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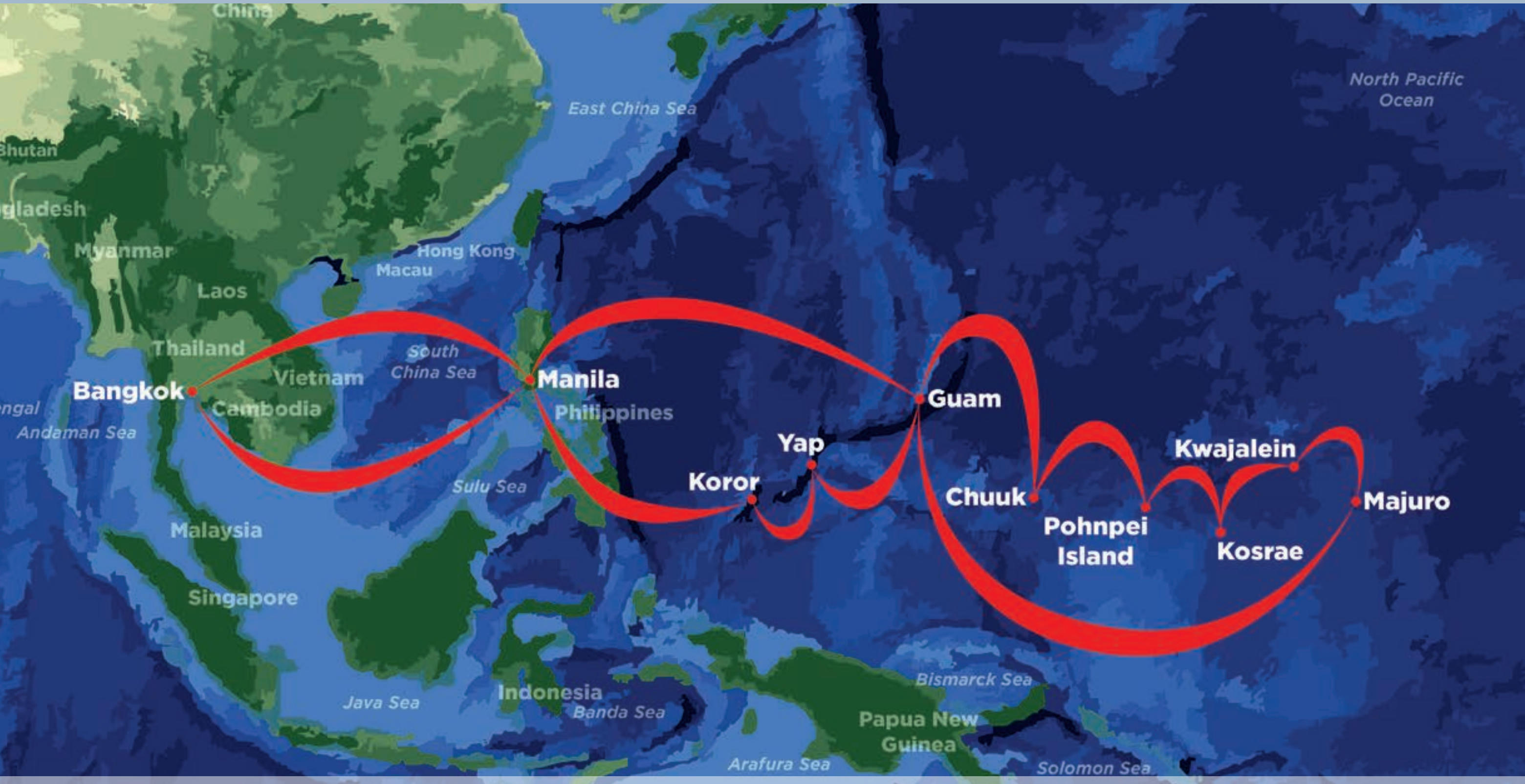

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Uninsured Motorists: a Major Risk-on-wheels during Overseas Assignments

Widespread unemployment and economic decline has caused an alarming spike in the number of **uninsured motorists** across the globe, according to Reuters. These uninsured drivers represent a growing danger to Foreign Service members, who already have the challenge of adapting to unfamiliar roadways with each new overseas assignment.

Reported Accidents on the Rise

Accident data reveals that uninsured drivers are especially reckless behind the wheel: in the UK alone, it is estimated that uninsured drivers are responsible for at least 26,500 incidents every year, according to Daily Mail. Although the magnitude of the problem varies from country to country, this trend poses a **troublesome threat** to State Department professionals and their families.

For example, while driving on the notoriously safe roadways of Panama City, a Foreign Service officer on assignment in Central America was hit while driving his 2012 RAV4 by a local vehicle. The local driver immediately fled the scene after the collision, leaving the FSO with a severely damaged vehicle. With no Uninsured Motorist coverage, the out-of-pocket cost to repair the wrecked car was nearly $10,000 USD.

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On the cover: Island hopping: A classic diplomatic courier mission across the Pacific Ocean. Graphic Design: Jeff Lau.

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New Ideas from AFSA

BY ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

In my past three columns, I have described AFSA's relations with our main partners: Civil Service colleagues, Congress and State Department management. This month I would like to describe AFSA's strategic plan, adopted by the Governing Board in November.

This two-year plan focuses on five areas: good internal governance, member benefits, Foreign Service career development, overseas security and Foreign Service image promotion. Within these five areas, we have prioritized 29 projects.

This is an ambitious agenda. But with AFSA now grown to a record 16,200 members, and with 10 standing committees, a 29-member board and 34-member professional staff, we believe it is time to think big. Here are three of the projects we are undertaking.

First, a working group of 10 retired chiefs of mission, comprised of both career diplomats and political appointees from three administrations, is drafting a set of "Guidelines for a Successful Chief of Mission." They are drawing on the criteria for ambassadors contained in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 and other sources, as well as their personal experiences.

In December the AFSA Governing Board and other groups will review the Guidelines document. After its adoption, AFSA and these like-minded organizations will hold a series of media and congressional events to present it. We believe these guidelines will prove to be a useful resource for the executive and legislative branches in the nomination and confirmation processes for chiefs of mission.

Second, to provide input for the 2014 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, AFSA has formed six working groups, each composed of a mix of active-duty and retired members, to look at reforms in six discrete areas. We are calling this our "Six Easy Pieces," which we will present to the leadership of the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, and to the broader membership, in January.

One of these groups is looking at security and at the task of striking the right balance between risk mitigation and engagement with local publics, which is so vital to being able to carry out our work overseas. Stay tuned for further information on these groups.

Our third initiative involves the yearlong celebration in 2014 of the 90th anniversary of both the modern Foreign Service and AFSA. We are planning many great events to celebrate that milestone, beginning with a kickoff cocktail reception in January. There will also be a May 22 gala dinner hosted by Secretary of State John Kerry, a series of talks on the Middle East and Europe, a policy conference in October open to all AFSA members, book launches, and much more.

There are many other initiatives in AFSA's two-year strategic plan. We are working to have Foreign Service travelers included in the "Global Entry" program at U.S. airports; develop a leave bank along the lines of the "credit union" model to help manage our leave; and formulate after-hours guidelines for employee BlackBerry accessibility. And to model good governance and institute a performance management culture, AFSA's elected officers are leading by example, calling for 360-degree reviews of themselves by staff.

You'll find the entire plan at www.afsa.org; under the "About AFSA" tab, go to "Governing Board" category.

And now, as promised, here are the answers to last month's Foreign Service quiz.

- George Kennan wrote the Long Telegram, proposing the Containment Doctrine that prevailed in the Cold War, while serving as an editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*.
- The ratio in today's Foreign Service between generalists and specialists is roughly 60/40.
- The early American republic gave chiefs of mission the title of minister plenipotentiary rather than ambassador.
- The father of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., was AFSA President Charles Whitehouse.

Congratulations to Craig Olson of Arlington, Va., and Ethan Goldrich of Embassy Minsk for answering all four questions correctly. Your AFSA coffee mugs are in the mail!

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season. Be well, stay safe and keep in touch.

Bob

Silverman@afsa.org

Robert J. Silverman is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

Dissent Leads to Change

Thanks to the *FSJ* for publishing our article, "What Makes Someone an American Citizen?" (September), in the issue honoring the AFSA dissent and performance award recipients.

Not only did we receive encouraging e-mails from colleagues all over the world dealing with the same issue, but the article's publication undoubtedly helped us achieve our main goal.

Not long after the issue came out, State sent a cable (13 State 140282) to all posts offering clear guidance on how to implement the Child Citizenship Act, bringing the State Department interpretation of the law into line with that of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

From now on, parents applying for a passport for their children must furnish proof that they are, in fact, "residing in" the United States. The guidance also explicitly prohibits posts from recommending to parents that they "apply for an immigrant visa for the child solely for the purpose of the child entering, but not residing in, the United States and then simply return to post to apply for a U.S. passport for the child pursuant to [the Immigration and Naturalization Act Section] 320."

The process of publishing the article reminded us that *The Foreign Service Journal* is perhaps the most effective venue for expressing constructive dissent and connecting with colleagues all over the world on key issues that affect us all. I encourage everyone to continue to read it and contribute to it.

James Rider
FSO
Embassy Tel Aviv

Shane Myers
FSO
Washington, D.C.

More than a Photo Op

I know Spike Stephenson, respect his work in Iraq and agree with most of what he wrote in his article, "Paying the Price of Expeditionary Diplomacy" (October *Journal*). However, he misses the mark when he describes the mission of the group that was attacked in Zabul, Afghanistan, this past April as "essentially a photo op."

Yes, this visit to Zabul was part of a larger public affairs initiative involving outreach associated with the distribution of high-quality Pashto- and Dari-language books across Afghanistan. And yes, it involved local Afghan journalists and included a press conference aimed at a national audience.

But the schedule that day also entailed meetings with teachers and students, as well as lunch with a provincial governor who, over the past several years, has demonstrated a strong commitment to education in a part of the country that previously had almost no schools.

As Stephenson points out, we "cannot lock ourselves in bunkers." In some circumstances, Foreign Service officers take on difficult assignments that inevitably place them in harm's way. But rightly or wrongly, our country made a policy decision to deploy embassy staff for direct engagement with local communities on a face-to-face basis, including in remote parts of Afghanistan. Those of us who volunteered to carry out that policy undertook such trips many times over the course of a year.

As Stephenson surely knows from his own experience in Iraq, it is not unusual to include "photo ops" as part of any outreach effort—but this does not necessarily mean that they are the only, or even most important, part.

Jonathan Addleton
USAID FSO
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J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

AN INVITATION TO PROPOSE PROJECTS FOR FUNDING BY THE J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST IN 2014

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of J. Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for professional fulfillment and community service of active Foreign Service officers and specialists and their families.

The principal activity of the Trust is to support projects that are initiated and carried out, on an entirely unofficial, voluntary basis, by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, wherever located. The Trust will also consider projects of the same nature proposed by other U.S. government employees or members of their families, regardless of nationality, who are located at American diplomatic posts abroad. Only the foregoing persons are eligible applicants.

In 2013 the Trust made its 17th round of grant awards, approving a total of 50 grants that ranged from $400 to $3,263 (averaging $1,715), for a total of $85,729. These grants support the involvement of Foreign Service personnel in the projects described in the Trust announcement titled Grants Awarded in 2013 and available at www.kirbysimontrust.org. To indicate the range of Trust grants, the following paragraphs set forth a sampling of projects supported by the Trust in recent years.

Education Projects: School supplies for refugee and other conflict-affected children and for orphanages; English-language learning materials for high school students; day-care facilities for underprivileged women learning marketable skills; specialized education equipment for the disabled; kitchen and other equipment for occupational training programs.

Additional Projects for Young People: Playground and sports training equipment, educational toys, furnishings, household appliances, toilet and shower facilities for special-needs schools and orphanages; clean-ups to improve sanitation and create play spaces; school fees and food for abandoned children; materials for a re-entry program for returning Foreign Service teens.

Health and Safety-Related Projects: Dental care for impoverished children; staff training for crisis shelters; health care equipment and improved sanitation for maternity clinics and orphanages; a visual impairment survey among HIV-positive children; rebuilding homes of earthquake victims; photo documentation of murdered women set on fire by husbands or in-laws.

Revenue-Producing Projects: Machines and materials for income-generating programs for sick and disadvantaged children and adults, including abused women, migrant workers, refugees, Roma and victims of sex-trafficking; a cooperative for deaf carpenters.

The Trust now invites the submission of proposals for support in 2014. It is anticipated that few of the new grants will exceed the average size of the 2013 awards, and that projects assisted by the Trust will reflect a variety of interests and approaches, illustrated by the foregoing list of past grants and by the website description of 2013 grants.

Certain restrictions apply: (a) Funds from the Trust cannot be used to pay salaries or other compensation to U.S. government employees or their family members. (b) The Trust does not support projects that have reasonable prospects of obtaining full funding from other sources. (c) The Trust will provide support for a project operated by a charitable or educational organization only where the individual applicant(s) plan an active part in initiating and carrying out the project, apart from fundraising. (d) The Trust will support only projects in which each applicant's role is clearly separate from the applicant's official responsibilities.

A proposal should include a description of the project, its aims and the role to be played by the applicant(s); a preliminary plan for disseminating the results of the project; a budget; other available funding, if any; and a brief biography of the applicant(s). Proposals should be no longer than five double-spaced pages (exclusive of budget and biographical material). Please follow the application format available at www.kirbysimontrust.org/format_for_proposals.html or by communicating with the Trust (see below).

Proposals for projects to be funded during calendar year 2014 must be received by the Trust no later than March 1, 2014.

Proposals can be submitted by mail, by fax or (preferably) by e-mail to:

J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust

93 Edgehill Road

New Haven, CT 06511

FAX: 203-432-8095

E-mail: Send to info@kirbysimontrust.org and (2) john.simon@yale.edu and (3) marguerite.camera@yale.edu

Further information about the Trust can be found at www.kirbysimontrust.org.

TALKING POINTS

The U.S. and Asia: What Pivot?

Barack Obama's first term as president was filled with rhetoric concerning the United States' foreign policy and stature as a world power. In particular, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton championed an initiative to forge stronger social, economic and military ties through a "Pivot to Asia."

Two years later, however, President Obama's decision not to attend October meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (in Bali) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (in Brunei), and to cancel visits to U.S. allies in the region, has led many to ask whether the pivot is simply a rhetorical device without any real substance to it.

Anticipating that reaction, the White House sent Secretary of State John Kerry in the president's place, and emphasized its intention to reschedule a trip to Asia as soon as possible. But the very reason it gave for the cancellation—the federal government shutdown—stirred up unpleasant memories of the fact that Pres. Obama had also been forced to delay a 2010 trip to the region twice over domestic issues.

A survey of reactions to the news, and the international fallout, suggests that analysts are coming at the subject from all sorts of angles.

Politically conservative think-tanks like the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation see the main value of the pivot in the potential to ensure American military and political dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. To make that case, AEI's analysts lean heavily on Cold War-era terminology like "conventional deterrence," while Heritage urges pursuit of an expansive military plan for the region.

But other think-tanks believe that nonmilitary aspects of U.S. strategy are what will enhance American influence in Asia. For instance, Robert M. Hathaway of the Wilson Center declares that the United States must dedicate "institutional structure, budgetary support and conceptual legitimacy to the idea that America's fate is inextricably linked to Asia." Still, he warns, for U.S. foreign policy to flourish, Washington must get its own house in order, citing the shutdown as a case study.

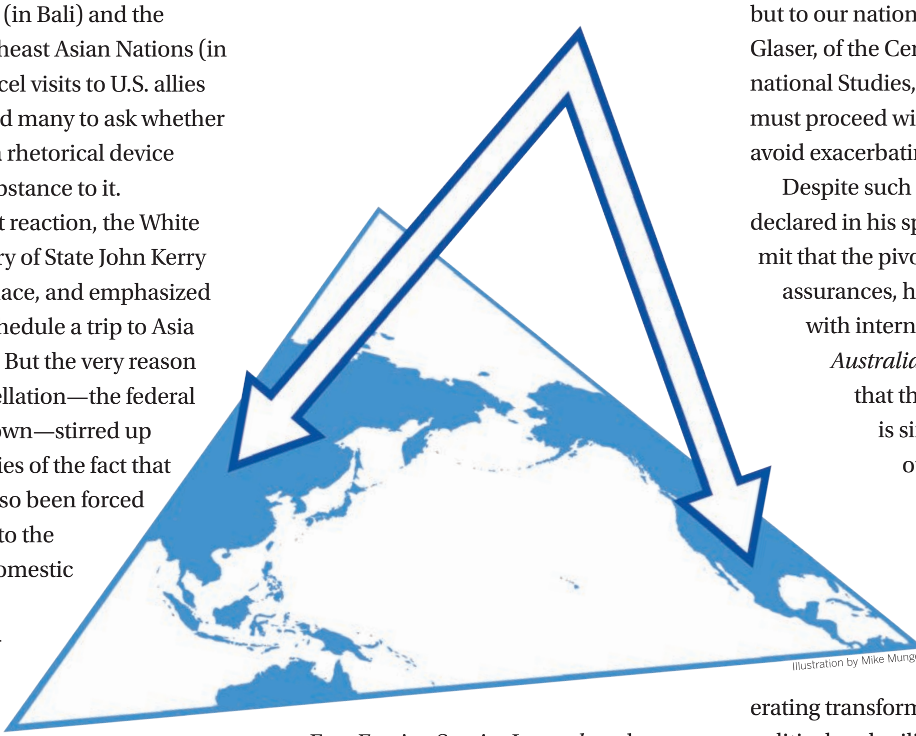
Illustration by Mike Munger

Few *Foreign Service Journal* readers will be surprised that much of the debate concerns Sino-American relations, which many observers view as a zero-sum game. They noted that as soon as the White House announced the cancellation, Chinese President Xi Jinping moved up his own trip to Bali to signal interest in courting Southeast Asian governments. Among other exploits, Xi not only addressed the Indonesian parliament, but scored diplomatic points for opening his speech in the country's official language, Bahasa.

Perhaps more significantly, America's no-show delayed negotiations to finalize the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a major trade deal involving the United States and 11 other nations—but not China. Beijing seized the resulting opening to promote its own proposal, a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership—which happens to exclude the United States.

In *Foreign Affairs,* Robert S. Ross argues that a real Asian pivot would be detrimental not only to Sino-American relations, but to our national interests. And Bonnie Glaser, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, cautions that Washington must proceed with "subtle firmness" to avoid exacerbating regional suspicions.

Despite such concerns, Secretary Kerry declared in his speech at the APEC summit that the pivot is alive and well. His assurances, however, have been met with international skepticism. *The Australian*, for instance, speculates that the Obama administration is simply too overwhelmed by other international issues, particularly in the Middle East, to "pursue the pivot."

Whatever the truth of that claim, Asia's accelerating transformation into an economic, political and military powerhouse, and Beijing's increasingly energetic diplomacy, make it incumbent on the United States to step up its game there—or be left on the sidelines.

—Valerie Sanders, Editorial Intern

Close, but No SIGAR

Over the past 12 years, the United States has appropriated roughly $100 billion for relief and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Mindful of the massive waste and fraud that occurred in the aftermath of the Iraq War, in 2007 Congress created the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction to provide independent and objective oversight of Afghanistan reconstruction activities.

SIGAR is headquartered in Arlington, Va., but has an office in Kabul and a field presence in multiple locations throughout Afghanistan. John F. Sopko was sworn in as Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction on July 2, 2012.

Under the authority of Section 1229 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (P.L. 110-181), SIGAR conducts audits and investigations to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of reconstruction programs and detect and prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

SIGAR also conducts forensic reviews of reconstruction funds managed by the Department of Defense, Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In a joint Oct. 10 letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, Sopko notes: "Direct oversight of reconstruction programs in much of Afghanistan will become prohibitively hazardous or impossible as U.S. military units are withdrawn, coalition bases are closed, and civilian reconstruction offices in the field are closed." He then asks all three agency heads to detail their plans to maintain effective oversight of U.S. assistance programs in Afghanistan.

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Fighting an Ancient Scourge

The Perth, Australia-based Walk Free Foundation has released the inaugu-

SITE OF THE MONTH: *DS Wikipedia*

Interested in getting an insider's perspective on the work of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security? Check out *DS Wikipedia*, which bills itself as "an unofficial wiki for both the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Diplomatic Security Service—more commonly known as DS."

The wiki's purpose is to preserve historic information on DS in a form that is publicly accessible and, in particular, to commemorate the sacrifices of DS-affiliated personnel.

The "Bureau of Diplomatic Security Personnel Killed in Action" page is the centerpiece of the wiki. The list includes not just direct-hire employees, but local guard force casualties and security contractors killed in the line of duty—categories that account for an overwhelming number of casualties. There you'll find the names of local guards killed in the 1983 Embassy Beirut bombing, and in the terrorist attacks on our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998, as well as names through 2013.

Among other features, the wiki also documents "Host-Country Police Killed in Action Defending U.S. Facilities" and "Diplomatic Security Service Special Agent Heroism Award Recipients." On a somewhat lighter note, there are lists of "Diplomatic Security Service Agents Turned Author" and links to "Videos of Diplomatic Security Bureau Mentions in Film and TV."

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

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ral edition of its Global Slavery Index.

In a pithy phrase, the WFF defines modern-day slavery as the substitution of property value for personhood. This terminology also encompasses forced labor and human trafficking, which are major components of slavery in the 21st century.

The Global Slavery Index would perform a welcome service if it only compiled quantitative data on the prevalence of this deplorable phenomenon across the world, but it goes much further. It identifies the factors responsible for the practice of slavery, explains what individual governments can do to address them, and recommends specific steps the global community can take.

How many slaves are currently held across the globe? The Index counts 29.8 million in all, and also calculates the prevalence of slavery among each nation's population. Mauritania, Haiti and Pakistan have the highest current levels of slavery as a percentage of population, while India, China and Pakistan have the highest absolute numbers. But slavery is not absent from the United States or the developed world, since high demand for cheap labor often creates a market for human trafficking that operates under the radar.

The Walk Free Foundation has also set up a Global Fund to End Slavery, and is partnering with Humanity United to set up a $100 million Freedom Fund to take direct action against those who profit from this ancient scourge.

—Valerie Sanders, Editorial Intern

Contemporary Quote

"Several cornerstones should be laid to underpin a de-Americanized world. For starters, all nations need to hew to the basic principles of the international law, including respect for sovereignty, and keeping hands off domestic affairs of others.

Furthermore, the authority of the United Nations in handling global hotspot issues has to be recognized. That means no one has the right to wage any form of military action against others without a United Nations mandate.

Apart from that, the world's financial system also has to embrace some substantial reforms. The developing and emerging market economies need to have more say in major international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, so that they could better reflect the transformations of the global economic and political landscape.

What may also be included as a key part of an effective reform is the introduction of a new international reserve currency that is to be created to replace the dominant U.S. dollar, so that the international community could permanently stay away from the spillover of the intensifying domestic political turmoil in the United States.

Of course, the purpose of promoting these changes is not to completely toss the United States aside, which is impossible. Rather, it is to encourage Washington to play a much more constructive role in addressing global affairs.

And among all options, it is suggested that the Beltway politicians first begin with ending the pernicious impasse."

—Excerpted from an Oct. 13 Xinhua News *(English) commentary.*

Weibos Want to Be Free

Anyone who follows developments in the People's Republic of China is probably familiar with *Sina Weibo*, the Chinese microblogging website that is akin to a hybrid of *Twitter* and *Facebook*. One of the country's most popular sites, Weibo has a market penetration similar to what *Twitter* has established in America.

Since its launch by the SINA Corporation in August 2009, *Weibo* has gained more than half a billion registered users, who post about 100 million messages a day. However, the Chinese government closely monitors the site and routinely deletes items that mention, or are seen as alluding to, any subject the PRC deems too sensitive for public discussion.

In response, anonymous activists set up *FreeWeibo.com*, a website dedicated to tracking and undermining PRC censorship. "We offer uncensored and anonymous *Sina Weibo* searches. We ignore relevant laws, legislation and policy," the homepage declares, adding that *FreeWeibo* is 100-percent blocked in China.

The site certainly does not lack for fodder. Consider Chinese news coverage (or the lack thereof) after an SUV plowed into a crowd in Beijing's iconic Tiananmen Square on Oct. 28. The car crashed and burst into flames, killing two pedestrians and the three occupants of the vehicle, and injuring 38 others.

Hundreds of posts about the incident (some from eyewitnesses, complete with photos) began surfacing on *Weibo* and other social media sites, but were just as quickly deleted en masse by censors. This was particularly true of messages suggesting that the crash might have been a case of self-immolation, an increasingly common form of protest in China. *FreeWeibo* sprang into action and began posting and archiving deleted posts on its site.

Unfortunately for Westerners, *FreeWeibo* does not translate Chinese-language tweets into English. However, if you type an English word into the search box, it will show you posts that use that term.

—Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Spain Zones Out

As the *Journal* prepares to go to press, the United States has just moved from Daylight Saving Time to Standard Time. (As the saying goes, "Fall back in the fall; spring forward in the spring.") So we were intrigued by news of a Spanish initiative to toughen up the country's traditional casualness about timekeeping.

While many Spaniards defend the practice of taking afternoon siestas and eating dinner late at night as sacrosanct, the National Commission for the Rationalization of Working Hours says the country's lifestyle is simply unsustainable. Not only is the current setup detrimental to promoting work-life balance and gender equality, but it is seriously impeding Spain's economic productivity.

Complicating matters further, Spain—unlike Portugal and the United Kingdom, which have the same longitude—is aligned with the Central European time zone, as it has been ever since World War II. The commission believes that finally eliminating this historical anomaly will make the country's workers healthier, happier and more productive.

There is certainly no doubt that Spain is in dire need of an economic boost. Could the commission's proposal be a step in the right direction? Only time (zones) will tell.

—Valerie Sanders, Editorial Intern

50 Years Ago

November 22, 1963
3:30 p.m. EST

President John F. Kennedy was shot two hours ago. .... Our *Journal* was on the press at the time of these events, and as we write these words many of our Foreign Service colleagues have not heard the tragic news.

We will leave to others the well-thought-out and deserved tributes to the stature and integrity of this man as he tried to meet the overwhelming responsibilities of the high office which he held. To the extent that we can control our own personal sorrow and grief, we shall here pay tribute to his great efforts to handle our foreign policy problems in full consciousness of the United States' role of leadership in the Free World, and his inspiration to the Foreign Service to meet the challenge of its role in the field.

None of us will forget his advice to AFSA that those who can't stand the heat should get out of the kitchen. He never spared himself, even when the heat was intense—as indeed it was a year ago in October during the confrontation with the Soviet Union over the missiles in Cuba. Amidst the confusion which reigns at the moment of writing, the finest tribute we can pay to this great leader is to rededicate ourselves to meeting the standards of excellence which he demanded of all who served the nation.

—Untitled editorial statement, FSJ, *December 1963.*

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WHEN CONTACTING AN ADVERTISER, KINDLY MENTION *THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

A Plea for Greater Teamwork in the Foreign Service

BY GEORGE B. LAMBRAKIS

The militarization of America's foreign policy in recent years, and the encroachment by political appointees on more and more positions within the State Department that used to be occupied by career diplomats, are both disturbing trends that should impel those of us in, or retired from, the Foreign Service to ponder how most Americans see our profession. After all, popular perceptions affect how America deals with the rest of the world, and therefore how we should manage our institution.

However, there are some subtleties to be considered. The Foreign Service is much smaller than the Department of Defense, and affects a much smaller population of American voters directly. We are also more remote from, and less immediately relevant to, most Americans than the military or such professions as law enforcement, firefighting, teaching and medicine.

At the same time, State and the other foreign affairs agencies loom large in Washington, and are vital to the White House and Congress—as well as to journalists, businesspeople and those who travel abroad. These are the people whom the Foreign Service must convince of its value.

Fortunately, this is a feasible task that the Service can address head-on. I would go so far as to suggest that the president, Congress, fellow departments of government, and others with whom we deal would value and trust our judgment more if they generally saw our culture as striving to achieve our aims in a relatively disinterested and collegial way—not (as may now sometimes be the case) seeing us as being mainly out for ourselves.

If I am right, this shift could induce more legislators to take a realistic, even admiring, view of what we (no longer "genteel cookie-pushers") accomplish with our limited budgets.

George B. Lambrakis was a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1957 to 1985, after two years with USIS in Vietnam and Laos. He served in hardship and non-hardship posts in the Middle East, Africa and Europe as a consul, political reporting officer, deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires, and as an intelligence analyst, desk officer, personnel officer and office director in Washington. While serving in wartime Beirut in 1975 and 1976, he shared in an embassy unit award for valor as DCM and chargé between four different ambassadors (one of whom was kidnapped and assassinated). He also shared an award for heroism while serving as political counselor and (for several months) acting DCM in revolutionary Tehran between 1977 and 1979.

After retirement, he set up international fundraising operations for Brown University, the International Institute for Strategic Studies and other organizations. Since 1994 he has been a program director and professor of international relations and diplomacy at universities in London and Paris, and often defends American foreign policies on Press TV, the Iranian television network.

Copy—but Selectively

To facilitate that process, we should consider copying to a considerable extent the teamwork that the military and other service professions enjoy, while maintaining the different traditions of the diplomatic career. Diplomatic work differs in its essential characteristics from those other professions, and I am certainly not suggesting otherwise.

For example, there is one pernicious idea borrowed from the military which I would argue runs contrary to the essentials of diplomatic work: the "up or out" promotion process embedded in the Service since the 1980 Foreign Service Act. Diplomacy in the wider world is not best conducted by the young and inexperienced.

Nor is the Foreign Service well served by a personnel pyramid that eliminates capable officers because they have not quite reached the top. If anything, diplomacy has proportionally more uses at or near the senior ranks for experienced mid-career and senior officers than does the military.

The emphasis since 1980 on facilitating the rapid rise of exceptionally gifted officers at the expense of the average has evolved to the point that individual officers have to compete actively, if not ferociously, against their colleagues for promotion. This can lead to some desperate maneuvering at reassignment time for the flashier assignments, and requires diverging from other duties to make sure supervisors write the best-sounding annual performance reports, in the finest style possible, that cite strings of performance awards.

As a result, failure to manage one's career in a way that maximizes the chances of rapid promotion, and simply trusting the system on its own to reward one's performance, can now lead to premature retirement.

Getting Due Credit

Apart from sensational kidnappings or assassinations that occasionally grab the news headlines, it would appear that congressional and public opinion does not yet sufficiently appreciate how many American diplomats serve in the line of fire in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan and many other conflict zones.

Nor do they realize how often American diplomats deal over their career with truly difficult foreign leaders and complicated situations that help qualify them as better judges of what foreign policies to follow or avoid. This encourages the impression that just about any bright person can become an effective diplomat, even if only for a short assignment or two.

So how do we mark bright Foreign Service officers as more skilled in foreign affairs than those in politics or other professions? One can cite the competence gained over time spent doing the job and make better efforts to describe the complications of that job to our target audiences.

One could also point to the selectivity of appointment into, and promotion within, an elite with special professional duties and requirements. And finally, perhaps one should spotlight the professionally communal, selfless behavior of Foreign Service personnel who do their jobs in life-threatening situations—a quality not usually shared by most of those outsiders.

That said, we cannot overlook the importance of identifying those individuals who become exceptionally good at a particular skill over the course of a career. Two examples much lauded in recent years are the ability to manage overseas missions, and skill at coordinating foreign policy for an American president or Secretary of State at home.

Those individuals who are specially gifted in these respects are likely to make it to the top whatever the promotion system; they do not need an up-or-out system to push out their colleagues.

Undo the Harm We've Done to Ourselves

It is clear that the Foreign Service must focus on its ongoing difficulties and undo some of the harm it has done to itself. Here are a few ideas for doing so.

First, seriously slow down (if not eliminate) the forced retirement of mid-career and senior officers. This might be done by changing the rules, or indeed by changing the law.

Second, give the annual promotion boards—as well as supervisory officers writing the annual reports, both in Washington and at posts abroad—instructions to reward team effort. This means taking notice of those ready to improve their skills through training assignments and those who help to train more junior colleagues, rather than simply concentrating on those holding the most glamorous jobs.

The bottom line should be this: How well have they served the needs of the country, and done the particular jobs assigned to them in the Service, over several postings?

Third, let us also remember that before officers can learn to manage well, be they young prodigies or late bloomers, they must understand what will work in the world beyond America's borders. (That is, after all, the core requirement that qualifies people for the jobs of the Foreign

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We should cultivate greater respect for what every member of the Foreign Service is doing—and willingness to sacrifice personal ambitions for the common good.

Service, whatever their specialties.)

Toward that end, excellence in reporting, analysis and negotiation must be valued and rewarded just as much as managerial ability—for those, too, are special skills on which policymakers very often call.

Similarly, the skills and personalities required to provide consular services to foreigners, as well as American citizens abroad; manage development assistance to foreigners; assist American businessmen in their foreign dealings; or persuade foreigners of America's message are not necessarily the same as those needed to deal only with fellow Americans. Experienced diplomats in these jobs must also be supported and protected—not pushed out prematurely.

To sum up, what we should be seeking to cultivate is greater respect among diplomats for what their colleagues are doing—and a willingness to sacrifice one's own ambitions for the common good as needed. The Foreign Service cannot change human nature: misunderstandings and jealousies will continue to arise when individuals feel unfairly slighted. But the Service can instill the value of putting the common interest, and that of the country, above one's own ambition.

That should be the mark of a stronger Foreign Service: one that gains respect by effectiveness in doing its own, distinct job, yet is closer to the communal values of the military and other service professions that Americans, as well as citizens elsewhere in the world, admire.

Check out the Tax Guide in the January-February 2014 Issue!

Read about the latest federal and state tax provisions affecting the Foreign Service in the AFSA NEWS section of the *Journal.*

www.afsa.org/taxguide.aspx

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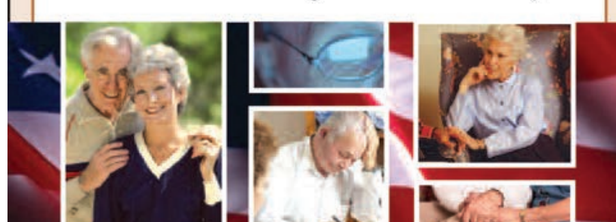

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A Practical Guide to International Divorce in the Foreign Service

BY ELIZABETH FITZSIMMONS AND RICHARD SEIPERT

Regardless of how common divorce is in the Foreign Service, when you go through it you feel like the first person who has ever tried to navigate the bureaucracy of the State Department.

Dissolving your marriage while simultaneously being an effective diplomat or specialist, taking care of your kids, writing employee evaluation reports or bidding, and processing the emotional effects of this massive life change (whether the divorce was your idea or not, it is a huge adjustment) can feel absolutely overwhelming. The experience can also be intensely lonely.

We both know, because we've been there. We had naively imagined there was some State Department affinity group for divorcing FSOs. Instead, we began to utilize our own Foreign Service networks. "I heard you served with someone who shares custody internationally. Can you send me their e-mail? Didn't your former boss go through a divorce trial in Virginia? Do you think I can call her?"

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But we survived to tell the tale, and promised ourselves in the darkest hours of our divorce sagas that when we got to the end of that long and bumpy road, we would pay it forward by sharing the lessons we learned the hard way. Our hope is that we can save colleagues from the mistakes, delays and hassles that were the unfortunate effects of wandering blind down the dark alley of Foreign Service divorce.

Still, right off the bat we want to offer the caveat that this article is no substitute for legal advice or consultation with a financial planner. We're not attorneys, and our advice may be wrong, so please don't sue us!

That said, we do believe our 10-step

Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, currently counselor for public affairs in Sofia, joined the Foreign Service in 1995. (At the time of her swearing-in, she was the youngest member of the Service.) She has served in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Cambodia, India and Washington, D.C. In 2009 the International Women's Forum named her a fellow, one of only 25 women in the world to be so honored. She is married to Diplomatic Security Special Agent Richard Seipert, and the two have five children.

Richard Seipert is currently serving as assistant regional security officer in Sofia. He joined the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in 2003, after a 13-year career in the U.S. Air Force, and has also served in Egypt, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Miami and Washington, D.C.

No matter how far away from retirement age you are, consult with the Retirement Office as soon as you begin the nitty-gritty of financial negotiations with your soon-to-be-former spouse.

guide can help smooth your path by offering some signposts about the issues unique to divorce in a profession where "home is where the State Department sends you."

Step 1: Realize that just like Foreign Service life, FS divorce is exponentially more complicated than "regular" divorce (whatever that is!). We don't say this to scare you, but to warn that you will face issues that most divorce lawyers and family court judges have never considered. These same lawyers and judges will make generalizations about our profession, and the countries where we serve, that may simply reflect ignorance or misinformation but are nonetheless shocking.

We had one family court judge say to us that "Bangkok wouldn't be a good assignment because your kids could get sold into the sex trade there." We're not disputing the existence of human trafficking issues in Southeast Asia, but I'm not aware that FS dependents are even remotely at risk. Yet this is the sort of "fact" that you will confront over and over again, and it takes lots of patience and diplomatic skill to educate those you will rely on in this process about the realities of overseas life.

Step 2: Prepare for life in the embassy fishbowl to feel even less private than it already does. Another hard truth, we know, but you need to be prepared. You will lose friends who view your personal situation as a professional liability, or worry your divorce is contagious. You will lose friends who don't want your child to be around their children. (This one is particularly heartbreaking, but we've seen it happen—and not just to us.)

But you will also discover that a few people—maybe some you never expected—will be steadfast friends, standing by you through it all. That is one of the bright spots of this process, which we also want to highlight.

Step 3: Get organized and do your research. Even if you think you and your divorcing spouse agree on everything, you are embarking on the most paperwork-heavy process you have ever been through. And if you do disagree, no detail is too small to document now to protect yourself later.

Start a file and a log like you are going to be reporting to the Executive Secretariat on a weekly basis. Once you get going in the "divorce process," you will be asked to recall details of your financial situation, your children's school records and your Thrift Savings Plan balance that you can't possibly imagine now.

If you have a good system for keeping track of everything as you discuss it, your life will be much easier when you need to supply information to your lawyers, your former spouse or (worst-case scenario) the court. You should also be in regular contact with the Family Liaison Office; get their divorce handbook for a start, and read every page like your life depends on it. (Because to a certain degree, it does.)

Trust us: There are considerations in FS divorce that you can't foresee, and you need experts on your side. And that leads us to:

Step 4: Lawyer up! Even if your divorce is proceeding without a hiccup right now, and you are envisioning a peaceful post-divorce friendship a la Demi and Bruce, at some point things will take a turn for the worse. This process is just so complicated that even if you can discuss it all civilly with your former spouse, there are considerations you can't know about unless you are a former family law attorney (in which case you should put this article down and go do something fun!).

For example, the judge in our divorce was unable to issue the decree at the conclusion of the trial because Virginia law requires proof you have been living separate and apart from the spouse you are divorcing for one year from the date of separation before the divorce can be granted. This requires either testimony in the U.S. court or an affidavit from another adult living in your residence—not items most of us can readily provide from an overseas environment.

Do your research on lawyers. Just because someone says they "know about the Foreign Service" doesn't mean they really do. We are still dealing with the fallout from an ill-informed attorney who did not include the State Department-required language in our property settlement on retirement payments. And this was someone from the FLO list! So be sure to get some references from actual FS folks they have represented.

Step 5: Clear your schedule. If you can possibly avoid bidding on it, this isn't the time to take that 90-hour a week "dream" job. Getting divorced will be like a 40-hour-a-week job in itself. We managed to do this in a very busy embassy, thanks to the practical and emotional support of colleagues and a tremendous supervisor, but you can't count on that. So minimize as many external pressures as you can.

Step 6: Get your team briefed up and loop in your human resources office right away. You and your estranged spouse both have rights and responsibilities in this process, and you need to know what those are. The State Department may pay for things (like a shipment from post for the departing spouse and plane tickets) that you won't think of right away, but that will take tremendous logistical hassles off your plate. Your HR office should have someone who is an expert on FS divorce; if they don't, they'll be able to reach back to Main State and get the answers for you.

Step 7: Think long-term (as in retirement). It sounds crazy, we know, since you may be decades from leaving the work force, but you need to consult the Retirement Office as soon as you begin the nitty-gritty of financial negotiations with your soon-to-be-former spouse.

State's basic perspective is that your former spouse is entitled to half of your pension and a full share of your survivor's benefits unless and until he or she expressly waives that right and that waiver is accepted by the relevant team in the Retirement Office. You should also make sure to change the beneficiary designations on all of your accounts (Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, etc.), but none of those steps by itself is sufficient

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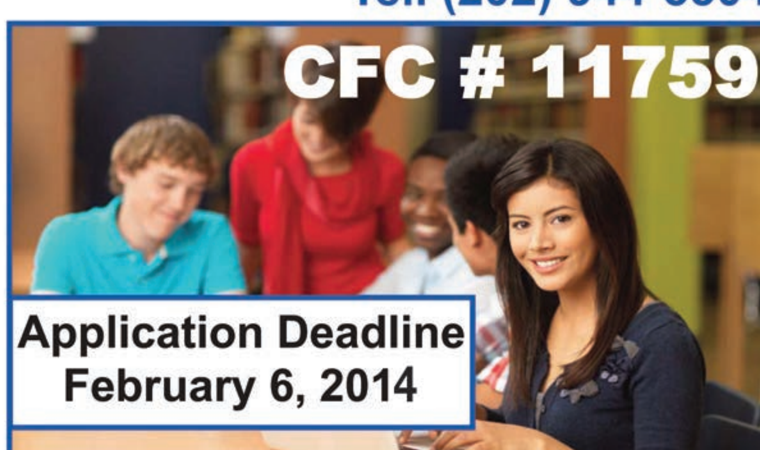

American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)

As more FS families stay overseas during and after divorce, it becomes even more vital to get your kids all the resources their school can muster.

to cover your retirement benefits. So consult early with the retirement team in the Bureau of Human Resources.

This, too, is a lesson we learned the hard way. So learn from our mistakes and make sure to e-mail the divorce decree to the folks in Retirement when you begin the discussion of a property settlement, to ensure that your final divorce decree is acceptable to them. They will then issue you a determination letter, making that one fewer thing to worry about when you finally leave federal service.

Step 8: Don't wait. It doesn't get easier. We mean this in both the macro sense (the issues that are leading you to the decision to divorce won't miraculously disappear at the next post) and from a practical perspective. If you think it is hard to agree now, just wait until you can no longer rely on the legal bond of marriage to get you to a consensus.

You may be tempted to put off some decisions, since you will face so many complicated issues in so short a time, but we urge you to confront and resolve everything possible during the divorce. We know it seems easier to say, "Well, we're not living in the house in Arlington now, so he can sell it later and get me off the mortgage then." But let us assure you that you'll regret not sorting that out now.

Even if your divorce decree mandates a time by which the house must be sold, that verbiage is pretty toothless without a court date, and with any luck you'll be on to a whole new (happier) chapter by the time that deadline arrives. The last thing you'll want to do then is to revisit this issue. So resolve whatever the outstanding issue is now so that you can both close this chapter and move on.

Step 9: Bring school(s) into the loop. You should let your children's teachers and the school administration know as soon as possible about the massive seismic shift that is coming in your kids' lives. They can offer support, counseling for kids who need a safe place to process their feelings, and a sense of normalcy for family members who may not feel it anywhere else.

This isn't always an easy thing to talk about. One school in a city with a large expat community told us it had never had a case where the kids stayed at post after a divorce. But despite a lack of familiarity with the process, that school really stepped up for us, as I think most responsible teachers and administrators will do. And as more families stay overseas during and after divorce, it will become even more vital to get your kids all the resources their school can muster.

You should also consider looping in the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Children's Issues if you think disagreements with your estranged spouse put your children at risk of parental child abduction. CA can assist with a hold on passport applications for your child while you get a court order detailing custody, which is a huge weight off your shoulders.

Step 10: Believe that the end is in sight and that it will all be OK. This is the hardest part. One of us took more than three years to reach agreement on a framework for sharing custody internationally, and there were times when we literally thought we'd be embroiled in the divorce struggle forever. But it will end, you will move on, and your kids will be fine—and so will you.

Like so many things in life, if we knew then what we know now, we would have had faith. So I hope we can pay it forward now by offering some reassurance. We are happily remarried, as is one of our former spouses, and the other is happily pursuing the career of their dreams.

As we told ourselves in our darkest hours, "everyone will be happier eventually," and that has turned out to be truer than we ever realized. Our kids look at this as another variation of the "third culture kid" life that was already familiar, and they are thriving, despite our worst fears.

We wish each of you luck, and whatever peace you can find in an inherently stressful process, and extend our hope that the future will be better and happier for everyone involved.

Feel free to e-mail us with questions, and we'll do our best to answer them and give you our informal "divorce advice" (FitzsimmonsEN@state.gov and SeipertRR@state.gov). ■

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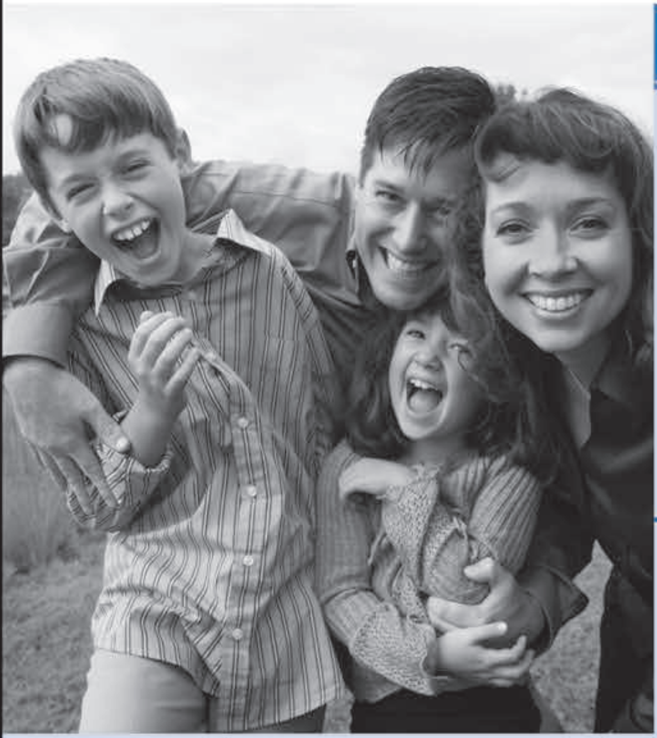

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THE ISLAND HOPPER

A classic diplomatic courier mission across the Pacific recalls the history of World War II.

BY JAMES B. ANGELL

Jeff Lau

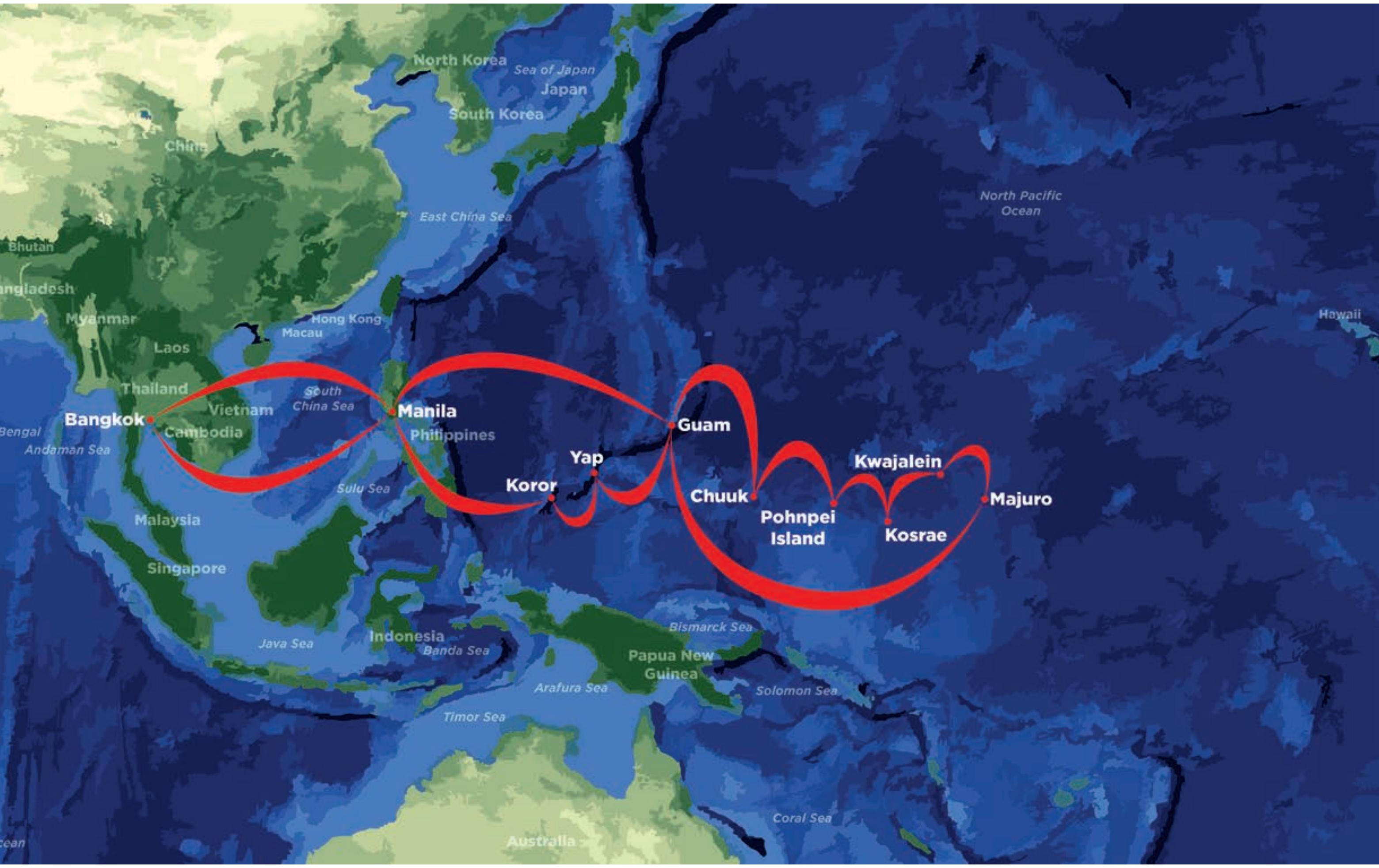
en.wikigogo.org

Pohnpei Island's Nan Madol archaeological site, shown here, was home to the Saudeleur Dynasty from 1100 to 1600. During World War II, Japanese defenses on the island were so strong that the U.S. chose to drop 118 tons of bombs on it rather than invade.

One of the classic diplomatic courier missions is the Bangkok Regional Diplomatic Courier Division's "Island Hopper," a 10,000-mile round trip that stretches across the planet from Bangkok to Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands on the International Date Line, and back. It is also a mission that encompasses much of the Pacific theater of World War II.

Setting up the logistics for such a trip takes days of work weeks ahead of time, with a detailed cable sent to multiple personnel, at both State and Defense and at six U.S. missions

James B. Angell, a diplomatic courier officer, is the director of the Bangkok Regional Diplomatic Courier Division (where he has served twice previously). Since joining the Foreign Service in 1993, he has served twice in Frankfurt, and once each in Seoul and Washington, D.C. The views expressed in this article are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. government.



stretching across the Pacific. The inbound classified diplomatic pouch information for each post is confirmed in the cable, and posts are requested to inform the Bangkok office of their classified dispatch to ensure efficient scheduling. Once all U.S. entities have been informed, the mission can proceed.

Getting the classified pouches planeside without being X-rayed is not an issue in Bangkok, as our relationship with Thai Customs & Immigration couldn't be better. The cleared American escort takes the material directly onto the tarmac while I process through the terminal like any other passenger, paying for the excess diplomatic pouch weight before arriving at the gate.

With the assistance of Thai Air staff and an airport badge, it's routine to descend to the tarmac to meet the escort planeside for a piece count and to observe the diplomatic pouches being loaded into the aircraft. With the escort securing the hold, I'm free to board the aircraft via the air bridge.

East to Manila

Taking off to the south from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport with a belly load of classified diplomatic pouches, the flight soars over Samut Prakan. It was there, on Dec. 8, 1941, that the 3rd Battalion of the Japanese Imperial Guards Regiment came ashore with orders to take Bangkok. But after a tense standoff with a Thai Police detachment, they agreed to wait for formal negotiations to conclude before fighting their way to the capital. There were five other Japanese landing sites further south along the Gulf of Thailand that morning, and many confrontations with Thai resistance resulted in casualties on both sides.

The invasion was all part of the larger Japanese strategy of quickly seizing the Malay Peninsula, Singapore and Burma from the British. On Dec. 21 of that year, a formal alliance was signed between Bangkok and Tokyo allowing Japan access to Thailand's infrastructure to launch cross-border attacks. On Jan. 25, 1942, Thailand's Field Marshall Phibun formally declared war against the United States and Britain.

Interestingly, Thailand's ambassador to the United States, Seni Promoj, not only refused to deliver Field Marshall Phibun's declaration of war to the State Department, but began to organize the Free Thai (Seri Thai) movement (in cooperation with the Office of Strategic Services) that helped liberate the country three years later.

Three hours after departing Thailand, my flight begins

A favorite contemporary image of Guam is the Japanese pillbox under towering hotels on Tumon Beach.

Jiro Waters

This Japanese gun emplacement on Tumon Beach in Guam is a World War II relic.

its descent over the entrance to Manila Bay, directly above Corregidor, scene of one of the most humiliating surrenders in American history. To the north is the Bataan Peninsula, crowned by the craggy 4,554-foot Mariveles Volcano that towers over Corregidor. Looking south out of the right window, one sees Cavite province, where the Japanese began their bombardment of U.S. forces on the island on Feb. 8, 1942.

During the final approach into Manila, I can clearly see the World War II American Military Cemetery, a circular 152-acre park containing 36,285 American dead, one of our largest overseas military graveyards. Most of the casualties occurred during the New Guinea, Philippine, China, Burma and India campaigns.

Corregidor fell on May 6, 1942, after Lt. General Wainwright's radio message to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared: "There is a limit of human endurance, and that point has been long passed." Through the invasion of the Philippines, the Japanese were able to isolate the archipelago from resupply and gain important airfields for operational thrusts throughout the Pacific.

On to Guam

After an exchange of classified diplomatic pouches with embassy personnel on the tarmac at Manila's Ninoy Aquino Airport, a complex change of aircraft for the subsequent journey to Guam takes place. As a result of increased security at airports worldwide, signing for classified material, changing airlines, paying excess baggage and moving the diplomatic pouches from one plane to another are never easy. Only Embassy Manila's excellent support at the airport makes this transit possible.

Three hours later, on the approach into Guam, I can see the sawgrass hills of the island fringed by reefs in a single glance. Because Guam is American territory, the security at the airport is tighter than elsewhere in the region. The diplomatic courier is not allowed to descend planeside at Won Pat International Airport to retrieve our classified material, so a second courier is sent from Bangkok ahead of time to act as a cleared escort.

Merely securing an airport badge ahead of time isn't enough to access the tarmac, however; the escort has to be joined by a U.S. Transportation Security Administration employee planeside. After a successful exchange of classified diplomatic pouches with another government agency, the remaining material is driven 30 minutes north to Andersen Air Base for secure overnight storage along a flight line crowded with B-52s. The interagency cooperation between the Diplomatic Courier Service and the U.S. Air Force on Guam is seamless.

The Americans' Operation Hailstone destroyed 249 aircraft and sank 12 warships and 32 merchant ships, turning Chuuk Lagoon into the largest graveyard of ships in the world.

A favorite contemporary image of Guam is the Japanese pillbox under towering hotels on Tumon Beach. Japanese tourists are the dominant economic force on the island today. The irony of them lounging on the beach around this World War II relic belies the fierce fight their countrymen put up against returning American forces. Numerous former machine-gun emplacements chiseled from coral can still be found along the jungle beaches north of Tumon, perfectly positioned to rake the shore approaches of an invading force. But the Americans didn't strike here, but further south at Asan Beach in 1944, in what is now the War in the Pacific National Park, the westernmost Department of Interior monument.

I spend a day off on Guam exploring Japanese gun emplacements buried deep in bamboo thickets and visiting the isolated Talafofo River Valley, where Sgt. Soichi Yokoi lived hidden for 28 years. When discovered in 1972, he had exclaimed: "We Japanese soldiers were told to prefer death to the disgrace of being captured alive."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The wreck of the Japanese submarine *Shinohara* in Chuuk Lagoon. This sub was part of the fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The Real Thing

The Island Hopper mission truly begins, however, on the spectacular flight from Guam into Chuuk (Truk), the first stop on the United Airlines 737 route that services five islands on the way to Hawaii. After Chuuk comes Pohnpei Island, Kosrae, Kwajalein and then Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands.

Chuuk is one of the largest atolls in the world, with a protective reef 140 miles around. Since there is no U.S. mission there, I remain planeside for an hour to guard the classified pouches in the hold. This is ample time to soak in the scenery and contemplate the history of this remote locale.

Initially part of the Spanish Empire, the Caroline Islands became German after the Spanish-American War. They were then ceded to Japan by the League of Nations' South Pacific Mandate after the defeat of Germany in World War I. Known as the Gibraltar of the Pacific, Chuuk was the Empire of Japan's main base in the South Pacific. Its garrison consisted of 50,000 Japanese military personnel with the lagoon harboring most of its Pacific fleet.

In 1944, the Americans' Operation Hailstone, launched from the recently invaded Marshall Islands 1,500 miles to the east, became one of the most effective airstrikes of the war. It destroyed 249 aircraft and sank 12 warships and 32 merchant ships, turning Chuuk Lagoon into the largest graveyard of ships in the world. In the poetic justice category, it is interesting to note that one of the relics in the lagoon is the submarine *Shinohara*, part of the fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor, which was hit when it attempted a dive to avoid attack.

After takeoff from Chuuk, with spectacular views of the reef and islands, an hourlong hop to Pohnpei Island, for an exchange of classified diplomatic pouches with the small embassy in Kolonia, is next. Even though the capital of the Federated States of Micronesia is now in the town of Palikir, just down the road to the southwest, most embassies remain in Kolonia. Because the Japanese had built up their defenses on the island so thoroughly during their rule, the Americans chose to drop 118 tons of bombs on this stronghold rather

With Majuro's capture, the United States gained one of the largest anchorages in the Pacific.


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Majuro, Marshall Islands. When U.S. forces invaded on Jan. 30, 1944, they found that the Japanese already evacuated to Kwajalein.

than invade it. Even though Pohnpei was bypassed during the amphibious campaign, remnants of the bombing campaign are littered throughout the island.

On takeoff from Pohnpei, I get a glimpse of the archaeological site of Nan Madol, home of the Saudeleur Dynasty from 1100 to 1600, in the distance along the eastern side of the island. This site is composed of megalithic structures and funerary sites. It is said the founders of this dynasty came from afar and looked nothing like the native people; but they did set up an organized government, unifying Pohnpeians for the first time.

In the Marshall Islands

After a day of island hopping from Guam, the flight finally touches down on the 50-yard-wide airstrip on the 30-mile-long atoll in Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands. As the aircraft taxis to the quaint terminal, I see lagoon out one window and surf out the other. It's a fairly casual arrival in keeping with the relaxed nature of the islands.

The cleared embassy escort meets me planeside and takes me immediately to the chancery. The embassy is small enough that the ambassador or deputy chief of mission typically drops by for a chat during the sign-over of classified pouches.

On Jan. 30, 1944, when U.S. forces invaded, they discovered that the Japanese, who had managed the island since 1922, had already evacuated to Kwajalein. With Majuro's capture, the United States gained one of the largest anchorages in the Pacific. It became one of the busiest ports in the world until the action moved further west during the latter part of the war.

After spending 47 days adrift when his bomber crashed in the South Pacific, bombardier Louis Zamperini (the focus of a best-selling novel, *Unbroken*) was captured by the Japanese off the Marshall Islands' seaplane base of Wotje in June 1943. He was then moved to Kwajalein as a prisoner of war before being transferred to the POW camp in Ofuna, Japan, by ship via Chuuk, a few months later. The nearly seven weeks Zamperini spent floating in the Pacific surrounded by sharks and the subsequent six weeks of imprisonment on Kwajalein were halcyon days compared with what awaited him on the Japanese mainland.

After a restful night on Majuro under a blizzard of stars, it's time to head to the embassy to pick up the post's outbound shipment. The flight, which arrives from Honolulu, retraces the previous day's route back to Guam. Another long day of island hopping concludes with a drive to Andersen Air Base for storage and an overnight in Guam. Early the following morning, all regional outbound classified diplomatic pouches are consolidated and dispatched to Manila via Yap and Koror.

The Republic of Palau

The Manila flight continues southwest from Yap toward Koror, part of the Republic of Palau, the westernmost cluster of Caroline Islands. All these islands, including Yap, were also part of the League of Nations Mandate that granted control to the Japanese after World War I.

Koror itself, where the embassy is located, is currently staffed by an ambassador and a few officers. It was not directly

In January 1945, when American and Philippine forces attempted to recapture Manila, they drove the retreating Japanese troops into the walled city and shelled it.

involved in World War II hostilities, but the battle for the nearby island of Peleliu is still remembered as one of the bloodiest of the Pacific campaign. Operation Stalemate II finally ended in the autumn of 1944 after 2,000 Americans and 10,000 Japanese were killed.

An airport exchange of classified diplomatic pouches occurs here with an embassy escort. An hour later the plane is taxiing for a takeoff over the spectacular Rock Islands, shaped like mushrooms rising from turquoise waters.

After a few hours in the air, we fly past the perfect cone of the Mayon Volcano (8,081 feet) and over the Leyte Gulf, scene of the largest naval battle in modern history. In October 1944, this was the site of General Douglas MacArthur's famous "I have returned" speech to the Philippine people. The Battle of Leyte Gulf pitted 212 Allied ships against the remnants of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The victory there eventually paved the way for American and Philippine troops to recapture the Bataan Peninsula on Feb. 17, 1945.

en.wikigogo.org

Intramuros in Manila, as it looked in January 1945.

In Manila, I secure the regional classified material overnight in the embassy vault, and proceed to explore the disheveled seafront and Intramuros District, the original walled Spanish settlement built in 1571.

In January 1945, when American and Philippine forces attempted to recapture Manila, they drove the retreating Japanese troops into the walled city and shelled it, killing 16,000 soldiers. The infamous Manila Massacre, committed by Imperial Japanese Army troops while surrounded by U.S. and Philippine forces, killed some 100,000 Filipinos—10 percent of the city's population at the time.

The next morning it's important that I arrive at the airport early. Embassy Manila always has a large outbound classified load, and traffic is notoriously bad. The diplomatic courier escort in Manila always does an excellent job of getting the pouches planeside through a remote customs gate. I process through the terminal like a regular passenger, before being escorted onto the tarmac to observe their loading by the Thai ground agent.

Following wheels-up, the flight soars west over Corregidor. En route to Bangkok above the South China Sea, we pass over Scarborough Shoal and the Paracel Islands—two contentious island groups currently being claimed by the Chinese, much to the displeasure of the Philippines and Vietnam.

On arrival in Bangkok, the entire classified load of diplomatic pouches is securely transferred from Suvarnabhumi Airport to the embassy's classified vault, where it is prepared for dispatch aboard the weekly department trunk line to Seoul and Washington.

The Island Hopper is a classic Diplomatic Courier Service trip, as well as an education in the history of the Western Pacific during World War II. ■

FEATURE

RETHINKING THE ROLE OF 'MADAM': KAFALA AND THE U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE

What makes the kafala system so morally unsettling is the way it exploits vulnerable populations while claiming to be a benign safety net for them.

BY LAURA MERZIG FABRYCKY

I am the spouse of a Foreign Service officer and the mother of two young daughters. During our recent tours in Qatar and Jordan, our family employed women to work in our home, which enabled me to volunteer and work part time outside of our home. They kept our apartment clean and tidy and, most importantly, they cared lovingly for our children.

Their presence in our home, like our embassy-issued furniture, was also utterly ordinary. Employing domestic workers—nannies, housekeepers, cooks or gardeners—during an overseas posting in the Middle East (and elsewhere) is common for Foreign Service families. Even our previous embassy's Community Liaison Office handbook speaks of domestic help as "one of the perks of living abroad."

In the Middle East, this "attractive" domestic-employee relationship is part of the larger kafala system for non-immigrant workers from other countries. From what I observed, it is a system in which the laws governing how domestic employees are treated are deliberately weak and their enforcement universally pathetic. The result is a morally suspect arrangement in which thousands of mostly South and Southeast Asian "guest workers" are trapped.

The culture of kafala horrifies me, but during our years in the Middle East, I also came to see myself as a full participant in it. I am writing about that personal dilemma in the hope of spurring a conversation within the Foreign Service community that might lead to more constructive, sustained moral reflection and action among other Americans and expatriates on this topic.

Laura Merzig Fabrycky is a Foreign Service spouse. She has resided in Doha, Qatar and Amman, where she worked as a part-time Eligible Family Member. The views expressed here are the author's alone.

How I Understand Kafala

Kafala, the Arabic word for sponsorship, is the legal system by which many Middle Eastern countries, in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere, permit entry to non-immigrant laborers—typically from India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka or Indonesia. Through a

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complex series of multinational arrangements, recruiting agencies "import" these individuals to work in the booming construction industry (usually men) or in households (usually women). The agencies assign each guest worker to a local sponsor, to whom he or she is legally bound until that sponsor chooses to release them.

In fact, almost all expatriates who work for national companies in the region, including Arabs, Europeans and Americans, have a place within the kafala system, as well. An American executive working for a Qatari company is sponsored by that company. But the qualitative circumstances of sponsorship usually fall sharply along ethnic and socioeconomic lines, and its darker aspects affect poorer South Asian workers hardest.

What makes kafala so morally complicated is the way it keeps vulnerable populations controllable, even as it publicly purports to serve as a benignly paternalistic safety net for workers and their employers. The guest worker's legal status is dependent on his or her sponsor, who according to laws and guidelines is required to provide paid medical care, room and board, and in some cases phone calls and periodic trips back to the home country. A domestic guest worker is something of a non-family member of household—in theory.

Domestic work for a Filipina, or a Sri Lankan or Indonesian woman may resemble indentured servitude, if not imprisonment.

In practice, however, the system favors the powerful. Not only are the laws governing it routinely disregarded; but also, since there is no real market competition for employees and they enter the country with few meaningful legal rights or freedoms, they are without recourse when problems arise. Even if one argues that kafala is not technically slavery, the institution permits the development of all kinds of slave-like situations.

Indeed, "running away" from one's sponsor is often the only real form of escape from terrible working conditions. And there are plenty of runaways who then live in legal limbo, lacking passports and local documentation because their sponsors have taken the documents from them, a widely practiced contravention of the laws.

The treatment of domestic workers usually falls far short of any legal norms issued by their countries of residence. The acceptable range of pay varies widely, as do normal working hours. Some employers refuse to let their domestic workers leave the home without permission, imprisoning them inside; and many deny their employees use of a phone. It takes little imagination to appreciate the kinds of abuse women who are so thoroughly hidden from society may experience. Domestic work for a Filipina, or a Sri Lankan or Indonesian woman may resemble indentured servitude, if not imprisonment.

Domestic workers try to find work in households where there are stronger cultural expectations for basic human rights, usually among Western expatriates. Often these arrangements can be quite beneficial, where remuneration for work is relatively above market price, with days off, sick-day compensation, and so forth. But a far larger swath of guest workers toil in homes or factories where conditions are abusive, unjust, isolating and unrelenting, and where the employee has no remedy.

My Place in the System

During our tour in Qatar, we employed a Filipina (I'll call her "Lola") to work in our home. I had serious reservations about sponsoring and employing her, but mostly because I was squeamish about losing our family's privacy and because I felt that hiring a domestic employee violated my American work ethic. (I still think cleaning one's own toilet is good for the soul.)

But with my husband's long work hours, the long list of housekeeping tasks in the large house assigned to us, and trying to care for a toddler and a nursing newborn, an "extra pair of hands around the house" eventually came to sound like a good idea. After all, having some kind of household help was part of the cultural fabric of Doha, as well as within the American embassy community.

Lola's original American sponsor/employer had been abruptly fired by his Qatari company when he was traveling outside of the country. Because his legal rights in Qatar were nullified overnight, so were hers. If she did not find a new sponsor or host quickly, she would face deportation to the Philippines. Worse, she still owed significant debts to the agency that had arranged her passage to Qatar, and there were financial pressures back in the Philippines, too. She contacted us to see if we could help, and we agreed to hire her.

My husband worked through the process of securing her "release" from her previous American employer, and we helped her get settled into the maid's quarters of our house. A closet at best, it at least granted her (and us) some real privacy, with a separate entrance and exit, a private bathroom and a door that Lola could lock to keep us out.

Shortly after Lola came to work for us as a "live-in," it dawned on me that our new arrangement was one with which I had only a literary acquaintance. Since I had been raised in a typical middle-class American family—no "help" whatsoever—having a live-in housekeeper was more the stuff of an evening BBC drama on PBS than real life for me. Along with "Mommy" and "Daddy," I was now called "Madam" and my husband "Sir." (Even when I insisted she call me by my name, in a naive attempt to relax the palpable power dynamics, she could never bring herself to do so.)

And I began to understand that, as Caitlin Flanagan aptly put it in her 2007 book, *To Hell with All That: Loving and Loathing Our Inner Housewife:* "My relationship with [my domestic employee] would turn out to be the most legally, morally and emotionally complicated one of my life."

Life as 'Madam'

Lola and I eventually arrived at a workable rhythm to our shared existence, but I found my role in the home harder to justify with her able presence. Odd sensations of territoriality welled up in me at times, even as I was enormously grateful for her help keeping the miles of tile in our home clean—no small feat in the

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The same arguments were once used to justify the American enslavement of Africans: "They're so much better off than where they came from."

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dusty desert of Doha. Lola eased the small frustrations of my life. My very young children came to love her, which I also grew to see as an inevitable, if strangely cosmopolitan good.

During that year Lola and I talked a great deal, sharing stories about our lives. I learned more about the dynamics that actually brought her to the Middle East, besides grinding poverty. Her family situation was incredibly complicated, and while she was in Qatar to earn money for her children, her being there also relieved some personal burdens. We talked about her children, but she also shared stories of friends and acquaintances caught in tragic employment situations—disgusting stories of frequent sexual molestation, and verbal and physical abuse. (These narratives are depressingly common among domestic workers, as are stories of female domestic employees "falling" from upper story windows.)

"There are only two kinds of people I'll work for," Lola once told me thoughtfully, "the Americans and the Danes. They are the only ones who treat their nannies well." I was glad that she felt happy in our family, and I loved that she felt I was doing right by her. But was I? While it benefited her that I was a firm believer in inalienable human rights, I cannot claim to have materially advanced her situation toward greater acquisition of those rights.

The horrific stories we hear from nannies about their compatriots living in difficult households or that are written up in the newspaper enrage us. But I think they also assuage our moral burdens by making the other dehumanizing aspects of kafala pale by comparison.

Lola and her distant children were dependent on our family's good graces to pay her regularly, treat her fairly and honor our commitments in her contract with us. Yet we could have just as easily denied her basic human and labor rights—and no one would have known, or acted to stop us if they had. In fact, kafala culture looks down on those who are too "soft" toward their employees.

In Jordan, we sponsored two domestic workers at different times. The first, Jennie, was also from the Philippines, and dutifully sent money back to support her mother, brothers and sisters, and their families. She started working full-time at age 12 in a clothing factory—"nice clothes; Gap, that kind of stuff, Madam"—where she earned pennies for her labor. Her widowed mother could not support her six children with her own meager earnings. Already accustomed to hard work, Jennie came to Jordan because she wanted to do more for her family. In Amman, she became active in a local church of guest workers. Through these relationships, she found friendship, wisdom and support.

Each pay period, Jennie sent money home, but her older siblings actually dictated how the funds were dispersed. Jennie admitted once that she knew her older brothers often squandered the money, and that it did not reach her mother: “The last time I was in the Philippines, I tried to teach my mother how to sign her name so she could get the money. But she is illiterate, Madam. She has worked so hard all her life. But she knows almost nothing of the money I send home.”

What Now?

Over the years, I became more accustomed to the murky moral complexity of kafala, as well as to the tired arguments trotted out to support it. The same arguments were once used to justify the American enslavement of Africans; for example, “Their lives are so much better off here than where they are from.”

Life is simply hard—cradle to grave—for most of these workers. For the women, the money they earn is often no more theirs than before they earned it. They face strong pressure from agencies and family members who rely on their remittances, as do the governments of their home countries, whose economies are not keeping pace with ever-increasing populations.

The women also may be misled about the life of a domestic worker in the Middle East, believing that some of the Middle East’s reportedly gold-paved streets might become a path of wealth for them, as well. But the migration laws of kafala and the seething poverty of their countries of origin leave them with few good options.

Kafala’s notoriously ignoble margins should be treated as a front in the battle against global human trafficking, one of the most pressing international issues of our time. Thinking about it in those terms may be uncomfortable, perhaps because so many of us are entangled in it even though we hardly think of ourselves as being actively involved in human trafficking. I’ve become more convinced, however, that those margins matter.

After researching and witnessing the fallout from kafala, one Foreign Service officer I talked to while preparing this essay said that, as a form of resistance to the entire system, she refuses to employ any domestic worker. Another officer said that employing another person to clean your house under sponsorship laws is “un-American.” I respect these positions, and I wonder how many others in the Foreign Service have taken that kind of bold stand against kafala.

Beyond the Wilberforce laws, we can be agents of change to combat the cultural indifference and violence toward domestic employees in the kafala system.

Yet another person I talked to for this article—a local doctor who has seen firsthand some of the abuse these women endure—argued in the opposite direction: "These women will keep coming even if every caring expatriate refused to employ them as an act of rebellion against the current system. And they would be much, much worse off. They are driven here by poverty, and they are trapped here by debt and the prevailing culture. I think if you have a commitment to human rights and labor rights, you should embrace the moral burden to sponsor and employ someone."

We have helped each of the women we've employed pay off back debts and secure actual, legal documentation, when their numerous previous employers had flouted or even manipulated their own countries' labor laws to extort money from these domestic employees and keep them in bondage. But again, that kind of help only seems to enable a culture and a legal system that beg for fundamental change.

Real Change

The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 outlines the many forms of modern slavery and workplace abuse and the American government's commitment to combating it. The act governs U.S. personnel's involvement in domestic employment abroad, but its bite stops at the borders of the embassy community's bubble.

In truth, the U.S. government does little to enforce its provisions beyond issuing an annual management notice to warn employees of consequences. (I would welcome examples of enforcement, if they exist; we all know FSOs or their family members who treat their domestic employees like dirt.)

Real change in the region will only take place when those of us involved in the system work harder to spark the moral imagination of our friends, our children's classmates' families and wider circles outside the bubble.

When we find ourselves or others talking about domestic employees like chattel—"I ordered her from the Philippines," or, "I was so mad at my idiot nanny that I could have punched her" (just two of many statements I overheard from otherwise well-to-do, relatively Western sponsors)—we are not simply dehumanizing these human beings; we are also dehumanizing ourselves. It's shameful—not classy—to talk about or treat a domestic employee as if she were a dog in the room, unable to understand what is being said about her.

We need more conversations across the region to pool our collective moral reasoning for the good. I'd recommend exploring the work of scholars who have delved more deeply into this subject. For a start, try Andrew Gardner's *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain* (ILR Press, 2010) or "Of Maids and Madams: Sri Lankan Domestic Workers and Their Employers in Jordan" (*Critical Asian Studies* 40.4, 2008) by Elizabeth Frantz, an anthropologist to whom I'm particularly indebted for help in thinking through these questions.

Kwame Anthony Appiah's *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) is another essential resource, and I'd also recommend the work of Amnesty International on the treatment of migrant workers in the Persian Gulf region.

Until recently, I was relatively uninformed about and inattentive to migrant labor laws in the United States. But now that I've been a participant in the kafala system, I am more alert to immigration and "guest worker" issues here, too. I'm coming to see that the moral task of any decent government is to craft and enforce laws that permit labor to flow, as it inevitably will, in a way that also promotes just, livable working contexts for employers and employees alike.

Beyond the Wilberforce laws, we can be agents of change to combat the cultural indifference and violence toward domestic employees in the system. We can watch for signs of abuse and mistreatment among the maids and nannies we see regularly. And we can volunteer at domestic employee safe houses throughout the region, donating clothing, food and legal expertise to the most vulnerable. At the very least, we can be honest stewards of their stories as witnesses to a wider world.

I want to respectfully employ the women who care for our children, wash our dishes, fold our clothes and facilitate our busy lives. I believe that others in the expatriate community want that, too. Together, perhaps, we could help to create some meaningful moral and cultural resistance to the soft form of slavery that kafala embodies. ■

FEATURE

THE USES OF HISTORY: LESSONS FROM A GEORGETOWN CLASSROOM

Whenever proponents of a policy cite a historical analogy as their main justification, listeners should beware.

BY DAVID GALBRAITH

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once said, "Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner." My students at Georgetown University and I certainly learned together this past semester, but that did not surprise me. What I was *not* expecting was how applicable what I learned in the classroom is to being in the Foreign Service.

I had the good fortune to spend the 2012-2013 academic year as a Rusk Fellow at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. The highlight of my fellowship was developing and teaching an undergraduate seminar on U.S. policymaking in response to the Arab Spring.

I conducted the course from a practitioner's perspective, but sought to develop more general lessons from the specific issues at hand. (I think I succeeded, at least at the macro level. One student, following a simulation of a National Security Council meeting on Syria, exclaimed: "That was a great exercise. I never realized policymaking was so f------ hard!")

One of the central questions we considered in the course was when the United States should use force, with Libya and Syria as case studies. On the surface, there are many similarities. Both countries were run by unfriendly dictators, and threatened by humanitarian catastrophes (which have come to pass in one). But I also sought to tease out the many differences between the two, exploring why President Barack Obama chose to intervene militarily in Libya but not (at least directly) in Syria.

The students did an excellent job of identifying these contrasts, ranging from terrain and demography to geopolitical complexity and the nature of the regime. Historical analogies frequently came up in the conversation: Rwanda, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. But I didn't let the class dwell on them.

For their final papers, I asked the students to write a memo

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My students were far from alone in resorting to historical analogies to justify preferred policies.

advocating for a course of action—different in some way from current U.S. policy—on an issue of their choice related to the Arab Spring. Syria, drone policy in Yemen and assistance to Egypt were the most popular topics.

Any Analogy Will Do

Those writing about Syria universally advocated U.S. military involvement, whether through providing weapons and training to opposition fighters (using U.S. military advisers), imposing a no-fly zone or supporting a NATO-led ground intervention. What struck me most about these papers were their uses of history and analogy. One cited Kosovo as a precedent, and another raised the U.S. experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan—only to dismiss their relevance to Syria.

It seemed to me that my students picked (or interpreted) an analogy to fit the position they had decided on, rather than taking a broader view of history to inform their decision-making process. Rather than probing deeply into similarities and differences, they reached quick conclusions. A NATO intervention worked in Kosovo, so it could in Syria. Conversely, U.S. failures in Iraq and Afghanistan need not occur in Syria, given the many dissimilarities.

I quickly recognized that my students were far from alone in using historical analogies to justify preferred policies. At a seminar on Bahrain on Capitol Hill, one panelist argued that it was natural for the Bahraini government to crack down on protesters. After all, he observed, other governments do the same when significant portions of the population rise up—look at Kent State in 1970. (No, I'm not kidding!)

The panelist beside him flinched. When asked subsequently to explain her objections, she invoked the American Revolution—for reasons that remain unclear to me—as a counter-analogy to argue against crackdowns.

To go back to Syria, consider the op-ed by Turkish political scientist Soner Cagaptay and former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James Jeffrey in the May 17 *New York Times*. They argue for arming the rebels or imposing a no-fly zone, pointing to Bosnia and Kosovo as "proving the value of American leadership." Or take the campaign by Senator John McCain, R-Ariz., invoking his service in the Vietnam War, to urge Washington to impose a no-fly zone and undertake other military actions beyond the current policy of furnishing light weapons to the opposition: "I've been in conflicts where there was gradual escalation, and that approach doesn't win."

Whether the arguments cited above are right is not the point. There's no doubt history can be a useful tool in developing and defending one's position. Sen. McCain, Amb. Jeffrey and others are right to draw on their extensive experience and historical knowledge. But a quick reference to historical-analogy-as-justification should prompt listeners to raise their antennae. Such rhetoric is seductive, for it says: "Trust me; I've learned the lessons of the past."

An analogy isn't necessarily a bad starting point, of course. But how is Kosovo like Syria? How isn't it? What are the problems each situation presented to the United States? Are the regional and domestic contexts similar or different? And how do the key countries and leaders involved see the situation?

It is easy to cite an analogy to justify one's position. But as my Georgetown student so succinctly put it following our simulation, assessing a foreign policy challenge is much harder.

For the most difficult problems in foreign policy, asking the right questions rarely leads to an obvious answer (except, perhaps, in hindsight). But ideally, it will lead to a way forward that is both informed and clear about our assumptions, why we have made them and what (if anything) might cause us to change them. *Thinking in Time* by Richard Neustadt and Ernest May (Free Press, 1988) expands on this framework to offer a marvelous guide for using historical reasoning in the policy process.

The Foreign Service Angle

What value can a Foreign Service officer bring to the table in an internal policy debate? On the surface, there's an easy answer. Our knowledge of a given country or region—its leaders, influences, economy, people and culture—can inform recommendations, giving policymakers a nuanced understanding of the situation under consideration.

Examples abound: George Kennan's Long Telegram; the contributions made by three FSOs who participated in President John Kennedy's ExComm; the China hands' analysis of the prospects of the Communists and Nationalists; and the efforts by State Department professionals to improve post-invasion governance in Iraq.

FSOs can fall prey to our own assumptions or preconceived views as easily as anyone else if we are not careful.

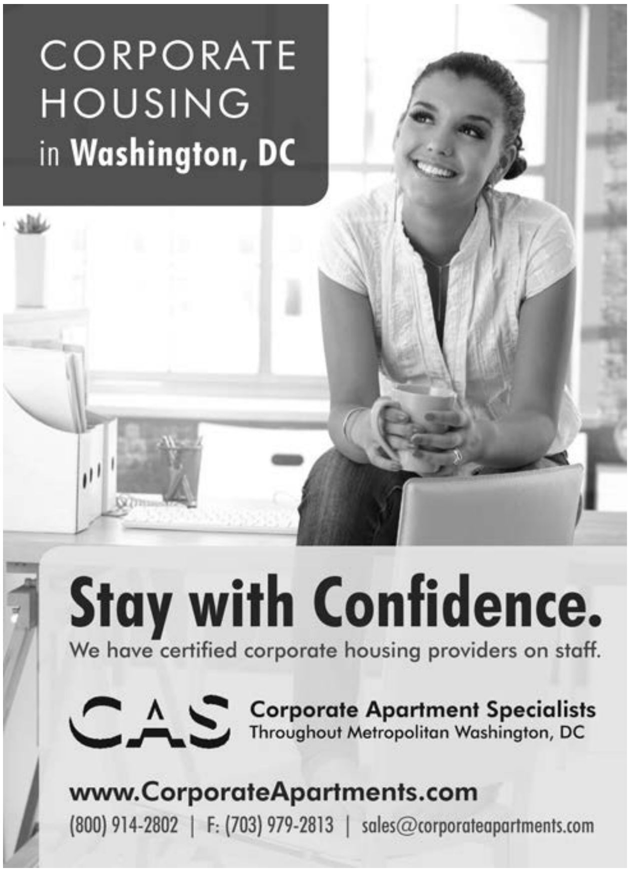
But FSOs can fall prey to our own assumptions or preconceived views as easily as anyone else if we are not careful. Any doubters should read Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), a recent classic in the fields of psychology and behavioral economics. As I read it, I recognized how easily I have fallen into many of the traps he identifies: such as, assuming others think like me and being unduly optimistic.

One example comes from my work as an economic officer in Venezuela. Because President Hugo Chavez's economic policies seemed absurd, it took me longer than it should have to understand, then frame for policymakers, why they worked for him (at least initially). I first had to identify my underlying assumption—there is never a good reason for sustaining economically damaging policies—and then allow Pres. Chavez's political success to inform it.

I overcame my preconceived views first and foremost by seeking the views of a range of academics and practitioners who were struggling with the same questions. Their perspectives challenged mine and, over time, helped me reframe and refine my analysis. It wasn't necessary to be an expert on Venezuela's economy, politics or history. But it was necessary to keep an open mind, developing new insights that allowed me to weave an increasingly coherent explanation for why Chavez pursued "21st-century socialism" despite the economic ills it was causing.

If I teach another foreign policy course, I'll know better how to weave history into it, and be better prepared to advise students on effective ways to use it in the policy process. By all means, they should dive into history and consider how it informs debates about current issues, but they should not settle for easy answers.

Meanwhile, as an FSO in the field, I will be much more conscious of ways to help policymakers avoid some of the pitfalls I've highlighted here—and, I hope, of my own blind spots. For that, I thank my students.



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Help the children of your Foreign Service colleagues achieve their dreams.

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Call for Nominations: AFSA Constructive Dissent Awards

BY AFSA PRESIDENT ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

Nominations are now being accepted for AFSA's Constructive Dissent Awards. In June 2014, recipients will be honored at the annual awards ceremony that will also celebrate the 90th anniversary of AFSA and the Foreign Service.

For more than 40 years, AFSA's constructive dissent awards have recognized Foreign Service colleagues who work within the system to change policy and regulations for the better. No other government-related association offers an award for constructive dissent.

While members of the Foreign Service may express their dissent in public meetings, e-mails to superiors, memoranda, cables or other formats, an AFSA dissent award recognizes an employee's concerted and ongoing efforts to effect change.

Although our Foreign Service culture values consensus, many award winners have risen to the highest ranks of the Service thanks to the same intellectual and personal qualities that led them originally to dissent

Please help AFSA continue to honor and recognize honesty and independent thinking by nominating a colleague for one of the constructive dissent awards described below. Any Foreign Service member of any rank and of any agency may be nominated for the following dissent awards: the Christian A. Herter Award for Senior Foreign Service officers, the William R. Rivkin Award for mid-level FSOs, the W. Averell Harriman Award for entry-level officers and the F. Allen "Tex" Harris Award for Foreign Service specialists.

This year, we are honored to announce that the Una Chapman Cox Foundation has come on board as the new sponsor of the W. Averell Harriman Award. Their support is greatly appreciated and will help ensure the ongoing viability of our dissent awards program.

For nomination guidance go to www.afsa.org/dissent. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 28, 2014.

DONNA AYERST

Theodore Lyng, the 2013 recipient of The William R. Rivkin Award, is congratulated by his family at AFSA's annual awards ceremony on June 4.

Dissent Is About Making the Right Decision

BY AMBASSADOR JAMES WARLICK

Consular work, especially adjudicating visas, is never easy. It is especially difficult when there is pressure to overturn a refusal, and becomes even more difficult when that pressure comes from more senior officers, immigration attorneys, members of Congress and even the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

In 2003, I received AFSA's Christian Herter Award for dissent, which I shared with three of my colleagues in the consular section at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. As consul general, I was the final word on visa adjudication, but my dissent was a team effort.

The visa applicant was a

Dissent continued on page 51

CALENDAR

12/5/2013
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

12/13/2013
3:00 - 5:00 PM
AFSA Labor Management Holiday Open House at HST

12/16/2013
1:00 - 3:00 PM
AFSA Holiday Party
AFSA Offices Close at 1 PM

12/25/2013
Christmas
AFSA Offices Closed

1/1/2014
New Year's Day
AFSA Offices Closed

1/8/2014
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

1/20/2014
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
AFSA Offices Closed

2/5/2014
12:00 - 2:00 PM
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

2/6/2014
Deadline for Academic/Art Merit Awards

2/17/2014
President's Day
AFSA Offices Closed

2/28/2014
Deadline for Dissent and Performance Awards Nominations

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA State VP.
Contact: asadam@state.gov or (202) 647-8160

Diplomatic Security 101: Risks and Rewards

The Sept. 11, 2012 attack on our mission in Benghazi reminded us of the inherent dangers of our profession. The Benghazi Accountability and Review Board, its "Independent Panel" and the Office of the Inspector General have all made recommendations on how to minimize future diplomatic loss of life. In addition, Congress is considering legislation that includes an embassy security component.

However, to break the vicious cycle of attack, report and congressional action, we must ensure that this response includes a formalized process of evaluating risks and rewards, and embraces enhanced language and security awareness training for Foreign Service employees.

Vital Presence Validation Process

In line with a basic business school lesson—that risks and rewards drive investment decisions—the department needs to introduce a similar diplomatic security calculus. It is developing a Vital Presence Validation Process that will ultimately enable senior leadership to decide when the "rewards" (U.S. interests) are sufficiently high enough to bear additional "risks" (to U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel.) The department, as an institution, may be more accepting of risk when and where our interests are significant—during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example—but less so when our interests are not.

That decision-making process will affect Foreign Service employees, who will ultimately bear any additional unmitigated risk. AFSA, the exclusive representative of the Foreign Service, looks forward to consulting with the department on this process.

Such a risk-reward calculation is not new, to be sure. At an individual level, employees already make their own risk-reward calculations based on quantifiable metrics, like danger pay, various incentive packages and Career Development Program considerations.

Enhancing Training

The department and its employees have a shared responsibility for personal security. The department invests in buildings, programs and personnel to minimize and mitigate employee risk, but employees must also be security-conscious to avoid or escape threats.

In the current fiscal climate, the department should evaluate the effectiveness of competing training requests to maximize the return of its training dollars in these two areas: language and security awareness.

While the department offers employee language training based on a position's language designation (which is reviewed on a triennial basis), at present, there is no explicit personal security criterion to review when making such a determination (see 13 FAM 221.2).

AFSA suggests including such a criterion, while encouraging bureaus and posts to consider more asymmetric language designations. In many cases, 1+/0 language skills obtained via an FSI FAST language course may be sufficient enough for an FS employee to recognize and avoid threatening situations.

Post-Benghazi, the department expanded employee eligibility and increased the off-site length of its Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course, OT 610 (known as "crash and bang"). However, participation in the course is limited by the capacity of the driving school in West Virginia.

While AFSA supports the department's long-term solution to create a foreign affairs security training center, it may be able to increase its immediate training dollar return by examining the length, focus and venue of the current course. An irony of the "crash-and-bang" course was that many of its participants were headed to countries in which they were prohibited from driving. When I participated in the course, I was one of five Foreign Service employees out of the hundreds in Afghanistan that could actually drive. Could the five days of student per diem and tuition be used more effectively and reach a larger audience if the FACT course had a different focus and venue?

Secretary Kerry, Advocate

Early in his tenure, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke of the "need for employees to engage with the world," and not to "pull back" from diplomatic security challenges. He declared that U.S. Marines were overseas not just to protect classified material, but also the people producing and handling it. Since then, Sec. Kerry has demonstrated his willingness to address diplomatic security risks and rewards on multiple occasions.

He is creating the environment for diplomatic engagement to flourish. For his efforts to fully succeed, the department needs to institutionalize this risk-reward process and enhance employee training.

I look forward to hearing your ideas regarding security risk and reward at post. Next month: Occupy AFSA.

USAID VP VOICE | BY SHARON WAYNE

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA USAID VP.
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USAID Needs a Transparent Promotions Process

USAID Foreign Service officers are deeply proud of the work they do. Thankfully, we have that pride and dedication to motivate us, as recognition via promotions and respect via clear agency communication is not always forthcoming. The 2013 promotion lists have been released, and I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all that found their name on that anxiously awaited list.

It didn't take long for me to start receiving calls from officers who did not make the cut. Most asked how the agency decides the number of yearly promotions it will grant, how long it usually takes to be promoted and how far they were from making the cutoff.

Some promotion information is easy to access in the Automated Directives System, such as eligibility requirements and information on evaluations and performance boards, but other relevant information seems to be kept under lock and key. It is understandable that aspects of the process must be closely held; for instance, the promotion boards are sequestered with no knowledge of the "cutoff number" so they remain untainted by any outside influence when ranking the individual performance evaluations.

The concerns mainly surface after the promotions are announced. The major complaint has been that information describing the procedure to determine the number of promotions and other related statistics are never divulged. Apparently, the agency's current standard operating procedure dictates that the process and details are not shared.

Today's work force expects more transparency and engagement from its employer. In contrast to USAID's limited communication, the State Department publishes yearly promotion data broken down into cones (what we call "backstops") by grade. The data show the number of officers competing, the number promoted, the percent promoted, the average time in class of both those competing and those promoted, and the average length of service of both those competing and those promoted. State also publishes insight into how the number of promotions is determined, including promotion statistics by gender, ethnicity and race.

USAID does not publish any of the above data, thereby contributing to lower morale and leading some to believe that the entire exercise is arbitrary. Poor communication is frustrating for staff and a source of conflict and turnover. USAID has an extremely bright and committed work force, but when basic guidance on how to manage one's career and respect from one's employer are lacking, even the most dedicated employees may begin to consider leaving.

Program Operations and Management Board (Backstops 10, 11, 12, 21, 25, 40, 50, 60, 76)

Grade	*Promoted*
FS-2 to FS-1	23
FS-3 to FS-2	19
FS-4 to FS-3	31

Program Direction and Development Board (Backstops 1, 2, 85, 94)

Grade	*Promoted*
FS-2 to FS-1	9
FS-3 to FS-2	9
FS-4 to FS-3	9

Program Support Board (Backstops 3-7, 93)

Grade	*Promoted*
FS-2 to FS-1	6
FS-3 to FS-2	4
FS-4 to FS-3	11

Senior Threshold Board

Grade	*Promoted*
FS-1 to FE-OC	29

Consolidated Senior Foreign Service Board

Grade	*Promoted*
FE-OC to FE-MC	10
FE-MC to FE-CM	5

Overall morale and relations with the Office of Human Resources would both improve if USAID increased transparency in how it makes decisions that affect the lives of its staff. Agency officers want to make the Foreign Service a career, but they also want an idea of what that career might look like. Without clear communications regarding realistic career paths, the agency unwittingly facilitates the rumors that fuel unrealistic expectations—ranging from unrealistically high to cynically low.

The good news is that the dialogue has begun, as shown by the release of the 2013 promotion statistics. Let us hope this marks the beginning of a more open flow of information from HR to staff. (Note: The promotion cutoff number was often increased to account for those ineligible for promotion.)

Please continue to submit your questions and comments to me at swayne@usaid.gov. AFSA is the voice of the Foreign Service, but to serve you effectively, I need to know what is on your mind. I look forward to a continued, open dialogue.

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.
Contact: david.mergen@fas.usda.gov or (202) 720-3650

Surviving the Shutdown (On Back-Pay)

The Foreign Agricultural Service was one of the agencies hardest hit agencies by the shutdown, with most of its employees furloughed from the first day. Unlike our counterparts at State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, FAS did not have a source of money free of fiscal year restrictions, funds that could be used to delay shutting down the agency.

During this uncertain time, AFSA's leadership and professional staff worked with other government unions and allies in Congress to ensure that furloughed employees would receive retroactive pay for the time the government was closed.

While Congress approved back pay during the last shutdowns in 1995 and 1996, this time there was no guarantee that this would be the case. Furloughed employees had serious concerns about how they would pay their bills in the event of an extended shutdown.

Among the questions I received from colleagues overseas was how to apply for unemployment compensation. Although the agency sent the necessary forms to posts, employees were faced with the daunting prospect of having to apply in person at their state's employment office back in the States.

AFSA's leadership and its advocacy team were at the forefront of the effort by the Federal-Postal Coalition (representing nearly five million federal and postal employees) in addressing the issue of back-pay. The coalition quickly mobilized behind the bipartisan proposal to provide retroactive pay, introduced by Representatives James Moran, D-Va., and Frank Wolf, R-Va. On Oct. 5, the House passed the back-pay legislation unanimously, greatly easing the anxiety of furloughed employees and virtually ensuring that it would be included in the final agreement to end the shutdown.

Likewise, AFSA was instrumental in mobilizing support for the legislation's Senate companion bill, introduced by Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md. In the end, the proposal was included in Congress's shutdown compromise. Getting the message to members of Congress in a rapid, well-coordinated way was critical to securing retroactive pay for federal employees.

Although FAS represents a relatively small part of the Foreign Service community, AFSA and its professional staff are looking out for the interests of all Foreign Service employees. This is increasingly important as we endure attacks on federal salaries and benefits, and face the possibility of a second shutdown at the start of 2014.

Although FAS represents a relatively small part of the Foreign Service community, AFSA and its professional staff are looking out for the interests of all Foreign Service employees.

NEWS BRIEF

HS Essay Contest in its 16th Year

AFSA is pleased to announce the 2014 National High School Essay Contest. Now entering its sixteenth year, the contest is one of the prime contests of its kind in the United States, with remarkable opportunities for young people interested in foreign affairs and the Foreign Service.

Students who are U.S. citizens and whose parents are not in the Foreign Service are eligible to participate if they are in grades nine through twelve in any of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, or if they are attending high school overseas.

Deadline is 11:59 pm EST on March 15, 2014. Details at www.afsa.org/essaycontest.

DONNA AYERST

AFSA's Exemplary Performance Awards

Nominate a Family Member, Office Management Specialist or Community Liaison Officer

AFSA encourages all members of the Foreign Service community to consider nominating a deserving colleague or family member for one of the association's three annual awards for exemplary performance. Deadline for nominations is Feb. 28.

AFSA Performance Awards honor Foreign Service employees and family members alike.

The **Nelson B. Delavan Award,** for a Foreign Service office management specialist who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale beyond the framework of his or her job responsibilities. The 2013 winner was Mikkela Thompson, Dhaka.

The **M. Juanita Guess Award,** for a community liaison officer who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, initiative or imagination in assisting the families of Americans serving at an overseas post. In 2013, two winners were honored with the Guess award: Elizabeth Jenkins, Caracas and Jessica McVay, Khartoum.

DONNA AYERST

AFSA award certificates are displayed in the Thomas Jefferson State Reception Room before they are given to the award recipients during AFSA's annual award ceremony.

The **Avis Bohlen Award,** for a Foreign Service eligible family member whose relations with the American and foreign communities at post have done the most to advance the interests of the United States. The 2013 winner was Leah Evans, Kyiv.

Winners are chosen by panels of judges from within the Foreign Service community. All winners will be honored at AFSA's awards ceremony held in June 2014, in the Department of State's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. Each winner will receive a cash prize of $2,500.

To submit a nomination for the 2013 performance awards, please visit www.afsa.org/performance. For more information, please contact AFSA's Coordinator for Special Awards and Outreach Perri Green at green@afsa.org or (202) 719-9700.

Clements Worldwide: Proud Sponsor of the M. Juanita Guess Award

BY DONNA AYERST, *AFSA NEWS* EDITOR

The history of Clements Worldwide's long association with the Foreign Service began in 1947, when Robert Clements and Juanita Guess Clements founded a domestic insurance business. At that time, Juanita was working as a secretary at the State Department. During conversations with her colleagues, it became apparent that members of the Foreign Service needed an insurance policy that covered their personal property and cars while overseas, which was unavailable at the time.

Jon Clements has followed in his parents' footsteps as chief executive officer and chairman of the company they started, although they might not recognize it. Clements Worldwide now serves not only members of the Foreign Service, but international companies and expats, as

Clements continued on page 47

DONNA AYERST

Jon Clements, chief executive officer of Clements Worldwide, presents Elizabeth Jenkins with the M. Juanita Guess Award certificate during AFSA's awards ceremony on June 4, 2013.

AFSA ON THE HILL

In the Middle of the Aisle

BY DAVID N. MURIMI, LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

To determine if a program is working well, a few questions need to be asked. At AFSA's advocacy department, we ask ourselves: Are we doing what is needed to raise the issues that matter to our members? Is Congress listening to AFSA? Are we getting the results we seek?

Our Biggest Asset

While AFSA can reach out around the clock to members of Congress, our biggest asset in getting their attention is you, our members. The most effective strategies for influencing those on the Hill must include direct messaging from their constituents, and for AFSA, that means messages from the Foreign Service community. We need *your* participation.

We work hard to establish and maintain relationships with members of Congress and their staff from both sides of the aisle. We seek to find common ground with those who share our interests and have supported the Foreign Service in the past. Our objective is to expand these relationships while establishing new ones that will, in turn, support us.

According to a 2012 survey conducted by The George Washington University of the American League of Lobbyists and congressional staff, the most important determinants for gaining access to members of Congress are: an existing relationship with the member or staffer; the reputation of the individual seeking the meeting; and having previously worked for the legislator.

"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." ***Thomas Jefferson***

Fortunately for our members, AFSA's advocacy team can claim all of the above advantages, and we use them whenever we can. Our goal is to inform senators and representatives of the pressing concerns you have and to build a coalition of legislators who will work on your behalf.

Keys to Success

Through AFSA's Governing Board meetings, liaison with our vice presidents, discussions with AFSA staff, meetings with Hill staffers and keeping abreast of current events, the advocacy team is on point when it comes to the big issues. But again, our efforts need your input so that we can focus on the issues and problems you face.

Your outreach to members of Congress—be it through social media, a letter or a phone call—educates and can influence them on a matter that could ultimately bear positive results regarding your job, family and even your life. Hearing from you can connect a policy issue to your legislators' need to serve their constituents. They are there to serve you; give them the opportunity.

Share Your Views

Don't underestimate the impact we can make together. By letting us know what your concerns are, we can accomplish much. We invite you to share your views or concerns by e-mailing Advocacy Director Javier Cuebas at cuebas@afsa.org, Legislative Assistant David Murimi at murimi@afsa.org or Assistant Coordinator for Retiree Counseling and Legislation Matt Sumrak at sumrak@afsa.org. We are here for you.

ATTIATUL NASAR

AFSA State Vice President Matthew Asada and Governing Board State Representative Nancy Rios-Brooks speak with Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, at an event celebrating National Hispanic American Heritage Month at the Department of State on Oct. 9. The event was sponsored by the Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies, an affinity group with which AFSA frequently collaborates.

AFSA Expands Its Congressional Outreach

BY JAVIER CUEBAS. AFSA DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

On Nov. 13, AFSA hosted a Congressional networking reception in the Russell Senate Office Building. The purpose was twofold: creating an opportunity for Hill staffers and Foreign Service members to meet and exchange views in an informal setting; and to honor Congressional friends of the Foreign Service.

AFSA President Bob Silverman and Vice President Matthew Asada were the evening's hosts. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., was the keynote speaker. He spoke of his family's long connection to the Foreign Service—his father, grandfather, uncle and first cousin have all served as ambassadors. AFSA presented the senator with a plaque in recognition of his support of the Foreign Service.

Ambassador James Jeffrey also spoke eloquently of his long service in the Foreign Service, and of the importance of having the U.S. Senate confirm ambassadors, as it conveys the trust of both the executive and legislative branches to their service.

AFSA was also honored by the presence of Senator Benjamin Cardin, D-Md., and Representative Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., both of whom spoke strongly in support of the men and women of the Foreign Service.

ASGEIR SIGFUSSON

Center, left to right: FCS Rep Barbara Farrar, State Rep Chuck Fee, AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston, State Rep Nancy Rios-Brooks, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., AFSA President Bob Silverman, USAID VP Sharon Wayne, FCS VP Steve Morrison. Corner: Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I. Bottom: AFSA President Bob Silverman with Sen. Benjamin Cardin, D-Md.

Support AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy in 2013

The Fund for American Diplomacy is AFSA's vehicle for telling the story of the Foreign Service to the American public, creating awareness and understanding of the importance of diplomacy and development.

We do this through lecture series, speaker programs and educational seminars around the country, the publication of our bestselling book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy* and various AFSA events staged here at AFSA headquarters, such as Book Notes discussions and expert panels.

DONNA AYERST

Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry pay tribute to fallen Foreign Service members at AFSA's Memorial Plaque ceremony on May 3, 2013.

The FAD also encourages the interest of students who are interested in a Foreign Service career. We do this through our essay contest, the minority summer internship program, and career seminars at universities across the country.

Finally, the FAD honors members of the Foreign Service community who have performed exemplary service, dissented courageously and constructively, or given the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

You can also support the Fund for American Diplomacy through the ongoing Combined Federal Campaign. You will find us under #10646, Diplomacy Matters-AFSA.

Please visit www.afsa.org/fad for additional information on how to give.

FS Students: Apply Now for AFSA College Scholarships

BY LORI DEC, SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR

AFSA is now accepting applications for its scholarships, which fall into two categories. AFSA merit awards (one-time only) recognize art or academic accomplishments of high school seniors, while AFSA financial aid scholarships (renewable, need-based) are for undergraduate college study. Over the last 20 years, AFSA has disbursed more than $3.5 million in scholarship aid to more than 1,600 children of Foreign Service employees.

As a benefit of AFSA membership, only children of members who are active-duty, retired or deceased Foreign Service employees of the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Developlment, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, International Broadcasting Bureau or the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are eligible to apply. Eligible students may apply for all three award categories.

To be eligible for an AFSA financial aid scholarship, the student must be claimed as a dependent on his or her parent's taxes. When applying for a financial aid scholarship, students must submit their official high school or college transcript (showing a 2.0 cumulative grade point average on at least 12 credits per semester) and the College Scholarship Service PROFILE assessing the family's financial status.

AFSA will fund students attending any two or four-year accredited college or university located in the United States or overseas. All college instruction and correspondence from overseas schools must be in English. Individual financial aid scholarship awards range from $2,000 to $4,000. Scholarships may be applied towards a student's tuition, room and board, books, computer and/or university fees. Approximately 60 scholarships are awarded each year. **The deadline for an AFSA financial aid scholarship is March 6, 2014.**

To be eligible for an AFSA academic award or an art merit award, students must be in their senior year of high school. The family's financial situation does not factor into consideration for this program, which bestows about 25 awards each May. When applying for an AFSA academic merit award, students must submit an application, a two-page essay, two letters of recommendation, their official high school transcript and SAT or ACT test scores. First-place winners receive $2,200.

Academic merit award applicants are also eligible to be considered for a prize recognizing the best essay and the most compelling community service work. Art merit award applicants must submit the a two-page essay, two letters of recommendation, their official high school transcript and examples of their art work in one of the following categories: visual arts, musical arts, performing arts or creative writing. **The deadline for an AFSA academic and/or art merit award is Feb. 6, 2014.**

For details on how to apply for an AFSA scholarship, go to www.afsa.org/scholar. The online application process allows students to check on the status of their application and ensure that their documents have been received.

To learn more about other college assistance programs, AFSA encourages parents and students to visit such scholarship search sites as www.fastweb.com or www.wiredscholar.com, as well as AFSA's website to view other scholarship resources.

For more information, contact AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec, at dec@afsa.org or (202) 944-5504, or AFSA Scholarship Assistant Jonathan Crawford, at crawford@afsa.org or (202) 338-4045. ext. 252.

For information on becoming an AFSA member, please visit www.afsa.org/become_a_member.aspx or call (202) 338-4045.

NEWS BRIEF

To Support the AFSA Scholarship Program Designate CFC #11759

This year, please consider supporting the AFSA scholarship program by designating #11759 on your Combined Federal Campaign pledge card or online donation.

The AFSA Scholarship Fund has changed its name to Foreign Service Youth Scholarships-AFSA, but the number remains the same (CFC #11759).

Last year, AFSA provided more than $230,000 through need-based scholarships and merit awards to 90 Foreign Service students to aid in their college expenses.

Please visit www.afsa.org/cfc for details.

AFSA BOOK NOTES

Mongolia: Many Mountains Still to Climb

BY JULIAN STEINER, AFSA COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

On Oct. 21, AFSA's Book Notes program welcomed Ambassador Jonathan S. Addleton, who spoke about his book, *Mongolia and the United States, A Diplomatic History*. Addleton served as ambassador to Ulaanbaatar from 2009 to 2012, and previously served in Mongolia as the U.S. Agency for International Development mission director from 2001 to 2004.

U.S.-Mongolian Relations

Amb. Addleton's book was first published in 2012, partly to celebrate the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of U.S.–Mongolian relations. He originally thought the book would only be published in Mongolian, but its publication in English gives many more readers a comprehensive view of U.S.–Mongolian history.

During his presentation, Amb. Addleton made the point that Mongolia's foreign policy relies on a "third neighbor policy, " concentrating on good relationships not only with such powerful neighbors as China and Russia, but also with other democracies around the world.

American Efforts

American diplomatic efforts in Mongolia concentrate on five areas: development, commerce, democracy and governance, people-to-people relationships and security. Mongolia has partnered with the United States in military peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Darfur and elsewhere.


ASGEIR SIGFUSSON

Amb. Jonathan S. Addleton signs copies of his book after his presentation at AFSA on Oct. 21.

Fast-Growing Economy

"When I first visited Mongolia in 2001, it was a billion-dollar economy, with a $400 million budget. By the time I left last year, it was a $10 billion economy, with a $4 billion annual budget," Addleton remarked. He added, "Per capita income rose from $400 in 2001, to $4,000 11 years later. It is still tough for Mongolia, but you've got to give them credit for their efforts on the business side." In fact, Mongolia is one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

The fact that President George W. Bush, Vice President Joseph R. Biden and almost every Secretary of State has visited Mongolia since 1988 underlines the importance the U.S. attaches to maintaining close bilateral relations between the U.S. and Mongolia.

People-to-People

Addleton's book offers many examples of the people-to-people aspects of our relationship with the country over the past 25 years. He notes that there are hundreds of Mongolian students studying in the U.S., the Peace Corps has made a tremendous impact in the country and the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation has been successful.

In his closing remarks, before taking questions from the enthusiastic audience, Addleton addressed the challenges Mongolia faces in the near future. "This has been a tough year for Mongolia, for all kinds of reasons, but I think that no country can ever reach the mountaintop. And if it does, there are still many mountains to climb."

To view the event online, go to www.afsa.org/afsavideos.aspx.

Clements continued from page 43

well as others.

In 1995, in appreciation of the Clements' long history with the Foreign Service, the company offered funding to establish an award in the name of M. Juanita Guess. This exemplary performance award is given to a Community Liaison Office coordinator. Since then, 21 recipients have been so honored.

The CLO, a Foreign Service family member, addresses quality-of-life issues for the official American communities at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world. The program, administered by the department's Family Liaison Office, requires the incumbent to cover eight areas of responsibility, from security and education to crisis management and events planning.

Each year, a panel of judges comprised of AFSA staff and employees of the State Department, select the winner of the Guess Award. This year, two CLOs were so honored: Jessica McVay (Khartoum) and Elizabeth Jenkins (Caracas).

On June 4, Jon Clements presented the awards during AFSA's annual awards ceremony, held in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room in the Department of State.

ACTIVE AFTER ACTIVE DUTY

Expeditionary Diplomacy When Actually Employed

BY LARRY COHEN

One of the most common ways for Foreign Service personnel to remain "active after active duty" is through When Actually Employed assignments. Here are some isights I gained during a recent WAE assignment in Erbil, capital of the Kurdistan region in Iraq.

Fueled by Kurdistan's oil-led economy, Erbil is a commercially vibrant, modern city that enjoys a highly secure environment. Its malls, supermarkets, restaurants and cafes are all packed. There hasn't been an attack against foreigners in the region since 2003 and locals have a hard time naming the year when the last terrorist incident occurred.

Crime in Erbil is insignificant, or as one contact put it, "safer than Canada." As a result, tourism is expanding, with such U.S. brand hotels as Sheraton, Marriott, Hilton Doubletree and Best Western under construction. More than two dozen airlines serve Erbil's new international airport. Visitors from Europe and the U.S. can obtain a 15-day visa at no cost at the airport. International businesses are pouring in. The world has discovered Erbil and Kurdistan. Everyone, it seems, except American diplomats.

The U.S. consulate in Erbil is located in Ainkawa, a religiously mixed neighborhood of small shops and restaurants. The consulate occupies roughly six square blocks of Ainkawa. In self-imposed isolation from the surrounding city, it is a T-wall-protected enclave, complete with its own corner grocery stores and greasy-spoon restaurants.

Despite Erbil's favorable operational environment, official vehicular movement outside the compound still requires strictly controlled travel in an armored Chevrolet Suburban.

Despite Erbil's favorable operational environment, official vehicular movement outside the compound still requires strictly controlled travel in an armored Chevrolet Suburban. This year, Kurdish security teams have replaced the previously mandatory U.S. protective escort, realizing a significant savings in cost.

However, travel elsewhere in Kurdistan still requires a full, four-vehicle convoy. And while U.S. personnel may walk to Erbil's shops within 100 meters from the main gate, they must travel in pairs and be escorted by two armed Kurdish guards.

Here one sees the slow-motion end game of expeditionary diplomacy. The consulate's relative isolation is the legacy of many factors. Most obvious, is our difficulty converting psychologically from a military to a civilian paradigm. Ratcheted security rules and procedures are easy to tighten, but difficult to loosen. Outdated notions, as seen through an Embassy Baghdad optic, about Iraqi violence continues to pervade thinking.

The slog of one-year unaccompanied assignments leaves the consulate continually facing ad hoc decision-making. Enormous sunk expenditures, especially the albatross of unmovable infrastructure and security-related contracts, weigh heavily. Policies put in place by predecessors hamstring current management, which raises the question: Where is the sunset clause in our expeditionary diplomacy?

Consulate Erbil employees are often excessively cautious about leaving the perimeter, while the city of Erbil is ready for normal family life, as evidenced by its growing expatriate community, including Americans. An assignment there should be an exciting prospect and a great posting for families. Instead we are stuck in the past, circa 2007.

Fortunately, the expeditionary diplomacy conundrum is growing less dire. New personnel carry less of the "Iraq in the old days" baggage. As expensive contracts expire or get slashed, excess infrastructure, such as the nearby embassy diplomatic support compound, is abandoned or offered up for other purposes.

Our expeditionary diplomacy as exercised in Erbil will ultimately adapt to meet the reality on the ground. U.S. diplomats will shop where Kurds shop and dine in local restaurants. They will visit Kurdistan's scenic areas. Family members, and perhaps children, will eventually be allowed at post. Morale will improve. And at the end of the day, U.S. diplomats will perform their mission even more effectively.

Larry Cohen is back home and currently serving on the AFSA Governing Board as the VP for Retirees.

Bonnie Brown Retires

BY IAN HOUSTON, AFSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DONNA AYERST

We have been very fortunate to call Bonnie Brown a colleague and friend for many years. Bonnie first joined AFSA in the summer of 2003, and so she recently celebrated her 10th anniversary with AFSA.

Bonnie made the decision to retire from AFSA effective Nov. 8. We will greatly miss her.

In her time at AFSA, Bonnie's contributions have been significant. The newsletter that she has skillfully edited since her arrival has always been well received. She transformed it from what it was many years ago.

Additionally, Bonnie has provided counseling and assistance to countless AFSA members, and provided critical intervention on their behalf with the department and other agencies. The counseling work Bonnie has rendered to individuals has been exemplary—easing the burdens of people under stress or who are vulnerable.

She has been an excellent advocate for retiree benefits, and contributed to forging partnerships with a variety of outside groups.

Her ability to monitor legislative, regulatory and department actions that affect federal retirement and health benefits, and then advise AFSA leadership and membership about these issues, has been first rate.

Bonnie has also provided contributions to various public events here at AFSA on a host of subjects including: federal health benefits, the Federal Employees Health Benefit plan, Medicare benefits, the future of Medicare, senior care, Thrift Savings Plan, among other topics.

AFSA will sorely miss Bonnie's professional skills, tact, writing, analytical ability and talent.

Matt Sumrak, assistant coordinator for retiree counseling and legislation is available to assist retirees and can be reached at sumrak@afsa.org.

I will personally miss Bonnie's warmth, kindness and friendship. Warm wishes to Bonnie as she begins this new chapter of her life with her wonderful husband Ken, her family and friends.

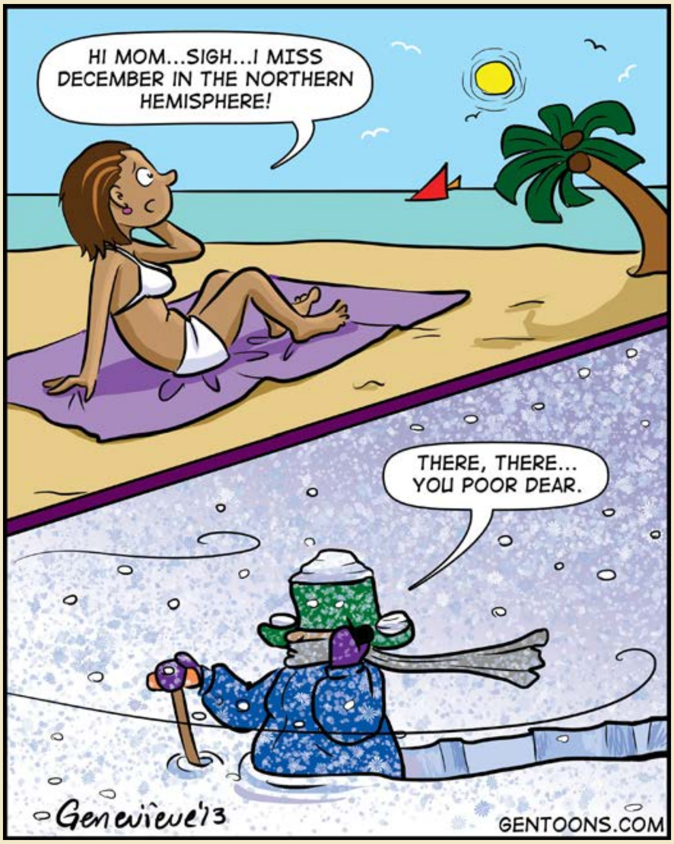
NEWS BRIEF

AFSA Welcomes New Staff Member

In October, AFSA welcomed Jeff Lau to the AFSA staff. Jeff fills our new online communications specialist postion, working mostly on AFSA's website and graphics. We are excited to add this important capacity to our expanding communications team. Jeff has been an auxiliary member of the AFSA team, having worked on a part-time contract for more than three years.

Jeff originally hails from Pennsylvania but most recently lived in Mississippi, where his wife completed her Ph.D. in American History. Jeff completed his undergraduate studies at Vanderbilt University, and also studied at the Pennsylvania State University, the Catholic University of America and Boston University, where he received a graphic and Web design certification from their Center for Digital Imaging Arts. We are happy to welcome Jeff to the (full-time) AFSA team!

LIFE IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

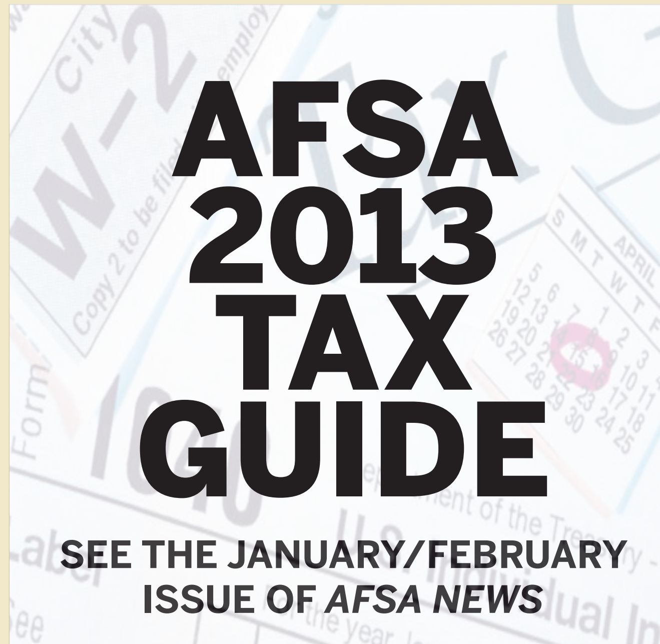


NEWS BRIEF

AFSA Provides Guide for Federal Health Plans Open Season

AFSA is pleased to provide online access to the *2014 Consumer Checkbook Guide to Federal Health Plans*. This member benefit can be accessed at www.afsa.org/retiree. Click on the banner at the top of the page and you will be directed to AFSA's Consumer Checkbook page. There is no need to log in, as the link is specific to AFSA for our members. The link is now active and will remain through the duration of Open Season, which runs through Dec. 9.

CONSUMERS' CHECKBOOK



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Dissent continued from page 39

wealthy, politically connected Russian businessman with many friends in Washington, D.C. He was a frequent traveler and this was just another business trip—or was it? We decided to hold his application for further scrutiny. It did not take long before we began receiving letters and phone calls from his legal counsel in the U.S., followed by letters from members of Congress. Needless to say, there was increasing interest from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, as well.

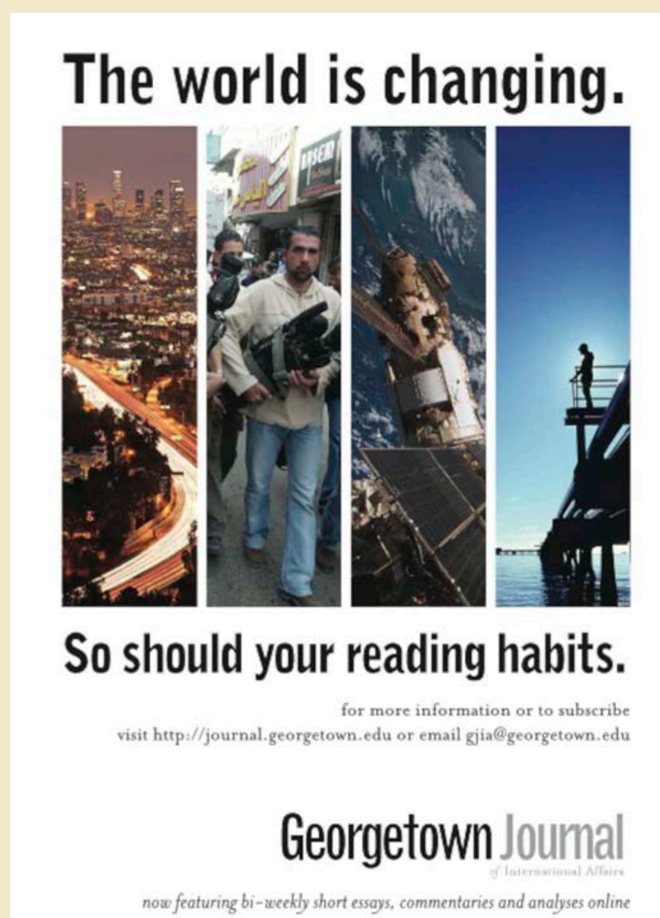
It got worse. One member of Congress threatened me by telling me that by refusing the businessman's visa, I was jeopardizing my career. I wish I could have recorded the telephone conversation when that angry congressman shouted a string of expletives at me and said his next call was to the Secretary of State. I asked myself, is this decision worth it?

We refused the visa on solid grounds. I made it clear to CA that the consulate in Moscow would not be issuing any visa to the applicant while on my watch. The ambassador backed me up, but it was months before the anger and rage subsided.

The incident did not end my career. At the time, none of us considered it dissent; the visa refusal was simply the right thing to do. Therefore, we were surprised to hear about the Herter Award nomination. Receiving the award did not hurt any of our careers. We can now look back with satisfaction that we hung in there to make the right decision.

At our embassies and consulates around the world, Foreign Service members make decisions with integrity and good judgment, and we stand by those decisions. Our team in Moscow did nothing more than what many of our fellow officers do on a regular basis, hopefully without the threats and expletives!

Having served in more senior positions since then, I have come to highly value those officers who are unafraid to provide alternative ideas, speak honestly, dissent when warranted and stand by their convictions. If that is you, I look forward to working together.

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THE REVISED COMMON APP

Here is a timely guide that will help you make the most of the Revised Common Application and its new essay prompts.

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

The Common Application, or "Common App" (www.commonapp.org), was designed 35 years ago by a group of 15 colleges as a way to streamline the American college application process. Since then, it has grown steadily in popularity each year, and more than 520 member institutions now utilize the application. A tool like the Common App makes sense: applications to colleges have increased exponentially in the past decade; today most high school seniors apply to seven or more schools.

The new Common App includes the following sections, each of which can be filled out online and saved until the application is complete:

- *Profile* (contacts, demographics, geography)
- *Family* (household, parent/guardian, siblings)
- *Education* (current school, history, academics)
- *Testing* (results of college entrance and other exams)
- *Activities* (10 slots maximum, a new limitation)
- *Essay* (250-650 words in answer to one of five questions, or "prompts")
- *Explanations* (a way to explain disciplinary actions, criminal activity or interruption of education)
- *Additional Information* (optional, where you can provide information not covered in the rest of the application)
- *College Page One* (general information needed by the colleges you are applying to. There will be one of these pages for each of your colleges.)
- *College Page Two* (an additional writing supplement if required by your selected colleges)

Although the Common App has been offered online since 1996, until this year it was also available in paper form for those who eschewed the online process. But the current (2013–2014) application season marks the start of a paperless, completely Web-based process.

With this change have come a number of other changes to the application. Of these, the most important are in the new Writing section, including revised prompts and a more generous length.

That's the good news. Unfortunately, the new Common App is also full of glitches—some merely inconvenient, others serious enough that dozens of schools have pushed back their application deadlines. More about those later.

Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a writer and college essay application tutor. She writes frequently on education issues, and is a former editor of AFSA News.

The entire application has been revamped to make it more interactive and user-friendly.

What Works Better For You This Year

▪ The entire application has been revamped to make it more interactive and user-friendly, with a new look and feel designed to be intuitive for a teenager. The questions are customized so applicants don't have to answer or even look at questions that don't apply to their situation. For example, if you click on your parents' status as "divorced," you'll automatically get a pop-up question to determine which parent you live with.

▪ A new auto-fill feature speeds up the process of finding high school and college names and addresses.

▪ The word count for the personal essay has increased substantially. Earlier versions of the Common App limited the main essay to 500 words. Now, students have 650 words to tell their stories.

▪ The five new essay prompts give you a lot of leeway in your topics, and are more creative than most of the old prompts. They also demand more thought and depth in your response.

What to Watch Out For

▪ The essay prompt "Write on a topic of your choice" is gone. Not only did this choice give you more freedom, but in the past you could easily write your essay before the start of senior year and know that it was usable even before that year's Common App was released.

▪ There is no prompt that focuses specifically on academics or achievements, and the former extracurricular short essay, which allowed students to write 250 words on their favorite sport or hobby, has also been discontinued.

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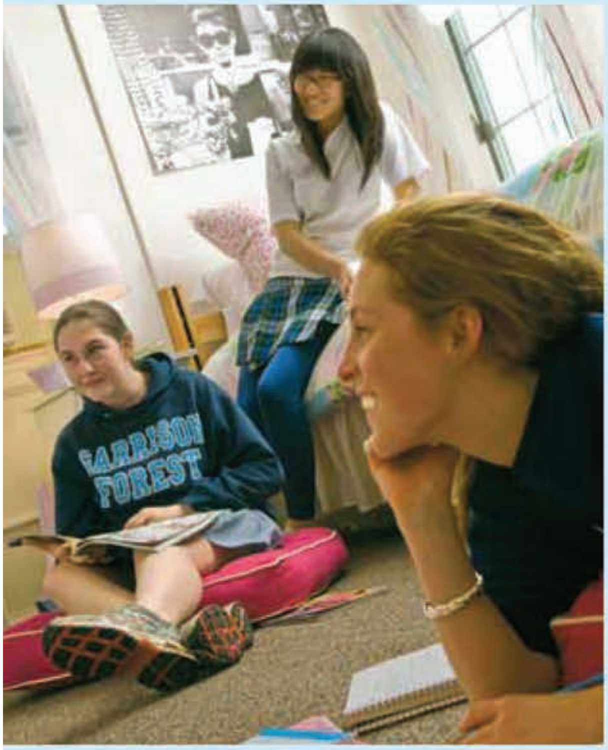

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The five new essay prompts give you a lot of leeway in your topics. They also demand more thought and depth in your response.

However, many colleges require their own supplements to the Common App anyway, and quite often those are centered on extracurricular activities or academics.

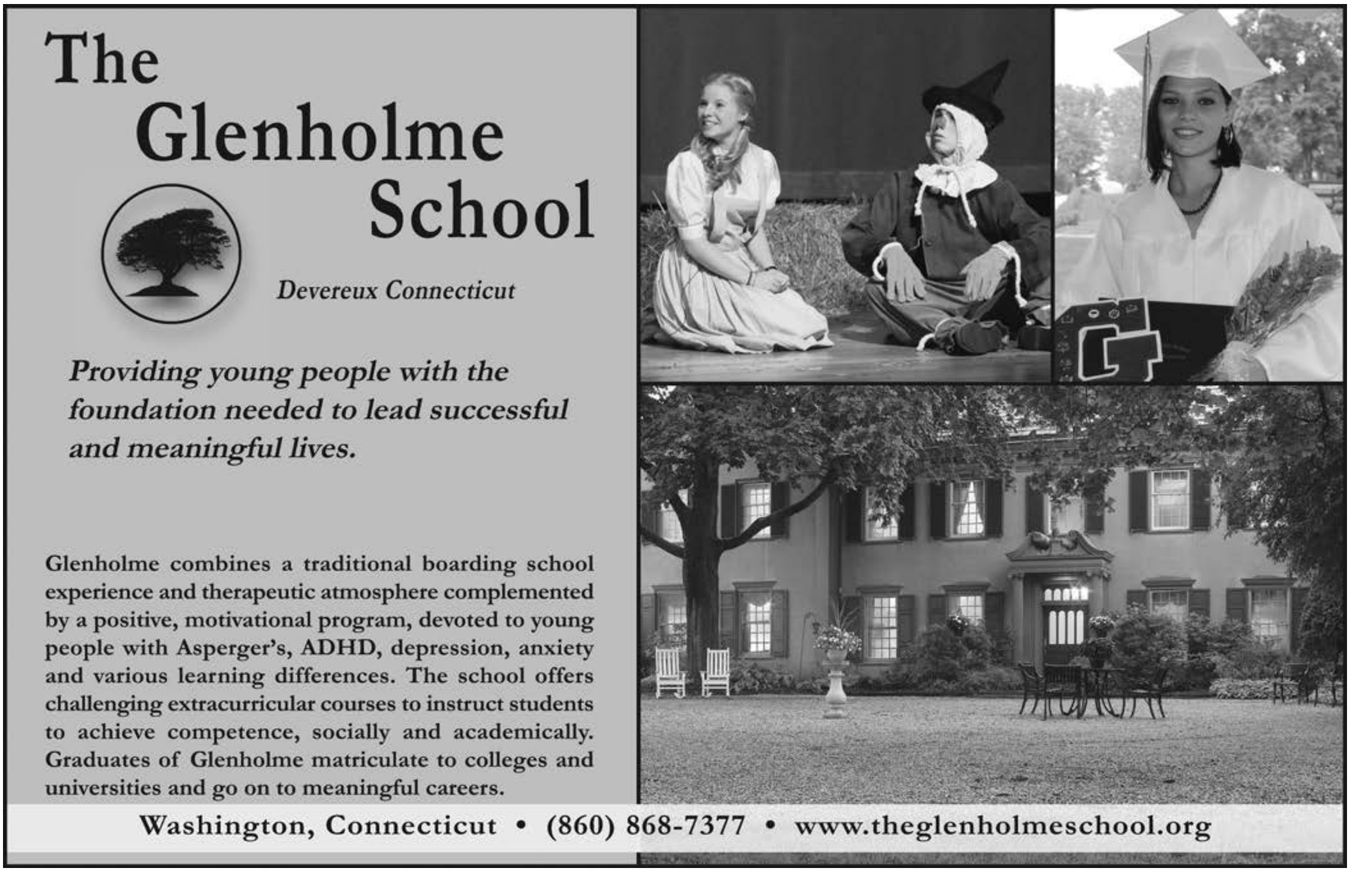
▪ You may no longer upload a resumé unless a specific college requests it. And most do not. The question under Testing that reads, "Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board?" may apply to you if you are at an overseas school.

▪ Check with your school guidance counselor. As mentioned above, the paper application has been discontinued. While it's understandable to want to digitize all materials, there is reason to believe that the Common App might have discontinued the paper application prematurely because of all the…

…Glitches

Word on the street is not good: the newly revised Common App launch has been a bit of a disaster. A few of the more frustrating irritations included login and format problems, and some member institutions' supplemental applications not "going live" on time. When the first early-decision deadlines approached, a high volume of students finishing up applications often crashed the system, causing some colleges to extend their early deadlines.

As Colleen Desmond, Resource Counselor at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in Bethesda, Md., puts it: "The 'new and improved' Common App was obviously put forward before all of the glitches were worked out.



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The Help Center on the Common App Web site and the CA's Facebook page give updates on what has been fixed, and what is still being worked on.

Their updates were well-intended, but instead of making things simpler and more streamlined, they have actually created a process that is even more complicated and frustrating for students, parents, counselors and colleges."

As of this writing, the Help Center on the Common App website and the CA's Facebook page give updates on the status of repair work.

Tips on the New Essay Prompts

Although there are revisions throughout the Common App, it's the Writing section that showcases the biggest changes—and gives students the best opportunity to control the process. Here are some tips on how to proceed.

First, do not compose your essay on the application screen itself—there have been too many cautionary tales of essays being garbled or lost. If you've composed it in Word, some experts suggest pasting it into low-format software such as Notepad (Windows) or TextEdit (Mac) and then pasting it onto the online application, as word counts can vary depending on software. Only paste in your essay when it's completely revised and ready to go, of course.

Now, let's go through the five new essay prompts, one by one:

- *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story*.

If you grew up in the Foreign Service, your experiences are likely unusual compared to those of other applicants. You can speak in general about growing up as a "diplomat's kid," or you can home

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The new Common App is also full of glitches—some merely inconvenient, others more serious.

in on one colorful experience that casts your background into context. Generally, I recommend the latter; talking about your FS experiences in general doesn't make for as compelling reading as a specific example does, especially if your writing utilizes as many of the five senses as possible. Remember the prompt, however—whatever story you tell must be "central to your identity."

▪ *Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?*

Almost all members of the Foreign Service community have experienced failure, most often in communicating in a foreign language or understanding the culture of one's host country. Essays based on this prompt can run the gamut from the comic to the serious, but should spell out those "lessons learned" in the second half of the essay.

▪ *Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?*

This essay basically asks for a demonstration of critical thinking, which is a hot topic with universities these days. Why? Recently many college professors have noticed a decline in writing and reasoning skills among their first-year students. Again, living or having lived overseas lends itself beautifully to the topic of challenging a belief, simply because Foreign Service kids are exposed to other ideologies throughout their childhood.

▪ *Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?*

Again, a perfect "Foreign Service" question. Describing a place where most Americans have never been will instantly set you apart from other applicants. Try to be as specific as possible in choosing this place, however. If it's a library, for example, make sure to play up what's different about it in comparison with an American facility.

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement June 2013

Thinking through Educational Options For Your Foreign Service Child

BY REBECCA GRAPPO

It's hard to predict how a teenager will react to the idea of an international move. Some see it as a grand adventure and look forward to the change of lifestyle with eagerness and enthusiasm. Yet many parents worry that they might face the opposite reaction: open mutiny, complete with accusations of ruining the child's life. Of course, the reaction could also be somewhere in between—or both, depending on the day.

Each teenager is different, but one thing is universal: choosing a school is not only about feeding the mind, but also feeding the young person's appropriate social and emotional development. That makes it a doubly important decision, one for which consideration of the child's resilience is essential.

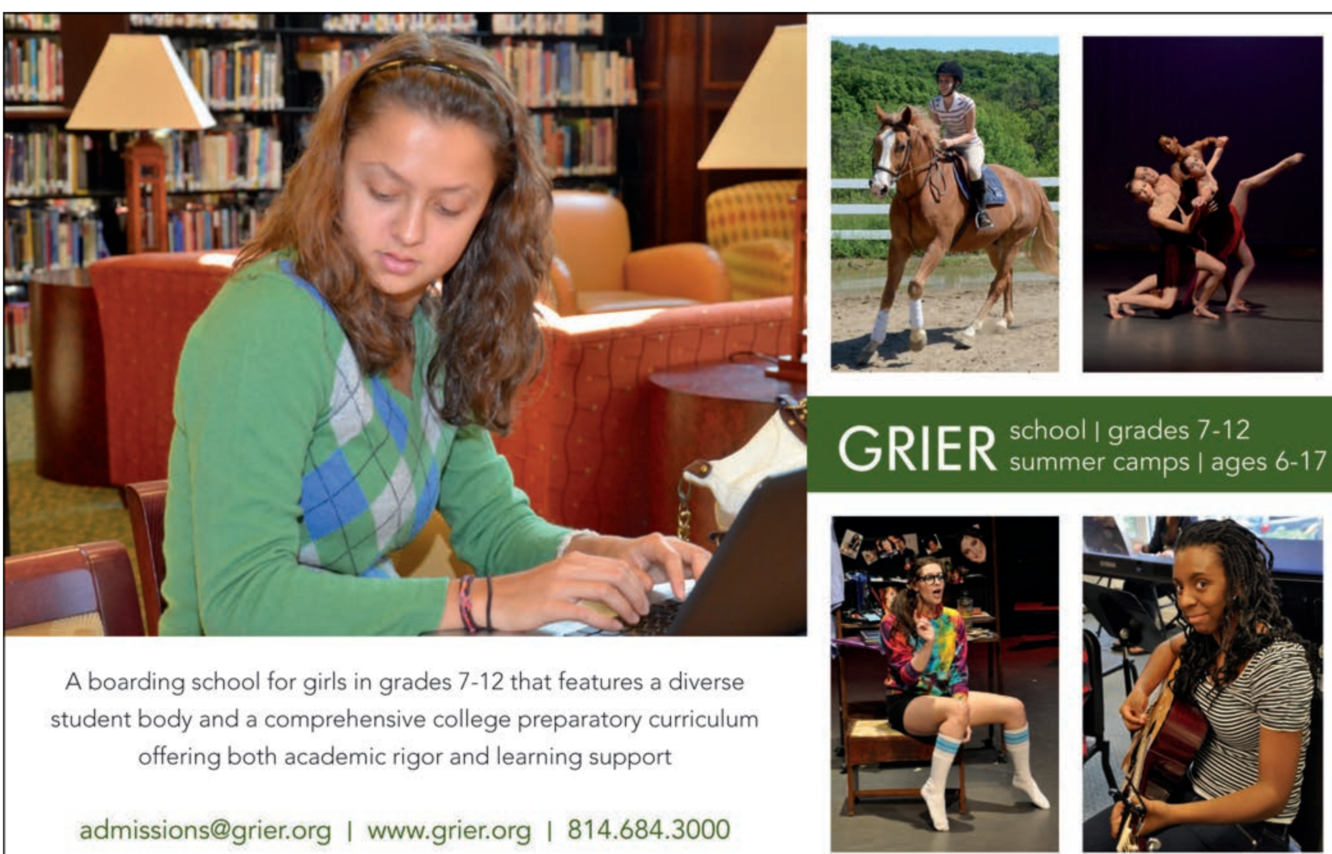
Even under the best of conditions, bidding on posts while trying to find the right school for your child is a challenge. The bid list of possible posts around the world comes out, and you have a tight turnaround time to figure out whether the job is right, the post is right, and the school is right. If you have to find a school that will meet the needs of an exceptional child, your anxiety can be thrown into the red zone.

Though there are many benchmarks for determining the suitability of a school, it is important to keep in mind that every individual has their own needs. A school that is great for one student may be a disaster for another. Here are some of the things to consider:

- Size
- Curriculum
- Extracurricular activities
- Peer group
- School culture
- College counseling
- Safety

For a full discussion of each of these aspects of choosing a school, as well as a discussion of the types of schools and alternative approaches that are available to meet the particular needs of FS kids, go to afsa.org/educationarticles to access the complete article.

Rebecca Grappo is a certified educational planner and the founder of RNG International Educational consultants, LLC. She does placements for international schools and boarding schools, including those for students with learning disabilities, as well as for therapeutic schools and programs. Married to a retired career Foreign Service officer, she has raised their three children internationally.



Although there are revisions throughout the Common App, it's the Writing section that showcases the biggest changes.

the Indian Ocean, don't spend too much time describing waves, sand, etc., unless there's a way in which the setting is different from the beach at any other ocean.

Instead, focus on evoking the history of the place (the spice trade?), mention the colors of the shells and wildlife, or talk about the local people who also go to "your" beach.

▪ *Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community or family.*

Here's where the average stateside American student is going to discuss how hard he worked on the football team for that big victory, or how the family pulled together when a sibling or parent was ill. There's nothing wrong with these topics, of course. But again, use your overseas experiences here if you can.

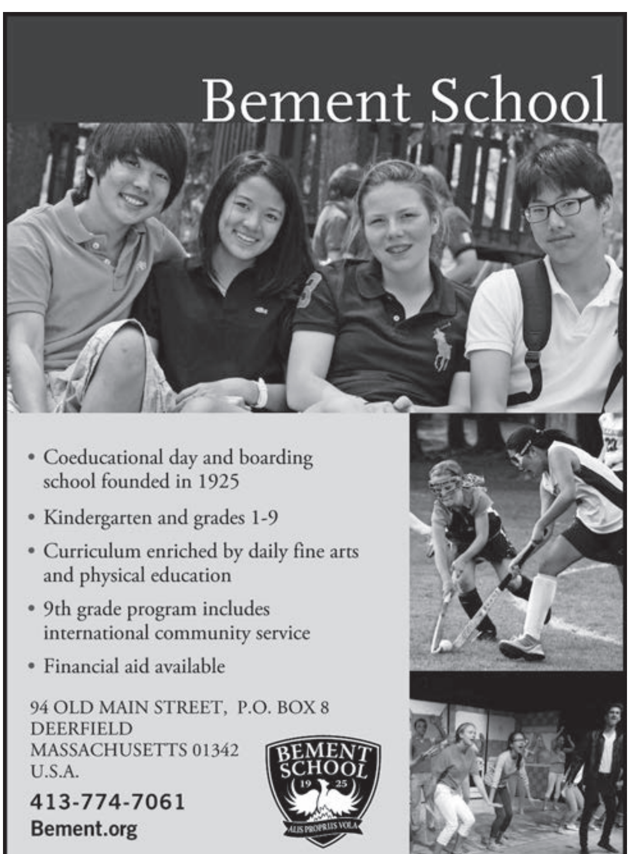
This is not an easy prompt, however. Rarely does one event take the average person from childhood to adulthood. But if you can show how an event or accomplishment served as the catalyst for the process of maturation, go for it.

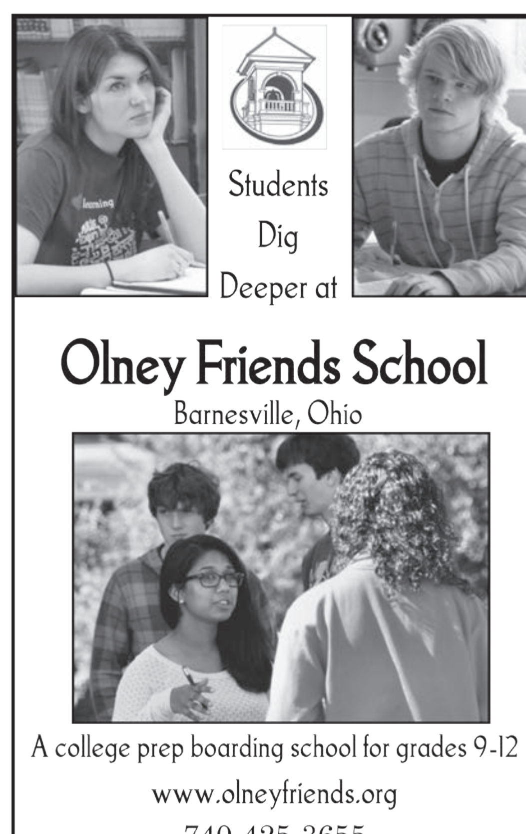
The Additional Information Section

This new, general section near the end of the Common App gives you a chance to write up to 650 words on anything that you feel is important for the admissions officers to know. This is an optional section, so if you use it, make sure that you're not wasting the admission reader's time.

Most counselors do not recommend that you paste your resumé here, unless there is something unusual on it that is not

Continued on p. 70





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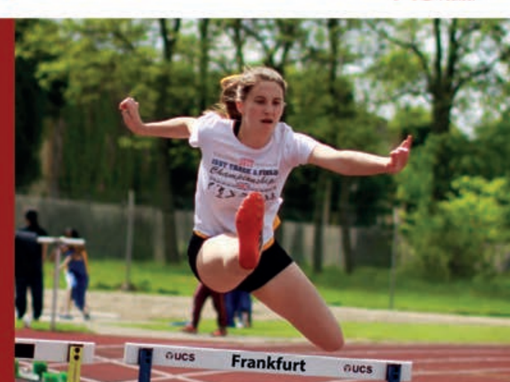

SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at www.afsa.org/fsj and search on "Schools"

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	AP/IB†	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage††	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Elementary/Junior/Senior High													
Bement School, The	62	218	50/50	17	14	K, 1-9	NA	Y	N	53	Y	N	48,075
Bishop Strachan School	65	900	All girls	9	6	KG-12	Y/N	N	Y	13	Y	N	49,263*
Fay School	77	450	50/50	25	16	PK-9	Y/N	Y	N	25	Y	N	Call
Hampshire Country School	88	25	All boys	100	NA	3-12	N/N	N	Y	65	NA	N	51,500
North Country School	58	85	52/48	81	27	4-9	NA	Y	Y	125	Y	N	55,700
Junior High/Senior High													
Cheshire Academy	59	352	60/40	66	45	8-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	Y	42	Y	Y	47,840
Florida Air Academy	67	265	75/25	66	33	6-12	Y/N	Y	Y	1.5	Y	Y	40,000
Grier School	85	300	All girls	95	50	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y	120	Y	Y	48,800
Knox School, The	83	145	55/45	87	60	6-12, PG	Y/N	N	Limited	40	Y	Y	45,017
Massanutten Academy	85	110	75/25	100	18	7-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	82	N	N	31,500
St. Dominic Academy	82	301	All girls	0	0	7-12	Y/N	N	N	10	Y	N	9,975
St. John's Military School	77	230	All boys	100	10	6-12	Y/N	Y	Y	80	Y	N	34,100
St. John's Preparatory School	85	295	51/49	30	25	9-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	N	75	Y	N	40,022
Thomas Jefferson School	81	91	50/50	55	25	7-12, PG	Y/N	N	N	12	Y	N	38,000
Senior High													
Christchurch School	71	221	67/33	60	22	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y	50	Y	Limited	44,700
Garrison Forest School	55	290	All girls	28	12	8-12	Y/N	Y	Y	20	Y	N	46,945
Lyndon Institute	74	580	54/46	15	12	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	90	Y	Y	44,700
Madeira School	59	310	All girls	55	12	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y	12	Y	N	51,820
Mercyhurst Preparatory School	57	575	42/58	16	15	9-12	Y/Y	Y	N	9	Y	Y	37,500
Olney Friends School	62	50	60/40	95	45	9-12	Y/N	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	29,800
St. Mark's School	60	340	55/45	80	18	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	30	Y	N	49,130
Westover School	87	200	All girls	70	20	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y/N	50	Y	N	49,100

† Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate. †† Dec. 25-Jan. 1. * Dollar value is subject to exchange rate.

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SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at www.afsa.org/fsj and search on "Schools"

Special Needs

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	AP/IB†	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage††	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Brehm School	81	75	67/33	98	7	6-12, PG	NA	N	Y	118	Y	N	68,900
Glenholme School, The	56	120	70/30	92	6	5-12, PG	NA	N	Y	30	N	Y	Call
Gow School, The	80	150	96/4	89	33	7-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	Y	58,200
Landmark School	74	460	60/40	35	3	2-12, PG	NA	N	Y	25	N	N	49,200-65,500
Kildonan School, The	79	80	70/30	60	8	2-12, PG	NA	Y	Y	90	Y	Y	45,000-68,900
Oakland School	79	50	50/50	50	10	3-8	NA	N	Y	75	Y	N	46,500

Overseas

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	AP/IB†	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage††	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Berlin Brandenburg International School	54	285	55/45	20	65	9-12	Y/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	46,000*
Carlucci American International School of Lisbon	63	560	50/50	NA	50	PK-12	N/Y	N	Limited	22	Y	NA	9,855-22,985**
Frankfurt International School	63	1,730	50/50	0	70	PK-12	N/Y	N	Limited	19	Y	N	23,147
Jakarta International School	83	2,400	50/50	NA	85	K-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	30	Y	N	14,400-22,900
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	73	1,670	50/50	NA	61	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	73	340	53/47	100	80	8-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	78,000**
St. Stephen's School Rome	78	278	49/51	14	64	9-12, PG	Y/Y	N	N	12	Y	N	45,225*
TASIS The American School in England	69	760	50/50	24	46	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	53,500*
TASIS The American School in Switzerland	69	700	50/50	67	80	PK-12, PG	Y/Y	Limited	N	3	Y	N	83,000

Post-Secondary

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	AP/IB†	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Holiday Break Coverage††	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Johns Hopkins University, The	92	968	10/90			BS, MSN, MPH, PhD, DNP				14	Y		45,000
New School, The	93	10,797	28/72	20	28	BA, MA, Cont. Ed.	Y/Y	Y	N	18	Y	Y	15,260-39,350
St. Norbert College	90	2,260	41/59	77	6	BA, BBA, BS, BM	NA	Y	Y	10	Y	Y	39,992
Wilson College	91	800	12/88	72	7	AA, BA, BS, MA	Y/Y	Y	Y	64	Y	Y	37,673

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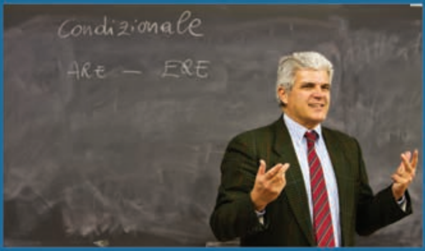

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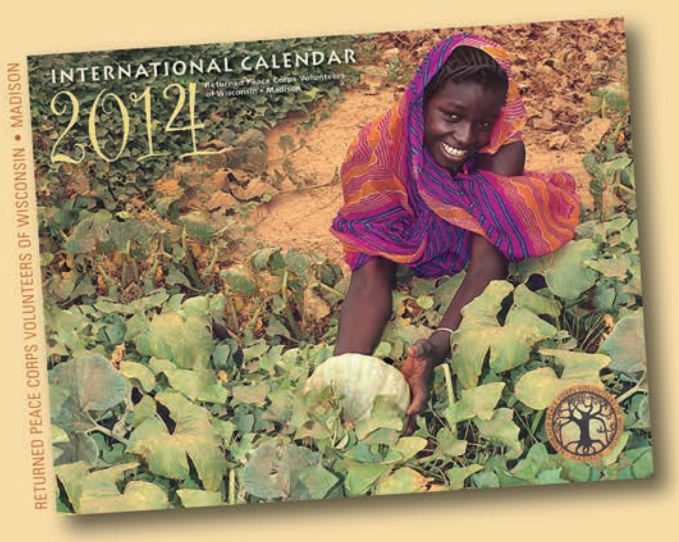
Distance Learning

School Name	Page Number	Information
BYU Independent Study Center Online	89	More than 400 paper, online and teacher-led courses; middle school, high school and university accreditation; transcript-granting high school program (grades 9-12); open enrollment year-round; high school courses starting at $136 per semester (half-credit) and university courses starting at $168 per credit-hour.
Stanford University Online High School EPGY	71	Accredited, diploma-granting independent school (grades 7-12). Advanced academic program (AP and university-level courses). Epgy.stanford.edu.ohs 5/9/2012
University of Nebraska Online	52	Accredited, online, NCAA-approved. Foundational through AP courses. Individual courses or full diploma. Open enrollment. Five to 52 weeks to complete a course. Go to: highschool.nebraska.edu

Other

School Name	Page Number	Information
DACOR Bacon House Foundation	80, 84	Offers Dreyfus scholarships up to $10,000 to children and grandchildren of FSOs attending Yale or Hotchkiss. Contact dacor@dacorbacon.org
Family Liaison Office, Department of State	75	Information and resources for Foreign Service families Contact FLOAskEducation@State.gov
Foreign Service Youth Foundation	82	A support network for U.S. for Foreign Service youth worldwide Contact fsyf@fsyf.org



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Do not compose your essay on the application screen itself—there have been too many cautionary tales of essays being garbled or lost.

Continued from p. 62

mentioned elsewhere on the application. Your achievements, grades and activities will all be listed elsewhere, and your main essay will be showing something of your character and personality.

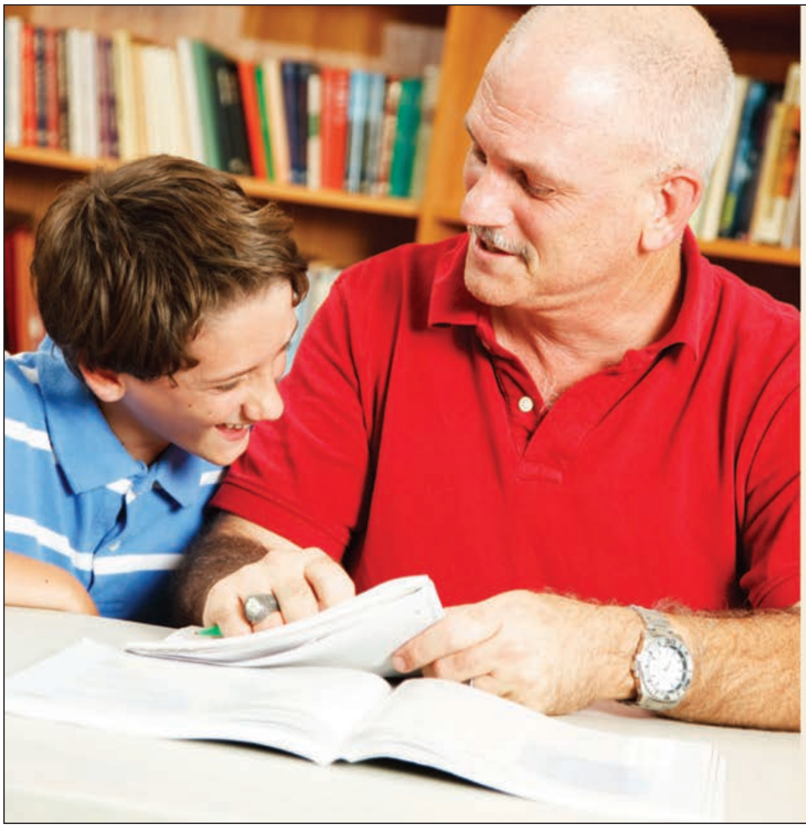
Here you can add something extra, but again—only if it's something new. If you have not yet cited your Foreign Service lifestyle and all the places you've lived, now's your chance. If being overseas meant that certain courses or activities weren't offered to you, such as U.S. history, or American football, you could explain that here—especially if you have taken an online course, done extra reading or started a local American football club in your host country, as a way of dealing with the deficits in your education or experience. If you've experienced an evacuation, for instance, or have developed an unusual passion overseas that isn't reflected in the rest of the application, you can use this space to elaborate on it.

Give Yourself Extra Time

Finally, remember that while applying from overseas may give you an advantage in the application pile, a poor Internet connection in a Third World country may well put you at a disadvantage, given the Common App's current online glitches.

If the Common Application wants to set itself up as the gateway for all U.S. college applicants, it will have to ramp up its customer service and engage in a little "public diplomacy" for the sake of its national image. Meanwhile, the new essay prompts are a definite improvement, and they lend themselves well to the Foreign Service experience.

So, take advantage of that, and be sure to give yourself extra time to complete and submit your application—just in case. ■



ARCHIVE OF EDUCATION ARTICLES

Go to www.afsa.org/educationarticles

The ABCs of Education Allowances
by Pamela Ward

Flying Solo — Going to College from Overseas: A Guide for Parents
by Rebecca Grappo

The Boarding School Option: A Tent for a Global Nomad
by Pamela Ward

When Boarding Schools Are an Option
by Leah Wallace

Applying to U.S. Colleges: A Primer for FS Teens
by Francesca Huemer Kelly

Ranking College Rankings A Handy Guide
by Mohammad Alhinnawi

Tips on Writing A College Admissions Essay
by Francesca Huemer Kelly

Telepractice: Answers to the Special Ed Puzzle Overseas
by Erin Long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A PARENT'S GUIDE TO PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS

The goal of a psychoeducational evaluation is to enhance a child's ability to be as successful as possible.

BY CHAD C. NELSON

As parents, we strive to help our children as much as possible. Despite our best efforts, however, we may see them struggling in some areas.

These struggles may occur early in a child's development, manifested as difficulty understanding directions, learning to read or managing social interactions. For others, the challenge may arise as a child progresses in age, whether it involves reading comprehension, completing tests in the allotted time period, attending to tasks or organizing tasks and materials.

Despite assistance, these struggles may persist, leaving parents, children and teachers feeling frustrated or helpless. Under those circumstances, a psychoeducational evaluation may open the door to greater understanding of the child by everyone involved and help point the way toward solutions.

For Foreign Service families, in particular, such evaluations may help identify academic intervention and accommodations that may be necessary for children entering or continuing on in American and international schools around the world, as well as transitioning from one school to the other.

For FS children who are beginning to make the transition to college, evaluation can help identify accommodations that may be necessary in college. It can also help students prepare for higher education by identifying the ways in which they learn most efficiently.

What Is It?

Psychoeducational evaluation is a process by which a trained professional works with those involved in a child's learning or development to identify the child's strengths and weaknesses. Its goal is to enhance everyone's ability to help the child be as successful as possible.

People involved in the process often include you, your child, your child's teachers and, possibly, even your child's pediatrician.

Such an evaluation can answer many questions. For instance:

- What kind of learner is my child?
- Why is my child struggling in one subject, but not others?
- Why does my child cry at the thought of school or doing homework?
- Why have my child's grades declined?
- Why do I have to repeat myself over and over to get my child to do something?
- Why is my child struggling to make friends?

Chad C. Nelson is a licensed psychologist in private practice in the Lutherville, Md., area. He specializes in the evaluation of learning, attention and emotional disorders in children, adolescents and young adults. Dr. Nelson can be reached at doctorcnelson@comcast.net.

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- Why is my child misbehaving in class?
- Why is my child so nervous?
- Why does my child seem so disorganized and lazy?
- Why is my college student struggling with the demands that are placed on him or her?

While every evaluator is different, psychoeducational evaluations typically involve five areas of questioning and evaluation.

1. **Background information and developmental history.** To gain a comprehensive picture of your child, it will be important for the evaluator to have a full understanding of your child's development leading up to the evaluation.

Often evaluators will inquire about your child's birth history, developmental history, medical history, academic history, social/emotional history and family history. Areas of concern—and when they first became areas of concern—will also be assessed, as well as your impressions of your child's strengths and weaknesses.

Some parents believe that only a "clean slate" approach to testing will lead to an unbiased assessment of their child. Evaluators, however, don't let this information guide their evaluation; rather, they utilize it to help in a diagnostic formulation and in planning an appropriate intervention for your child.

2. **Assessment of abilities (cognitive functioning).** When assessing a child's abilities, the examiner administers a series of measures to determine how your child learns, as well as their ability to process information and formulate responses. These measures often include verbal and visual tests to examine verbal reasoning, nonverbal reasoning and certain types of memory, as well as the speed at which your child processes

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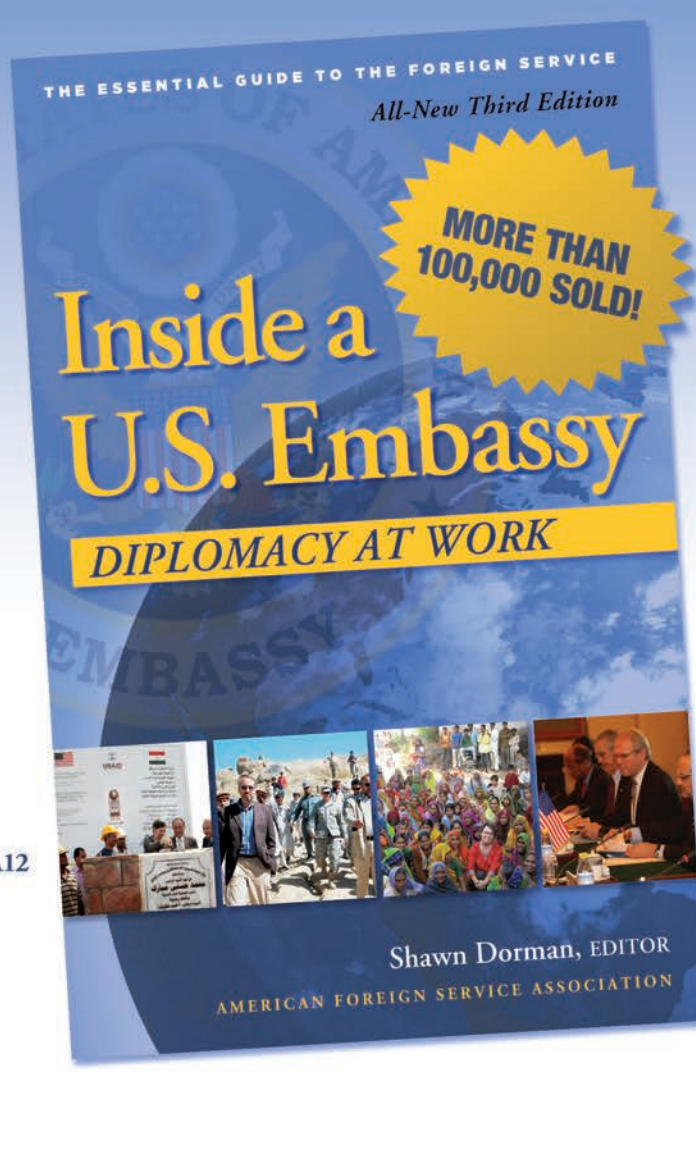

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Evaluation can also help students prepare for higher education by identifying the ways in which they learn most efficiently.

information and formulates responses.

In addition to the scores that these measures generate, examiners also gain a great deal of information from how children approach and solve problems. Do they talk out loud when attempting to solve complex tasks? Do they work at their own pace, completing a task to the best of their ability?

Are they impulsive in their responses (answering without weighing all possible options)? Do they experience difficulty with complex directions and instructions? Do they become anxious when they know they are being timed? Do they become overwhelmed when they perceive the task to be too great for them to accomplish?

These are just a few of the questions that will be answered to gain an assessment of the child's abilities.

3. **Assessment of processing.** While cognitive assessment is a thorough process that helps determine the strengths and weaknesses a child possesses, there are other measures that also help in filling out your child's learning profile. These include speech and language processing, auditory processing and other forms of memory, attention, organization and visual-motor processing.

4. **Assessment of academic functioning**. Achievement, or academic, assessment is carried out to assist in understanding your child's academic strengths and weaknesses. Tasks involving reading, writing, spelling and mathematics are assessed for general academic skill; in many instances, academic fluency and efficiency are also measured.

Evaluators often supplement general academic measures if they see that

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement June 2012

Telepractice: An Answer to the Special Ed Puzzle Overseas?

BY ERIN LONG

One day in the summer of 2006, my husband came home from work and told me about an e-mail he had received from a fellow Foreign Service officer. The officer asked my husband if I could provide speech therapy for his daughter if they came to post. The answer, of course, was yes. But what interested me was how this family had found me.

Facing a move to a new post with a child who had recently been identified as needing speech therapy, this little girl's mother had been scouring the world for professional assistance. I cannot imagine how much time she put into this search, but she must have persevered for many hours and days.

Somehow she happened to read an old newsletter from Consulate General Monterrey. And in that particular newsletter she came upon my husband's self-introduction, in which he mentioned that his wife was a speech pathologist.

It seemed a difficult and haphazard approach to finding a speech pathologist, or any special education service for that matter. But I soon came to understand that this is typical of the kind of effort Foreign Service families with a child needing special education services have to undertake before every overseas posting. And it is even more complicated for families that need more than one type of special education provider.

Sometimes appropriate local therapists and teachers are readily available. More often, a family finds some of what they need and patches together the rest, with help from a local teacher or therapist who is not a fluent speaker of English. Whatever the result, the approach is time-consuming, and completely "hit or miss."

The emerging field of telepractice may be the answer for Foreign Service families. Some FS families have already started using the Internet for educational purposes, but the idea of getting professional therapeutic or rehabilitative services online is new and may seem improbable.

A product of the revolution in communications technology, telepractice has only recently come into its own. The following is an overview of this promising new area and a look at its potential to meet FS families' needs. In addition to offering you a window into what online therapy actually looks like from my experience as a professional speech therapist and teleprovider, I hope to be able to answer some questions and inspire you to look into it for yourself.

Erin Long is a speech-language pathologist and founder of Worldwide Speech. Her husband, Jeremy Long, joined the Foreign Service in 2005, and the couple has been posted to Mexico and Brazil. Her complete article is available online at afsa.org/educationarticles.

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The amount of time an evaluator spends with a child can vary from several hours on a single occasion to shorter periods of time on multiple occasions.

a child is experiencing difficulty in a specific area. For example, if a child has trouble reading single words, tests of phonological processing and reading efficiency may also be administered to determine the cause.

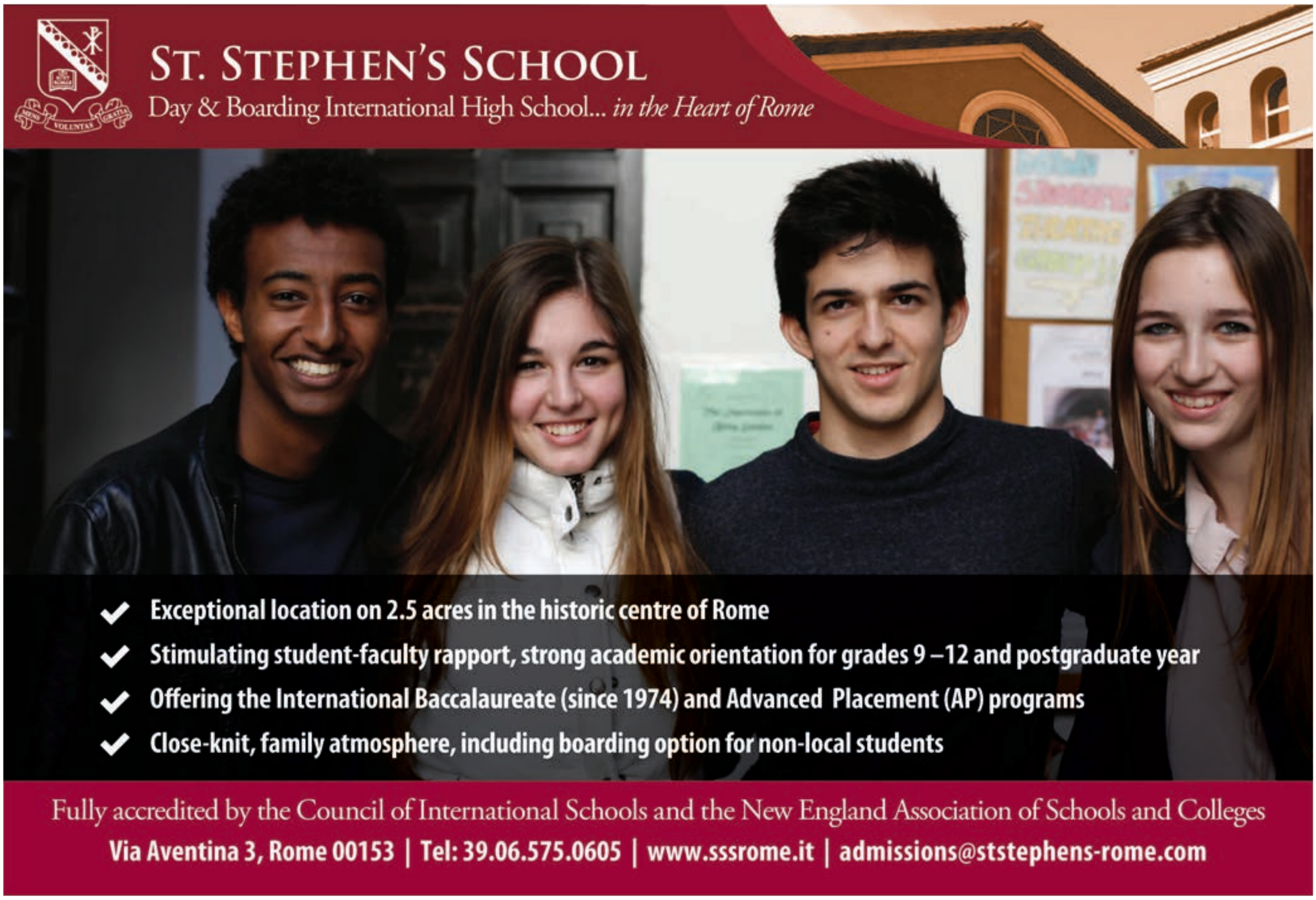
5. **Social/emotional functioning.** In the process of understanding strengths and weaknesses in a child, it is important to examine not only their cognitive and academic functioning, but also their social and emotional functioning. This may be done in a variety of ways, depending on the age of the child and the examiner's approach.

For younger children, social/emotional and behavioral functioning is often assessed through parent questionnaires. Teachers may also be asked to complete questionnaires regarding your child's learning and behavior. As children get older, they may complete questionnaires assessing how they feel; and tests may be administered to measure how they cope with and view social relationships.

Screening the Evaluator

When interviewing a potential evaluator for your child, ask the following questions to help find the "best fit" for you and your child:

- **What is your experience assessing students this age?**



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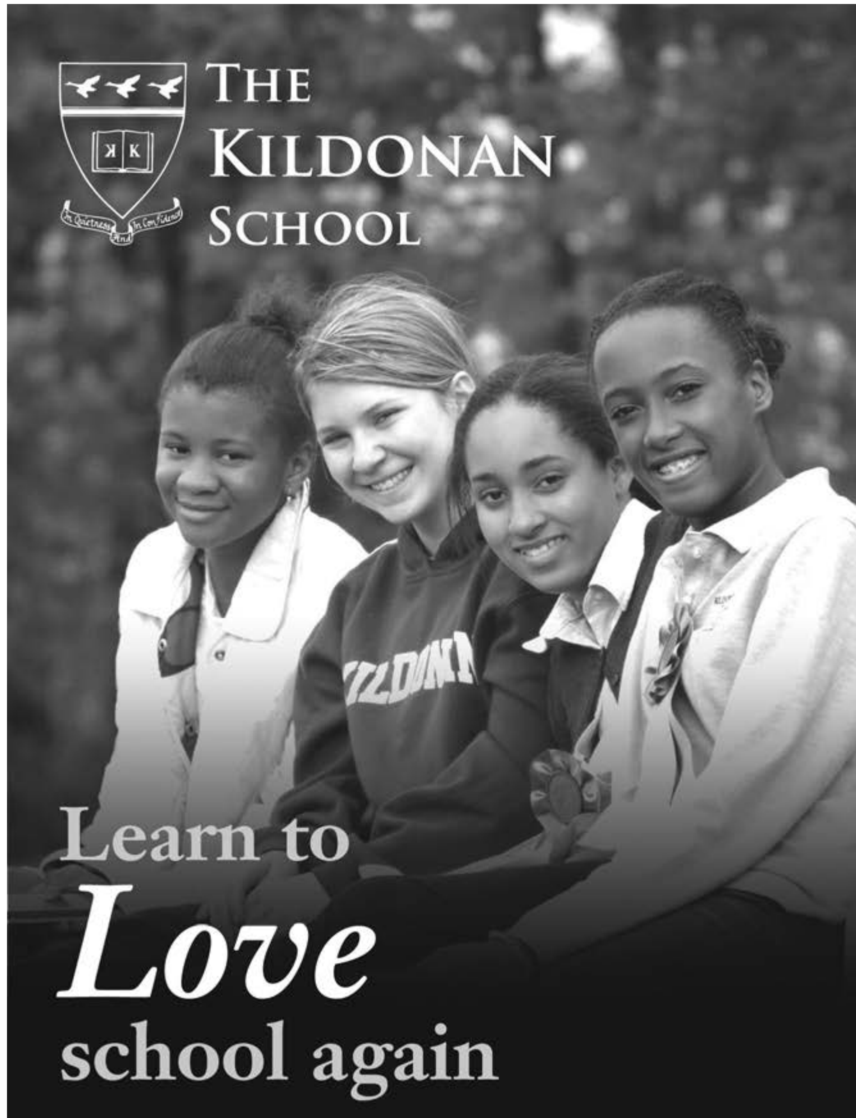

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www.kildonan.org

EMPOWERING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA SINCE 1969

Examiners also gain a great deal of information from how children approach and solve problems.

▪ **What is the cost of the evaluation?**

▪ **Do you participate in insurance?** Some evaluators participate fully in insurance; some are out-of-network providers and will complete paperwork to assist you in trying to obtain reimbursement; and others will have nothing to do with insurance.

▪ **How much time will be spent on the evaluation of my child, and what is your rationale for spending that amount of time?** Some evaluators spend several hours, while others spend several days.

▪ **What is included in the evaluation?**

▪ **How long will it take to have completed results and a completed report?**

▪ **Will I receive a copy of the report?** Some evaluators charge an additional fee for a complete evaluation report.

▪ **What will be included in the report?** Some reports will be a simple review of evaluation results, while others will also contain recommendations based on those results.

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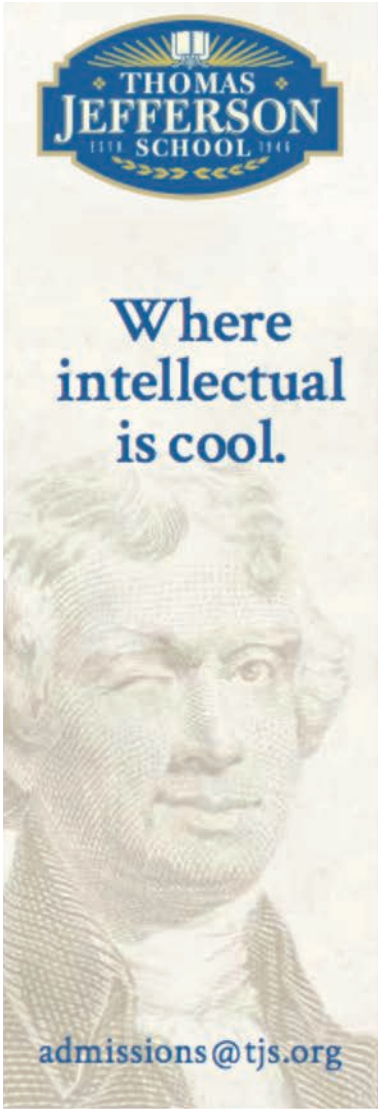

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The feedback session provides you an opportunity not only to hear the results, but ask questions.

What to Expect on Evaluation Day

The amount of time an evaluator spends with a child can vary from several hours on a single occasion to shorter periods of time on multiple occasions. During the evaluation process, parents are often not present in the testing room as the evaluator and child work together.

If you are planning on staying during the evaluation period, bring something to keep you occupied, as you will likely be waiting for several hours. Also, your child may take breaks, so ask if they are allowed to bring a snack or if refreshments will be offered. This is especially important for children who have food allergies.

Here are several suggestions to help prepare for the evaluation, so that your child will be able to perform to his or her true potential.

1. **Prepare your child for the testing experience.** In an effort to normalize the testing experience, it is helpful to let your child know that many children undergo testing to see how best they learn.

With younger children, avoid telling them that they will be playing a bunch of games, as this expectation can lead to disappointment when they discover that they won't be playing the kinds of games they are accustomed to.

Also, the title "doctor" often conjures up thoughts of needles in younger children, so you may wish to tell your child that they will be working with their own teacher or tutor.

With high school and college students, inform them of the process and encourage them to be involved. The more involved they are in the process,

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement June 2010

Online Education: Unprecedented Opportunities

BY KRISTI STREIFFERT

Just as today's Foreign Service families cannot imagine how their predecessors lived without the Internet, we may soon be wondering how we ever got along without online education. Distance learning, as it is sometimes called, offers an unparalleled opportunity for FS family members to target and tailor their educational needs to their circumstances.

Universities offer online undergraduate degrees in nearly every possible topic—from interior design to accounting. There is no one set of programs that works best for FS families. To suggest otherwise would be to ignore the wide array of circumstances of family members (age, educational level, English-language abilities, and interests and talents, to name but a few).

In fact, the plethora of opportunities for online students means that the buyer must beware. The online student must identify his or her educational goals clearly—A degree? A postgraduate degree? A certificate? Continuing education credits? Then he or she carefully chooses the appropriate institution and program.

This is excerpted from the article of the same title by Kristi Streiffert, a Foreign Service spouse and freelance writer, that was published in the June 2010 Schools Supplement. The complete article can be accessed online at www.afsa.org/educationarticles.

Prior to the evaluation, begin recording any concerns or thoughts that you want to share with the evaluator.

the more fully older students "buy into" the evaluation.

2. **Prepare yourself for the testing experience.** Prior to the evaluation, begin collecting documents that may be helpful to the evaluator. These may include items such as report cards, progress reports and previous standardized testing results.

The evaluator may also ask you to complete some forms and questionnaires prior to the evaluation. Given that some of these forms take a considerable amount of time, try to complete them well before the appointment.

In addition to collecting documents, collect your thoughts. Prior to the evaluation, begin recording any concerns or thoughts that you want to share with the evaluator. This ensures that you won't forget important information during your meeting.

3. **Know everyone's schedule when making the appointment.** While it may be less convenient, refrain from scheduling evaluation appointments during "special days" at school. For example, while your child may not miss academic content if the evaluation is scheduled for when the class has an all-day field trip, he or she may resent missing the outing.

It can also be disruptive if one parent is out of town or has a medical procedure planned on the same day.

4. **Ensure your child is well rested.** Parents should refrain from allowing their children to participate in activities such as sleepovers prior to the evaluation, and evaluations shouldn't be scheduled on the day your family or your child

Continued on p. 88

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bgold@dacorbacon.org

From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2012

Moving Forward When Bouncing Back

BY LEAH WALLACE

Transitioning back to the United States is often the most difficult move for Foreign Service kids. "We tend to think the move back to the United States is the easy move," says Connie Hansen, a former coordinator of the Overseas Briefing Center at FSI's Transition Center. "But, in fact, everyone will say that the hardest assignment of all is coming back to Washington, D.C."

It can be a big culture shock because going "home" is expected to be easy, yet it requires preparation, just like moving abroad. Eventually, of course, as with any move, kids develop friendships and find activities and interests. But awareness that returning to the States is different from other moves helps to manage expectations.

As a seasoned Foreign Service parent and the Education and Youth Officer in the Family Liaison Office, let me recommend some tried and tested things you can do to ease your children's transitions:

1. Prepare for the move by doing research—on homes, neighborhoods and educational options—as a family if you can.

2. Anticipate that before, during and after the move your children may seem hesitatnt or frustrated at times.

3. Talk to other foreign Service parents—consider joining the American Foreign Service Parenting Yahoo Group (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSparent/).

4. Help your kids manage their expectations about life in the U.S.

Leah Wallace is the Education & Youth Officer in the State Department's Family Liaison Office. Read her complete article online at afs.org/educationarticles.

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement June 2009

A Vital Point of Contact: The Office of Overseas Schools

BY KRISTIN GRASSO AND CAROL SUTHERLAND

Established in 1964, the Office of Overseas Schools coordinates and administers the Department of State's Overseas Schools Assistance Program.

As all Foreign Service parents know, the quality of education available is a major factor they consider in the bidding process for overseas assignments. Foreign Service personnel being posted overseas who have school-age children should therefore make A/OPR/OS one of their first points of contact.

To reach the Office of Overseas Schools, you can use any of the following methods:

Tel: (202) 261-8200
Fax: (202) 261-8224
E-Mail: overseasschools@state.gov
Internet: www.state.gov/m/a/os
(Contains the list of REOs and their regions)
Intranet: http://aopros.a.state.gov
(Contains the list of REOs and their regions)
Address: 2401 E Street NW (SA-1)
Room H328
Washington DC 20241-0003
Resource Center Hours:
Monday thru Friday,
8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Excerpted from the article of the same title by Kristin Grasso and Carol Sutherland of the Office of Overseas Schools. Read the complete article online at www.afsa.org/educationarticles.

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The ABCs of Education Allowances

BY PAMELA WARD

Employees of government agencies assigned overseas are granted allowances to help defray the cost of an education for their children in kindergarten through 12th grade, one equivalent to that provided by public school systems in the United States.

In most cases, posts abroad are served by one or more English-language, American curriculum schools. The majority of these are nongovernmental, nonprofit, nondenominational, independent schools, usually with a board of directors establishing policy and a superintendent, headmaster or principal as the senior administrator. Even though these schools may be called American, they are not entities of the U.S. government and space is not guaranteed for U.S. embassy children.

Some receive government grants for specific purposes, but these grants represent a small percentage of their overall budget. Children of many nationalities attend these schools—including, in most schools, a significant percentage of host-country students.

The allowances for a specific post are determined by the fees charged by a school identified as providing a basic U.S.-type education. Parents may use this allowance to send their children to a different school of their choice—say, a parochial or foreign-language institution—as long as the cost does not exceed that of the "base" school. If the alternative school is more expensive than the "base" school, the difference would be an out-of-pocket expense for the parents.

An allowance covers only expenses for those services usually available without cost in American public schools, including tuition, transportation and textbooks. Fees for lunches, field trips, computers or school uniforms are not covered, even if required by the school.

Parents may also elect to home-school their children while at post, using a home study program or a virtual online educational program. They will receive an allowance to purchase materials and services while posted abroad, but this allowance will not be continued if they are reassigned to the United States.

If a foreign country does not have a secular, English-language school with an American curriculum, or has such a school that goes only through certain grades, an away-from-post or "boarding school" allowance is provided. A lump sum, varying from post to post, is allotted to cover the estimated cost of tuition, room, board and travel to post during school vacations. Parents may choose the boarding school they prefer.

There is no special funding for parents or students to visit schools in advance of application or for an interview, even if one is required. Some schools will agree to do an interview via Skype or Facetime. The allowance will not be paid for a child to attend a school in the United States if there is a parent (natural, adoptive or step) residing there, because the assumption in that case is that the child could attend a public school.

The U.S. government does not provide an allowance for college or other post-secondary education. However, one round-trip per year to post is provided for students studying at universities in the United States through the Educational Travel Allowance. In 2006, Congress amended the statute to offer this allowance to students studying at universities abroad. Also allowed is the shipment of 250 pounds of unaccompanied air baggage or the equivalent cost in storage for each college or boarding school student.

All funding for education is processed by the financial management officer at the post where the employee is assigned. At some posts the embassy or consulate works very closely with the school or schools, and the billing is handled directly. In other instances, the employee will pay a school fee, or pay for an airline ticket or storage, and then submit bills to the FMO for reimbursement. Although a student may start school at the beginning of a semester if a parent has been officially assigned to a post, the parent may not be reimbursed for any school expenses until he or she arrives at post.

There are several offices in the Department of State prepared to help you understand how the educational allowances work, and what choices you have for your children. These include the Office of Overseas Schools (www.state.gov/m/a/os), the Office of Allowances (www.state.gov/m/a/als) and the Family Liaison Office (www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm).

We hope that you will get in touch with us if you have any questions about your situation. Although these offices are part of the Department of State, the same allowances apply to most civilian federal employees under chief-of-mission authority overseas. For information or assistance contact FLOAskEducation@state.gov or call (202) 647-1076.

Pamela Ward is a regional education officer in the State Department's Office of Overseas Schools. She served previously as the education and youth officer in the Family Liaison Office. Her article, originally published in the June 2007 FSJ, *has been updated to reflect developments since then.*

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If it makes you more comfortable, ask another family member to be present to make sure you understand all of the information that is given to you.

Continued from p. 84

returns from an out-of-town experience.

For example, the day after returning from summer camp may not be the best day to schedule an evaluation. Instead, have your child wait a day and rest prior to the evaluation.

5. **Make sure your child is well-fed and hydrated.** A good breakfast and plenty to drink prior to the evaluation are important. Ask the evaluator if your child can bring along a snack and beverage, as well. Some children benefit greatly from having a break time to get a snack.

After the Evaluation

The feedback session is one of the most important aspects of the evaluation. It provides you an opportunity not only to hear the results, but ask questions. Ask any question that you may have, and bring something to take notes.

If it makes you more comfortable, ask another family member to be present to make sure you understand all of the information that is given to you.

Depending on his or her age, there may be a feedback session for your child, as well. By the time children are in middle school, they are often curious regarding their performance.

They may also benefit from hearing that they are capable students, but simply require accommodations, different study strategies or certain interventions to help them be as successful as possible.

You will also receive a written report, and should read through it several times

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement June 2011

Promoting Your Child's Emotional Health

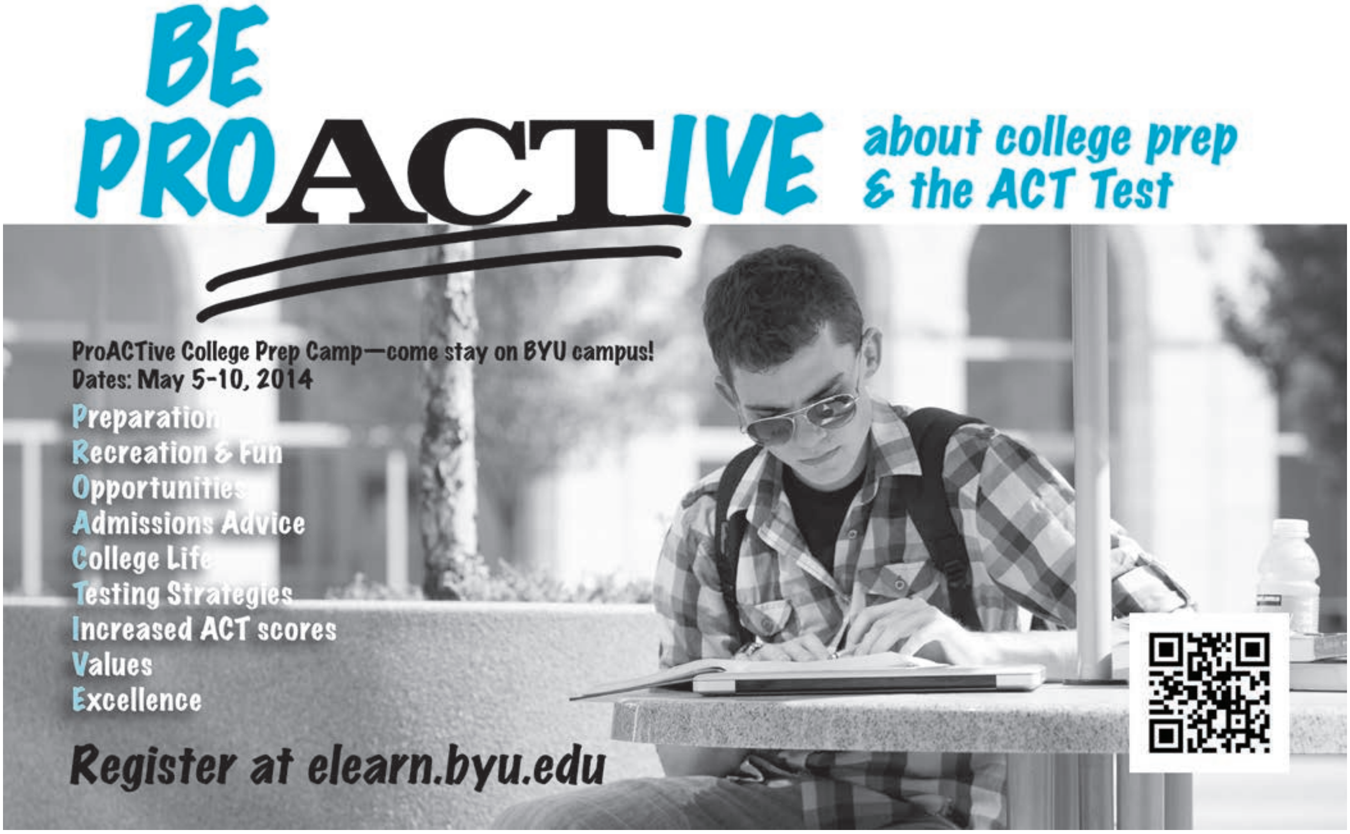
BY REBECCA GRAPPO

Despite the spread of globalization and the sharp increase in the size of the American expatriate population around the world, a clear understanding of the emotional and psychological demands and implications of an internationally mobile lifestyle—for children, in particular—is still at a premium.

And, at one time or another, most Foreign Service parents ask themselves the same questions: What am I doing to my kid? Is this globally nomadic lifestyle a good thing or a bad thing?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions; but there are ways to protect and promote the emotional well-being and resilience of internationally mobile children.

This is excerpted from the article by the same title by Rebecca Grappo, an FS spouse and certified educational planner. The complete article can be accessed online at www.afsa.org/educationarticles.



The White House Weighs in on College Rankings

Fall is college rankings season, and in recent months the usual suspects have issued their latest reports: *U.S. News & World Report's* "2014 Best Colleges," *Forbes'* "America's Top Colleges 2013," *Kiplinger's* "College Rankings," *Princeton Review's* "Best 378 Colleges" and *Washington Monthly's* "Different Kind of College Ranking."

This fall, the college rankings world is also entertaining the prospect of a new player. In August President Barack Obama directed the Department of Education to develop and publish a new college ratings system that would be available for students and families before the 2015 college year. The aim is to help students compare the value offered by colleges and to encourage educational institutions to improve.

In public hearings around the country, the DOE will gather input from students, parents, teachers, state leaders, college presidents and others on how to construct the ratings. They will be based on such measures as access (e.g., percentage of students receiving Pell grants), affordability (e.g., average tuition, scholarships and loan debt) and outcomes (e.g., graduation and transfer rates, graduate earnings and advanced degrees of graduates).

Once the ratings are well developed, the administration plans to seek legislation making the new rating system the basis for allocating the more than $150 billion in federal aid to higher education annually.

In addition to helping ensure that taxpayer dollars for higher education are used wisely, the initiative gives a boost to the shift toward a focus on outcomes in college rankings.

Even *U.S. News & World Report,* publisher of the most popular "prestige" ratings, now also does a separate ranking of the "Best Value Schools," in which the net cost of attendance for a student receiving the average level of need-based aid is taken into account along with a school's academic quality.

Following release of its "2014 Best Colleges" rankings in September, *U.S. News* methodologist Robert Morse noted that the president's rating plan is very different from the *U.S. News'* rankings. But, he points out, if approved, the president's plan would make comparative student outcomes data available from colleges for the first time, since the DOE can require schools to accurately report that data.

"The bottom line," Morse adds, "is that more information and more data are better for everyone."

—Susan Brady Maitra, Senior Editor

The exercise can help ease the frustration that both you and your child may be experiencing.

before sharing it with the school or with other professionals. You will then know exactly what information the school is seeing, and also be in a position to contact the evaluator before it is shared should there be any misinformation included in the report.

Typical Outcomes

In most cases, parents are correct in perceiving that their child has difficulty in one or more areas. As part of the evaluation process, diagnoses are made to assist in identifying these areas of weakness more precisely.

Typical findings as a result of psychoeducational evaluation are learning disorders (e.g., reading disorder, mathematics disorder and/or writing disorder), language disorders (e.g., weakness in expressive language, receptive language and/or auditory processing) and attention disorders (with or without executive dysfunction).

Additional factors that may contribute to your child's struggle may include problems with retention, processing speed or anxiety.

In some instances, parents have no concerns regarding their child's learning. They simply want their child to understand how he or she learns, and how best to study. In these cases, the evaluation may lead not to a diagnosis, but to strategies for learning most efficiently and effectively.

How to Use a Psychoeducational Evaluation

Once you have had your child evaluated and received the report, what do you do with the information? While some parents are concerned with the

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2011

College Applications Checklist for 11th-Graders

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

When it comes to college admissions, junior year of high school is crunch time. This is when you're expected to take the most challenging courses, get the best grades and start racking up those SAT or ACT scores. Junior year is the last full academic year that factors into acceptance decisions from colleges. It also provides an opportunity to bring up a mediocre grade point average and polish your resumé.

In addition, you can finish—yes, finish—a whole swath of the applications process in 11th grade so that you do not get hit with a ton of pressure the next fall.

This no-nonsense, month-by-month guide from December through August of your junior year will help you get a head start on the college application process and sail through your senior year.

Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a college applications essay tutor and writes frequently on educational issues. The college applications checklist for 11th-graders in the December 2011 issue of the FSJ *is available online at www.afsa.org/educationarticles.*

College Applications: Books

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges with Web site Access. Barron's Educational Series, 2013. Comprehensive reference book with statistics on all four-year accredited institutions in the United States.

The Best 378 Colleges, 2014 Edition. Princeton Review, 2013. Excellent all-around guide that weeds out the top ten percent universities for you, including humorous best-and-worst lists.

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges. Pope, Loren. Penguin, 2012.

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, 2014: Students on Campus Tell You What You Really Want to Know, 40th Edition. Yale Daily News Staff, ed. St. Martins Griffin, 2013. One of the most interesting college admissions books out there because of its emphasis on student feedback quotes about their colleges.

Cracking the SAT, 2014 Edition. Princeton Review, 2013.

The Official SAT Study Guide, 3rd edition. The College Board, 2013.

Crash Course for the ACT, 4th edition. Princeton Review, 2012.

In many cases, the information and diagnoses are necessary to qualify for special education services, as well as accommodations on standardized testing.

"labels" that an evaluation may evoke, the information and diagnoses provided in reports are often useful for guiding services and accommodations in the school and with other professionals, such as tutors.

In many cases, the information and diagnoses are necessary to qualify for special education services, as well as accommodations on standardized testing. This is especially true when applying for accommodations in college and for college entrance examinations.

Sharing the information with others working with your child may also help to clear up misconceptions. For example, certain educators may be viewing your child as "lazy," when in fact a language, learning or attention disorder is the problem.

If a psychoeducational evaluation is of interest to you, act now, as many evaluators are booked far in advance. Ask friends, teachers and pediatricians about their experiences with certain professionals. Call them to see if you are comfortable with that person, and whether or not your child would be comfortable with them.

While it can seem somewhat daunting to a parent who has never had experience with such an evaluation, the psychoeducational evaluation process can be very enlightening for all those working with your child. Whatever its findings, the exercise can help ease the frustration that both you and your child may be experiencing. ■

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May 3 — register by Apr 4
June 7 — register by May 9

These dates are tentative.

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ACT (register online at www.act.org)

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Please note that the ACT is not offered on all dates in all countries.

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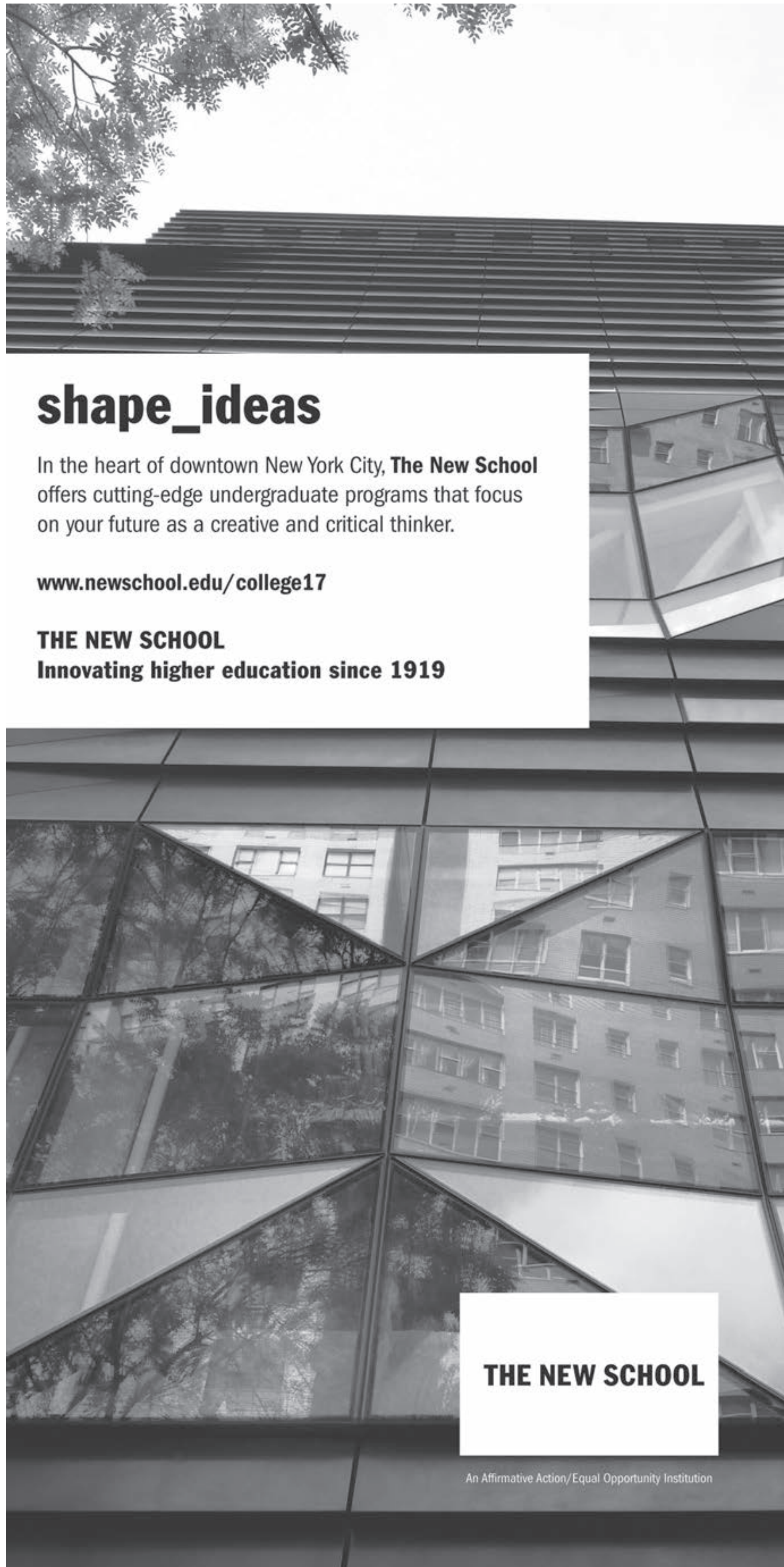


A Special Relationship's Not-So-Special Ambassadors

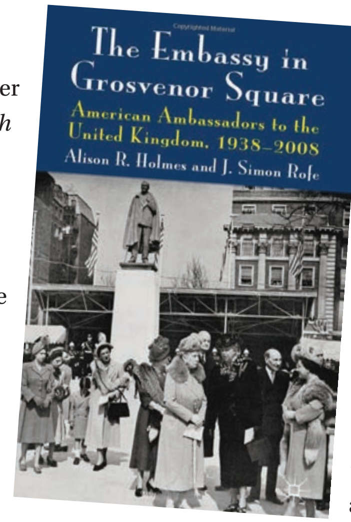
The Embassy in Grosvenor Square: American Ambassadors to the United Kingdom, 1938-2008
Alison R. Holmes and J. Simon Rofe, et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, $95, hardcover, 392 pages.
Reviewed by Dennis Jett

This is a very useful book, and not just for those who have an interest in Anglo-American relations. The contributions by J. Simon Rofe, Alison R. Holmes and 11 other academics, nearly all of them historians, are extremely well researched, enjoyable explorations of the role of Washington's envoy to the Court of St. James's. Collectively, they illuminate how much has changed in American diplomacy over the past seven decades—and how much has not.

In the earliest years of the U.S.-U.K. relationship, many of the American chiefs of mission in London went on to the highest positions in government. Five would become president, nine were later Secretary of State, and four were both.

Today, London is still one of the most prestigious U.S. diplomatic posts—but it has lately become a prized destination for very rich, white, male political appointees (international experience strictly optional). The last four men to live in Winfield House each contributed an average of $500,000 to presidential and congressional campaigns, and "bundled" hundreds of thousands more from their friends.

Yet while ambassadors to the Court of St. James's are appointed by the president, few have been close friends of his. This has frequently led to a distant relationship with the White House, if not a prickly one. As Michael Fullilove documented earlier this year in *Rendezvous with Destiny: How Franklin D. Roosevelt and Five Extraordinary Men Took America into the War and into the World* (see the review in the Oct. *FSJ*), FDR used a succession of special envoys to bypass Joseph Kennedy once the ambassador decided Britain was going to lose World War II.



Given the importance and complexity of the Anglo-American relationship, one might wonder why we so often send ambassadors to London with little to recommend them besides the size of their bank accounts.

In these less geopolitically fraught times, the U.S. ambassador still has many important duties, of course. For instance, now that anyone can hop on a plane at Dulles and be in London seven hours later, the embassy gets about 20,000 official visitors a year. Because of the wide array of important contacts to be made on their behalf, our man on the other side of the pond must handle endless social obligations and satisfy a constant demand for public diplomacy.

Some political appointees in London have performed that function very well. Others, like John J. Lewis, the heir to the Johnson Wax fortune, disliked such tasks so much that it makes one wonder why he wanted the position in the first place.

Another curious choice for the job was Robert Tuttle, who inherited an auto dealership and parlayed it into a job in the personnel office of the Reagan White House. There he proposed an ideologue for every ambassadorship and succeeded in raising the percentage of political appointees to a level not seen since the Hoover administration. Why someone with such obvious contempt for the Foreign Service, and government in general, would later want to run an embassy with a staff of a thousand is a mystery, but perhaps even used car salesmen worry about their resumés.

This book is also a good reminder that even the best of friends often have profound differences. I got a taste of that when, as Argentine desk officer, I had to explain in a BBC interview why we were renewing military sales to Buenos Aires little more than a year after the Falklands (Malvinas) War.

Given the importance and complexity of the Anglo-American relationship, one might wonder why we so often send ambassadors with little to recommend them besides the size of their bank accounts. Then again, perhaps I just answered my own question. ■

Dennis Jett, an FSO from 1972 to 2000, was ambassador to Mozambique and Peru, and deputy chief of mission in Malawi and Liberia, among many other assignments. Now a professor of international affairs at Penn State University, he is the author of Why Peacekeeping Fails *(Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) and is writing a book on American ambassadors that Palgrave Macmillan will publish in 2014.*

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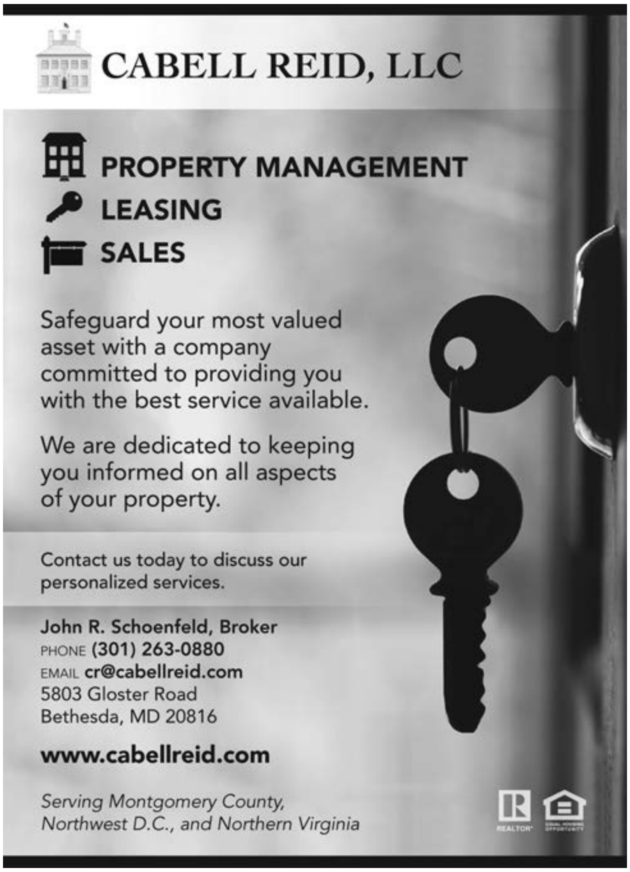
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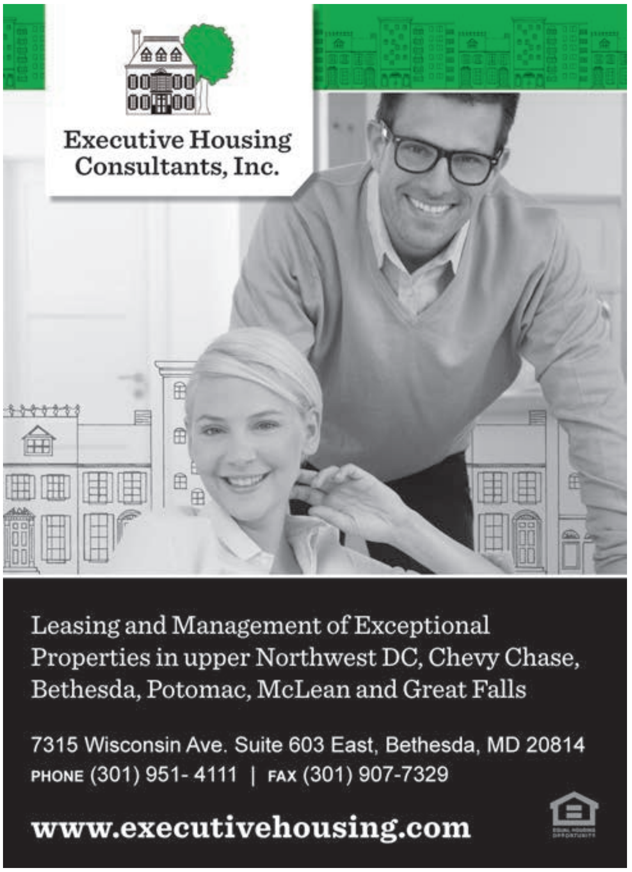
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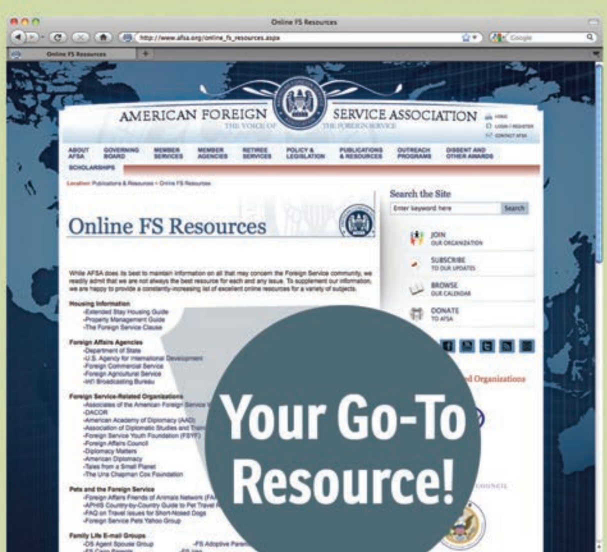

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Despair, Hope, Perseverance

BY ROBERT E. GRIBBIN

Most of the Mountain Club's members were Makerere University graduate students in their 20s; over the next decade virtually all of them would die of AIDS.

AIDS cut a wide swath through Uganda and much of Africa in the late 1980s. Newspapers were filled with notices of deaths "after a short illness," but everyone knew the code. Fueling the panic, the disease mainly struck down those in the prime of life, many of them from the burgeoning middle class.

Even with dozens of medical researchers around the globe focusing on the malady, no cure was found, and treatment remained quite rudimentary for several years. There was, however, awareness that HIV/AIDS was heterosexually transmitted, so changing people's sexual practices would diminish the infection rate.

With that in mind, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's government launched a massive public campaign. In one memorable television clip, the minister of health demonstrated condom use in the Kampala city market by putting one on a banana. The health ministry also publicized the slogan "zero grazing," using the metaphor of a cow tied to a post that could only eat in a circle (a zero).

Other initiatives included a network of counseling centers for the infected and their families, and advertising campaigns to diminish the shame attached to the epidemic's origins as a sexually transmitted disease.

Even so, the relentless HIV/AIDS epidemic took a mounting toll. All organizations were hard hit. The Ugandan colonel in charge of army training confided to me that he had to have 10 soldiers tested for AIDS to find two who were not infected and thus eligible for U.S. training.

Along with several Embassy Kampala colleagues, I had joined the Mountain Club of Uganda for hiking expeditions to nearby rock faces and to the Mountains of the Moon. Most of the club's members were Makerere University graduate students in their 20s; over the next decade virtually all of them would die of AIDS.

Between 1987 and 1990 alone, at least seven Foreign Service Nationals at the embassy died of the disease, along with a dozen local guards. Local staff persuaded the administrative officer to rework their benefits package so that at death, an employee's male relatives (acting in accordance with tribal custom) could not seize his or her benefits, to the detriment of the spouse and children.

Yet throughout this period, hope flourished—however unfounded. East African newspapers made much of a Kenyan scientist's claim that he had discovered a cure, proudly announcing that Africa was in the forefront of science. Alas, clinical trials showed the remedy was marginally useful, at best.

Similarly, Kampala's *New Vision* newspaper reported one day that a woman in Masaka, about 60 miles south of the capital, had cured her daughter of the "slims" (as AIDS was popularly known) by feeding her clay from her backyard. Hundreds of people converged on the site, quickly turning it into a deep pit.

I asked several of my contacts about this, expecting to find them skeptical. But they were believers. As one told me: "Eating it might work; if not, it's just dirt. I am going this afternoon." Of course, it did not work, and that story soon faded away, as well.

What *did* work was the government's campaign. Teaching about AIDS, removing the sexual stigma and encouraging condom use and changed sexual behavior reduced the infection rate enough to hold the line until anti-retroviral medicines became available. Through the 1990s, Uganda was hailed as having the best response to the disease on the continent.

Today the country is still coping with HIV/AIDS, and has recently seen an uptick in the infection rate. But compared with 30 years ago, its society is thriving and its economy is prospering.

Still, as mankind observes yet another World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, one can't help wondering how much further along Uganda might be if it had not lost tens of thousands of its most productive citizens far too early in life. ■

Robert Gribbin was the DCM in Kampala from 1988 to 1991. Later he served as ambassador to the Central African Republic and to Rwanda. He is the author of a memoir titled In the Aftermath of Genocide: The U.S. Role in Rwanda *and two novels,* State of Decay *and* Murder in Mombasa.

LOCAL LENS

BY BOB MEISTER ■ MOSCOW, RUSSIA

The Novodevichy Convent in Moscow, founded in 1524, was built as a fortress at the curve of the Moskva River. It became an important part of the southern defensive belt of the capital, and was known to have sheltered many ladies from the Russian royal families. ■

Bob Meister, a native of California, has been with the State Department for six years as a Financial Management Officer. Now deputy FMO in Kabul, he has also served in Moscow and N'Djamena. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Bob was employed in the film/entertainment/animation production industry in Los Angeles. He took this photo in March 2013, using a Nikon Coolpix.

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