the international visitor exchange officer for public affairs. A year later, he was detailed to the White House as the USIA representative in the Presidential Advance Office.

After retiring in 1991, Mr. Krill joined the Meridian House International Center, then became a consultant on global business access. He served as president of the Iowa Peace Institute from 1992 to 1994. He worked as the director of business development at the Westar Group from 1997 to 2003, and taught public diplomacy statecraft at the Foreign Service Institute from 2003 to 2005.

A DACOR member for many years, Mr. Krill was elected to the Board of Governors and Trustees. He ably led the Program Committee during several years marked by a steady increase in the frequency of lectures and receptions at DACOR Bacon house. From 1995 to 1997, he was director of corporate relations at the American Foreign Service Association.

Mr. Krill is survived by his wife of 53 years, Danielle Menager Krill; a daughter, Elizabeth Bava; and grandsons Christopher and Michael.

■ **David Levintow**, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, died Feb. 18 at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, in Lyme, N.H., of complications from a bone marrow disease.



Mr. Levintow was born in Philadelphia, Pa., on June 15, 1926, the son of Benjamin and Dora (Melnicoff). During World War II he served in the Army Air Corps (1944-1945), and graduated from Antioch College in 1950 with a bachelor's degree in government. He earned his master's in development economics from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1970.

From 1958 to 1984, he served as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, retiring as a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of counselor. He married Arsenia Gonzalez in 1951, and the couple raised four children during the course of his various overseas postings including the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Iran, Turkey, Vietnam, Liberia, Afghanistan and Ghana.

Mr. Levintow's Washington, D.C., tours included serving as director for the Pakistan and Nepal office and in the Bureau for Private Enterprise. He also served on the U.S. delegation to the Asian Development Bank and helped to establish the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.

After retiring from the Foreign Service, he worked in Washington, D.C., for the Institute for Public-Private Partnerships, the Center for Financial Engineering in Development and the Center for Privatization. There he served as a development economist, advising government officials in more than 30 countries on public sector reform strategies that involved public-private partnerships.

He conducted capacity-building workshops and seminars on project design, procurement, contract monitoring and regulatory governance. This included a broad range of projects such as extending public services to former black townships in South Africa, advising Indonesia on facilitating foreign direct investment, advising the governorates of Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt on solutions for solid

waste management, and many other public sector reform and anti-poverty initiatives.

After his wife, Arsenia, died in 2003, Mr. Levintow relocated to Lyme where he enjoyed a long and active "On Golden Pond" phase, which included biking, kayaking, canoeing and the pleasures of stoking his wood stove with logs he had stacked himself.

He had been raised in the Jewish tradition, but after moving to Lyme he joined the Lyme Congregational Church, where he served on the Outreach Committee and on the board. He was also an active member of "Those Guys," a men's service organization in Lyme.

Family and friends recall one of his many favorite sayings, that his life's goal could be summed up in the famous quotation from the American educator, Horace Mann: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."

Mr. Levintow is survived by his daughter, Alexandra Howell (and her husband Peter Tenney) of Lyme, and his three sons, Nicholas (and his wife, Katharina), Christopher and Anthony; and his grandchildren, Cameron, Nathan and Caroline Howell, and Sara, David and Christopher Levintow. His brother Leon predeceased him in 2014.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Parish Nurse program or to Those Guys, c/o Lyme Congregational Church, Lyme NH 03768.

■ **Helen Stephens Nagy**, the spouse of retired Foreign Service officer Ernest A. Nagy, died of Alzheimer's disease on Aug. 15 in Burbank, Calif.

Mrs. Nagy was a Foreign Service secretary when she met her husband, Ernest, at his first post, Budapest, in 1952. She had previously served at the U.S. embassy in Rome. In accordance with the regulations

of the time, she resigned from the Foreign Service upon marriage.

She subsequently served as a secretary at embassies in Berlin, Rome and London, and was an occasional secretary with the State Department following her husband's retirement. She also served on the Tower Commission and at shorter-term assignments in Vancouver, Kyiv and Geneva.

Mr. and Mrs. Nagy were married for 61 years. She led an adventurous, exciting and valuable life of service.

■ **Russell "Russ" Prickett**, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Jan. 18 in Ashburn, Va.

Mr. Prickett was born on May 18, 1932, in Willmar, Minn., to Glenn and Edna Prickett, the eldest of three siblings. He graduated from Murray High School in St. Paul, Minn., in 1950, Hamline University in 1954, and Harvard Law School in 1957.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1958. A member of the Minnesota Bar, he practiced law and edited legal publications from 1958 to 1959.

After marrying Hiltrun Hermann, with whom he would have four daughters, he began his Foreign Service career in 1959. His overseas postings included Basel, Vienna, Tokyo and Belgrade. During two separate assignments in Yugoslavia, he served as commercial attaché and economic counselor, bringing American trade and manufacturing investments into that nation.

In 1974, Mr. Prickett was posted to Tokyo as deputy economic counselor. He returned to Washington, D.C., in 1976 and was assigned first to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and then to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as chief of the Trade and Finance Division.

He was detailed to the Department of Commerce in 1980, and then served as economic counselor and commercial

attaché in Belgrade from 1982 to 1985. He was a co-author of *Yugoslav-American Economic Relations Since World War II* (1990) and a consultant to and member of the U.S.-Yugoslav Economic Council.

He served on the Board of Examiners before retiring in 1986.

A love of music dominated his life as well as his activities in retirement, when he joined his wife Rose Taylor in Austin, Tex. He was a member of the Austin Lyric Opera, the University United Methodist Church and choir, and The Texas Foreign Service Group.

Mr. Prickett was preceded in death by his wife, Rose, and had returned to Northern Virginia this past summer to be near his family.

He is survived by his daughters Christine Prickett (and her husband, Miroslav Kovacevic), Sylvia Prickett (and her husband, David Case), Suzanne Prickett and Katherine Prickett (and her husband, Jeff Brown); five grandchildren and two great grandchildren; his brother Gordon Prickett (and his wife, Jean) and sister Joyce Kirk (and her husband, Pat Nobles); as well as loving nieces, nephews and other extended family members.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Southern Poverty Law Center, University United Methodist Church, Austin, Tex.; WETA/Classical Radio, Washington, D.C.; or in support of any music program.

■ **Mary Ryan**, 101, the spouse of the late retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador Robert Ryan Sr., died on Feb. 10 at her home in Daytona Beach, Fla., after a brief illness.

Born on Dec. 27, 1914, in Northampton, Mass., Mary Frances O'Leary was the sixth of seven children. She grew up in that area, graduating from Saint Michael's High School and Northampton Commercial College. She married Robert Ryan in 1938.

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Soon afterward, the Ryans moved to Washington, D.C., to embark on his career in the State Department Foreign Service. They lived in Silver Spring, Md., from 1948 to 1959.

In the decade that followed, Mrs. Ryan accompanied her husband on his assignments as counselor for administration in France, then as U.S. ambassador to Niger. During this time she acquired an excellent command of French.

In 1969, the couple moved to New York, where, after retiring from the Foreign Service, Robert Sr. served in a series of high-level positions in the United Nations Secretariat.

Affectionately nicknamed the “Energizer Bunny” by her relatives, Mrs. Ryan continued to pursue her many keen interests up until an infection struck her shortly before her 101st birthday. She drove her car, read widely, hosted big family get-togethers, handily solved crossword puzzles, watched classic movies, and followed domestic politics and international news.

She was known as the devoted matriarch of a distinguished Foreign Service family, including her husband, the late Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Sr. (1914-2003), as well as her two children, Ambassador (retired) Robert J. Ryan Jr. (b. 1939), also of Daytona Beach, and the late FSO Thomas W. Ryan (1943-2011) of Redding, Calif.

Family members, friends and neighbors rejoice that she was able to stay with them for so long.

Her siblings all predeceased her.

Mrs. Ryan is survived by her son, Robert J. Ryan Jr., four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, as well as her daughters-in-law, nephews and nieces, with all of whom she was very close.

■ **Robert E. Waska Sr.**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away on

Jan. 16 in Santa Rosa, Calif.

Born in St. Cloud, Minn., on April 8, 1925, Mr. Waska’s early years were spent in St. Cloud and Helena, Mont. He entered World War II as a trombonist with the Fort Douglas, Utah Army Band. Later military assignments were on the USS *General Ballow* as part of an Army detachment to India and France.

Near the end of World War II, he was in charge of an Army detachment on the HMS *Queen Mary* and made five trips between England and the United States transporting British war brides to America.

After the war, he entered college, earning his undergraduate degree at Carroll College in Helena, Mont., and Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. He completed graduate studies at Harvard University.

In 1951 Mr. Waska joined the U.S. Foreign Service and was stationed in Athens for three years. On Oct. 9, 1954, he married Frances Robertson of Houston, Texas. She accompanied him on diplomatic assignments to Karachi, Naples, Kingston, Bucharest, Lagos, Taipei and Beirut.

He also served on the faculty of the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C., and as deputy director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department before retiring in 1986.

He continued to work as a contractor for the Department of State for 12 years before moving to Oakmont Village in Santa Rosa, Calif., in 1998.

Mr. Waska is survived by his wife, Frances; his son, Robert Jr., and daughter-in-law, Elizabeth; a brother, Ronald J. Waska of Houston, Texas; three sisters, Patricia Carden of San Antonio, Texas, and Carole McAshan and Marcia Traylor of Houston, Texas; and many nieces and nephews.

Donations may be made to Catholic Charities, P.O. Box 4900, Santa Rosa CA 95402. ■



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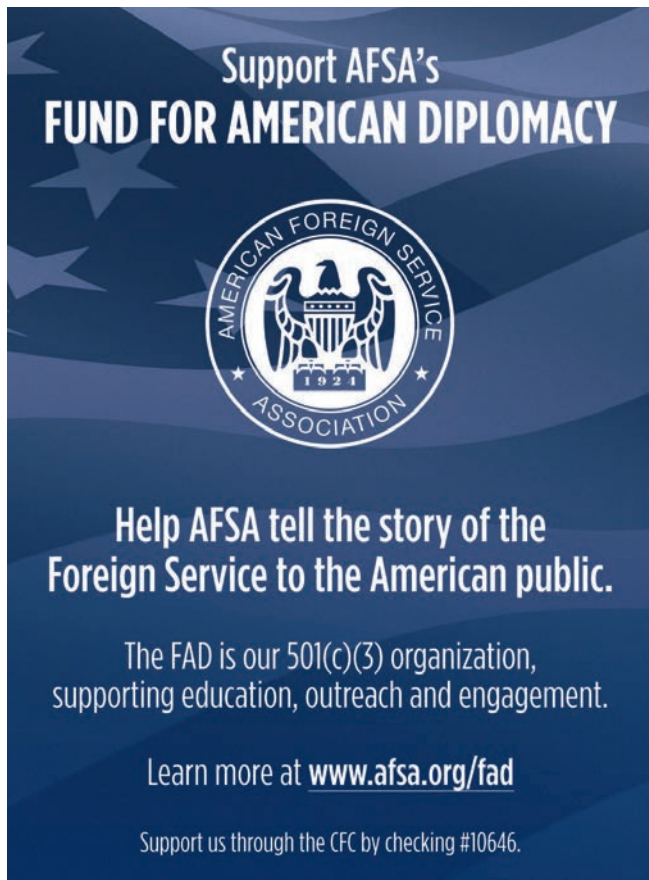


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# Israelit Friedhof: A Forgotten Cemetery in Vienna

BY JEFFREY GLASSMAN

Unknowing, Vienna Tri-Missions employees drove by it every day on the Währinger Gürtel, high up behind a 40-foot stone wall. It was on the regular route between the embassy and the Mission to the OSCE, where I worked. When I first arrived in Vienna in August 2004, I struggled to make sense of the maze of streets. My initial goal was simple: to drive from the mission to the embassy without becoming one with the ubiquitous Vienna streetcars.

To that end, I intensely studied the *Freytag & Berndt Buchplan Wien*, an excellent map of the city known in our family as “the orange map.” On the lower third of page 20, in painfully tiny print, it showed the location of Israelit Friedhof (Jewish cemetery).

As an American Jew working in Vienna, I was intrigued. I was aware of the schizophrenic attitude the Viennese have toward their Jews. Some of the highest points of Jewish life and accomplishment occurred in Vienna. The names are familiar: Theodor Herzl, Sigmund Freud, Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler, Arthur Schnitzler, Arnold Schoenberg. The low



*Jeffrey Glassman is a recently retired FSO. During a 27-year career, he served at the U.S. Missions to the Organization for Security and Co-operation*

*in Europe and the United Nations, as well as in Monrovia, Cape Town, Moscow and Minsk. Photo by Studio Theresa Bentz, Vienna.*

When I passed through the ancient wooden gates, I sensed I had entered a place sacred yet wild. The silence was unexpected.

points are also well known.

After the Anschluss, when Hitler appeared on the balcony of the Hofburg Palace on March 15, 1938, thousands of Viennese cheered the Fuhrer. Before the war, Vienna had been home to almost 200,000 Jews. Many of them fled; 65,000 lost their lives as part of Hitler’s Final Solution. The current Jewish population of Vienna is under 10,000.

The Israelit Friedhof, also known as the Währinger Cemetery, was the chief place of Jewish burial from 1784 to 1879. After 1880, Jews were buried in a section of Vienna’s Central Cemetery, where Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms are also buried.

As I became aware of the cemetery, I wanted to see it. My family attended the Stadttempel, the only synagogue in the city that survived the Nazis (only because they feared burning it to the ground would endanger other parts of central Vienna). When I asked at the Stadttempel if I could go to the cemetery, I was told that nobody goes there. It’s been closed since the war. Naturally, that made me even more eager to go.

In the winter of 2007, the Stadttempel announced that there would be a one-time tour of Währinger Cemetery. The tour would be led by historian Tina Walzer, who has made its study her life’s passion. “Great,” I thought. But almost immediately, I was told I couldn’t go: The cemetery was so overgrown that my wheelchair would not be able to traverse its narrow, rutted paths. I was undeterred.

On the day of the tour, my wife and I showed up at the cemetery at the appointed time. It was a typical winter day in Vienna: raw cold and overcast, with the clouds seemingly inches above our heads. I had been warned about the condition of





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The Israelit Friedhof, also known as the Währinger Cemetery, was the chief place of Jewish burial in Vienna from 1784 to 1879.

the cemetery, but after all that time, I was determined to try. If it was impossible, at least I had made the effort.

When I passed through the ancient wooden gates, I sensed I had entered a place sacred yet wild. The silence was unexpected. The great city of Vienna was only meters away, but one heard neither the squeal of trams nor the convivial *gemütlichkeit* sounds of the cafes. Trees were bent at crazy angles and underbrush was everywhere. It looked as if no humans had been there for many, many years. And, in fact, no one had. Other than Tina Walzer, almost nobody had set foot there for a long time.

Eventually, among the vegetation and the gray murk of the day, gravestones became visible. Many of the memorials were overturned and overgrown, covered with weeds and vines. I found that most dirt paths were passable—but barely. They were narrow and rutted. But for the most part, the wheelchair was able to move forward. I thought that maybe a higher power wanted me to be there.

Buried there were some of the great Jewish families of Vienna: financiers, industrialists, railroad magnates and

cultural figures. Families that had literally built the modern city of Vienna, and made it the center of art, science and music in the world. To us, the names are unfamiliar, but at the time they were the elite: Königswarter, Wertheimer, Epstein, Arnstein-Eskeles, Ephrussi. In the city, they built palaces for life; in the *friedhof*, they built grand monuments to their passing.

In Jewish tradition, cemeteries are meant to stand forever, where the soul revisits the body from time to time. But during World War II and since, those memorials have been looted and defaced, their coffins and bodies long gone. At its height, Währinger had more than 9,000 graves. It housed in death not only the Viennese elite but regular people with modest gravestones of sandstone (soft as they are, those gravestones suffer the most from the elements).

Starting in 1939, the Vienna Natural History Museum had a contract to study the “degeneration” of the Jews in both the moral and spiritual realms, as well as physically. So they needed bodies—and found them in Währinger. They took the bodies to the museum (a tourist must-

see) and subjected them to untold indignities. Some of these bones have never been recovered.

During the war, the cemetery was significantly damaged and was reduced in size. In 1941, fear of bombing led the Nazis to take over a portion of the cemetery to create water ponds as a defense against fire. Fifteen hundred graves were lost, the bodies reburied in a mass grave at the Central Cemetery.

Under the Washington Agreement of 2001, the government of Austria pledged to make a significant contribution to the “restoration and preservation” of Jewish cemeteries in the country. Germany signed a similar agreement in the 1950s. Germany does an excellent job; but Austria remains—as with many aspects of the Nazi-era experience—conflicted.

Meanwhile, the Israelit Friedhof is much as I left it. The Jewish community is supposed to look after it. But in its much reduced state, the community does not have the resources to do so. The cemetery, a ghostly reminder of a long-ago war and the pathology of the Nazis, remains a window into the past. ■



Boats rest peacefully in the still of morning on Pokhara Lake in Pokhara, Nepal. The country's second-largest city, Pokhara is located 200 miles west of Kathmandu in the shadow of the magnificent Annapurna Range that contains three of the 10 highest mountains in the world. This photo was taken on March 12, 2015. In less than two months, the country would be rocked by an earthquake that claimed more than 8,000 lives. ■

*John F. Krotzer is a Foreign Service family member and, most recently, the community liaison officer at Consulate Mumbai. He and his family are heading to Beijing for their next posting. For this photo he used a Nikon D5300 with a standard Nikkor 18-55mm lens. John is an avid nature photographer, whose best pictures can be viewed at [www.flickr.com/photos/krotzmonster/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/krotzmonster/).*

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