

THE **FOREIGN SERVICE** JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

JULY-AUGUST 2016



CAREER DIPLOMACY TODAY

TALKING ABOUT **TRAUMA**

LIFE AFTER THE FOREIGN SERVICE
PART II

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Does Concern for Your Family's Future Keep You Up at Night?

This summer the U.S. State Department has released travel alerts for U.S. Citizens due to the risk of potential terrorist attacks throughout Europe, in addition to a series of alerts and warning across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. This emphasizes what Foreign Service officers already know – that there are inherent risks in every post. These concerns, however, do not keep Foreign Service officers from doing their jobs with passion and commitment. The possibility of the unthinkable occurring cannot be ignored – that a foreign service officer could lose their life in service to their country.

No one wants to plan for a premature loss of life, but it is necessary for peace of mind. Many fail to consider how their family would manage after such a loss: how would their standard of living be maintained, how would mortgage payments be afforded or education costs be paid? Every member of the diplomatic community must ensure they have an adequate and sufficient life insurance policy.

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¹Source:LIMRA and Time.com. ²Subject to meeting policy requirements. For policies under \$500,000. ³Death all causes except in locations defined as "high-risk," which also require medical underwriting. Limits and restrictions apply. Subject to certain country restrictions. Coverage is excluded in the United States and Canada and their territories and possessions in addition to Iran, India, and North Korea.

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BY FORMER AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE

On the Cover: Flags of all countries with which the United States maintains diplomatic relations are on display in the State Department's main lobby. When new members of the U.S. Foreign Service receive their first assignments, each is given a small flag of the country to which he or she is headed. Photo: AFSA/Susan Maitra.

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Strengthening the Foreign Service

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

Welcome to the July-August edition of the *FSJ*, devoted to the important topic of the Foreign Service career.

One of the achievements I am most proud of from my first year as AFSA president is creating capacity for AFSA to fulfill its role as the principal advocate for the long-term well-being of the Foreign Service.

As a union, AFSA advises and defends members who run into trouble and ensures systemwide fairness and due process. As a member organization, AFSA seeks to be responsive to member concerns, particularly widely shared concerns.

At the same time, as the professional association for the U.S. Foreign Service, AFSA must carve out resources to ensure that we play a forward-looking, strategic role as the voice of the Foreign Service.

We have taken the first steps toward that goal by creating the Professional Policy Issues directorate, headed by former FSO Maria Livingston. Even in its earliest stages, PPI has enabled AFSA to speak authoritatively about the shape and structure of our workforce.

After a dry spell of 14 years since the last State authorization bill was approved by Congress, this year three versions moved rapidly through the Senate and House with troubling provisions for, among other

things, lateral entry into the Foreign Service.

AFSA quickly marshaled arguments against lateral entry. It is

AFSA must carve out resources to ensure that we play a forward-looking, strategic role as the authoritative voice of the Foreign Service.

not true, as the bills posit, that mid-career professionals are somehow precluded from joining the Foreign Service. AFSA's informal survey of the incoming classes we host here at headquarters tells us that upwards of a third of new entrants are in fact highly skilled mid-career professionals.

With 17,000 applicants each year for roughly 370 (or fewer) new entry-level officer (ELO) positions, the lateral-entry provision is manifestly unnecessary to attract top talent.

Further, lateral entry would, in fact, cause harm by adding to already full mid-ranks, exacerbating the current challenge: filling the soaring number of entry-level consular adjudicator positions. Hiring numbers are limited by budget constraints, and hiring unnecessary entrants at mid-levels costs positions at entry-level, where the need is great.

In a similar vein, AFSA is pleased to have played a constructive role in advocating do-no-harm solutions to the shortage of entry-level consular adjudicators. By fully embracing the Consular Fellows Program (which provides consular adjudicators on short-term appointments using the limited non-career appointment authority in the Foreign Service Act of 1980), we hope to work with the Director General to realize his goal of offering every entry-level officer an in-cone assignment.

We see encouraging early signs that

this approach is bearing fruit. While members of the 185th A-100 class expressed concern that their career development would be impeded by years of delay—multiple consecutive consular tours, regardless of cone—before their first shot at in-cone service, members of the 186th class were upbeat about A-100 briefings describing the DG's goal of one tour in cone for each ELO.

Be sure to read Andy Kelly's Speaking Out piece for more on early career trade-offs—and join the discussion.

Finally, another note on joining the discussion: A big thank you to members who accepted my invitation to participate in a structured conversation about the Foreign Service. After meeting with chiefs of mission in March, we met with three groups of 12 FS-1 State FSOs in April before moving to FS-2s in May, followed by FS-3s in June.

After the summer transfer season, we will resume with sessions with State specialists and then hear from other constituencies (USAID, FCS, FAS, APHIS and BBG).

The response to this inreach effort has been overwhelmingly positive, and the insights we gain are invaluable as we shape positions informed by a nuanced understanding of member views. The sessions are also a real joy for me, a chance to engage with the extraordinary people who answered the call to serve. ■



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

Career Diplomacy Today

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Welcome to the summer double issue of the *Journal*. This month we focus on various aspects of the Foreign Service career.

First, we take a close look at the state of family member employment, an issue that can and sometimes does determine whether a member of the Foreign Service stays or goes.

One major barrier to employment at post has long been the wait for security clearance approval. Each new posting has required a new clearance, which always takes months and, in some cases, can take as long as a full tour to get.

But as former FSJ associate editor and family member Debra Blome was working on the article, State announced the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps, which may offer a real step forward. The bottom-line benefit is that once family members do get that security clearance, they will be able to carry it with them from post to post.

What about when both spouses are in the Foreign Service? Tandems have their own set of unique challenges, as described in “Tandem Couples: Serving Together, Apart,” by FSOs Fred Odisho and Whitney Dubinsky. They argue for more creative policies to help ensure

that tandems can be assigned to the same post at the same time.

In “A Roadmap for New Hires: 30 Rules to Survive and

Thrive,” Ambassador (ret.) Stephen McFarland presents a set of suggestions—a permanent To-Do list—for developing the unique attributes of a Foreign Service professional.

Finally, we look at the intake process, how to join the Foreign Service. Becoming an FSO for State is one of the most competitive processes for any career. In 2008, the process was revamped and a “total candidate” approach was adopted.

We are grateful to the Board of Examiners—the people who run the hiring process—for providing a guide from the source in “Examining State’s Foreign Service Officer Hiring Today,” by FSO and BEX Assessor Glenn Guimond. This is the article to share with friends who are considering the career. And for our student readers considering this path, we offer a three-page list of “State Department Opportunities for Students.”

This month’s Speaking Out column addresses the career, too, as entry-level officer Andrew Kelly suggests ways to reform entry-level assignments.

Following on our coverage of mental health care issues in the January-February issue, retired FSO Angela Dickey shares ideas for addressing the effects of work in high-stress environments.

And, as promised, we bring you Part II of “Life After the Foreign Service: What We’re Doing Now.” Part I’s 22 essays, published in the May issue, proved popular with readers, and Part II (25 essays) will surely also resonate. ■



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

CALLING ALL FOREIGN SERVICE AUTHORS!

The November 2016 *Foreign Service Journal* will highlight recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

Authors from the Foreign Service community whose books have been published in 2015 or 2016 are invited to send us a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book, by September 1. (Books that have been featured in a previous edition of “In Their Own Write” will not be featured again.)

Deadline for submissions is September 1.

For more information, please email journal@afsa.org.

Send your materials and new book to:

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Attention: In Their Own Write

Assuming Responsibility for a Dark Period

I very much enjoyed the May issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*, as I do every month. However, the article by Jeffrey Glassman, “Israelit Friedhof: A Jewish Cemetery in Vienna,” presents the author’s personal assessment of how Austria has dealt with the darkest period in its history rather than a factual analysis of this delicate subject. That assessment is subjective and could perpetuate obsolete stereotypes.

Mr. Glassman mentions the historic Washington Agreement, signed by the Austrian and U.S. governments in 2001, which finally ended a period during which Austria as a society struggled to accept the facts as to its involvement in the machinery of the Nazi dictatorship.

Contrary to the author’s assessment of the Austrian policies, I am proud to say that our system today is comprehensive, just and often referred to as a best-practice model for restitution laws.

No less an authority than State Department Special Adviser on Holocaust Issues Stuart Eizenstat, in a speech on May 27, 2015, said: “I witnessed and have been deeply moved by how far Austria came from reluctantly and incompletely coming to terms with its complicated World War II role to now becoming a leader in Holocaust justice.”

As the last step in the implementation of Austria’s international obligations arising from the Washington Agreement, the Fund for the Restoration of Jewish Cemeteries in Austria was set up in December 2010.

Managed by the Austrian National Fund, this account has been endowed with a total of 20 million euros by the federal government, to be disbursed over the next 20 years by matching contributions of the cemeteries’ owners

after their conclusion of maintenance agreements with the respective municipalities.

More than 60 Jewish cemeteries throughout Austria will thus be safeguarded from ruin.

Furthermore, the city of Vienna signed a maintenance agreement with the Jewish community on Oct. 1, 2013, to allow for restoration of the single most important project, the Jewish cemetery in Währing that is mentioned in the article. Vienna has already awarded 500,000 euros for the restoration of the janitor’s house there.

Thorsten Eisingerich
Minister, Austrian Diplomatic Service
Director of the Office for Press
& Information
Embassy of Austria
Washington, D.C.

Police Volunteering

I enjoyed reading “From Consul General to Police Volunteer” by Ann Sides in the May *Journal* focus on life after the Foreign Service. I retired in 1995 after a consular career and final tour as consul general in Kingston.

I, too, became a police volunteer in retirement—after a 700-hour police academy, I was sworn in as a Texas Peace Officer. I will be retiring (again) in July from the Brazos County Sheriff’s Office, where I have been an investigator for the past 10 years.

I explain to people who question my career change that police work and Foreign Service officer work are very similar. We make contacts, gather information, write reports and make recom-



mendations to superiors (DA or CA) who decide whether to issue an arrest warrant or, maybe, impose sanctions.

We both serve and protect the American public and enforce laws (although I was told that, as a consular officer, I was not enforcing visa law, just administering it).

I now wear the exact same uniform I wore in the Foreign Service—suit and tie, albeit with room for pistol and handcuffs under my coat.

James Carter
FSO, retired
Bryan, Texas

Consular Work During the Vietnam War

I recently read Lange Schermerhorn’s April 2015 article, “Doing Social Work in Southeast Asia.” Never mind why it took me a year to get around to reading the article, but it was worth the wait—and similarly worthwhile to read other articles about the Foreign Service in Vietnam in that *FSJ* focus marking 40 years since the fall of Saigon.

Without being a scholar of that era—and never having set foot anywhere in “Indochina”—I found the articles wide-ranging and utterly fascinating.

Amb. Schermerhorn’s description of the situation for consular work deserves the widest possible readership because of its insights about cultural differences and different legal traditions between Vietnam and the United States.

Larry Lesser
FSO, retired
Washington, D.C.



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Foreign Service Day and the Foreign Service Act

Colin Powell came to the State Department as Secretary in 2001 and was concerned that he found an apparently divided workforce—a Foreign Service and a somehow less prestigious Civil Service. This troubled him. He sensed an elitism that sapped morale and probably impaired productivity.

Foreign Service Day had existed for half a century as an opportunity for Foreign Service retirees to return each year to Washington to reminisce with old friends and be briefed on current developments in foreign policy and diplomacy. It had nothing to do with the Civil Service; its members lived in Washington already.

The Foreign Service Lounge was a sort of sanctuary, where Foreign Service staff returning from overseas could have an address where their mail would be held, and where they could find a typewriter (later a computer), telephone directories and telephones to re-establish contact with old friends and work through the sometimes confusing experience of repatriation to a changing America. It had absolutely nothing to do with the Civil Service or political appointees in the State Department.

Without exploring the facts or the background, Secretary Powell disruptively set out to correct a problem that did not exist. He asked, “What about Civil Service Day?” He wanted to “level the personnel playing field,” and so he renamed these institutions Foreign Affairs Day and the Employee Services Center, respectively, as part of a policy to eradicate perceived elitism.

Poorly advised, he did not grasp the distinctive nature of a professional diplomatic service grounded in law. He would never have promoted the “homogeniza-

tion” of the uniformed military with the civilians of the Pentagon.

The U.S. Foreign Service and the State Department Civil Service work together to realize the international goals of the United States. But they are distinct personnel systems operating within individual legislative and regulatory frameworks, each with different missions.

This is not easy to administer, but each is in need of more coherent personnel management, career development and professional training (see the American Academy of Diplomacy report, “American Diplomacy at Risk”). Each merits respect. And each must be better protected from political abuse.

General Powell’s actions were well-intentioned in a misunderstood context of political correctness. But his policy encouraged a dysfunctional drive to attempt the amalgamation of disparate personnel systems.

And, sadly, this has led to the current State Department aberration of “disappearing” the Foreign Service of the United States, of pretending that the Congress did not create a professional diplomatic service of commissioned officers confirmed by the Senate and supported by competent Foreign Service specialists—in fact, of suppressing the very title “Foreign Service Officer” and even avoiding, whenever possible, the proud name “Foreign Service.”

I imagine Colin Powell would regret the role he played in this outcome, which we must hope will be short-lived. Like other modern nations, the United States needs a disciplined professional diplomatic service, now more than ever. The Rogers Act of 1924, reinforced by the Foreign Service Acts of 1946 and 1980, established one.

Bill Harrop
FSO, retired
Bethesda, Maryland

Professional Training

AFSA President Barbara Stephenson says that training acquired through assignments is the primary form of training in the Foreign Service (President's Views, May *FSJ*). Frankly I see this as a great problem.

Training through assignments, and the often-absent quality mentoring, is at best a hit-or-miss situation. Any serious diplomatic establishment should have a proper diplomatic school or academy where new entrants can have a minimum of one year of full-time career training, or ideally two years.

This is especially essential at a time when we are emphasizing diversity. Diversity is a great advantage to the Service, but the diverse backgrounds of the candidates must be fleshed out with career-related material.

In the early days of the Service, when most entrants had studied subjects at university closely tied to the needs of the department's work, that was not too important. That is no longer the case, however, and therefore must be remedied. We are falling very short on this score and thus doing a great disservice to many new officers.

Robert Illing
FSO, retired
Porto, Portugal

Correction

The photo in Sarah Sewall's "Corruption: A 21st-Century Security Challenge," in the June *FSJ*, was wrongly captioned.

The photo on p. 21 shows Under Secretary Sewall discussing links between corruption, human trafficking and illegal fishing with port security officials in Thailand, not her visit to a police station in Guatemala.

We regret the error, which has been corrected in the *FSJ*'s online edition. ■

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PDAA Award Winners Demonstrate Creativity in Challenging Environments

On May 15, the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association held its 19th annual presentation of Awards for Excellence in Public Diplomacy.

PDAA is a volunteer, nonprofit organization of current and former State Department, broadcast, academic and private-sector public diplomacy professionals.

Nominations were received from U.S. embassies in every region of the world and from Washington. Each was unique but remarkably consistent in the excellent work that is done every day by dedicated public diplomacy practitioners.

Winner Tanya Brothen, an AFSA member and assistant information officer in Kabul, showed, as her nomination put it, “extraordinary creativity, diplomacy and tenacity in bringing the documentary film ‘Frame by Frame’ to premiere in Afghanistan at U.S. Embassy Kabul—an initiative that influenced efforts to legislate protections for media practitioners and foster a free press in Afghanistan.”

Joining Tanya as winners of the 2016 PDAA awards are Public Affairs Officers Stephen Ibelli and Brenda Soya, both AFSA members, as well as Coordinator Milica Raskovic and Program Coordinator Marko Bumbic from the American Corner in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Ibelli received his award for promoting the U.S. presence in conflict-ravaged Libya while working from Tunisia.

The citation reads: “For exceptional analysis, innovation and single-handed hard work in creating robust social media outreach that engaged Libyans on U.S. policy and culture, established contact with a new generation and re-established exchange programs, all



Public Affairs Officer Brenda Soya, left, dances with a student at a school for the deaf in Burkina Faso during the Arts Envoy program.

while working under the extreme challenges of a post in exile outside the host country.”

Soya knew that the U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso wanted to get outside the embassy fortress in Ouagadougou to connect with the Burkinabe, exchange alumni, government officials and others and to build “the image of an ambassador as someone who knows Burkina well enough that I could deliver difficult messages without offending people.” Soya’s efforts to get “out of the bubble” greatly helped U.S. relations in the country.

Finally, Milica Raskovic and Marko Bumbic received a PDAA award for their extensive programming initiatives in an environment where only 20 percent of the population has a favorable attitude toward the United States.

Their efforts have become a model for American Corners throughout the region, says nominator William Henderson, public affairs officer at U.S. Embassy Belgrade.

For full coverage of the PDAA awards and a complete list of PDAA’s award

winners since 1993, visit www.pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Diplomats Dissent on Syria Policy

In mid-June (as we were about to go to press), 51 State Department diplomats signed a Dissent Channel message that is sharply critical of the Obama administration’s policies in Syria, according to Mark Landler, writing in *The New York Times*.

The story has since been picked up by numerous other media outlets, including the *New Yorker*, NPR’s *On Point* and *The Washington Post*.

Remarkable for the number of signatories, the memo urging “a more muscular military posture under U.S. leadership” was submitted via the State Department’s confidential Dissent Channel a week after Syrian Prime Minister Bashar al-Assad vowed to retake “every inch” of his country from its enemies, defying the United States and the United Nations.

A draft of the cable was leaked to the press, a move which has frustrated the

Obama administration.

The *NYT* notes that the memo does not address what would happen if Mr. Assad is forced from power. That point was also made by Vice President Joseph Biden, in an interview with “CBS This Morning” on June 21.

“The president and I and previous presidents support the right of any diplomat to have a secure channel to voice a different view,” Biden said. “But there is not a single, solitary recommendation that I saw that has a single, solitary answer attached to it—how to do what they’re talking about.”

Writing on ForeignPolicy.com, retired FSO Joseph Cassidy says that this isn’t the first sign of an insurrection; rather, it means the system is working. Use of the Dissent Channel is different from normal policy tussles, he explains, because the message reaches the highest levels of the department, including the Secretary of State.

Cassidy notes that State Department officials should and do debate and argue among themselves, because they care deeply about the outcomes of the foreign policy they help to make and implement. Most of the dissenters are mid-level officers who have been involved in the administration’s policy on Syria in the last five years.

The last U.S. ambassador to Syria, career FSO Robert Ford, resigned from the Foreign Service over his disagreement with Syria policy. Now a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, Ford told *The Daily Beast* on June 20: “The dissent memo should wake us up... we need to reconsider our approach.”

Meanwhile, the question of who leaked the memo and why is being hotly debated. And then there’s the question of how the *NYT* had the details of the Secretary’s “private” meeting with eight

of the dissenters the same day. There will be more to this story.

—*Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor, and Shawn Dorman, Editor*

Canadian Foreign Service: A Plea for Reform

Former Canadian diplomat and current Director of the Mackenzie-Papineau Group Bruce Mabley calls on the new Liberal Party government to restore the Canadian Foreign Service as “a true diplomatic corps” in an article in *Open Canada*, a digital public policy magazine.

Mabley’s plea is bound to resonate with members of the U.S. Foreign Service. He highlights inadequate training, excessive lateral movement between the Civil and Foreign Services and a lack of transparency as factors in what he describes as the long CFS decline.

Though engaged in the national foreign policy conversation, the Canadian public has little sense of the work of the Foreign Service, Mabley argues, making it very difficult to create a public constituency to support reforms. High-level officials with no FS experience are

tasked with making budget decisions, often trimming long-term programs in favor of expanding travel and hospitality budgets, he adds.

Among other things, Dr. Mabley recommends restoring the CFS’s meritocratic promotions and evaluations system. Also needed, he says, are better training opportunities for mid-level officers and a drastic reduction in the number of Civil Service employees allowed to move into Foreign Service positions.

He advises that more attention be paid to the well-being of Foreign Service families to increase retention rates. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s new government may be unable to deliver on its many foreign policy promises, Mabley says, if it does not first reform the Foreign Service.

Daryl Copeland, another former Canadian diplomat and now a senior fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, speaks often about the need for reform in the Canadian Foreign Service.

Following a June 2 presentation at AFSA, Copeland told the *FSJ*: “We need to re-profile our presentational network, get away from cookie-cutter embas-

Contemporary Quote

“While so many Americans are cynical these days about our civil servants, we came away thankful that we have smart, experienced and hard-working people like Ambassador [Eric] Rubin and his staff. They are dedicated to maintaining stability in this complicated corner of our shaky world. The thought that someone as experienced as Rubin could be replaced by a new president with a political appointment (a crony or fundraiser) who had no previous experience or interest in that country (as often happens) is heartbreaking.”

—*Rick Steves, author and TV host, at a dinner with career FSO U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria Eric Rubin, reported in The Huffington Post on May 31.*

sies and consulates. There is too much corporate cloning, and the institution is change-resistant. The headquarters operation is overly segmented; we need to be more supple and better connected in order to be more effective.”

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant

Social Media— How Diplomats Could Be Using It

A Q&A session involving Foreign Service officers from U.S. Embassy

50 Years Ago

Up Babel Creek Without a Paddle

Dramatic changes in our life and culture greet the Foreign Service officer returning from overseas. These changes have so much accelerated that a three-year absence is sufficient to make apparent sweeping currents moving contemporary American society. ...

Since no one likes to be observed objectively, the officer returned from abroad is well advised to keep quiet in mixed company. ... But on the theory that the *FSJ* is not mixed company, I will attempt some impressions.

The first change I noted on return this time was an advancing American deafness. Tellie sets, record players, instructions to children and even conversation are turned up much higher than they were, and people seem now to strain to hear. It is difficult to catch the meaning of spoken words above the telephone, the washer, the dryer, the barn dance in the rec room, the jet whine overhead and the rumble of traffic. One notices an insistent new shrillness in voices, a phenomenon once associated with the old and hard of hearing.

By all means the most startling development in the American culture in the last three years has been the deterioration in the use of the English language. ... Not simply a lazy slurring of the syllables, it is a degeneration of the thought that once gave the word its impulse. It reflects not flabbiness of the tongue muscles, but of the mind. What was only a noticeable trend among teenagers a few years ago to substitute a ritual sound like “cool” for a well-selected descriptive adjective is now accepted as an

Beijing was removed from the popular Chinese question-and-answer website zhihu.com at the end of May, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Viewed more than 1 million times, the Q&A entertained such diverse questions as how to obtain cheap Broadway tickets and how to set up a food truck business in the United States.

Spokesman Benjamin Weber said the embassy was disappointed by the removal of the Q&A. “The questions were submitted from Zhihu, and we under-

stand they were based on the interests expressed by Zhihu users,” he stated.

According to the *WSJ*, the removal was not surprising, given the recent crackdown on “Western influence” and online speech in China.

“The U.S. considers this as cultural outreach or promoting cultural understanding,” Willy Lam, a student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, told the *WSJ*. “But Beijing sees this, I think, as an act of hostility, to try to poison the minds of young Chinese with American ideas.”

adult approach.

Imagine my surprise, then, to find on my desk a State Department memo in which a proposed course of action was described as “exciting.” This is the language my daughter uses anticipating a Girl Scout hike. I closed my eyes and saw myself in forest green with Scout kerchief knotted at my neck, merit badges on my sleeve, proposing to the British an exciting condominium to exploit the oil reserves of Upper Chad.

I was as dismayed by the State Department’s “flap” dialect in the 1950s as I am now by its “crunch” dialect in the 1960s. This effort to show exclusiveness by developing an “in” jargon may be juvenile, but it is not a serious threat to our culture. What is serious is linguistic laziness that lets the art of communication fail by default.

It is a part of the responsibility of an educated elite to maintain the standards of the mind and intellect. This process of widening the elite numerically is called the democratic process. This process is not to be confused with the process of lowering the standards, which induces the slow death of the culture.

It seems ironic that a department which emphasizes the use of foreign languages seems indifferent to its own.

—Excerpted from an article of the same title
by Saxton Bradford, FSJ, July 1966.



Some Chinese social media users accused the embassy of waging a “public opinion war,” but Weber insisted that it was a standard exercise in public diplomacy and outreach by the embassy.

But how useful are these online efforts? According to Shaun Riordan, a British senior visiting fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, foreign ministries and embassies seem to have become obsessed with having a social media presence for its own sake.

But simply being online is not enough anymore, Riordan writes in a USC Center for Public Diplomacy blog post. Social media should be used to advance national objectives—not alone, but as one of many digital tools available to today’s diplomats, he says.

Riordan adds that engaging in social media is resource-intensive. So, both in terms of time and people, it is essential for diplomats to get all that they can from their chosen channels.

Social media can be used to gather information, gauge public opinion and even communicate warnings. Riordan believes that, combined with data mining, it can be used to provide real-time information about attacks, natural disasters and political crises. But while diplomats are making sure that their Twitter and Instagram feeds are up to date, Riordan argues, they should also be making use of other digital tools—online platforms and computer “games” that can be used to simulate crises and try out contingency plans.

These tools can help diplomats, states and non-state actors to come together to shape key global debates, Riordan concludes—but only if they can escape the obsession with social media.

—*Gemma Dvorak,*
Associate Editor

Senate Picks Up Pace on Confirmations and Promotions

The speed of confirmations and promotions during the past year or so has steadily been returning to the timeframe that was more common in the 2000s—approximately two to three months.

Those who follow AFSA’s work on ambassadorial nominees and Foreign Service promotion lists will remember that in the last few years, the pace of confirmation had slowed to a crawl.

At one point, more than 1,800 names on Foreign Service promotion and tenure lists sat unconfirmed for more than a year. AFSA worked to break that logjam and implement new procedures.

On May 17, the Senate confirmed the nominations of eight members of the career Foreign Service: Robert Annan Riley III as ambassador to Micronesia, Karen Brevard Stewart as ambassador to the Marshall Islands, Adam Sterling as ambassador to the Slovak Republic, Kelly Keiderling-Franz as ambassador to Uruguay, Stephen M. Schwartz as ambassador to Somalia, Christine Ann Elder as ambassador to Liberia and Elizabeth Holzhall Richard as ambassador to Lebanon.

Each of these new ambassadors is a career Foreign Service officer. The Senate also confirmed career FSO Matthew John Matthews as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Senior Official.

The following day, the Senate confirmed more than 300 promotions and tenures on Foreign Service lists from four agencies: the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Commercial Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Those lists had been submitted to the Senate only a few weeks previously. AFSA congratulates all those who have been confirmed in recent weeks.



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As we go to print, 14 career Foreign Service nominees await confirmation to ambassadorial posts; only one has waited longer than three months. In addition, 285 promotions and tenures await approval by the full Senate, 278 of which have been waiting less than three months.

AFSA remains hopeful that Congress will fulfill its responsibilities regarding these nominees efficiently. For more information on AFSA's ambassador tracker project, visit www.afsa.org/ambassadorlist.

—*Ásgeir Sigfússon,*
Director of Communications

Budget Freeze Hits Zimbabwe's Diplomats

The government of Zimbabwe has frozen hiring at its 42 foreign missions. The freeze was announced after a 2015 audit identified “idle manpower, role duplication, uncoordinated staff recruitment, flagrant abuse of overtime allowances and leave days, and salary fraud” that were costing the government up to \$388 million a year, according to *The Sunday Mail* on May 22.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry has already begun to lay off embassy clerical staff. According to Foreign Affairs Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, this streamlining will allow the government to redress late salary payments and ensure that ambassadors have safe, modern transportation.

The head of the country's National Chamber of Commerce has even advocated closing some of the country's embassies altogether.

The Finance Ministry told the International Monetary Fund that it will be freezing civil service recruitment and salaries until at least 2019. ■

—*Shannon Mizzi,*
Editorial Assistant

SITE OF THE MONTH: Project Syndicate: www.project-syndicate.org

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Founded in 1994, the site began with the mission to help fledgling independent media outlets in post-communist countries reach a broader audience. It quickly went global, operating on the principle that “all people—wherever they live, whatever their income and whatever language they use—deserve equal access to a broad range of views by the world’s foremost leaders and thinkers on the issues, events and forces shaping their lives.”

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—*Shannon Mizzi,*
Editorial Assistant, and
Susan Maitra, Managing Editor

Reforming Entry-Level Assignments

BY ANDREW KELLY

In April's President's Views column "Building the Deep Bench," Ambassador Barbara Stephenson brought up the challenge that surging demand for consular adjudicators poses to the career development of entry-level officers.

With increasing frequency, non-consular coned officers are being called on to serve consecutive assignments out of cone. This has resulted in more officers entering the mid-level ranks without any in-cone experience.

As Amb. Stephenson pointed out, most officers can expect 90 percent of their career development to come from assignments and mentoring. The consequences of officers never serving in their assigned cone at the entry level are real, both for individual officers seeking to learn their craft and for the overall health of a Service that depends on well-rounded generalists.

Lately there has been much discussion about reforming the assignments process to make it easier for newly minted mid-level officers to gain in-cone experience. New positions have been created and existing positions have been re-graded. Both changes may prove helpful in the short term, but are Band-Aids on the larger issue of how we handle consular adjudicator assignments.

As long as our career development model is so heavily slanted toward on-the-job training, ELO assignments should be viewed as just that—training—and not simply as encumbered positions.

A Model for Handling Structural Imbalance

I propose that the manner in which the U.S. Army handles a similar structural imbalance within its officer ranks may offer a model for how to reform entry-level assignments in our own Service.

I joined the Foreign Service in late 2010 following four years as an active-duty Army officer. At the time, there was a one-year consular service requirement, though most officers could expect to spend a full two years adjudicating visas.

My first impression of the way the Foreign Service assigns entry-level officers (ELOs) to vice-consul positions was that it was similar to the Army program of branch detailing junior officers. I have since learned that while there are many similarities, there are also impor-

tant differences.

Every year the Army commissions more than 5,000 second lieutenants. As in our own Service, those officers are assigned to a specific "branch" in which most will spend their entire career.

However, different branches have different entry-level staffing requirements. For example, the infantry requires a high proportion of lieutenants to more senior officers, a situation that is reversed in the military intelligence branch.

To address this imbalance the Army often details newly commissioned intelligence officers to the infantry for the first three years of their career. Prior to arriving at their unit, these officers attend the Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course while their non-detailed colleagues go on to the intelligence version of the same school.

It is important to note that branch details almost always involve detailing an officer from a combat support branch into one of the three combat arms (infantry, armor, field artillery) and almost never the reverse.



Andrew Kelly is an FSO vice consul in Manila, where he also served as the ambassador's staff aide. Previously he held the rule-of-law portfolio in Sofia. Prior to joining the Foreign Service he served two tours in Iraq with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. He joined the Foreign Service in 2010 and is a member of the 157th A-100 class.

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Maintaining Career Prospects

This system manages to address structural staffing imbalances without negatively affecting the career prospects of Army officers who spend their first three years “out-of-cone.” That it is able to do so is primarily due to the Army’s more regimented training and assignments process.

Practically, it isn’t hugely important whether an Army officer served in their assigned branch as a lieutenant. This is because on promotion to captain all officers must attend the comprehensive Captains Career Course of their assigned branch.

As a result, any advantage the non-detailed officers may have had in job experience is ameliorated by the uniform education all officers receive at the career course. It also helps that there is widespread acceptance that serving in the combat arms is excellent preparation for service in any branch of the Army.

There is an obvious parallel between the view that the combat arms are central to the Army’s mission and that consular work lies at the heart of ours. In extremis all Foreign Service officers become American Citizen Services officers, and a strong argument can be made that an out-of-cone consular tour is the best way of satisfying visa demand, introducing new officers to the Service and building esprit de corps.

The important role a consular tour plays in the last two points is of particular importance given our Service’s dearth of lengthy professional training. However, in the same way that some Army officers think the branch detail program exists because infantrymen make better intelligence officers, some in the Foreign Service consider the

consular requirement a policy that was adopted because it makes for better officers in the other cones.

Eating Our Seed Corn

This may often prove true, but the underlying thinking is specious. Both programs were developed to address a staffing challenge and not primarily as a professional development tool. While the experience of serving out-of-cone or out-of-branch may be positive, it is incidental to the primary purpose of such assignments.

This is an important point to keep in mind when considering how the Foreign Service handles entry-level consular assignments. Skyrocketing demand for consular adjudicators has led to officers entering the mid-level ranks without in-cone experience, something our assignment process (and arguably our promotion process) penalizes.

More importantly, a new mid-level officer ought to be able to perform at the mid-level. For a tenured FS-4 or new FS-3 (the rank equivalents of an Army captain and major) this entails many cone-specific tasks and may include supervising locally employed staff and direct-hire employees, or managing a small section.

It goes without saying that in an ideal world officers would first gain exposure to their cone prior to entering a management position. In fact, if there is to be a prerequisite in our current model of officer development, this should be it. By denying officers a chance to learn their trade at the entry-level we retard their professional development and undermine the distinction between the entry and mid-level ranks. It is the human resources equivalent of eating our seed corn.

Successful reform in how we handle ELO assignments is likely to have a magnified effect at the mid-levels.

What Is to Be Done?

I would offer the following suggestions:

1. The Director General has called for ELOs to serve one tour in cone. As an interim measure, have the Bureau of Human Resources adopt the stated goal that every ELO will serve at least one year in an in-cone position over the course of their first two tours or five years of service. Consider expanding the use of limited non-career appointments, qualified EFMs and rotational assignments to make up any shortage of adjudicators.

2. Move in the direction of having HR front-load consular assignments. Most ELOs already serve their first tour in a consular position, so make this a uniform policy.

3. Once the aforementioned policy is achieved, combine A-100, consular training and tradecraft courses on economic, political and public diplomacy work into a beefed-up 10-week A-100 course. This reformed A-100 orientation would more closely resemble the military's Basic Officer Leaders Course for new lieutenants, and could become the first step in the much-touted goal of formalizing Foreign Service training over the course of a career.

4. Once the new A-100 course has operated for a few years, start developing mid-level cone-specific training that more closely resembles the Army's Captains Career Course. Make attending this course a requirement within three years of promotion to FS-3, and optional for tenured FS-4s.

If sufficiently substantive, such a course should lessen variations in the level of competence among officers who have different lengths of in-cone experience at the entry level. That, combined with the fact that every tenured officer will have at least some in-cone experience, will make it more likely that new mid-level officers are given a fair shake in the assignments process.

Difficult, Yet Achievable

All of this is easier said than done, but eminently achievable. There will be difficulties along the way; but successful reform in how we handle ELO assignments is likely to have a magnified effect at the mid-levels, since many of the perceived inequities in mid-level rating and bidding stem from frustration at not having been able to serve in cone.

In particular, increasing the number of rotational assignments will cause near-term difficulties for HR and increased levels of staff turnover for supervisors. Challenging as that may be, as long as our career development model is so heavily slanted toward on-the-job training, ELO assignments should be viewed as just that—training—and not simply as encumbered positions.

In the past three months significant, if incremental, reforms have been implemented to improve the rating and assignment processes. Similar reforms should now be undertaken in how we handle the assignment of ELOs. ■

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University of Minnesota Duluth
Co-Editor, *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*

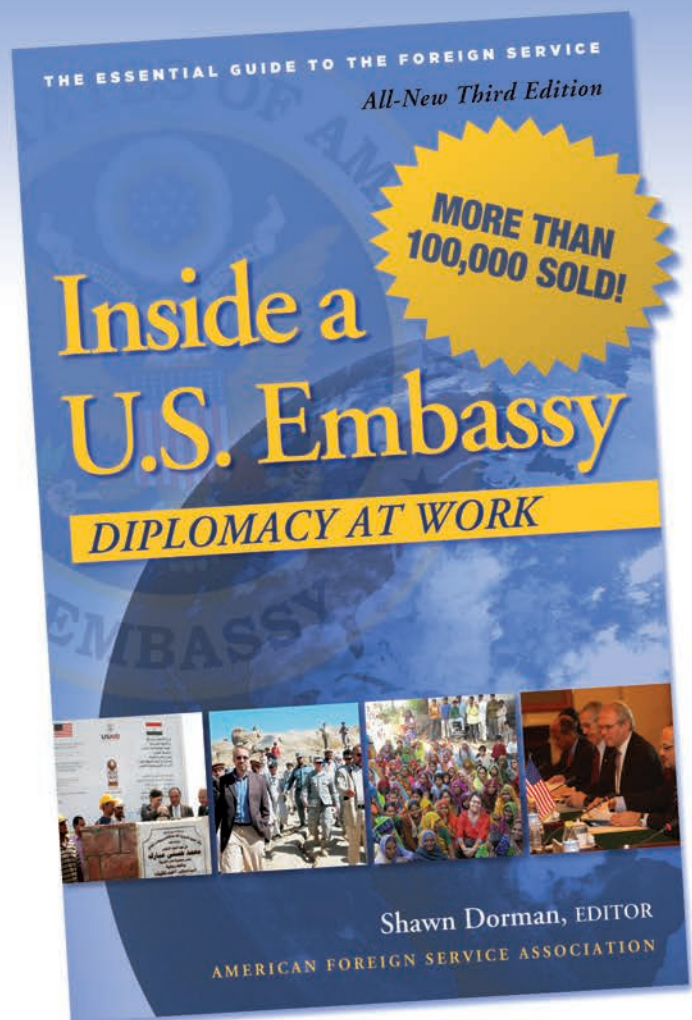
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Taking On Family Member Employment. Really!

Family member employment is a critical issue for members of the U.S. Foreign Service. The State Department finally seems to be taking it seriously.

BY DEBRA BLOME

For eligible family members (EFMs) in the Foreign Service, the process of finding employment isn't easy and never has been. The reasons are obvious: frequent moves, language barriers and limited options, to name just a few.

But what is new is that the Foreign Service has now tasked itself with really doing something about it.

Compare how the issue was treated in the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The first-ever QDDR, released in 2010, devoted an entire chapter to



Debra Blome is a former associate editor of The Foreign Service Journal. She currently lives in Jerusalem with her husband, FSO Donald Blome, and their family. In her more than 20 years as an EFM, Debra has tried all

the employment options: she has worked inside the mission, on the local economy and as an independent contractor for a U.S. organization. She has also spent many hours as a volunteer when paid employment was unavailable.

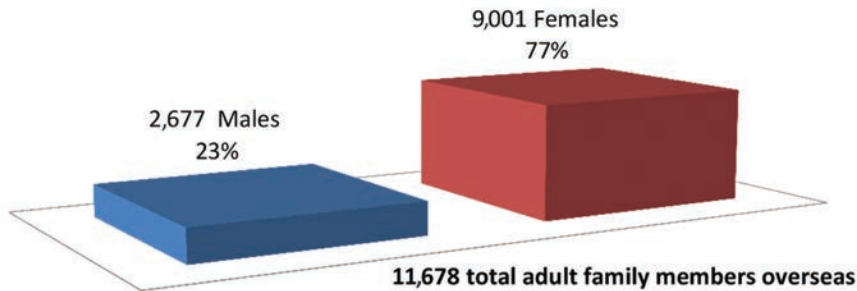
“Working Smarter”—without ever mentioning family member employment. The new QDDR, released in April 2015, discusses expanding opportunities for family member employment as part of the section titled “Adapting our Organizations to Take Care of Our People.”

“Two-career families are increasingly the norm in both American society and in the Foreign Service,” the report states. “This means that ensuring opportunities for spousal employment should be an integral part of our plans to retain and motivate staff.”

The report says State and USAID will strengthen efforts to build EFM career tracks, use EFMs to fill existing staffing gaps when possible, and create a database of EFM skills to help spouses find jobs both at post and in Washington. It also pledges that State and USAID will expand programs already in existence, and will “pursue mechanisms” to facilitate the security clearance process, so EFMs can begin work at post without a “lengthy” delay.

(Though the QDDR document is a product of State and USAID, the EFM policies and reforms it calls for apply to employees of all the foreign affairs agencies under chief-of-mission authority on an assignment abroad.)

Family Member Population Overseas



Source: State Department Family Liaison Office, Family Member Report, November 2015.

A Big Deal

For AFSA, family member employment is a major advocacy issue. State Vice President Angie Bryan says she addresses the topic in her meetings with all relevant offices within the department. She wants State to understand that the issue is critical “not just to the spouses or to the family members, but also to the employees.”

She thinks they’re getting the message. “I must say that I do think the department is taking it seriously,” Bryan says.

For the State Department’s Family Liaison Office—which is charged with improving the quality of life for all employees and family members—family member employment has always been a big issue. “Expectations are very high about what family members would like to have in terms of employment overseas,” says FLO Director Susan Frost.

She notes that six of the 25 staff in the Family Liaison Office work full time on family member employment issues. “They work very hard to try and help family members realize their professional goals,” Frost says. “It’s something we take seriously, and we work hard to try to make sure it’s successful.”

The most recent FLO employment report, issued in November 2015, shows that of the 11,678 adult FS family members overseas, 60 percent were not employed, 27 percent worked inside missions and 13 percent worked on the local economy. According to statistics on the broader workforce of the United States, the number of single-income couples among FS members is more than 10 percent higher than among their domestic counterparts. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, both husband and wife were employed in 47.7 percent of married couples in 2014.

What FLO doesn’t know is how many of that 60 percent of family members who are not currently employed are making the choice not to work—and how many would like to be working, but are either still looking for a job or have given up trying to find one.

As one spouse and blogger puts it, “Obtaining a job as an EFM is often a job by itself.” In her blog *Diplomatic Impunity*, “Kim E.” announced in a Feb 21, 2015, post that she was leaving the ranks of EFMs to become an FSO. “I do not have children to take care

of, and I did not give up an extremely high-paying career—and still, at times, I felt more than daunted and jaded about the possibility of finding employment [as an EFM].”

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide took an in-depth look at the issue of family member employment a few years ago.

Their compilation of articles highlights

some of the unique challenges EFMs face, and offer suggestions for improvement, some of the same suggestions mentioned in the QDDR. Since then, an AAFSW committee on EFM employment has been in the process of writing an extensive position paper on the issue, which could become a real resource for innovative solutions once it’s presented.

Bob Castro, a member of the committee and the founder of Professional Partners and Spouses of the Foreign Service (PROPS), a LinkedIn network of professionally oriented FS family members, says collaboration among AAFSW, PROPS and other similar groups has, in effect, pushed the envelope on the issue of family member employment and prompted FLO and others within government to move more rapidly.

According to Castro—who won DACOR’s 2013 Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award for creating PROPS—employing family members is about more than just making spouses happy. It is also a way for the government to “leverage talent and resources that are already in place to be a force multiplier for mission objectives.”

EFM Employment Options at Post

What are the options for EFMs who haven’t given up on finding employment or joined the Foreign Service themselves? FLO lists enough employment programs and training opportunities to fill an 18-page brochure (“Family Member Employment and Training”). But with work spread out among more than 270 diplomatic missions overseas and more than 11,000 adult family members, many EFMs report that there aren’t enough opportunities to go around.

Working Outside the Mission. For spouses looking to work on the local economy, a number of factors come into play. First and foremost, does the United States have a bilateral or de facto work agreement with the country? Only if it does, and with permission from the post’s chief of mission, are family members permitted to work locally.

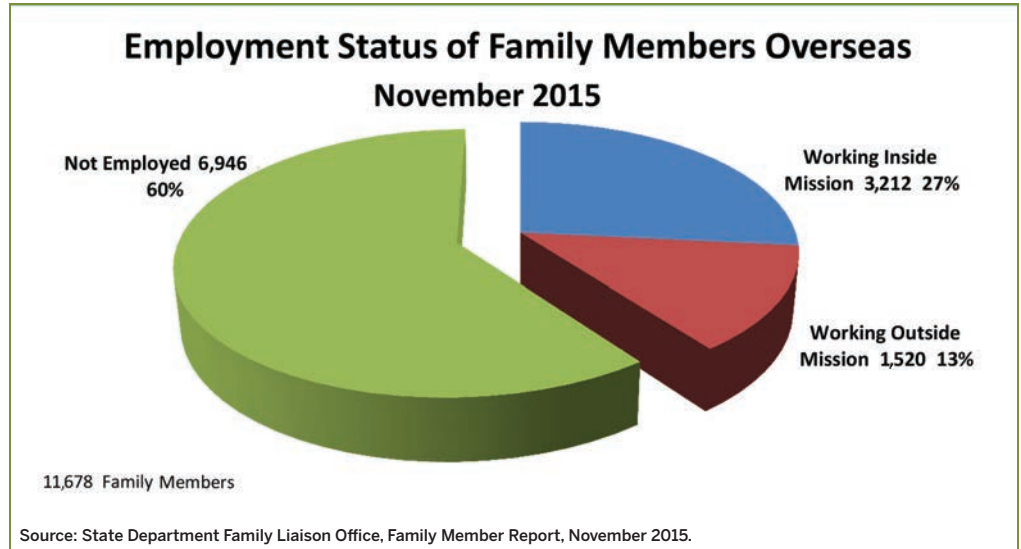
To help job-seekers, FLO has established the Global Employment Initiative, which is available to family members from all agencies at post, since FLO gets its program budget from Interna-

tional Cooperative Administrative Support Services (known as ICASS) in Washington. The GEI program evolved from a white paper FLO wrote 14 years ago and was granted initial seed funding by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation. Given the green light by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, it has been a FLO-administered program for the past 10 years.

While many EFMs may wish otherwise, GEI is not a job placement service. Instead, regional global employment advisers (GEAs; currently there are 16 covering more than 200 posts) offer counseling and coaching, either in person or virtually, to help family members develop short-, mid- and long-term employment strategies.

Is the program a success? It depends on who you ask. Some

EFMs report finding the coaching useful and the resumé-writing advice, in particular, invaluable. Others dismiss the service as something they could find elsewhere if they wanted it. "I think GEI advisers' time would be better spent doing on-the-ground networking for EFMs who aren't yet at post," says one EFM. "Getting a job takes a lot of face time that EFMs don't have during two- or three-year tours."



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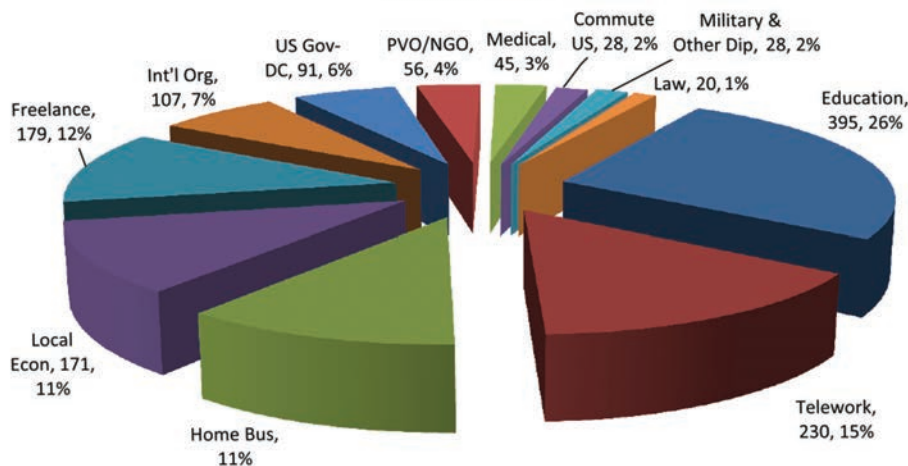


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Family Member Employment Outside the Mission

November 2015



1,520 Family Members Employed Outside

Source: State Department Family Liaison Office, Family Member Report, November 2015.

FLO measures the success of the program by counting how many times family members reach out to GEAs for counseling sessions, and how many webinars or workshops are offered and the attendance of those events. Christopher Baumgarten, the employment program coordinator at FLO, notes that in 2014 GEAs held more than 4,300 one-on-one sessions with EFMs seeking employment. In 2015, they held more than 3,100 sessions.

Frost also points out that while there has been a 25-percent increase in the number of spouses and partners overseas in the decade, the percentage of family members who are employed inside or outside of a mission overseas has remained static.

“So that means employment and career-related programs have helped,” Frost says. “The department and other agencies have increased the number of positions and employment opportunities overseas in the same percentage as the number of family members have increased.”

Working Inside the Mission. Depending on the size and scope of the post, most missions have jobs open to family members. The jobs are often clerical or administrative though some, like the Community Liaison Office coordinator, can be professional in nature.

In addition to these, some posts (though not all) have positions that are available through different centrally managed programs that tap into the EFM labor pool and provide more professional work.

Centrally Managed Programs

The Expanded Professional Associates Program. This FLO-coordinated program opens jobs that are the equivalent of entry-level FSO positions to family members. The program offers a

total of 200 EPAP positions plus 50 additional positions in the Bureau of Information Resource Management. Each year EPAP advertises these positions through a USAJobs vacancy announcement. Once selected for an EPAP position, EFMs are hired on a family member appointment (FMA), which means they receive danger pay but do not receive other allowances.

That means, for example, that at one Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs post that recently lost its danger-pay designation, the EPAP

employee reported receiving \$600 less per paycheck. The FSOs and specialists she worked with didn't see the same reduction, because the cut in danger pay at post was offset by an increase in other allowances, which the EPAP participant was not eligible to receive.

Used for many EFM hires, the FMA mechanism was first introduced in 1998 and it offers some real benefits, including annual and sick leave, Thrift Savings Plan participation, health benefits and life insurance. And, most importantly, it gives EFMs the opportunity to earn non-competitive eligibility, which enables them to more easily fill federal jobs back in Washington.

But if an EFM is doing a job that is the equivalent of what an entry-level FSO would be doing, it can be hard for him or her to swallow this difference in allowances. And even though the FMA mechanism has real benefits, they're not necessarily ones that soothe the EFM who feels the financial difference personally.

Spouses who participated in a discussion with the FSJ on EFM employment were unanimously skeptical that the EPAP program provided any real benefit to them. In addition to finding the hiring process cumbersome, these spouses agreed that they could often get higher pay and better jobs by working with the post's human resources section directly. “I would argue that as an employee you are better off not in the EPAP program,” said one focus group participant.

Said another: “They want to take advantage of the qualified people at post, and they market the program as an entry-level Foreign Service officer. But they don't want to pay you that way. And they expect you to take the same amount of leave and work full time.”

Professional Associates. Also known as the Hard-to-Fill program, this program is managed through State's Office of Career

Development and Assignments. Unlike EPAP, the positions in this program are actual mid-level FSO positions that have gone unfilled in the bid cycle and are then opened up to eligible EFMs, as well as to Civil Service employees. EFMs have preference in these jobs over Civil Service members, but they don't have preference over FSOs—so could lose their assignment at any time if an FSO bids on it. There are also not very many of these positions open in any given year—about 35 a year, on average, for the past five years. Currently, only about 5 percent of those slots are filled by EFMs.

Consular Adjudicator Program. The Consular Affairs–Appointment Eligible Family Member Adjudicator Program is coordinated by the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and allows EFMs to fill entry-level consular positions at their spouse's post of assignment. EFMs must go through a selection process to be qualified. Once certified, they remain eligible for positions for as long as they are EFMs. Since the program launched in June 2014, 89 EFMs have been fully certified. There is no fixed number of positions available each year, however; the needs of the Foreign Service dictate the number and location of openings.

EFM consular adjudicators are eligible to receive training

The number of single-income couples among FS members is more than 10 percent higher than among their domestic counterparts.

as employees—meaning they will be paid during their training period and are not expected to take training on their own time. However, they are not eligible to receive per diem, so they either pay housing costs out of pocket or arrange training when their spouses are already in Washington, D.C.

Not Enough to Go Around

“The QDDR commits us to expanding these [centrally managed EFM employment] programs even further, and making



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them easier to access through a single portal,” Kathryn Schallow, the new special representative for QDDR, told the blogger known as *Diplo pundit*, who wrote about the interview in an Aug. 31, 2015, post.

The commitment may be there, but no timetable has been established or goal set for completion of the task. And though on paper these programs seem to offer exactly what qualified EFMs are looking for—real professional jobs with real responsibility—they, in fact, have few actual openings. In addition, because of the hoops EFMs are required to jump through to qualify for these jobs, and because of the nature of EFM status and the mechanism of FMA hiring, these programs are not always seen in a positive light by the very people for whom they are designed.

One EFM describes the positions offered by EPAP and the consular adjudicator programs as just a “drop in the EFM bucket” and advised other spouses to “get off the EFM no-job, no-continuity merry-go-round and find something else.”

Security Clearance Delays

A major stumbling block to EFM employment within the mission is the length of time it takes for an employee to receive a security clearance.

Over the past year, the length of time needed, on average, to obtain a security clearance has increased across the federal government. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Gregory Starr, the delay can be attributed to the “increased workload, the shutdown of the Office of Personnel Management’s e-QIP (electronic questionnaire for investigations processing) system and a growing backlog of required checks that are provided to DS by other agencies.”

In the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2015, Starr reports, the government-wide average for top-secret clearances was 179 days. The State Department averaged 150 days. Starr says the State Department average is expected to improve further over the next few months—“bringing us closer to and hopefully within the ODNI [Office of the Director of National Intelligence] goal of 114 days.”

Though the State Department average is lower than the governmentwide figure, many EFMs still report long wait times for clearances. (One EFM at an NEA post reported waiting nine months for her clearance.) And if the EFM is foreign-born, the delay is often even longer. (The number of foreign-born spouses in the Foreign Service is not tracked, though the population feels fairly sizable. AAFSW reports having more than 300 members in its foreign-born spouse group.)

For an EFM at a two-year post, a nine-month wait for a clear-

ance is interminable—especially when he or she will have to do it all over again at the next post.

Introducing the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps

There may be a light at the end of the very long security clearance tunnel, however. On May 3, Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy sent a cable to all diplomatic and consular posts (an ALDAC) announcing the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps (16 State 49074).

“The FSFRC will create a workforce capable of rapid assignment to positions overseas, including sensitive positions,” the cable reads. In a nutshell, the FSFRC will be open to U.S. citizen spouses or domestic partners of employees and will allow members to retain their “eligibility for access to classified information”—i.e., their security clearances—as they move from post to post.

“Once fully implemented,” the cable reads, “the FSFRC will improve efficiency in the hiring and entry-on-duty process for appointment-eligible family members, centralize the administration of family member hiring and allow for certain efficiencies in security clearance processing.”

The department will begin phasing in the implementation over the next two years. The program will be managed out of the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Shared Service, in Charleston, and FLO will handle communication. FLO’s website already includes an overview of the program, as well as an FAQ.

Working in Washington

For many family members, a move back to Washington, D.C., is just as difficult as an overseas assignment, if not more so. “Washington can be the hardest transition, because you don’t have the infrastructure there to help you that you have when you come to an embassy,” says FLO’s Frost.

Frost reports that FLO is always working on measures to help ease the transition on return to the United States. To help EFMs make the most of the non-competitive eligibility they may have earned overseas—a goal of the 2015 QDDR—FLO has collaborated with HR Shared Services to create a Register of those eligible for Non-Competitive Employment.

Announced by the State Department as we headed to press, this initiative will connect department hiring managers with potential job applicants, and ultimately facilitate their hiring across the federal government.

In addition, last September FLO hired a Washington-based GEA to offer the same kinds of coaching and career counseling it offers overseas.

"We're trying to market family members," Frost says, to hiring managers within the State Department. She reports that FLO has also begun to brief other federal agencies on the pool of potential employees among FS EFMs. Because of this push, Frost says, there has been a large increase in the number of positions advertised on the FLO Network, an email listserv of job openings FLO sends to EFM subscribers weekly. (Interested EFMs can sign up for the Network by making a request at FLOaskemployment@state.gov.)

Still More to Do

By creating the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps, the Foreign Service is finally addressing one of the real stumbling blocks to EFM employment: timely security clearances. However, there is no indication that any of the current employment programs will be expanded, which is also a QDDR goal. Even the cable announcing the FSFRC made it clear that increasing the number of jobs available to EFMs was not a goal. "Fiscal constraints limit the department's ability to create new positions

overseas," the cable reads. "Therefore the FSFRC, in and of itself, will not create additional employment opportunities."

Still, the Foreign Service should get credit for officially recognizing that EFM employment is an issue it must address. "As evidenced by the QDDR," says Under Secretary Kennedy, "the department has been working to improve the hiring process for our Foreign Service family members, who are," he adds, "a valuable resource to fill available jobs at posts around the world, and we know that they want to work."

Getting EFM employment right has never been more critical for the Foreign Service. Says AFSA's Angie Bryan: "We have employees who are considering leaving the Foreign Service because they don't see a long-term solution for a spouse who wants and expects to be able to work."

Fulfilling the goals stated in the QDDR is essential. "It's not like the Foreign Service of 20 or 40 or 60 years ago," says Bryan. Foreign Service members "are not going to stick around if their spouses are unhappy." ■

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Tandem Couples: Serving Together, Apart

Two tandems discuss some of the unique challenges they face.

BY FRED ODISHO AND WHITNEY DUBINSKY

Representative of the larger society, Foreign Service families come in all forms, each with its own unique challenges. The dynamic of the modern family has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. The percentage of family members working outside the home has steadily increased. More and more possess professional degrees and experience in a variety of fields. Not surprisingly, they possess traits similar to those of their Foreign Service

spouses. In the face of these changes, have Foreign Service policies supporting the modern family kept pace?

For tandem couples—the term for families in which both spouses are members of the Foreign Service—the answer to this question is a resounding *no*. Little has changed since *The New York Times* published an article in 1986 titled “State Department; Till Reassignment Do Us Part?” describing the challenges facing tandem couples of that era. Being able to be assigned together was and still is the greatest challenge plaguing the members of any tandem couple. The threat of having to split up their family and children remains ever-present.

While the concerns of tandem couples can also include compensation and benefits, this article focuses on the assignments process because it directly affects not just the couple’s respective careers, but also the stability and integrity of their nuclear family.

A Relentless Game of Chance

During every bidding cycle, tandem couples place their fate in a complex game of chance that involves the availability of positions overlaid on the varied needs of several departments and agencies, hundreds of posts, and dozens of regional and functional bureaus. If a tandem couple have spent years hedging their bets and get lucky, they may end up with both members assigned to the same post at around the same time. But



Fred Odisho joined the Foreign Service as a political-coned officer in January 2014, a few months after his tandem spouse joined. After being separated for their first four years in the Foreign Service, he is looking forward to reuniting with her in the summer of 2017 for their second assignment. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he spent 18 years with the U.S. Army and still serves today as a reservist.



Whitney Dubinsky joined the Foreign Service in 2010 through USAID’s Development Leadership Initiative. After two years of being unable to find meaningful employment at post, her spouse joined the Foreign Service in 2014. They travel the world with their 3-year-old son, without whom neither can live.

this euphoria lasts only until the couple realize that they need to start hedging their bets for the next round of roulette.

To increase their chances of serving together, tandem couples utilize a variety of strategies during the bidding process passed down in the form of advice, guidance and mentorship from the tandems that went before them. These strategies include: learning common languages; being interested in common regions; getting and staying on the same bidding cycle; and considering commuter posts, up- and down-stretches, out-of-cone assignments, Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas assignments, excursion opportunities at other agencies, hard-to-fill posts, unaccompanied tours and leave without pay (LWOP).

The last two strategies don't even meet the litmus test of serving together. Accepting an unaccompanied tour asks a tandem couple to split up temporarily in order to increase its chances of getting back together in the subsequent bidding cycle. Similarly, having one member of a tandem accept LWOP achieves the goal of staying together but fails with respect to serving together; one member of the family is left unemployed and without benefits, and the family's income sources are effectively halved. Likewise, recent policies prohibiting tandem members on LWOP from joining the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps or from applying for certain Expanded Professional Associates Program positions have effectively eliminated most employment opportunities at posts.

The reality is that utilizing any or all of these strategies may not even result in a tandem couple serving together. They are options available to all employees that just happen to also possibly increase the chances of a tandem couple serving together. What they are not is an explicit and coherent assignments policy or process for tandem couples.

Tandem couples are not trying to circumvent the worldwide availability requirement. They acknowledge that directed assignments are not limited to entry-level employees but are also possible for mid-level and senior-level employees, as witnessed during the wars of the past decade. They understand and accept that they, like all their peers, may have to shoulder one of these directed assignments that may necessitate serving in an unaccompanied capacity.

In fact, one could argue that the unofficial motto of most tandems is, "It's not a matter of where we serve ... so long as we can serve together." Just like everyone else, we signed up for worldwide availability, not worldwide separation—especially separation that is not directed and is based solely on the luck of the bidding draw.

We believe that with some shared effort, creative thinking and *structural* policy changes, the Foreign Service could usher in a healthier and more stable era for tandem couples.

How About Some Assurance?

What responsibility, if any, should the Foreign Service have in keeping members of a tandem couple assigned together, assuming that there are no extenuating circumstances precluding them from serving together (e.g., anti-nepotism and nondiscrimination provisions, medical clearance restrictions, security considerations or post unaccompanied status)?

For the last five years, Foreign Service senior management has been renewing its commitment to tandem couples and family placement, reiterating the importance and advantages of couples working together at post. But does this rhetoric translate into an effective policy? Many tandem couples would argue that it does not.

Under its current standard operating procedure for the assignment of tandem couples, the Department of State commits to making "every reasonable effort to help both members of a tandem couple find positions at the same post" so long as these efforts do not violate other existing policies. While this sounds nice, helping does nothing to spare the tandem couple from the ever-looming threat of long-term geographic separation.

It is the phrasing of the next sentence that is striking: "While helping tandem couples pursue a joint assignment, the [State] Department will also ensure that other members of the Foreign Service receive equal consideration for the positions in question." Why is it not possible for the department to ensure—rather than merely "help" with—tandem joint assignments while also ensuring equal consideration of all positions?

We believe that it is. We believe that with some shared effort, creative thinking and *structural* policy changes, the Foreign Service could usher in a healthier and more stable era for tandem couples in the form of an explicit assignments policy and process for them.

During every bidding cycle, tandem couples place their fate in a complex game of chance.

The Challenge of Tour Lengths

One element of the bidding process that is particularly challenging for tandem couples is tour lengths. It is noteworthy that while the foreign affairs agencies affirm that they would like to keep families together wherever possible, one of the most foundational components of the bidding process undercuts that goal.

Assignments for State employees are generally two years at the entry level and two or three years at the mid-level. Assignments for USAID employees are typically four years (two positions, two years each at one post), although some are just two years. Foreign Commercial Service tours last three years, while those for the Foreign Agricultural Service range from three to four years.

Mix in tour lengths for the Broadcast Board of Governors, the curious fact that more than half of the positions for security officers—who outnumber all other cones except political—are not even foreign but domestic, varying language and training requirements, and a host of other assignment peculiarities, and you may start to appreciate the level of complexity in bidding as a tandem couple. Extensions, curtailments and separations are not the exception; they are the rule.

The solution is to standardize tour lengths across all agencies and departments, allowing posts to determine the tour length that is optimal for them given a fixed set of objective criteria. Tour lengths for entry-level employees can remain shorter than mid- and senior-level employees; but standardize them throughout the entire Foreign Service.

Currently, when a tandem couple receives staggered assignments, one of them must request an extension or curtailment to align their tours. Instead, automatically align the tour ending dates for members of the tandem couple, eliminating the need for the couple to submit the extension or curtailment request. Once the tandem's second member arrives at post, both officers would arrange with post management to align their tour dates.

If the post insists on keeping their tour ending dates staggered, then the onus is on the post to submit a request for non-

curtailment or non-extension to Washington, explaining why they want to place an undue burden on the family by forcing a separation. Should Washington concur with post's request, the period of separation would become akin to a directed assignment.

These basic structural changes to tour lengths would reduce some of the frustration felt by many tandem couples by minimizing the likelihood of separation.

“Two Is One, One Is None”

Beyond tour lengths, the core challenge is the availability of assignments. The directive nature of the Department of Defense's assignments process, in comparison to the selective nature of the Foreign Service's assignments process, allows DOD to be much clearer and more definitive in its approach to assigning tandem couples. To the question of whether federal departments should have a responsibility to assign tandem couples together, the Department of Defense's answer is a resounding *yes*—so much so that the title of its tandem assignments policy is “Joint Domicile.”

Foreign Service senior management has a different perspective. Given a selective assignments process where employees bid on available positions and posts select individuals from a list of interested candidates, all available positions should be open to all qualified employees, without special treatment for any, including tandem couples. But is the alleged mountain of anti-nepotism and nondiscrimination provisions merely a molehill? How could the Foreign Service ensure tandem couples are assigned jointly to posts, while at the same time not disenfranchising married or single non-tandems in the bidding process?

Here is one possible solution. Tandem couples already have to designate one member as the primary bidder. That person's bidding, assignment and career take precedence over the spouse's, and the couple can change the primary designation every bidding cycle. When an entry-level employee has a mid-level spouse, the career of the untenured employee automatically takes precedence.

Building on this process, begin by treating tandem couples as one bidding unit. One member of the tandem—the primary—participates in the bidding process, while the other member of the tandem does not and silently accepts their joint fate. Once the primary member of the tandem is paneled for the next assignment, there are two possible ways to accommodate the other member of the tandem.

The first option would be to create a separate pool of

Is the alleged mountain of anti-nepotism and nondiscrimination provisions merely a molehill?

positions that are held in reserve with the Bureau of Human Resources. When a post has selected the primary member of the tandem couple and does not have a vacant position to accommodate the partner, it can request one of the positions from the pool to be temporarily transferred for the duration of the tandem couple's assignment. At the end of that assignment, the position returns back to the pool for use by another post. The second option would be to forgo the reserve pool of positions and simply allow the tandem partner to double-encumber an appropriate position at post for the duration of the couple's assignment.

The number of reserve-pool or double-encumbered positions available to a post could be capped at one for posts with 10 or fewer direct hires, two for posts with 11 to 20 direct hires, and so on. The tandem couple could also opt out of this method and bid separately on positions at the same or different posts for the purposes of career advancement. They might even be required to do so because of anti-nepotism provisions.

The current method of treating the tandem couple as two distinct bidders forces its members to sell themselves as a pair, shopping for locations that have the need and desire for both members, usually with one or even both sacrificing career advancement. Tandems not only have to concern themselves with their own corridor reputation but that of their partner. They are keenly aware that their marital status significantly influences their careers, regardless of how many people parrot that the federal government cannot discriminate on grounds of one's marital status. So long as the bidding and lobbying process involves humans making deliberate (not blind) decisions rooted in corridor reputations, offices will always know which bidders are members of tandem couples.

Treating the members of a tandem couple as one bidding unit puts them on an even playing field with both their married and single non-tandem colleagues.

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Assignment of Tandem Couples

State Department Standard Operating Procedure, Revised November 2015

—A Summary—

A career or career candidate Foreign Service employee whose spouse or same-sex domestic partner is a career or career candidate FS employee of one of five foreign affairs agencies is part of a “tandem couple.” The State Department aims to make reasonable efforts to help both members of a tandem couple find appropriate positions at the same post. The State Department intends to ensure no advantage or disadvantage to members of tandem couples.

Assignments: Each member of a tandem must ensure that their Employee Profiles reflect this status by submitting an OF-126 through HROnline. Each partner should notify their career development officer (CDO) in writing of their intent to bid as a tandem. CDOs will provide guidance on bidding and long-term career planning as part of a couple.

- A member of a tandem employed by another foreign affairs agency should consult with both State’s CDO and their own.
- Candidates should inform prospective bureaus if bidding as a tandem.
- Entry-level officers (ELOs) are considered the “lead bidder” when bidding with a mid- or senior-level partner because of their lower level of flexibility due to tenure requirements.
- Only one member of a tandem may choose “with family” status prior to departure to the same post; dependent children appear on only one employee’s order. Couples may not transfer “with family” status until the end of a tour.

Tour of Duty: If TOD lengths differ, HR/CDA may approve an extension/curtailment for one employee (Cohen Rule). Extensions cannot exceed a post’s maximum TOD. Bear in mind that curtailment for synchronization may result in repayment requirements.

- If one partner is an ELO, the TOD for the mid- or senior-level partner will often be adjusted to coincide with that of the ELO. This is not done automatically, and the mid- or senior-level partner must negotiate this under the Cohen Rule.
- Direct transfers for the purposes of synchronization are not approved without presentation of compelling circumstances.

Alternatives to Joint Assignments: Alternatives include differing assignments, a Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (known as DETO) arrangement, detail to another agency, language study at FSI (Muller Rule), or Leave Without Pay (LWOP). Consult *Diplopedia* for information on commuter posts.

- A member of a tandem may go on LWOP for the duration of their partner’s TOD, requesting extensions as needed. He/she may also compete for appropriate vacant positions at post, or be directed into positions if there is an overwhelming need and the position remains unfilled after a reasonable period.
- He/she may accept another paying federal position provided the original remains on non-pay status. They may also accept assignments at post open to EFMs; this is not considered a formal return from LWOP.

Nepotism: Tandem employees should be aware of anti-nepotism regulations. Actions that affect or benefit or appear to benefit a relative’s career are prohibited. You may not supervise a relative. Duplication of travel, benefits or allowances is not authorized for tandems.

- The Meaning of Paneling Remarks—
 - *Tandem, No Issues:* Indicates timing and other issues have been considered and the assignment can move forward. Confirm with your CDO.
 - *Panel in Principle (PIP):* Indicates that timing issues are unresolved for mid- or senior-level overseas assignments. If an appropriate assignment cannot be arranged, you may request breaking the PIP’d assignment.
 - *Cohen Rule:* The TOD of the non-entry level member is adjusted to synchronize bidding cycles.
- ELOs may not appeal directed assignments (3 FAH-1 H-2425.8-6).
- The assignment of a third employee may not be broken to accommodate the assignment of a tandem couple.

—Shannon Mizzi,
Editorial Assistant

The central argument presented in this article is to treat the source problem—the absence of a policy that ensures tandems remain together—with a viable and lasting solution rather than continuing to write policies that treat the symptoms.

Treat the Problem, Not the Symptoms

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review says that the federal government takes “work-life balance seriously and will continue to support our employees as they balance their commitment to service with personal wellness and family life. Work-life balance is critical to retaining the best talent.” It is time for senior management to not only say these words but to take substantive action.

The central argument presented in this article and reflected in the preceding recommendations is to treat the source problem—the absence of a policy that ensures tandems remain together—with a viable and lasting solution rather than continuing to write policies that treat the symptoms.

Discussions about alternative employment options such as LWOP or EPAP—of which the former is not even employment and the latter is no longer an option—in lieu of tandem members actually serving as the officers and specialists that they are, only further shelves the discussion about the source problem.

With some shared effort, creative thinking and structural policy changes, we believe all Foreign Service departments and agencies are capable of adopting the following position:

The [Agency Name] will ensure that tandem couples are assigned to the same post should they desire to remain together, so long as their assignment does not supplant otherwise applicable regulations and practices (e.g., anti-nepotism and nondiscrimination provisions, medical clearance restrictions, security considerations or post unaccompanied status). ■



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A Roadmap for New Hires

30 Rules to Survive and Thrive

An experienced FSO ambassador identifies the unique attributes Foreign Service personnel should have and offers a guide to acquiring and perfecting them.

BY STEPHEN G. MCFARLAND

You've arrived at post. You're learning about your current responsibilities and where you fit in the section and the embassy. As challenging as it can be—especially if it's your first tour, or your first embassy—you will learn quickly, and you will start to contribute as a member of your team.

But there is much more: this is also the time for you to learn about your broader vocation and your career goals and interests as a Foreign Service officer or

specialist; about embassy interagency operations and how to navigate the different agency cultures and tribes; about how to understand, influence and negotiate with foreign governments and groups to advance U.S. interests; about how to lead—from below, as a peer, as well as from above.

You will learn to sharpen your habits to be more effective and resilient under adversity, stress and danger. You will get to think about the best ways to keep learning and to improve throughout your career.

Finally, you will develop professionally at a truly demanding time for U.S. foreign and national security policy and for the For-



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countries, and on supporting democratic transitions, peace processes, rule of law and human rights, and counterinsurgency. His earlier tours as human rights and insurgency reporting officer and as political counselor in wartime Peru and El Salvador motivated him to take a more activist approach as a diplomat. He served in Afghanistan and in Iraq, where in early 2007 he set up a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) embedded in a Marine regimental combat team in Al Anbar province.

McFarland grew up in the Foreign Service in Latin America and the

Middle East, and in central Texas. He speaks native Spanish and more limited Dari, French, Guaraní and K'iché. He is a graduate of Yale University and the Air War College, and attended the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Course (JR). He and his wife, Karin, who works at USAID, have four children. He likes to play soccer, hike, dive and ride horses.

Note: This article contains the author's personal views, drawn from advice he provided to new personnel during 21 years as ambassador, chargé, deputy chief of mission (DCM), PRT leader and political counselor. The views are based on experience at 12 overseas critical-threat and hardship posts during a 38-year career. These views do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Foreign Service, USAID or Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. Comments and questions are welcome at mcfarlandsg@gmail.com

Foreign Service. We face global warming, resource competition and demographic shifts, the unexpected consequences of computer and bio technology, as well as strained relationships with China, Russia and countries in the Middle East, and non-state violence. Having the best high-tech military in the world won't be enough by itself to address these and other challenges—diplomacy and development are just as essential, or more so.

What Makes FS Personnel Unique?

I spent a third of my career in countries with active wars and terrorism, including ironically named “low-intensity conflicts.” Those years were definitely conducive to reflection. Operating in extreme conditions gives you insights into how institutions and people succeed or fail. In the 2007 Iraq surge, when I supported tribal and municipal engagement “on loan” to a Marine Regimental Combat Team, I started analyzing what makes certain Foreign Service officers and specialists so valuable in such situations, and why the military and other agencies are usually so eager to work with State and USAID Foreign Service personnel. I pursued this inquiry in Afghanistan, and drew also on my time in the Peruvian and Salvadoran wars.

Here's my list of the unique attributes of Foreign Service personnel that enable them to add value to the foreign policy and national security process—and where, if we do not maintain this expertise, other agencies and the military will fill the vacuum:

- Deep knowledge of the region, the country and its society, religion, history, geography, culture and language based on experience overseas. The ability to state not only why things happen, but also their relevance for the U.S. and what our next steps should be; the ability to relate specific issues and responses to broader U.S. interests, such as democracy and human rights. The ability to assess our policy critically even as we implement it.

- The ability to understand foreigners—even those from sectors opposed to us, or trying to kill us—and comprehend what makes them tick and what their contradictions and limits are under normal conditions and extreme stress, avoiding “mirror-imaging”; and the ability to work with foreigners and influence them, or to oppose and defeat them, to advance U.S. objectives.

- The ability to think and work “interagency”—based on knowing what State and the full range of agencies present in an embassy (especially USAID, law enforcement and intelligence) can do to advance U.S. policy, in concert with Washington and, as appropriate, with the U.S. military and other partners. The ability to go the “last three feet” to turn policies into actions.

- A shrewd sense for using diplomacy across the spectrum

from peace to war—from the tactical to the strategic levels, from the short to the long term, and using elements of soft, hard and smart power—on issues shaped more by intense emotions and history than by cold logic.

- The ability to thrive in an environment of contradictory and ambiguous information and policy guidance.

- Leadership, including the ability to work with people under extreme stress; a positive attitude; and the ability to cope with hostile security conditions and their consequences.

While work at expeditionary and critical-threat posts tends to put these attributes into stark relief, they are just as relevant at less dangerous posts—not to mention the fact that today any post can turn hot very fast. Not all Foreign Service personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan met these standards—we had some duds and the odd toxic leader—but most rose to the challenge, as did Civil Service members and limited-term hires such as State's “3161s” and USAID's Foreign Service Limited appointments. (Language was a major challenge—but that is another story.)

How to Get There

In the following 30 points, I discuss how to develop and hone these attributes. Some points can be absorbed quickly; others take years to master. Here is my roadmap.

Geographic, Policy and Language Expertise

1 Keep learning about the host country—find a part that interests you and become as expert in it as possible. Read its literature, listen to its music, discuss its politics, history, religions and economics; attend cultural and sports events. Within your security constraints, travel widely outside the embassy “bubble.” (Carrying a nine-pound, 2-year-old girl from a farm to a USAID child malnutrition feeding station in Guatemala, for example, and listening to her parents' survival strategy—feed the older brothers, not the baby girl—taught me what no briefing paper could.) Figure out what makes the society work the way it does, and what its contradictions and dynamics are.

2 Meet and build relationships with host-country people from as broad a range as possible—our profession is ultimately about people, not policy papers. Reach out across invisible barriers of race, class, sex and region, and get outside the embassy. Don't hang out just with those who speak English or who are from the ruling class or who always agree with the United States. Local elites are important, but are often disconnected from the reality we need to understand and influence.

Don't emulate those who always disparage the host country or local groups; foreign partners will pick up on the conde-

scension and will cooperate less. Our enemies gain an advantage when we underestimate them.

3 Improve your command of the local language, slang and idioms. Diplomacy is about precision and nuances, and about connecting with those who don't speak English. If there is a second or third language spoken by minorities, try to learn it. Even a 1/0 in such a language will provide unexpected insights and entrée.

4 Keep learning about history and foreign affairs, and stay abreast of current events in the United States. You represent the United States 24/7—you may be the one American a foreigner remembers, especially if you are a consular officer. Read about issues and trends outside foreign policy, too; you will need this breadth as you advance. Foreigners follow U.S. events closely, and they will look to you for the U.S. government and the American perspectives.

Embassy Operations

5 Start learning about how embassies work—within the embassy, with the host country and with Washington. When done right, the U.S. government is without peer in terms of effective interagency operations under the authority of an ambassador or chargé (read the standard instruction letter for a new ambassador). At the same time, a good embassy is also a community (unlike the interagency in Washington). Keep an eye on employees' and dependents' sense of mission and morale; how the embassy carries out day-to-day as well as longer-term operations; how an embassy leads and manages organizational and policy change; how it manages security and prepares for crises; and how it carries out career development. You can also read about other U.S. embassies and posts at www.diplomat.net.

6 Know the mission of your embassy—read the Mission Strategic Plan, the USAID Country Strategy, and relevant speeches and testimony for starters. Talk to people in different sections and agencies; if possible, attend ambassador or deputy chief of mission (DCM) briefings. Ask yourself if the U.S. government's assumptions about the host country are correct, and if its policy objectives are realistic. Try to see how the embassy takes in information, receives human and financial resources, applies policies, carries out projects, engages the public and gets results.

7 Start learning how other U.S. agencies and the military carry out their work and how their operational cultures,



COURTESY OF STEPHEN MCFARLAND

Ambassador Steve McFarland with public university students in Guatemala during their annual protest march (Huelga de Dolores) in 2009. He was the first embassy official ever to engage with the traditionally anti-U.S. protest.

values, roles and objectives can differ from and complement—and at times conflict with, overlap or try to supplant—those of the Foreign Service and State. State Department personnel are a minority at almost all embassies. Most of our cutting-edge work overseas is interagency and with other foreign partners. All U.S. military services have reading lists that offer insights into their cultures and strategic thinking; *Foreignpolicy.com's* "Best Defense" blog and *Warontherocks.com* are also quite informative. The Foreign Service is an elite organization of which it is right to be proud, but don't be elitist or arrogant.

8 Learn about the different sections and cones and specialist tracks within State and the backstops in USAID, as well as the Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service, if they are present. If there are State Civil Service personnel on an excursion tour, learn about their profession. Learn about—and appreciate—the critical role of the Locally Engaged Staff (Foreign Service Nationals or FSNs, as they used to be called and still prefer). Support the FSNs and the FS specialists; they actually make the embassy work. Don't confuse rank with knowledge, authority, the ability to add value or power. As an Iraqi tribal leader once told me, "just because one has a degree does not mean one has wisdom."

9 Respect the chain of command—but if no one can address your problem, see the DCM; if that fails, see the ambassador.

10 Participate in the full range of embassy life—even when you don’t feel like it. It’s your community, and it’s a leadership thing.

11 Keep in mind that, though they can be enjoyable, representational events are work. When you get an invitation from the ambassador or DCM, you are generally expected to attend. If you have questions, check quickly with the office manager to see if it is a command performance. “On time” means arriving early. Focus on talking with non-embassy guests or with Washington visitors—ambassadors and DCMs notice this. Ask your boss when you can leave.

“Corridor Reputation” and Personal Skills

12 Improve your communications skills—listening, writing and speaking. Active listening, which includes observing a person’s mannerisms, pitch and nonverbal cues, is crucial to your later work in negotiations. When I negotiated by cell phone the unconditional release of Americans and Europeans held by armed hostage takers, active listening—identifying nervousness, pride and indicators of ethnicity and class—played a key role in our success.

13 Shape your professional persona, the “corridor reputation” you will inevitably develop. Identify what you want to be known as and for. At the start of the hostage event noted earlier, I picked two first-tour officers, a vice-consul and an assistant regional security officer (RSO), to travel to where I anticipated the hostages might be released. I chose them for their judgment, initiative, language skills and teamwork, and they excelled. Leaders observe you.

14 Take the initiative in preparing work requirements (30 days after arrival is the deadline) and in scheduling Employee Evaluation Review counseling sessions. For the latter, always take notes, even if the feedback is positive.

15 Volunteer for public speaking. This, and dealing with the press, will be a big part of your work as you advance. The public affairs section will help. Learn to brief succinctly and to make improvised remarks, in English and in a foreign language.

16 Learn to entertain at home. Invite the DCM and ambassador to an event with your host-country friends and contacts.

Security Awareness and Crisis Preparation

17 Support and respect the Marines and RSO staff—they will risk all to protect you. Go to Marine events; attend promotion ceremonies if invited. Four times I’ve been at

embassies where the host-country security vanished in the face of attacks, leaving only the Marine Security Guard at Post One. I think about that each time I walk past Post One; you should, too.

18 Understand your role—and your colleagues’ and bosses’ roles—in carrying out the Embassy Emergency Action Plan. This, too, is an essential part of leadership. When a crisis management team comes to post, try to participate in the exercises. Prepare yourself and your family for emergencies. Learn advanced first aid.

The ultimate test of an embassy is how it handles a crisis. Often lives are at stake, including yours. How well the embassy and you perform will depend largely on preparation, training (you did take those drills seriously, right?), teamwork and thinking through assumptions, worst-case scenarios and alternative courses of action. Often, you just have one chance to get it right.

19 Start developing your own security awareness, and start thinking critically about how we in the Foreign Service balance our safety with the imperative to carry out a mission in often dangerous circumstances. “Nothing is more important than your security” sounds great, but we cannot deliver if we only hunker down in hardened embassies. Obey RSO rules—a lot of experience goes into them, and your DCM and ambassador will demand this of you. Raise any disagreements with your supervisor and RSO; sometimes you can persuade them. However, the RSO cannot foresee everything, and at times makes the wrong call, so you must augment the rules with your own observations and experience.

Beware of complacency: it is sobering to see how a handful of committed attackers can use initiative and surprise to kill and cause damage to a heavily defended target. Remember, outsiders are collecting information about you and your embassy.

Becoming a Leader

20 Study leadership—you can start with former Secretary of State Colin Powell’s book, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*. Read and think through the consular leadership tenets and State’s leadership and management principles. Observe how people lead at your post. Even bad leaders—sadly, we have some—teach you, if only how *not* to lead. Leadership is not just for senior officers: you can and must lead from below, and with your peers. In fact, you never stop leading from below, even as an ambassador.

Study the moral aspects of leadership and responsibility, because your actions can have a direct impact on people’s lives. As you move up, you may have to send people into harm’s way or authorize the use of lethal force. What, you should ask,

gives you the right and the ability to do so? When those times come, there's no easy checklist, and there's precious little time to think—you need to have already developed a framework for moral and competent leadership.

21 Understand and internalize professional discipline. One aspect of this is to be able to take challenges and annoyances in stride. A second is to speak truth to power, respectfully but clearly. A third is to articulate and defend U.S. positions with which you may disagree strongly—in my own case, for example, the Iraq invasion and waterboarding. As you advance, you will be put on the spot increasingly to defend or implement positions with which you may disagree. Remember, “assess critically and implement faithfully.” Understand the mechanisms for dissent and use them if needed. Take pride in your work as part of a larger effort to advance U.S. interests.

22 Ensure that you look at all issues—work, foreign policy and personal—through an ethical lens. You'll appreciate the habit as you move up. So will your subordinates.

23 If you see something, speak up. I always told personnel new to the embassy that there was no room for any discrimination, sexual harassment or abusive treatment of anyone in the embassy by anyone else, and I insisted they meet these standards. I would tell them that while I hoped that they would never encounter such problems, if they did, or if they became aware of others who did, I expected them to inform the DCM and me.

24 Volunteer for additional duty outside your day job where you can develop management and leadership skills: e.g., with the housing board, employee association or commissary board; as an Equal Employment Opportunity representative or AFSA post representative; as a control officer for VIP visits; or on employee evaluation review (EER) panels. Consider local volunteer work, including teaching English at the American center. Activities that demonstrate your initiative, outreach, ability to develop a budget or execute a project, no matter how small, will stretch you and impress promotion panels.

25 Develop bureaucratic skills, especially how to participate in or run a meeting (hint: to arrive on time, arrive early) and identify the results you need from the meeting. You will spend far too much time in meetings, so you should get the most you can out of them. Read Richard Haass' *The Bureaucratic Entrepreneur*.

26 If you are a first-time supervisor, seek advice on setting objectives, giving guidance, counseling

Study the moral aspects of leadership and responsibility, because your actions can have a direct impact on people's lives.

and addressing any performance issues. Ask yourself how your leadership adds value to your team's work. You can be frank and firm, but never yell at or demean your subordinates; “leaders” who do so are bullies and ineffective. Take care of your people and praise their successes to your bosses. Learn to learn from your subordinates.

Resilience, Health and Passion

27 Balance work with family and personal needs. Your family will be there when the Foreign Service is not.

28 After consulting a doctor, give serious consideration to more exercise and better physical fitness. Physical fitness is still undervalued in the Foreign Service, but I've found it extremely helpful in dealing with the stress and dangers of our profession, and it's essential if you engage in expeditionary diplomacy or if you are an RSO. Bonus points if you join the Marines on a physical fitness or combat fitness test. Keep tabs on your emotional health, too. If you see or experience something traumatic, it's smart to consult a mental health professional rather than try to tough it out on your own.

The combination of physical, mental and spiritual fitness and agility, along with your sense of mission and teamwork, will determine your effectiveness and resilience when, not if, you face adversity and danger.

29 You will make mistakes. Acknowledge them, apologize as appropriate and learn from them. Much of your professional development will be on-the-job training, with advanced study in the school of hard knocks.

30 As you work on these issues and as you advance, try to maintain a running conversation with your inner self about why this work matters to you. Developing, refining and redefining your passion and purpose as a professional is extremely important and healthy.

Thank you for volunteering for the Foreign Service. We need you. Go make a difference! ■



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Examining State's Foreign Service Officer Hiring Today

Here's an inside look at the process of becoming a Foreign Service officer, considered the “gold standard” in professional recruitment.

BY GLENN J. GUIMOND

The traditional path to becoming a Foreign Service officer has evolved over the years as the State Department continues to seek a pool of candidates representing the diverse fabric of the United States, as well as ensure that the process more accurately and fairly chooses from among them. The State Department's Board of Examiners assesses applicants to the Foreign Service. BEX assessors identify innovative thinkers and entrepreneurial leaders to be the next generation of Foreign Service officers and specialists, strengthening the department and the Foreign Service to meet the challenges of a complex global landscape.

BEX evaluates aspiring FSOs, specialists and limited non-career (LNC) candidates in 21 career tracks, including regional medical officers, consular fellows, information management specialists and others. To make use of the most appropriate

and effective methods available, the BEX team works with department stakeholders and industrial psychologists to vet, validate and update test materials. This article outlines the basic steps to becoming a Foreign Service officer. The hiring process for specialists and LNC candidates is similar and spelled out on the State Department's careers website, careers.state.gov.

Using a “total candidate” approach introduced in 2008, the current selection process improves the department's ability to recruit and hire the best, compete more effectively with the private sector and be more efficient. Each step of the process is under continuous review to ensure efficacy and impact. The data for this evaluation comes, in part, from the candidates themselves in post-assessment surveys and social media platforms. Surveys of the new officers' supervisors in the field provide additional data where “the rubber meets the road.” If deficiencies are identified, corrections are proposed, evaluated and—if found appropriate—implemented.

One very important thing remains the same: the process itself continues to be considered the “gold standard” in professional recruitment.

The various steps in the entry process are briefly described here. More detailed information is available at <https://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/officer>.

Glenn Guimond is a public diplomacy officer currently serving as an assessor with the Board of Examiners (HR/REE/EXAM/BEX). His former assignments include the Czech Republic, Papua New Guinea, Jamaica, Iraq (PRT Baghdad), Ethiopia, Austria and Venezuela.

Like all elements of the entry process, the FSOT is under constant review.

Starting the Process

Each candidate must carefully consider and choose a career track before applying. While all U.S. diplomats are expected to communicate U.S. foreign policy and advance U.S. interests worldwide, each track has a specific focus. Formerly known as “cones,” the five FSO generalist career tracks of the Foreign Service are consular, economic, management, political and public diplomacy.

The Foreign Service Officer Test

Candidates seeking to become Foreign Service officers, or generalists, next register for the Foreign Service Officer Test, which is offered three times a year—in February, June and October. Registration is open for the five-week period immediately prior to a specific testing window (this is a change from the previous, continuously open application period). When registering, the candidate submits an application and selects a seat at the same time. The candidate also must make a career track selection when registering.

Applications are valid only for that particular test and expire when the testing window closes. Once an application for a test window is submitted, it cannot be changed. Candidates may test only once in a 12-month period. Eligible candidates may submit new applications during each registration period, allowing them to update employment or other important information, and change their contemplated career track if they wish.

The FSOT is a critical part of the FSO selection process, covering the job knowledge, English expression and biographic information necessary to work as a Foreign Service officer. The test is administered online and is comprised of a series of multiple-choice questions and an essay.

There are many resources available to help familiarize a candidate with the test at the Department of State’s website, <https://careers.state.gov>. Information provided there includes a Suggested Reading List and Course List; employee videos that communicate the range of work that Department of State

professionals perform abroad and at home; a digital brochure, “Becoming a Foreign Service Officer,” which contains sample test questions; and links to download the DOSCareers mobile app to test themselves with “retired” questions from the FSOT.

There is even an online practice FSOT that simulates the actual testing experience and gives a prospective candidate an estimate of his or her likelihood of passing the real test. Those who took the practice FSOT and then took the actual FSOT had higher scores and higher passing rates than those who did not take the practice FSOT.

Like all elements of the entry process, the FSOT is under constant review. In response to dissatisfaction among Foreign Service managers over the quality of entry-level officers’ writing ability, BEX is seeking ways to better measure a candidate’s business writing skills. A 2,800-character word limit was applied to the essay portion of the February FSOT to encourage more concise text. BEX is also considering the addition of situational judgment questions, which will assess a candidate’s judgment and interpersonal skills.

Personal Narratives

If a candidate passes the FSOT, he or she then has three weeks to write six personal narratives (PNs), which answer questions describing the knowledge, skills and abilities a candidate would bring to the Foreign Service. These six promotion precepts (Leadership, Interpersonal Skills, Communication Skills, Management Skills, Intellectual Skills and Substantive Knowledge) are predictors of success in the Foreign Service.

The PNs offer candidates the opportunity to highlight not just what they have done, but how they did it and what they learned. Candidates are asked to provide examples from their experiences that demonstrate their abilities; identify learning experiences; and show how their learning experience will contribute to success in their chosen career track. Essentially, they must show they have the skills to be a successful FSO. Each career track is reviewed by a different panel made up of officers from that career track during the Qualifications Evaluation Panel.

The Qualifications Evaluation Panel

Implemented in 2007, the QEP uses a total-candidate approach to review candidates’ educational and work background, their responses to the PN questions, their self-evaluated language skill level and their FSOT scores.

Although the QEP is a total file review, the candidate has the most control over it through his or her responses in the PNs.

These responses can be influential in determining a candidate's standing in the chosen career track. This is their chance to tell their story to the Foreign Service assessors.

The QEP provides a service to both candidates and the department. Because it allows a look at the total candidate, the process has proven effective at indicating which candidates are likely to be successful in the oral assessment. Prior to the QEP, the department invited approximately the top 10 percent of scorers on the written exam to attend the Foreign Service Oral Assessment. Once the QEP was introduced, the invitee pool from the FSOT went from 10 percent to approximately 40 percent, thus providing a wider range of candidates for the QEP to review. While approximately the same number of candidates is invited to the FSOA now as before the QEP, about 49 percent of the candidates invited using the QEP pass compared to 21 percent pre-QEP.

Both the department and potential candidates have realized substantial savings. The department reduced expenditures in staff time; and candidates unlikely to pass the assessment were saved the transport and lodging expenses of a journey to Washington, D.C. In addition, the process provided a wider mix of applicants with a broader range of skills. Nine years of data has shown that the better a candidate does on the QEP, the more likely he or she is going to pass the FSOA. The total-candidate approach in the QEP has proven to be among the best practices for employee selection assessments.

Evidence also indicates that the QEP produces a qualitatively different and more diverse pool of candidates coming forward to the FSOA. Based on historical FSOA invitation rates, more than half of the candidates (56.2 percent) invited to the FSOA today would not have been invited based solely on the cognitive-based skills test, the FSOT. According to a 2013 survey of entry-level officer supervisors to determine if the introduction of the QEP was producing officers with the "right stuff," today's candidates bring more international work experience, education and experience living abroad to the department. As one respondent said, "It is not that today's ELOs are better, but they are more consistently better."

The Spigot—From QEP to FSOA

The QEP results in a rank-ordered list of FSO candidates by skill code or career track. In determining the number of invitations to be issued to the FSOA, the strength of the current register, by skill code, is evaluated. The number of invitations issued is based on the hiring foreseen for each skill code and the number of FSOs necessary to achieve that number. It is thus

Nine years of data has shown that the better a candidate does on the QEP, the more likely he or she is going to pass the FSOA.

possible for more candidates of one skill code/career track to be invited to a particular FSOA than those from another skill code. It is also possible that a candidate could receive an invitation during a year in which hiring needs are anticipated to be high, but may not receive an invitation when hiring is expected to be low.

The Oral Assessment is conducted primarily in Washington, D.C. Resources permitting, BEX also offers it in San Francisco each year in January and May. The day-long Oral Assessment measures a candidate's ability to demonstrate the 13 dimensions that are essential to the successful performance of an FSO's work. It includes a group exercise, a structured interview and a case-management writing exercise. It is a job interview, not an educational exam.

The Oral Assessment exercises are based on a job analysis of the work of the Foreign Service. They reflect the skills, abilities and personal qualities deemed essential to the performance of that work. The exercises are not an adversarial process: candidates do not compete against other candidates, but instead are judged on their capacity to demonstrate the skills and abilities necessary to be an effective FSO.

The first update in a decade to the group exercise portion of the Oral Assessment was the addition of the "Ambassador Brief." Feedback from candidates indicated concern that less demonstrative candidates were being drowned out by more vocal members of the group. An individualized interaction was suggested that would allow those candidates to exhibit their capabilities.

During the "Ambassador Brief," candidates meet individually with the assessors, one of whom plays the role of an ambassador. The candidate briefs "the ambassador" on the outcome of the Group Exercise and explains the group's rationale for its decision. Once initiated, assessors found that this exercise also provided an opportunity to evaluate how well the candidates

The first update in a decade to the group exercise portion of the Oral Assessment was the addition of the “Ambassador Brief.”

followed, and were able to explain, the intricacies of the group discussion.

On the Careers portion of its website, the State Department provides resources that help familiarize candidates with the process. These resources include a “Foreign Service Officer Oral Assessment Information Guide”; a letter from the staff director of BEX, which contains a detailed explanation of the Oral Assessment and the 13 dimensions it measures; sample exercises; and a list of Frequently Asked Questions about the assessment.

Clearances

Candidates who pass the Oral Assessment will receive a conditional offer of employment and instructions about obtaining medical and security clearances to continue their candidacy. There is no guarantee of employment at this stage. Once the clearances are completed, the file goes to the Suitability Review Panel.

The Register

When candidates successfully pass the Foreign Service Officer Test; Qualifications Evaluation Panel; Oral Assessment; security and medical clearances; and a suitability review, they are placed on a hiring register. Candidates are rank-ordered on the register based on the specific career track they chose at the time they registered for the FSOT and their Oral Assessment score, plus any additional credit for language ability or veterans’ preference they may receive.

Veteran’s preference points or credit for demonstrated foreign language proficiency may raise a candidate’s standing on the register. Instructions on how to receive additional credit in these areas are provided on successful completion of the Oral Assessment.

Where We Stand

In recent years, up to 17,000 candidates have taken the Foreign Service Officer Test annually. A much smaller number advance to the QEP review, and approximately 1,000 per year are invited to the Oral Assessment. It should be kept in mind that FSO hiring targets are adjusted regularly. Many candidates with excellent qualifications who may have received an invitation to the Oral Assessment at a time of increased hiring will not receive one when the department’s hiring targets are lower or if there is an increase in the overall number of candidates. The process is highly competitive, and many candidates repeat the process more than once before succeeding.

The available data suggests that the current entry process results in a diverse, motivated and productive workforce. Minority representation in the Foreign Service has increased over the past 10 years, but is still not where the department would like it to be. In Fiscal Year 2003, Hispanic candidates represented 4.7 percent of FSOs hired, while in FY2015, 9.7 percent of those hired were Hispanic.

The percentage of African-American FSOs hired rose from 5.5 percent in FY2006 to 12.1 percent in FY2015. Although incoming Foreign Service classes are increasingly diverse and have nearly reached gender parity, except in a few specialist categories, it will take time before the workforce as a whole reflects these gains.

Our surveys of supervisors of new entry-level officers tell us that they possess strong work experience, technical and IT skills, and professionalism. Though this information is welcome, it by no means signals an end to the evolution of the entry process. FSOs themselves are expected to adapt to changing circumstances and to improve their performance over time. They do this through soliciting feedback from their peers and supervisors, as well as through critical self-assessment. The entry process for their profession should be no different.

The United States Department of State is fortunate to have so many outstanding candidates interested in joining the ranks of the Foreign Service. Those who have worked with the department’s entry-level professionals in recent years can attest to their outstanding skills and abilities. We will continue to evaluate the selection process to ensure that we are hiring the very best. ■

U.S. Department of State Opportunities for Students

National Security Language Institute for Youth

Who: U.S. citizen high school students, age 15-18, with 2.5 GPA or above.

What: Opportunities to study less commonly taught languages in immersion programs abroad.

When/Where: Summer or Academic Year/Selected countries worldwide.

How: Apply via www.nsliforyouth.org.

Funding: Travel, lodging with host families and language studies are funded.

How: Apply to individual programs via exchanges.state.gov/us/program/american-youth-leadership-program.

Funding: Travel, lodging and program fees are funded.

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for High School Students and Young Professionals, Germany

Who: U.S. citizen, national and Legal Permanent Resident high school students (age 15-18), with GPA 3.0 or above; and U.S. citizens, nationals and Legal Permanent Residents (age 18-24) with some relevant experience in their career field (work, internship or volunteer).

When: Academic Year/Germany.

How: Apply via www.usagermanyscholarship.org/app (high school) and <https://cbyx.info> (young professional).

Funding: Travel, lodging and academic studies are funded.

Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad Program

Who: U.S. citizen high school students at time of application, age 15-18.

What: Cultural exchange opportunities to enroll in local high schools and live with host families in selected countries.

When/Where: Academic year/Selected countries worldwide.

How: Apply via www.yes-abroad.org.

Pathways Internships

Who: U.S. citizen students or recent graduates age 16 and older.

What: Paid internship opportunities to work in federal agencies* and explore federal careers while attending school with possible eligibility for conversion to permanent employment in the Civil Service.

When/Where: Full-time and seasonal openings, announced on an ongoing basis/United States.

How: Apply to individual vacancies via www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads.

American Youth Leadership Programs

Who: U.S. citizen high school students, age 15-17, with at least one semester remaining upon return. Specific programs may be open only to students from a particular city, state or geographic region.

What: Leadership training exchange program to gain firsthand knowledge of foreign cultures and examine globally significant issues.

When/Where: Three to four weeks in summer/Worldwide.

**Those interested in Pathways openings with the U.S. Department of State should have an account and resumé on www.usajobs.gov; sign up for alerts using the "Keep Me Informed" feature on careers.state.gov, clicking the "Student Programs" box on the menu; and in most instances be prepared to apply within 24 hours of the vacancy announcement posting.*

U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

Who: U.S. citizen college students with 60 credits at start of internship who will be continuing their studies immediately after the internship.

What: Opportunities to gain practical, professional experience in a foreign affairs environment and insight into the substance and daily operations of U.S. foreign policy.

When/Where: 8-14 weeks, full time, in summer, spring and fall/Worldwide, at U.S. Department of State offices in Washington and other U.S. cities and more than 100 U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

How: Apply via usajobs.gov. Deadlines may vary, but traditionally are mid-October for summer, March 1 for fall and July 1 for spring of the following year. Interested students should sign up for email alerts using the “Keep Me Informed” feature on careers.state.gov and clicking the “Student Programs” box on the menu. For more information, see careers.state.gov/intern/student-internships.

Funding: Internships are unpaid. Housing may be provided at some overseas posts.

Critical Language Scholarship Program

Who: U.S. citizen undergraduate and graduate students who have completed one year of course work at start of program.

What: Opportunities to study one of 14 critical languages in immersion programs abroad.

When/Where: Summer/Selected countries worldwide.

How: Visit www.clscholarship.org/index.php.

Funding: Program, housing and travel costs are covered.

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Who: U.S. citizen undergraduates who are Pell Grant recipients and have been accepted into a credit-eligible study abroad program or overseas internship (including internships with the U.S. Department of State) lasting at least two weeks for students studying at a 2-year institution and four weeks for those at a 4-year institution.

When/Where: Spring, summer, fall or academic year/ Any country except Cuba or those on the U.S. Department of State travel warning list.

How: Apply via www.iie.org/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program. Deadlines vary according to program.

Funding: Up to \$5,000, with an additional \$3,000 available for critical-need language study.

Boren Awards for International Study— Boren Scholarships (undergrads) and Boren Fellowships (graduate students)

Who: U.S. citizen undergraduate or graduate students.

What: Funding for study abroad.

When/Where: For scholarships, semester, academic year and (for STEM fields only) summer. For fellowships, academic year.

Where: Worldwide excluding Western Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

How: Apply via borenawards.org/boren_scholarship/how_apply.html and www.borenawards.org/boren_fellowship/how_apply.html. Note that Boren Fellowship applicants commit to working in the federal government for at least one year after graduation.

Funding: Scholarships, up to \$20,000 for study abroad; fellowships, up to \$24,000 for overseas study, up to \$6,000 for domestic language study.

Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Summer Enrichment Program (undergraduate)

Who: U.S. citizen full-time undergraduate students with a GPA of 3.2 or above.

What: Six-week program designed to provide undergraduates with a deeper appreciation of current issues and trends in international affairs and a greater understanding of career opportunities in international affairs.

When/Where: Summer/Washington, D.C.

How: Apply via www.rangelprogram.org. Deadline is early February.

Funding: Tuition, travel, housing, two meals per day and a stipend of \$3,200.

Charles B. Rangel Graduate Fellowship Program

Who: U.S. citizens who plan to attend graduate school and who are interested in a Foreign Service career.

What: Funding for two years of graduate study in a field related to the work of the U.S. Department of State and two paid summer internships, the first on Capitol Hill and the second at a U.S. embassy. After graduation, fellows must fulfill a five-year service commitment as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State.

When: First internship takes place the summer before the start of graduate school in the fall.

Where: U.S. graduate school of candidate's choice.
How: Apply via www.rangelprogram.org.
Funding: Costs of graduate study (tuition and living expenses) are covered, up to \$37,500 per academic year. Internships are paid.

Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and Graduate Foreign Affairs Scholarship (undergraduate and graduate students)

Who: U.S. citizens planning to attend graduate school in a field related to the work of the U.S. Department of State and who are interested in a Foreign Service career.

What: Funding for senior year and the first year of graduate school, two paid summer internships with the U.S. Department of State. After graduation, fellowship recipients must fulfill a five-year service commitment as an FSO with the State Department.

When: Two paid internships, the first of which is prior to the start of graduate studies in the fall.

Where: U.S. graduate school of candidate's choice.

How: Apply via www.twc.edu/thomas-r-pickering-foreign-affairs-fellowship-program.

Funding: Up to \$37,500 per academic year. Internships are paid.

Fulbright U.S. Student Program

Who: U.S. citizen undergraduates and graduate students.

What: A wide range of fellowships for academic study, research and teaching English abroad.

When/Where: Varies according to program/Around the world.

How: Current students must apply through their school.

See: eca.state.gov/fulbright/fulbright-programs for a full list of programs and us.fulbrightonline.org for a list of Fulbright on-campus advisors.

Funding: Varies based on program.

Presidential Management Fellowship

Who: U.S. citizen graduate students in the final academic year of their degree or U.S. citizens who have completed a graduate degree within two years of the application deadline, who have a clear interest in public service.

What: The premier federal government leadership development program, designed to develop a cadre of potential government leaders.

When/Where: Two years, full time/Washington, D.C., and Department of State offices around the United States.

How: Apply via www.pmf.gov. Application opens for two weeks during September.

Funding: Two-year appointment as a salaried federal government employee.

Diplomacy Fellows Program

Who: U.S. citizens interested in a career as a Foreign Service officer who have a graduate degree in a field relevant to work of the U.S. Department of State and who have participated in and successfully completed one of the following programs within five years of the vacancy announcement:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Diplomacy Fellows
- Boren Graduate Fellowship Fellows
- Fascell Fellows
- Institute for International Public Policy (IIPP) Fellows
- Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellows
- Presidential Management Fellows at the U.S. Department of State or U.S. Agency for International Development
- Harry S. Truman Scholars
- Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Scholars
- Charles B. Rangel Fellows

What: Diplomacy Fellows are advanced directly to the Oral Assessment in the Foreign Service Officer selection process. See careers.state.gov/work/fellowships/diplomacy-fellows.

Virtual Student Foreign Service

Who: U.S. citizen recent high school graduates starting college or university in the fall and current undergraduates.

What: Opportunities to work on projects at various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of State.

When: 5-10 hours weekly throughout the academic year.

Where: Students remain on campus and work online.

How: Apply via www.usajobs.gov. Students apply for up to three specific projects. For details, see www.state.gov/vsfs. Applications are due in July for the following academic year. Interested students should sign up to receive the program announcement using the "Keep Me Informed" feature on careers.state.gov and clicking the "Student Programs" box on the menu. ■

—Information courtesy of the State Department
Bureau of Human Resources

Long Past Time to Talk About Trauma

Raising Awareness and Resilience

Taking better care of employees—from pre-employment to post-employment—makes economic sense, creates better morale and is the right thing to do.

BY ANGELA R. DICKEY

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 mandates a “career foreign service characterized by excellence and professionalism” as “essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States.”

Excellence and professionalism are difficult to maintain in an environment that requires repeated exposure to stressful and potentially traumatic situations. The January-February *Foreign Service Journal*, devoted



Angela Dickey, a retired Foreign Service officer, was posted in Africa, Canada, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Washington, D.C. Now an independent trainer and consultant, she recently received a master's certificate in conflict transformation from Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. She is also a certified EMU/CJP STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) trainer.

to mental health care, contained the poignant and distressing stories of 45 anonymous Foreign Service personnel. These reports describe an insensitive and inadequate response from the department to an unprecedented level of trauma in the workforce.

The testimonies of those who wrote to the *FSJ* illustrate powerfully that Foreign Service employees enjoy no separation between home and job, at least not when they are posted abroad. The experience is immersive. Note also the following realities for the typical Foreign Service professional:

- During the past two decades, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and other researchers have documented that trauma is prevalent in daily life in the United States. Therefore, the department must assume that at least some of the persons it hires have had previous exposure to trauma—even before being sent abroad. Any employee joining the workforce may have life experiences that weigh heavily and negatively on his or her wellness.

- More than 25 percent of today's Foreign Service members have served in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya or Yemen—the Priority Staffing Posts. Many more have served and are serving in other dangerous places such as Somalia, South Sudan and Leba-

non. Prior to September 2001, embassies were generally evacuated once they came under fire from hostile forces, but since the ramping up of “expeditionary diplomacy” in the post-9/11 era, that is no longer the case.

- Of the 200-odd American posts worldwide, between 30 and 40 percent may be classified as “unaccompanied” at any one time. Scientific studies show that being separated from family members is one of the most traumatic experiences an individual can face.
- More than a quarter of FS personnel, after serving in so-called “danger zones,” have moved on to other posts and to Washington, D.C., presumably bringing along with them unaddressed mental or emotional issues.
- No baseline study of trauma in the Foreign Service workforce has ever been done.
- Traumatized individuals are working in Washington, as well as abroad. For example, during an October 2015 open meeting at State on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), department-based employees reported “secondary trauma” from constant exposure, via phone calls and email, to the catastrophic experiences of their colleagues working in foreign countries.
- Traumatized individuals may also pass on the effects to family members in the form of domestic violence and abuse. Research has shown that abusers are often themselves the victims of trauma.

The obvious bears repeating: The State Department is the only federal agency that requires a subset of employees—Foreign Service personnel—to spend a majority of their careers abroad. And it requires them to work in combat or otherwise extremely difficult posts to qualify for promotion into the senior ranks. To comply with international best practice with regard to managing personnel posted abroad, State leadership can no longer turn away from the reality of trauma in the Foreign Service experience.

The good news is that there are new models of management that can help. Increasingly, international organizations that operate globally are adopting a concept of “duty of care” regarding employees. Medecins sans Frontières and the German Development Agency (GDZ) are among the organizations that have recognized that taking better care of employees—from pre-employment to post-employment—makes economic sense, creates better morale and is the right thing to do.

The Antares Guidelines

A few years ago, the CDC and the Antares Foundation in the Netherlands collaborated on a project to advise organizations that manage employees who live and work in hostile contexts.

Studies show that continuous exposure to live combat and extreme violence can lead even the hardest individuals to develop PTSD.

The result was the 2012 publication of *Managing Stress in Humanitarian Workers: Guidelines for Good Practice*. The Antares guidelines recognize that the stressors experienced by professionals in humanitarian and associated fields (like diplomatic and development work) can be greater than those experienced in more familiar situations. Here is the summary of the guidelines:

- *Policy*: The agency has a written and active policy to prevent or mitigate the effects of stress.
- *Screening and Assessing*: The agency systematically screens and/or assesses the capacity of staff to respond to and cope with the anticipated stresses of a position or contract.
- *Preparation and Training*: The agency assures that all staff have appropriate pre-assignment preparation and training in managing stress.
- *Monitoring*: The agency ensures that staff response to stress is monitored at all times.
- *Ongoing Support*: The agency provides training and support on an ongoing basis to help its staff deal with its daily stresses.
- *Crisis Support and Management*: The agency provides staff with specific and culturally appropriate support in the wake of critical or traumatic incidents and other unusual and unexpected sources of severe stress.
- *End of Assignment*: The agency provides practical, emotional and culturally appropriate support for staff at the end of an assignment or contract.
- *Post-Assignment*: The agency has clear written policies with respect to the ongoing support it will offer to staff who have been adversely impacted by stress and trauma during their assignment.

The guidelines posit that the employing organization should look after all its employees, regardless of nationality and whether they are full-time or part-time employees or contractors, through all stages of the employment cycle. The organization’s responsibility to its employees extends to post-employment, because PTSD and related disorders may appear only long after the first exposure to a potentially traumatizing event.

Studies show that continuous exposure to live combat and extreme violence can lead even the hardest individuals to develop PTSD. Trauma can trigger a cycle of violence, with some people “acting in” against themselves (e.g., alcoholism, drug addiction) and others “acting out” (e.g., beating their spouses, screaming at their employees). This kind of violence can also be seen as an ethical violation of FS norms: It is not only illegal to beat your spouse, it is unethical, too. Especially in the foreign context, where one’s behavior takes place “in a glass house.”

The Department of State needs to rethink and reform the way it cares for employees and their families, adopting systems and processes that are compassionate and consumer-friendly. Failing to provide this care has consequences for the individual concerned, his or her family, the larger Foreign Service and foreign affairs community, and U.S. foreign policy generally.

Helping Employees Help Themselves

Providing such care is a matter of both political will and resources. While the department lacks the funding to develop an adequate mental health and psychosocial support infrastructure to help employees cope with the demands and consequences of repeated stressful assignments abroad, a system of peer-led interventions could help support colleagues who may be suffering from illnesses and challenges. Peer trainers could supplement the work of the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) and the National Foreign Affairs Training Center/Foreign Service Institute in helping participants become more aware of the linkages between brain and body—particularly in relation to trauma—and learn to care for themselves and others.

A wealth of management literature supports the proposition that healthy, well-led teams are happy, more productive and better equipped to carry out their tasks than those worried about family problems, illness and so forth. As the Antares guidelines put it: “Under conditions of chronic stress, staff may be poor decision-makers and may behave in ways that place themselves or others at risk or disrupt the effective functioning of the team. Their own safety and security and that of beneficiaries may be put at risk, and their team may experience internal conflict and scapegoating. ‘Stressed out’ staff members are less efficient and less effective in carrying out their assigned tasks. Stress fundamentally interferes with the ability of the agency to provide services to its supposed beneficiaries.”

A country team that does not function smoothly can have a direct, deleterious impact on U.S. policy toward the host country. As the faces of America in a given country, FS personnel shape attitudes toward the United States and any given bilateral rela-

tionship. When a U.S. diplomat abroad behaves in an unethical manner, the action reflects poorly on the U.S. government and people.

Given the perennial and persistent pressures on the U.S. budget, it is unlikely the U.S. Congress will provide significant new mental health resources (e.g., large numbers of additional psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors) for the Foreign Service. This is especially so since the department has no baseline data on the prevalence of trauma among employees.

True, MED is expanding its resources, research and outreach to the FS population. But without cooperation from Human Resources and all the geographic and functional bureaus, change cannot occur. At present, the workings of HR are not transparent regarding staff care. Geographic bureaus run their own personnel empires, with unwritten and unstated policies that may or may not be congruent with overall department policy. All parts of the organization must resolve to abandon “stovepipe” approaches and work together to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and care to optimize the health and wellbeing of the foreign affairs community.

In the past two years NFATC/FSI has launched pilot programs in individual and community resilience. This new curriculum is not only for personnel coming out of combat zones but also for A-100 (entry-level), deputy chiefs of mission and new ambassadors. It also is being introduced in leadership courses required of all employees. The next step in spreading knowledge about this topic would seem to be to train trainers who can help deliver training to their colleagues.

A peer-led program on trauma awareness is not a substitute for psychological or psychiatric care, of course. However, peer training can help embassy country teams identify personnel who are having trouble and can refer these cases to the appropriate medical officer.

A Pilot Project to Introduce Trauma Awareness

The work that NFATC/FSI is already doing in terms of resilience training is admirable and needs to be reinforced. Other models could supplement what is already being done. For example, one model that could be adapted to the Foreign Service is the STAR—Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience—curriculum at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The STAR program, in which several employees from the U.S. Agency for International Development and from the School of Professional Studies at FSI have participated, describes itself as “a five-day research-supported trauma awareness and resilience

training program . . . [that] brings together theory and practices from neurobiology, conflict transformation, human security, spirituality and restorative justice to address the needs of trauma-impacted individuals and communities. STAR training sessions are multicultural, multifaith gatherings in which all are welcome to use the language of their own culture and faith traditions. Openness, sensitivity and respect are encouraged.”

George Mason University, the U.S. Institute of Peace and several other conflict-resolution institutions also offer programs that have been used successfully domestically and abroad to train social workers, emergency response personnel and others living and working in conflict situations. They give participants practical tools to recognize and deal with the stressors in their lives and professional environments. The programs typically include information on how trauma affects the brain, body and behavior. They also provide an opportunity to practice emotional first aid, compassionate listening and transforming conflict nonviolently.

STAR, or a program like it, could be tailored to fit the Foreign Service and embassy contexts. Adopting the program would require training facilitators who could carry the knowledge forward and disseminate it through embassy communities abroad. Additional material would be developed addressing the specific stressors of living and working in an embassy (e.g., how to nurture productive relationships with host-country nationals working in the embassy).

To launch such a program, a pilot “country team” could be trained together. The key would be to capture the group as it cycles through its pre-deployment training at NFATC/FSI. Most State Department personnel are required to take the foreign language of their country of assignment prior to deploying; therefore, they are already in class together for periods ranging from six months to two years. The trauma awareness training could be introduced as part of required training, just as security training and other country-specific courses are required. A key player in the establishment and maintenance of such a process would be the deputy chief of mission, who normally runs the embassy. Of course, a successful program would require the full-hearted support of the ambassador at each mission.

After the pilot group has been posted abroad and has worked together for a year or so, a training and evaluation team would be sent to evaluate how the group is managing in handling the stresses of living and working together. The evaluation team would visit again after another year. The trainers/evaluators could provide additional training to the original group and observe their facilitation of the country team in situ. Perhaps the program could be offered at the embassy at the same time as

The programs give participants practical tools to recognize and deal with the stressors in their lives and professional environments.

the annual Crisis Management Exercise in which each country team must participate. Feedback from the visits could be used to inform Phase II, in which a second pilot embassy team is trained and prepared for deployment.

Beyond observing the embassy country team pilot in its setting abroad, the master trainers would need to devise a monitoring and evaluation instrument to assess whether the pilot is having the desired effect.

Conclusion

More than four decades ago, a USAID FSO named Barbara Dammarrel survived the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut. She later wrote a master’s thesis about her experiences with PTSD following that terrorist incident. In her study, she recommended that the Department of State and the other foreign affairs agencies implement policy and procedures to prepare employees better for service in highly stressful situations.

Today it is clear that repeated exposure to trauma in the Foreign Service and larger foreign affairs community has reached a crisis level that affects office colleagues, families, bilateral relations with certain countries and foreign policy writ large. Although State has taken some preliminary steps to deal with this complex problem, much more needs to be done. The Antares guidelines offer a blueprint for beginning to address some of the root causes of distress in the foreign affairs community. There are a number of trauma-informed training programs that could provide ideas for State to follow in providing better care.

Additional programs to help employees manage stress would require additional resources that only Congress can provide. But the State Department should start planning for a baseline survey of all employees that can inform leadership about the extent of trauma in the foreign affairs community.

It is high time to begin mainstreaming trauma awareness throughout the Foreign Service. ■

Life After the Foreign Service— What We're Doing Now

PART II

The May Foreign Service Journal's focus was "Life After the Foreign Service." We began preparing that issue in January, with a broadcast message to retired and former members of the Foreign Service requesting input on the "afterlife." We asked AFSA members to reflect on what they wished they had known earlier about retirement, and what advice they would give their younger selves on planning for it. We also asked what they wish they had known before joining the Foreign Service. And we invited them to tell us about their interesting post-FS lives, including advice for others who may want to take a similar path.

The response was quick and abundant. We received nearly 50 thoughtful essays—far too many for one issue. We published 22 in May, and present the remaining 25 in this edition. Like the first batch, this collection is full of interesting stories. Retirees and prospective retirees alike will appreciate the great variety of paths taken by their colleagues, as well as the hard-won insights and useful advice offered here.

—The Editors

Teaching English as a Second Language

BY JAMES WACHOB

When I retired from the Foreign Service at age 60, I strongly wanted to "give back" some of the fruits of my exciting and challenging Foreign Service assignments. I was particularly interested in applying the skills in writing and in cross-cultural communication that I had honed in the course of a 37-year career that included seven overseas postings.

A Foreign Service spouse had once told me of the satisfaction she derived from organizing groups to learn English in countries where it isn't widely spoken. Her enthusiasm for English as a Second Language instruction motivated me to consider employment as an ESL instructor in the Washington, D.C., area, where my wife and I intended to remain in retirement.

A novice on ESL matters, I sent employment application letters with my résumé to four ESL schools advertising in the Yellow Pages. One of them was so enthusiastic about my qualifications that its management tracked me down in Los Angeles, where I was administering Foreign Service oral examinations during my final State Department assignment. They promised to hire me without an interview if I agreed to report to their Rosslyn branch on the first day of my retirement from State, a condition to which I readily agreed.

Valuable ELL Volunteer

By Lieu Huynh

There's no better way to spend this Christmas season than to give back. James Wachob, tutor of the Wilson ELL Department, has spent nearly his entire life doing just that.

Every Tuesday and Thursday afterschool, Wachob meets individually with ELL students to help prepare them for the TOEFL exam (Test of English as a Foreign Language). He also works with students to improve their grammar skills. The sessions are beneficiary because "I tell them information that they don't get in regular classes," he said.

Wachob's resume is very impressive. He has visited every continent and over 60 countries. After graduating from high school, he joined the military and became the youngest staff sergeant in the army at the age of 19. Then, he spent 37 years working for the U.S. Foreign Service and the Washington State Department, taking him around the world.

His widespread travels and



Tracy Koczela

GIVING BACK - ELL students benefit greatly not only from Ms. Ball's volunteer, James Wachob, but also from his donated map of the world. His far flung adventures and numerous awards show his passion for teaching English.

program for ELL students, the National Cathedral Literacy Program positioned Wachob as a tutor, where he has taught ELL students for the past seven years.

Wachob knows the impor-

language," he said. "They need to be told they can do it."

Throughout his life, Wachob has earned many accolades for his work with students, including the "Exceptional Language Teaching Award" in 1998 from the Jellison School of Language

James Wachob was featured in the Wilson High School newspaper in Washington, D.C., during his 2004-2014 tutoring stint.

With the full support of the ESL department, I was successful in encouraging many students to alter the negative behavior that had led to their being referred for mentoring. After seeing substantial improvement in those students, some department teachers began sending me students "whom only Mr.

When I reported to the school, the receptionist handed me a book used to prepare students for the international Test of English as a Foreign Language. I hadn't even heard of TOEFL or that publication, but she said, "You'll be in Room 4. Your students are waiting for you."

My Foreign Service experience, which included instances of successfully facing situations far more alarming than this, gave me confidence for my debut. I was pleased to be named the branch's senior instructor soon after that, and spent a total of 16 satisfying years in that line of work.

As my wife's Parkinson's disease worsened, I took a volunteer appointment to the ESL department of a public high school in the District of Columbia so I could spend more time with her and her nurses. My twice-weekly series of one-on-one sessions, again exclusively with foreign students, began as a continuation of my TOEFL program at the private schools. However, the main thrust of my high school sessions evolved into mentoring students who were underperforming for various reasons.

Wachob can handle."

After 10 years at the high school, I decided to end my volunteering on my 87th birthday. I looked forward to seeing some of my former students again, either here or in their home countries. Now widowed, I find those reunions an immensely rewarding part of my life after the Foreign Service.

James Wachob entered the Foreign Service in 1951 and retired in 1988 with the rank of Minister Counselor. He served in West Germany, Swaziland, the Central African Republic, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Libya and Washington, D.C.

Retiring Overseas

BY SUE H. PATTERSON

There is life, adventure and deep satisfaction in retirement. Making one's own life does require a steady income, initiative and the willingness to take a few risks, along with knowing yourself and what brings you satisfaction.

I chose to retire from the Foreign Service 19 years ago, after my final assignment as consul general in Florence. When I decided to make my home in Guatemala, where I had previously served as consul general for four years, my friends in Tuscany (and other places) thought I was in need of psychiatric treatment.

Some days I think they were right, but on the whole it was a good choice for me. Antigua—the colonial United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization site where I live—offers a fabulous climate, a lower cost of living than most places in the United States and plenty of stimulation. And it's surrounded by beauty in both the landscape and the Mayan culture. It also has a



COURTESY OF SUE PATTERSON

Sue Patterson (second from right) interacts with WINGS youth peer educators two years into their activities.

plethora of thorny but compelling social issues, which is what, in fact, pushed me to come back to settle.

It was during my time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia, more than 40 years ago now, that I learned I have a deep passion for trying to help poor women get better control over their lives. The paths that opened for me here, which provide structure to my days and occupy a lot of volunteer time, are family planning (via www.wingsgate.org) and reducing chronic malnutrition (www.aldeaguatemala.org).

Guatemala has both the highest fertility rate in Latin America (half its children are younger than 5) and the fourth-highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the world. Obviously, there is plenty of work to be done in these two intersecting areas, as in many others. Gratification and opportunities abound.

To ensure that a choice similar to mine is going to work, it is necessary to be in a community with plenty of stimulating,

like-minded people with whom one feels comfortable. For me, that is mainly a generous supply of fellow expatriates, not the rural Mayans I try to serve in my volunteer work. It also requires access to family and friends in the United States, as well as amenities like books, music, travel opportunities, a good climate, a university and a public library.

The decision to retire overseas takes time to ferment, and is enhanced by having previously lived in the potential destination. It is also true that only our excellent government benefits make such a choice possible for those of us having no other income streams. Serious volunteer work abroad or in the United States can be every bit as fulfilling as were our Foreign Service careers.

Sue H. Patterson served in Iran, Italy, Guatemala and Washington, D.C. After her retirement, she undertook temporary duty assignments in South Korea, Kenya, Panama and Peru.

Working and Reporting on Environmental Issues

BY BOB TANSEY

Iretired on Sept. 30, 2009. Looking back, I feel like I was pretty well prepared. I think State's four-day workshop is great. I also did the two-month transition and job search program just before I retired, and that provided lots of useful information and insights.

My advice—whether to my younger self or to colleagues preparing to retire in the foreseeable future—is to look for what you love and prepare to do it for the rest of your life. I've been a Buddhist all my adult life, and that gives me an orientation to service and to ongoing self-development. So I figured out

early on that I wanted to keep working and contributing to society in retirement.

Naturally almost everyone thinks about the basics like financial viability in retirement. But I believe it is also hugely important to consider what will bring you joy and fulfillment. The Foreign Service is a very particular kind of career, so it's important to step back and ponder, "What do I want to do for the rest of my life?"

Before I joined the Foreign Service in 1985, I'd only been to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls and to Japan. I spoke a bit of Spanish.

Now I've lived in eight countries, visited 63 (and counting), and have been able to communicate with fascinating people in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Turkmen in addition to my native English. It's probably good to have more experience with the world outside the U.S. than I had before joining the FS, but for me and my family it all worked out.

Because I had won the 2007 Frank E. Loy Award for Environmental Diplomacy for my work as an environment, science, technology and health officer in Tel Aviv—including my contributions to Israeli-Palestin-



Bob Tansey gives a presentation on conservation to a Chinese audience.

Do What You Didn't Have Time to Do

BY CRAIG OLSON

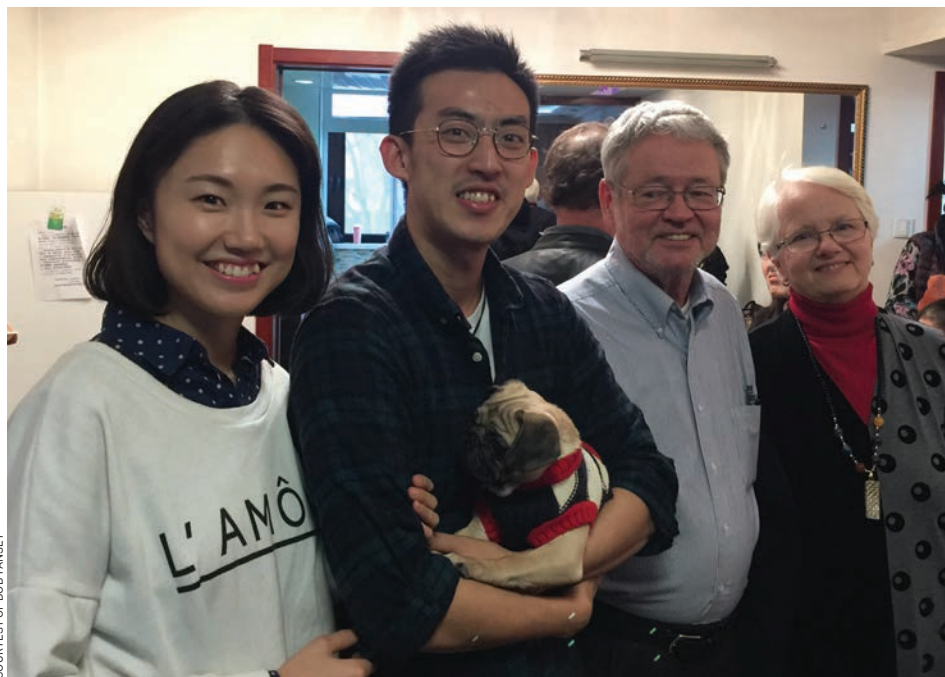
My response to your request to describe life after the Foreign Service has a twist. More than 80 percent of my working life occurred *before* I joined the Foreign Service.

You see, I entered the Foreign Service as a political officer at the age of 58. And no, I was not an appointee; I took and passed the exam after several tries. (I don't know if it's true, but I've been told I am the second-oldest person to have entered the Foreign Service in history.) I served in Colombia and Kenya, then spent the remaining two years of my FS career in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

My philosophy has always been that retirement is the stage

in life when you do things you didn't have time to do—or, for legal reasons, couldn't do—while working. In my case, that has included political activism, travel, bridge, golf and spending lots of time with our six grandchildren.

Craig Olson spent seven years in the Foreign Service, serving in Colombia, Kenya and Washington, D.C. Before joining the Foreign Service he worked for a private consulting firm doing economic development work in developing countries, and was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal.



A pot-luck farewell reception for Bob Tansey, third from left, at his apartment in Beijing.

ian water cooperation—and because I'd also studied Mandarin in Taiwan, and then worked in Beijing and Chengdu, The Nature Conservancy hired me in early 2010. I started in Beijing but am now at TNC's world office in Arlington, Virginia, supporting our China program from here and engaging with policy innovation

teams across the organization's major goal areas: land, water, oceans, sustainable cities and climate change.

To me, it's some of the best work in the world. Serving in almost all regions of the world was probably *too* eclectic from a Foreign Service careerist standpoint, but that mix is really paying off for me now in my global role with TNC.

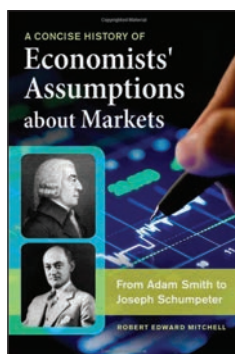
I tell friends still in the FS—including highly accomplished colleagues—to apply now for some things that by their nature involve long application and decision processes. That's a safe way to start figuring out what your own future "dream job" might be—assuming you want to keep working. I still quote the great lines from counselors at the career transition course: "Go for the offers! You can turn down the offers you don't want, but you

can't accept the offers you don't have."

Bob Tansey was a career economic officer with the State Department from 1985 to 2009. He served in Guatemala, Canada, Taiwan, China, Turkmenistan, Israel and Nigeria, as well as in Washington, D.C.

Ink in My Veins

BY ROBERT E. MITCHELL



I was a mid-career transfer into the Foreign Service, a targeted recruit from academia with analytical skills needed at the time by the U.S. Agency for International Development. With USAID I was able to continue what I was already doing, but without the time-consuming challenges of preparing courses, teaching and encouraging students. I missed that, but found program management and development work very rewarding.

Heavy time demands placed on overseas USAID staff didn't allow much opportunity to plan for what one would do after mandatory retirement at age 65. But I greatly benefited from the one-month retirement workshop the agency offers those about to retire. I sorted out my financial and other challenges while slowly slipping back into my earlier academic environment by taking advantage of the learning and research resources in the Washington, D.C., area.

Ink is in my veins, so writing (and publishing) compensates for my near-deafness, an affliction that makes social relations very difficult. I can live within myself, as I have had to discover.

I do miss the challenges of an overseas Foreign Service career and certainly benefited from multiple long-term postings in the Near East and Africa. But I was always a particular type of non-political activist, a disease that began well before my rewarding career with USAID. That early history helped me forge a meaningful post-retirement life. I'm still plugging away at publishing and both taking and leading courses for fellow (non-Foreign Service) retirees.

Robert E. Mitchell's long-term USAID postings were in Egypt, Yemen and Guinea-Bissau. The Middle East Journal published his "What the Social Sciences Can Tell Policymakers in Yemen" in 2012. He is the author of A Concise History of Economists' Assumptions About Markets: From Adam Smith to Joseph Schumpeter (Praeger, 2014), and two other manuscripts are now with publishers. One is "The Language of Economics: Socially Constructed Vocabularies and Assumptions," and the other is a long cliometric history titled Soils, Vegetation and the Settlement of the Five States of the Old Northwest: Assessing the Decisions Made by Michigan Farmers and Lumbermen.

Keeping the Mind Sharp in Retirement

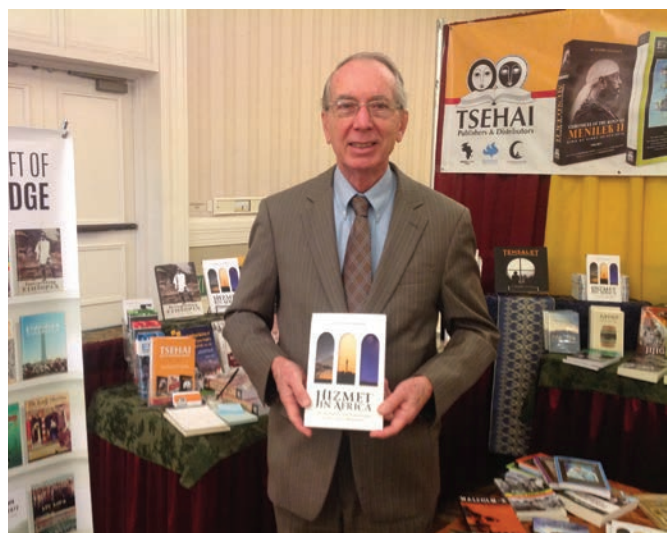
BY DAVID SHINN

A Foreign Service career comes to an end for most of us at a relatively young age, our late 50s or early 60s. Assuming good health, there is a great deal one can do during a long period of retirement.

That said, moving to a second career may be harder than you think, even when you seem to have all the right credentials. Armed with a Ph.D. and teaching experience at Southern University and the University of California at Los Angeles, thanks to the State Department's diplomat-in-residence program, I thought advancing within academia would be relatively simple. But it soon became apparent that I had not punched the necessary tickets to assume a senior teaching position.

So instead, I began adjunct teaching in the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University. That may actually have been the better choice, it turns out. While the pay is modest, I control my own schedule and effectively have no bosses—a huge plus after 37 years in the Foreign Service. The moral here is to be realistic about second careers and prepared to accept something less than your first choice.

Everything considered, there is little I would change in my planning for life after the Foreign Service. Your spouse or partner



David Shinn with his book, *Hizmet in Africa*, at the African Studies Association Conference in San Diego in 2015.

needs to be part of the process and in agreement with your plans. You should have some idea where you want to live, and what you would like to do. Financial planning that leads to financial flexibility is also important.

I knew long ago that teaching was a possible second career, so I decided to get a Ph.D. while still in the Foreign Service. I wanted to remain engaged in international affairs. That argued for staying in the Washington area. We already owned a home on Capitol Hill, and it was easy to stay put. Frugality and careful investing while in government resulted in financial flexibility. Voilà! It worked out, just not at the level I had initially envisioned.

Before joining the Foreign Service, it never really occurred to me that retirement might last so long. The corollary is to stay physically fit. I did not begin a serious physical fitness program until age 60.

In addition to teaching, an activity that helps keep the mind sharp and the psyche young, I have co-authored two academic books and published a third on my own, all dealing in some

way with Africa, which was my area of specialty in the Foreign Service. But I also needed to get up to speed on China for a major tome on Beijing's relations with the continent, so I made multiple visits there. Another book dealing with the Gülen Movement in Africa reacquainted me with Turkey, a country I had not visited since 1966.

Besides contributing numerous articles to policy and academic journals, I've also given lectures all over the world and advise or serve on the boards of a half-dozen nongovernmental organizations. My bottom-line advice to prospective retirees is to remain physically active and mentally engaged to make the most of retirement.

David Shinn was ambassador to Ethiopia from 1996 to 1999, and also served in Lebanon, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Sudan and Washington, D.C. Since retiring from the Service, he has taught African affairs at The George Washington University and published several books.



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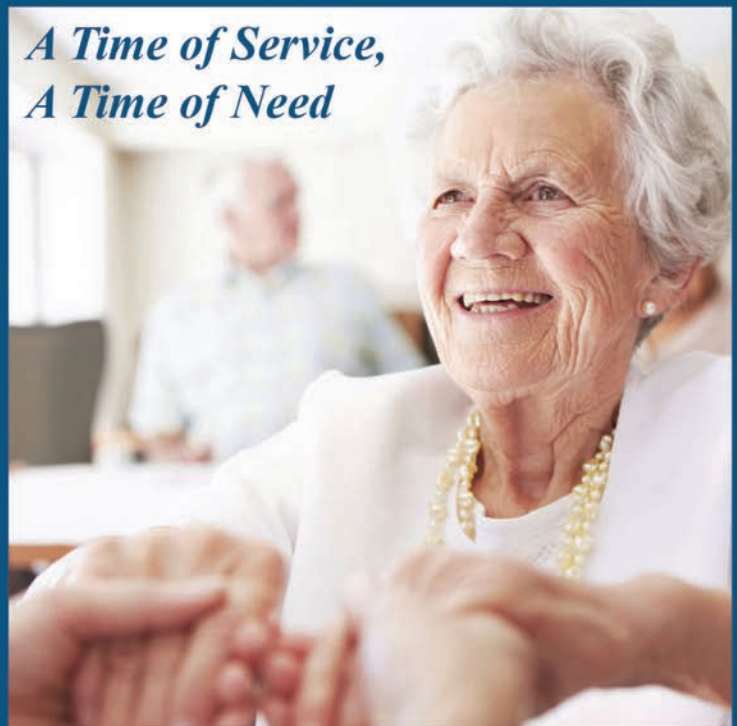
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Jim Meenan (right), with his wife, Vera, advocates for the Foreign Service with Representative Gerry Connolly (D-Va.) at the congressman's annual St. Patrick's Day event.

Use Your Connections

BY JIM MEENAN

All too often, Foreign Service personnel don't think about planning for retirement when we begin our careers. As a result, retirement sneaks up on many of us.

What is it that you would really like to do now that you have a retirement annuity to help meet your daily needs? The earlier you can answer that question, the better positioned you will be to achieve your dreams, by ensuring the skills you are developing and the training you are receiving will furnish you with the qualifications you'll need during retirement.

While in college, I had the pleasure of briefly meeting John F. Kennedy during his presidential campaign stop in Los Angeles. He proved most inspiring and sparked a desire to do more in my career than just hold down a job. I wanted a challenging international career where I could make the most use of my education. Shortly after graduation, *The Wall Street Journal* ran an ad announcing openings in my field of expertise in more than 87 countries with an organization called the U.S. Agency for International Development.

My first assignment after joining the Foreign Service in 1965 was Saigon, so I realized right away that my career would prove to be challenging, as well as rewarding. I served in a variety of hot spots, from Chile and Panama to Sri Lanka and the Philip-

pinos. What I learned throughout my career is the need to stay flexible and seek new ways to contribute to the U.S. objectives in each particular country or environment. Toward that end, I changed my career path from one pointing out areas for program improvement to actually designing the programs and managing their implementation. As a bonus, I figured that would give me employable skills later in my life.

I also observed, during my Vietnam assignment, the importance of staying in touch with one's congressional representatives. One senior officer was promised his next assignment

would allow his family to accompany him, and when that did not happen he contacted his representative, who happened to be Tip O'Neill Jr., the Speaker of the House. His situation was quickly corrected.

Although my Foreign Service career had focused heavily on private enterprise development, I was fortunate to have secured (under the Foreign Service Act) a three-year assignment as legislative assistant for trade and economic development to Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.). This assignment helped pave the way for a post-Foreign Service career in international trade, with both private firms and trade associations. I also joined the U.S. Department of Commerce private sector trade advisory group for small and minority business, as well as its intellectual property sister committee.

I later received a call from the chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Small Business to join his staff as its senior trade adviser, which led to useful hearings about the shortcomings in U.S. trade promotion. (I continue to maintain some congressional contacts as I volunteer on the AFSA Political Action Committee Advisory Board.)

My concluding advice: As one proceeds through a Foreign Service career, one should stay alert to making the most of the skill sets that are being developed, with an eye to ensuring they will be of assistance during retirement.

Jim Meenan is a retired USAID Foreign Service officer. His overseas postings included Monrovia, Saigon, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Colombo and Manila. He lives in Arlington, Virginia, and is a member of the AFSA-PAC Advisory Board.

Activism Through Volunteer Work

BY JACK R. BINNS

There is indeed life after the Foreign Service, and it can be very fulfilling. Moreover, it may continue for an extended period, as in my case. Of course, other persons' trajectories may not be as favorable as mine, or as that of my friend and colleague, Ray Seitz. When he retired from the Service and became a Lehman Brothers director, Ray observed: "I can continue to wear all my pinstripe suits: no change of wardrobe required!"

My wife, Martha, and I returned to our home in Washington, D.C., from Madrid in early 1986, ready to start new lives while remaining in our comfort zone, near friends and colleagues. My original plan had been to do consulting work and start a Spanish antiques business on the side. To that end, I had established a

relationship with a Madrid dealer and brought back a container-load of goods at my expense. But within two months I discovered my profit margins would be small, and the work would take a lot more time and effort than I was prepared to expend. Antiques were just not my bag!

Consulting work offered a more rewarding way to make a living. Among other gigs, at the behest of the Diplomatic Security Bureau I headed a small team that designed and conducted emergency planning exercises at embassies and larger consular posts. For nearly five years, my team visited and conducted exercises throughout Latin America and Europe—as well as Syria, for reasons I no longer recall.

For her part, my wife became a travel agent, then moved on to the National Planning Association—a nonpartisan think-tank that brings together business, labor and academia—as a meeting planner. We both were having a great time, but eventually got itchy feet. The Southwest beckoned! After much research, we moved to Tucson, Arizona, in October 1990.

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COURTESY OF GEORGE LAMBRAKIS

George Lambrakis (front, second from left) with his wife, Claude (front, right), at a dinner with the Brown University Club of South Korea in Seoul while on a fundraising trip.

lots of golfing, we both joined the boards of all sorts of local groups: the League of Women Voters, a local country club, an FS retirees group (which ultimately folded), the United Nations Association of Southern Arizona, the Tucson Committee on Foreign Relations and the Latin America Center at the University of Arizona.

Eventually I became the public affairs director for the local Planned Parenthood chapter, and that proved to be a turning point in our lives. The best part was the chance to form strong ties with a younger group of like-minded friends. They are very tolerant of the aged!

We also keep in touch with our FS friends, some of whom are winter visitors, and we see others when we go east to visit our New York-based daughter. Our other daughter lives in Australia with our only grandchild, but our parents faced the same long-distance challenge with us.

So, yes, kind readers, there is definitely a life after the FS. And there's also a hitherto absent sense of permanence. As best Martha and I can recall, we had 23 full household moves, sometimes two or three in the same city, during our 35 years in the Navy and Foreign Service. Since retiring we have moved three times, and have been in our current residence for 23 years. The thought of yet another move is appalling, but no doubt inevitable.

Jack Binns entered the Foreign Service in 1962 and served in Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador, the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Honduras and Spain, as well as in Washington, D.C.

Two More Careers Open New Worlds

BY GEORGE LAMBRAKIS

At age 54, after 31 years in the Foreign Service (two with the U.S. Information Agency and 29 at State), I embarked on the second of my three careers: international fundraising. That was eventually followed by university teaching and administration in London and Paris.

I quickly learned the value of putting together an effective résumé, a task I had never had to perform during my time in the Service. On a happier note, I discovered that there are a lot of Foreign Service alumni out there who are eager to help you find a job, particularly in think-tanks and academia. Nor do you need to be a superstar or have the title of ambassador (which several universities unilaterally bestowed on me anyway) for such positions.

Following up on a tip from a retired FSO I didn't previously know, and with the recommendation of former ambassador and Fletcher School Dean Ed Gullion, I was selected to establish a pioneer American university fundraising effort abroad at Brown University (not my alma mater). They preferred someone who knew his way around the world rather than any of the 250 other applicants with domestic fundraising experience.

Accompanied by my wife (at my own expense), I traveled to many countries we had never seen in the Foreign Service; got local country reports from savvy business people with whom, as a former political officer, I had had little previous contact; stayed in top hotels familiar to the wealthy prospective donors; and ate at top restaurants and was invited to stay in lovely homes. (My FS pension helped me make ends meet, given the lower starting salary at Brown.)

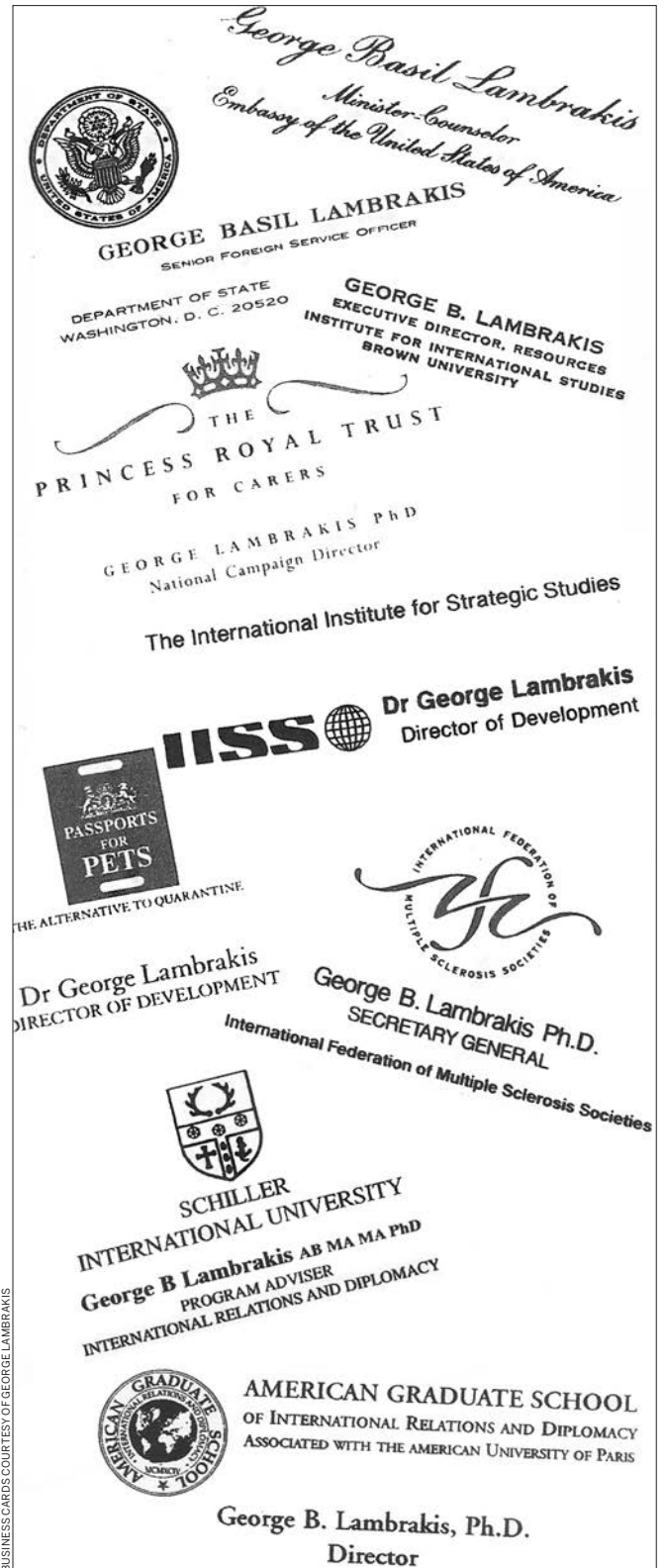
After more than three successful years at Brown, an old Foreign Service friend introduced me to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, where I established a similar program. I then set up fundraising for the new Princess Royal Trust for Carers (which involved visits to Buckingham Palace, lunches with Princess Anne, and a broken ankle while out shooting near Loch Lomond in Scotland).

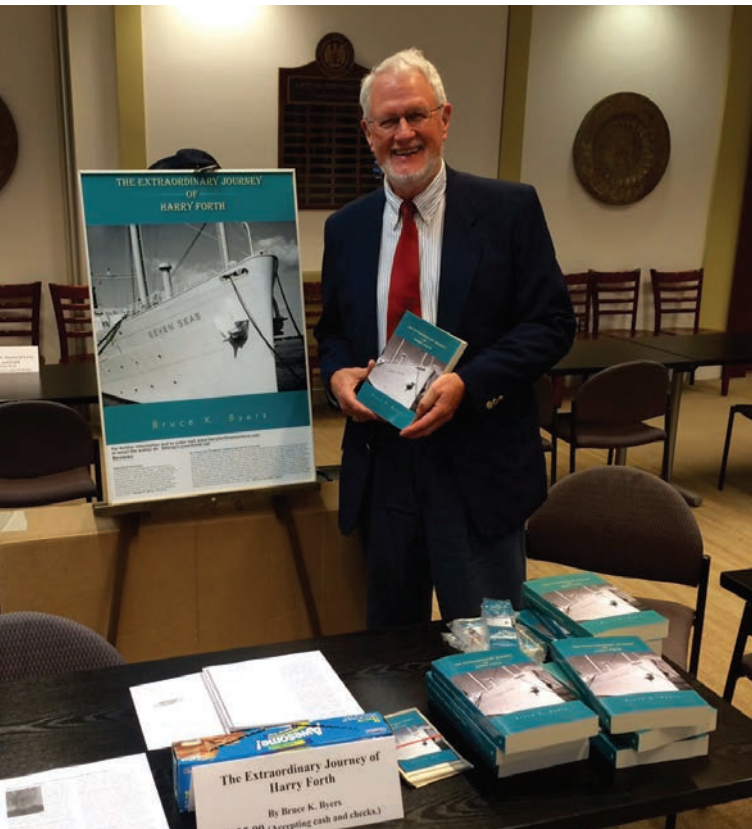
Next came a position as secretary general of the International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis Societies, where in the process of multiplying their fundraising take I got an education on brutal politicking between national chapters and prima donna volunteers in America and Europe. And finally, as the sole fundraiser for Passports for Pets, I helped inspire the campaign that succeeded in ending the draconian six-month quarantine of dogs and cats imported into the United Kingdom. In the process, I met more top society donors than I ever knew existed and earned the gratitude of people such as Governor Chris Patten, who was returning from Hong Kong with his two dogs.

My subsequent switch into academia was less dramatic. Foreign Service experience and a Ph.D. (from The George Washington University) won me the position of program head for international relations and diplomacy at the London branch of Schiller International University in 1994. I held that position until 2011, when I retired at age 80, having simultaneously taught courses at four other universities in London and directed the new American Graduate School of International Relations and Diplomacy in Paris.

So, my fellow FSOs, take heart. Your talents are highly marketable, and there is much to learn and enjoy once you realize that retirement, like college graduation, can open up new worlds for your delectation.

George Lambrakis is a retired Senior FSO with experience in a dozen countries in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia. He lives in Paris.





COURTESY OF BRUCE BYERS

Bruce Byers with his book, *The Extraordinary Journey of Harry Forth*, at AFSA's 2015 Book Market.

Breaking into Publishing

BY BRUCE K. BYERS

What do I wish I'd known before joining the Foreign Service?

I would have liked to know more about the dislocation that moving overseas can visit upon a young family.

I grew up in a military family and was used to moving a lot. But there is a major difference between military life and Foreign Service life. Support for the families of armed forces members is much more developed, although there have been significant improvements in family support at Foreign Service posts.

How should a prospective retiree prepare for post-Foreign Service work (paid or volunteer) and other activities? Research your post-career interests as much as possible before you retire, and expand professional contacts in those fields while you are still employed. To the extent feasible, attend conferences, seminars and lectures in the areas you are interested in pursuing. And don't neglect to join professional organizations that can help after retirement (AFSA and DACOR are two I have joined). Finally, hone your public speaking skills and expand the range of topics about which you can speak.

If you enjoy writing, start documenting your experiences while still on active duty. Keep photos, letters, articles and other memorabilia that can help in pursuing a writing career. (Remember, your children will one day want to know more about the early years in the Foreign Service when they were young and moving about the world.) Participate in writing workshops and seminars to establish contact with local authors.

While I worked as a WAE (now REA, or re-employed annuitant) in the State Department between 2001 and 2009, I published several essays on foreign affairs topics on different websites. I also wrote short stories related to my career experiences and my life before the Foreign Service, which were the basis for an autobiographical novel about my first trip to Europe as a high school exchange student.

Write what you would enjoy reading without worrying about publishing it. That way, the experience is more fun and less prone to disappointment. When you think you have something worth publishing, ask friends about their experiences and research the self-publishing industry thoroughly. Read contracts carefully and don't assume anything.

What advice would I give my younger self about planning for life after the Foreign Service? First, I would emphasize the need to save throughout one's career and avoid carrying major debt into retirement. It's also advisable to maintain good relations with local physicians, dentists and lawyers.

I would establish a revocable family trust (much sooner than I did) as a means of protecting personal and financial assets. The trust documents include medical directives, wills and powers of attorney to protect us and our assets in case of certain life events. Shop around for a law firm that specializes in trusts, ask lots of questions during the initial interview with a lawyer, and take nothing for granted.

I would urge anyone on the verge of retirement to update their security clearance and maintain good relations with the bureau in which they are working at the time of retirement to be able to be considered for WAE positions. A current security clearance is very valuable if you contemplate working for any government contractor or other government agency. It opens many doors to post-retirement jobs.

Bruce K. Byers joined the Foreign Service in 1971 with the U.S. Information Agency. He served in South Asia, Europe and East Asia, retiring in 2000. After retirement he worked in the Office of International Visitors and published essays on foreign policy topics in The Foreign Service Journal and the e-zine AmericanDiplomacy.org. From 1995 to 1996, Byers served as AFSA's USIA vice president.

A Satisfying Second Act

BY RON FLACK



COURTESY OF RON FLACK

Ron Flack.

I retired from the Foreign Service almost 20 years ago, and still occupy the position I found in 1997. After I had completed the retirement course and the job search program, Taylor Companies, a private, family-owned investment bank in Washington, D.C., hired me to develop and manage a global network of senior advisers.

When I started, I felt like a junior officer in an embassy again. I had to learn how to function in a very different work environment, acquire computer skills and integrate my international experience into the company.

I am not an investment banker, but hire and work with our advisers, mainly retired chief executive officers whom I have recruited. They are key to the success of the company.

Soon after starting my work with Taylor, my wife, Daniele, and I moved to Paris, where I still represent them as co-chairman for Europe. Happily, at age 82 I can pretty much set my own work schedule. When I retired at age 65 I thought I would work perhaps another five years at the most! I am delighted to be still working, albeit less, and keeping active.

Allow me to offer a few recommendations to my active-duty Foreign Service colleagues.

First, throughout your career, develop and cultivate long-lasting relationships with contacts around the world. I still draw on my diplomatic experience and international contacts almost daily in my work. I think that it is easier for FSOs who have spent most of their careers abroad, rather than in Washington, to find satisfying international work in retirement.

Second, spouses can play a very helpful role in a second career. Daniele has kept in touch with foreign contacts even more regularly than I have. FSOs whose spouses accompany them abroad have a major advantage in seeking international work after retirement.

In the Foreign Service spouses are, as my fellow Minnesotan Hubert Humphrey once said, unpaid diplomats. The government gets two for the price of one. In retirement, as well, my wife of 55 years has been an integral part of the teamwork at the company, this time as a paid consultant.

I have often counseled young people who are seeking careers in the Foreign Service to consider the downsides of

working abroad, such as raising a family in difficult environments and health issues, in particular—but also education and spouses' careers. But raising a family abroad can also offer enormous advantages. In our case, we chose the French educational system abroad, and our children have their French Baccalaureate degrees—one from Athens, another from Geneva. They are totally bilingual and bicultural, and they often thank us for giving them an international upbringing.

A Foreign Service career is an exceptional and very gratifying way to spend the first part of your life. But a satisfying second career is equally important.

Ronald D. Flack retired in 1997 after a 35-year career in the Foreign Service. He served in Paris, Copenhagen, Geneva, Athens, Abidjan, Algiers, Manila and Washington, D.C.

Enjoying Travel and Hobbies

BY JAMES PROSSER

After 41 years in the Foreign Service, I retired to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where I was born. This is my 25th year as a retiree.

Pursuing my numerous hobbies (photography, trains, classical music, animals and wildlife, computers, telecommunications, amateur radio, gardening, swimming) never left time to engage in remunerative post-retirement work. But it has also meant that I never have to wonder what I'll do each day.

One very enjoyable aspect of retirement after the Foreign Service has been the many opportunities



COURTESY OF JAMES PROSSER

James Prosser.

to address schools, social clubs and other local organizations about the Foreign Service. This activity led me to mentor three college students on how to successfully pursue careers in the Foreign Service.

My wife and I lived in 11 different countries during my Foreign Service career, and we still travel the globe, making scores of close friends. Many of our voyages have been by sea on freighters, each carrying fewer than 13 passengers. We traveled all the way around the world on a Danish freighter!

People often ask us, "What was your favorite place or trip?" We usually respond that it's impossible to pick only one. As long as our health holds out, we just keep on going.

Oh, and closer to home, we also have Green Bay Packer season tickets!

James Prosser joined the Foreign Service in 1954 and served in Vietnam, Germany, Congo, Belgium, Finland, Russia, Switzerland, Kenya, the Holy See and Washington, D.C.

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

BY WILLEM H. BRAKEL

There are many onward paths following a career in the State Department. Over the past five years, mine has centered on teaching part time at the university level. I have found this to be extremely rewarding in various ways: the interactions with bright and curious students, the possibilities for sharpening one's own analytic and presentation skills, and the opportunity to find some perspective and coherence (if only retrospectively) in the random moving around from issue to issue and post to post that is typical of a Foreign Service career.

As active-duty diplomats, we flit from one assignment to the next, focusing so much on the crisis of the day and the deadline of the moment that we have precious little time for reflection or strategic thinking. Academia offers an antidote to these tendencies. They say you never really understand a subject until you have had to teach it. And, as Socrates said, an unexamined life is not worth living. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity for that

reflection and self-examination today.

For those contemplating going in an academic direction, I call attention to the excellent, thought-provoking series of articles on the divide between scholars and practitioners of diplomacy in the January-February 2015 *Foreign Service Journal*. My only quibble, as a former economic-coned officer and scientist with 24 years in the Foreign Service, relates to that series' relatively narrow focus on (geo)political issues.

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to teach a course on international environmental politics at American University's School of International Service. In preparation I delved for the first time into the extensive scholarly literature on international relations as it relates to environmental concerns. (My own previous degrees were in biology.) Like several authors in the above-mentioned *FSJ*, I found that some academic writing was pretentious and pompous, and theoretical to the point of abstruseness. Yet I also found much that was useful and insightful and valuable—stuff I wish I had known better while I was still in the trenches drafting position papers, sharpening decision memoranda and delivering demarches.

Take, for instance, the academic literature on international environmental governance, which looks at the totality of institutions and arrangements and all their moving and non-moving parts. Over the years as an FSO I had picked up a lot of this in a piecemeal fashion. Yet if I could have given some advice to my younger self, I would tell that slimmer, hairier Willem to seek out opportunities for reflection and learning about his profession outside of the day-to-day grind of work. He will need that broader perspective in more senior positions later on and in retirement—and it will make him a better officer in the near term.

And I would also tell him to not be shy to bid on assignments that interest him and allow him to develop new skills and experience, even if they do not appear to be promotion-worthy or career-enhancing in the immediate term. In my case, several assignments that might appear off the beaten path (a teaching stint at FSI; an out-of-cone assignment that involved lots of negotiation; a detail to an international agency involving lots of practical, hands-on experience) helped me immeasurably in the Senior Foreign Service and paved the way for a rewarding career in semi-retirement.

Willem Brakel, an economic-coned officer whose career at State focused on environment, science and development issues, retired from the Senior Foreign Service in 2011 as director of the Office of Environmental Policy. He is currently adjunct professor of environmental science at American University, and represents the District of Columbia on the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

Making the Best of Premature Retirement

BY D. THOMAS LONGO JR.

It's one thing to retire after a full career in the Foreign Service. It's quite another to be retired prematurely, and involuntarily, for reasons unrelated to job performance.

That's what happened to me in 1993, when my time in class expired before I could be promoted into the Senior Foreign Service. The demise of my career resulted from shifting multifunctionality standards for promotion, as well as budgetary constraints and legal limits on the State Department's ability to confer promotions.

To be booted out that way was a searing experience, since I had planned to continue devoting my life to the Foreign Service. It was a psychological stunner that contributed, in part, to my divorce two years later. It also dissuaded me from ever again wanting to be hostage to an employer's whims.

Fortunately, I qualified for an immediate earned annuity, for which I am eternally grateful. Thanks to cost-of-living adjustments and careful budgeting, I lead an agreeable existence.

I continue to engage in various volunteer activities, such as serving on the board of a regional symphony orchestra, heading an alumni association of former U.S. Navy crew members since 1999 and participating in AFSA's Speakers Bureau. I am also president of eNARFE, the virtual electronic chapter (with more than 30,000 members) of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.

For me, these pursuits are a way to give back to fellow veterans and my country, from someone grateful to have served his country, to receive a decent federal annuity and, at age 73, to enjoy pretty good health.

I wish I had known before entering the Foreign Service that despite whatever dedication you bring to the "needs of the Service" and whatever accomplishments you achieve, it's not enough to think, as I perhaps naively did, that doing a good job will bring its own reward. Promotions are in good measure a matter of luck and whom you've met along the way to mentor you and give you a boost. The pernicious up-or-out system obliges the Service to cast out perfectly good people. What a waste for the country to squander experienced, good FSOs.



COURTESY OF D. THOMAS LONGO JR.

D.T. Longo Jr. "in jail" at the USS *Capricornus* Association's 2015 reunion in Kansas City, Mo. Longo has headed the naval ship association since 1999. The "cell" was a mockup in the restored Leavenworth, Kansas, train station, which is home to large U.S. military and federal civilian penitentiaries.

Speaking to various groups ranging from high schoolers to senior citizens, I do encourage others most sincerely from my own experience that the Foreign Service is extremely interesting, important and worthwhile work. You will be challenged, you will not be bored, and you will have fun. But keep your eyes open about what you're getting into: a full career and promotion to senior ranks are susceptible to ever-varying considerations beyond the fact that you stood up, saluted, went where the Service sent you and consistently did a great job.

D. Thomas Longo Jr. was an FSO from 1969 to 1993. He served in Ankara, Budapest, Düsseldorf, Palermo, Ottawa and Washington, D.C. Before joining the Foreign Service, he served in the Navy from 1963 to 1967.

Random Tandem Thoughts on FS Retirement

BY DAVID T. JONES AND TERESA C. JONES

When we entered the Foreign Service (David in 1968 and Teresa in 1974), the institution was on the cusp between the “old” and the “new” (and still evolving). Diplomacy was a profession, lasting a working lifetime—not a job. Although there was selection out and time-in-class restrictions, the system gently managed successful diplomats at the upper mid-level and senior ranks. They could expect to retire at their leisure in their 60s, and gold-plated, escalator-cluded annuities permitted them to live comfortably without a second job.

The new Foreign Service, which we had to navigate and which all current FSO must master, is more demanding. The first lesson for newly minted diplomats is to understand the federal bureaucracy thoroughly to better enhance their careers.



COURTESY OF DAVID T. JONES

David and Teresa Jones.

Here are some additional observations for active-duty FSOs that will help ensure you can look back on a satisfying career:

Find a mentor. Locate an upward striving, congenial superior in an area that interests you. Be prepared to go to the deepest-darkest (as well as lightest-brightest) with him or her. Work like hell to be an indispensable team member (in 30 years of active duty, I logged seven years of uncompensated overtime and regret-



COURTESY OF DAVID T. JONES

As a junior officer in Paris, David Jones was cast as “John Adams,” one of America’s primary diplomats struggling to persuade the French royalty to support the Revolution, at the embassy’s Fourth of July celebration.

ted barely a minute of it). But at the same time, start building your own team, those you want to lead when opportunity permits.

Leave previous experience behind. Your former academic, professional study or work will likely be irrelevant. A decade of East Asia study never resulted in a Far East assignment for one spouse; native Mandarin was never used professionally by the other.

Tandem status helps. The end of prohibition for married women as FSOs in the 1970s created “tandems”—with minuses as well as pluses. Now we must address the bitter spouses who couldn’t pass the FS entry exam. But “tandem” status is financially invaluable, especially in retirement.

Keep your original spouse. Divorce is expensive; multiple divorces even more so, especially when significant percentages of your pension goes to the spouse.

Preparing for retirement:

Assess your circumstances. Consider a final assignment to make you a Spanish-speaker if you do not already have that language. Obtain “While Actually Employed” (now REA) status. It is easier to arrange before retirement and opens paths for short-term assignments as an inspector, “gap” replacement or regular State work (e.g., Freedom of Information Act declassification).

Review your physical health. Do you need to diet? Do you have an exercise regime?

After retirement:

Do nothing dramatic for a year. Don’t plunge into a new job or a volunteer commitment (those are easier to get into than out of). Remember: Volunteers are welcome, but not honored. You get real respect by being paid.

Don’t sell your house and move “home.” You may quickly find that Centerville, USA, is Dullsville, with beloved relatives in cemeteries and “old school friends” passé. Moreover, it takes at least a year to move, reorganize and create new “trap lines.” Do you really have a year to spare for that?

Expand your social circle. This may seem obvious, but it is important to find younger friends (less likely to die on you).

Most important of all, enjoy every day! You have fewer ahead than behind.

David T. Jones entered the Foreign Service in 1968 and retired in 1998. He served mostly in politico-military positions overseas and in Washington, D.C.; his final assignment was as political minister-counselor in Ottawa.

Teresa C. Jones entered the Foreign Service in 1974 and retired in 1998. A science officer, her final assignment was as science counselor in Ottawa.

Picking Up Again in Academia

BY AL KEALI’I CHOCK

On my retirement from the Foreign Service, my wife and I moved to a nonprofit retirement community, Pohai Nani, which is a month-to-month rental in Hawaii with a \$250,000 entrance fee. We enjoy regular meals, many social activities, as well as bus service to shopping areas, theaters and concerts.

Fortunately, I had previously taught ethnobotany at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa as a lecturer, a paid position. After retiring, I was appointed to the adjunct faculty (unpaid). And after a decade and a half, I got an office (which I share with a post-doctoral student) that contains my technical and Hawaiian library—the equivalent of three wall-to-floor bookcases.

Warning: Once the word gets out that you’re retired, you will have numerous groups recruiting you. My first decade was filled with voluntary community boards and organizations (as many as six!), including two years as president of a master community association.

Be prepared: As a senior, you will soon find that there are numerous body parts that will fail, and you need to be close to major medical facilities. Forget that dream of living in a forest or rural setting! Since my retirement in 1992, I have had two complete knee replacements, as well as back (laminectomy) and right shoulder (rotator cuff) surgeries.

I wish I had today’s annuity, with locality pay, and double what I had in 1992!

Al Keali’i Chock was the plant quarantine officer for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its Rome headquarters from 1975 to 1978. He joined the Foreign Agricultural Service in 1982, and served as regional director for Europe, Near East and Africa, based in The Hague, Netherlands, until 1988. He then returned to Washington, D.C., to serve as regional director for Asia and the Pacific from 1988 to 1992. He served on the AFSA Governing Board as FAS vice president from 1989 to 1990.

Expect the Unexpected

BY DIANA PAGE

Despite preparing for mandatory retirement at 65 (which should be raised at least high enough to match the age to collect full Social Security benefits), the first few years of what I prefer to call “reinvention” were full of discoveries and disappointments for me.

I say this even though I approached the process as if I were going back to college: a freshman year for experimenting, then the traditional overconfident sophomore year. That would perhaps be followed by a junior year abroad or other challenges, after which I hoped to use a senior year to focus on what lies beyond that.

My husband and I expected to have our own little vineyard in Chile; instead, we ended up as tenants on an avocado farm. (“Yes, I know you thought you’d try a cabernet sauvignon, but how do you like this guacamole?”) Hidden in a valley an hour from Santiago, the farmhouse is not glamorous, but the rent is quite economical. It also allows us to escape winter in Maine from November to April.

I also expected my good health to last a long time—until the day pain developed in my knee, eventually forcing the choice between giving up walking or surgery. I chose knee replacement, but that changed my “junior year” into one of not going abroad. And despite planning many sentimental journeys, I found out that family issues—such as becoming grandparents—will defer your travel. My advice to fellow retirees: travel sooner rather than later, because you never know what’s coming.

My four years of reinvention did not bring what I expected, but they brought some advantages that I never anticipated: the fun of learning how to cook whatever is in season, the pleasure of a good library that is also a community center, and the satisfaction of being an opinionated citizen in a lively local democracy.



COURTESY OF DIANA PAGE



Diana Page with her husband in the Andes mountain range in the Atacama region of Chile, and the cover of her memoir.

(I’m working with Maine Moms for Gun Sense on a referendum to close loopholes on background checks.) When traveling, I find freedom to engage in discussions at all levels as just an American, not as a diplomat.

My advice to those planning to live abroad is try it for a year or so before shipping your household goods. You may miss all the acronyms, such as FSN, GSO, APO.

You will inevitably spend days in lines in ministry corridors. (My husband is Chilean, but I cannot get permanent residency due to our dividing the year between the United States and Chile.) Foreigners also have trouble getting bank accounts; it seems we’ve been too successful in blocking money laundering. On the bright side, the greatest boost to travel since no-frills airlines is the online home-away-from-home website, Airbnb. I love it!

Diana Page joined the Foreign Service in 1990, serving in Guyana, Brazil, Chile, Bosnia, Mexico and Argentina, where she retired as public affairs officer in 2011. Her memoir, Looking for Love in Strange Places: A Memoir for My Stepdaughters, was published by Wheatmark in 2016.

Launching a Documentary Film Company

BY LEONARD HILL

My post-retirement path has been partly traditional—rediscovering the ups and downs of living in my own house, several months of WAE (now REA) work a year—and partly unconventional. Launching, with my wife, a documentary film production company a year into “retirement” was definitely not one of the things we had talked about or planned during the Job Search Program.

Here are a few things that I’ve taken away from the process:

- An “extended home leave” cleared the decks for the next phase of life. Approaching retirement as I would home leave—a time of transition to something new, with a lot of things to do to get ready—worked well for me and my wife. I focused on getting through a list of necessary but not necessarily exciting tasks—e.g., renovations to our house, figuring out what to do with stuff that was in storage—rather than thinking too much about my new status (or lack thereof).

Before I knew it, I had both accomplished the tasks on the list and found myself headed on a completely unanticipated path.

- Be open to a change. Although my wife and I want to be near our aging parents, who require some assistance, we have tried to keep ourselves as flexible as possible to take advantage of new opportunities.

- Networks matter. From WAE assignments

to finding a film crew in Bangladesh, people I met during my diplomatic career have been crucial to what I have done since leaving the Service. Staying in touch or reconnecting with friends and colleagues has been one of the pleasures my wife and I have enjoyed post-retirement. And the networks that we developed have helped us immensely, either directly or by introducing us to others who have been helpful.

Making an independent film—as anyone who stays in the theater to read the credits knows—takes a lot of people; introductions and recommendations make finding them so much more effective.

Leonard Hill counted four transitions between climate zones 1 and 3 during his Foreign Service career, serving overseas as a political and economic officer, consul general or deputy chief of mission in every geographic bureau except Near Eastern Affairs. Since retirement, he has produced an award-winning documentary film, “Threads,” about Bangladeshi artist Suraiya Rahman, as well as completing WAE assignments in Tunisia, Canada and Central Asia. He lives with his wife and film-producing partner, Cathy Stevulak, in Gig Harbor, Washington.



Leonard Hill and his wife, Cathy Stevulak, interview Bangladeshi artist Suraiya Rahman in Dhaka for the documentary film “Threads,” which recently completed its film festival run.

A Retirement Adventure

BY JUAN BECERRA

The thought of retiring was frightening, but I can attest that there is life afterward. You do have to make adjustments to survive financially, however. I wish that I had known the value of formulating a “What do I really want to do?” plan before retirement. Financial stability and a home are important, but so is keeping yourself occupied after you retire.

As a Vietnam veteran, I decided that I would help my fellow vets by volunteering at the local Veterans Affairs hospital. That turned out to be rewarding as well as challenging, because I didn’t always understand the patients I worked with.

I had been lucky enough to return from Vietnam with minimal problems, but many of my peers had not been so fortunate. The same was true of many veterans of other wars and conflicts. Despite my best efforts, I could not relate to them.

So after a year of volunteering at the hospital, I decided to start traveling to visit family and friends and visit places I had always wanted to see. I did that for several years until one day, when I received an email from a Foreign Service colleague asking me if I might be interested in doing “While Actually Employed” (now “re-employed annuitant,” or REA) work. I jumped at the chance and here I am today, heading off to an assignment in South Africa next.

I would advise anyone interested in volunteering to try it out for a while and see if it’s really what you want to do. I found that I missed the travel, the adventure, the challenge of FS work and my Foreign Service colleagues. I have given myself an “end date” of 2017, and still plan to “completely” retire next year.

I am happy and ready for the next adventure in my life.

Juan Becerra served in Rome, Abidjan, Belgrade, Doha, Baku, Geneva, Belmopan, Berlin and Washington, D.C. So far, he has worked as a WAE in Abuja, Niamey, Brazzaville, Ouagadougou and Kinshasa.



Juan Becerra (third from left) at an Information Resources Management award ceremony at Embassy Brazzaville in 2015.

COURTESY OF JUAN BECERRA

Happy to Be Alive

BY ALAN L. ROECKS

When I retired from the State Department Foreign Service in 2012, I was in good health. But a year later, in October 2013, cancer struck. Over the next two years, after 21 painful immunotherapy treatments and numerous hospitalizations, I would lose a kidney and bladder, and now wear an external pouch. I was depressed and wondered if I would make it to age 70.

Fortunately, I had a spiritual companion. When times were difficult or I had considerable pain, I would close my eyes and Mother Teresa magically appeared to comfort me. My wife, Jane, and I had happened to have a private, 45-minute meeting in her Kolkata office years before. Mother Teresa thought I was there for visas, but I had brought used computers, which it turned out she could not use.

Though I had planned to write in retirement, it didn’t happen—the medical challenges created writer’s block. (This is my first writing since retirement.) Channeling frustrations of self-pity into something positive, I set up an American Foreign Service Association retirement group in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, established a nonprofit foundation and a

bladder cancer support group.

The overseas group was a wonderful stress-reliever and provided a collegial forum to discuss international politics and happenings in the Foreign Service, and reminisce about past postings. We talked, for example, about the Foreign Service Institute's Job Search Program, an option most of the group had not pursued when retiring.

As it happens, the Job Search Program had prepared me well. Room and board costs were offset by remaining longer on the payroll. Upon completion, I knew what I wanted to do with my Thrift Savings Plan and Social Security, had prepared a 10-year financial plan, and decided to set up a nonprofit foundation and keep my federal health insurance (a move that has saved me thousands of dollars in medical costs).

Setting up the nonprofit foundation was tricky and time-consuming, but represented a welcome diversion from ongoing cancer treatments and surgeries. The foundation embraces international medical, educational and humanitarian causes. In Addis Ababa, my last posting, our family became involved with a youth tennis academy and decided to sponsor a student to study in the United States.

Because Ethiopia is not exactly known for its tennis players, it was a hard sell. But we finally found a college in Lewiston, Idaho, that offers an excellent tennis program for international students. Yonas, the student we're sponsoring, joins our family during holidays and school breaks, and we follow his tennis team. The foundation also sponsors a humanitarian award for a student from my high school and helps support Missionaries of Charity in Bhagalpur, India, the birthplace of our two adopted children.

Looking back, I wish I had known about the Foreign Service out of college. I joined State as a specialist at age 42, later moving to the FSO management track. Overseas international schools provided a comprehensive college-preparatory education for our children and a stimulating professional environment for Jane, an elementary teacher.

My close medical calls since retirement have made me appreciate life, particularly my overseas experiences with the Foreign Service, more than ever. I am grateful for my pension; excellent, affordable health insurance; and the flexibility to engage in the activities of my choice.

Alan Roecks served in the State Department Foreign Service from 1989 through 2012, with postings in Kinshasa, New Delhi, Brasilia, Ankara, Dakar and Washington, D.C. His last tour was as management counselor in Addis Ababa. He has published stories in State Magazine and The Foreign Service Journal.

Fulfillment in the Nonprofit World

BY LAMBERT "NICK" HEYNIGER

I joined the Foreign Service in 1956 and served first as a consular officer in Amman and, thereafter, as a political officer in a series of overseas postings and assignments in Washington, D.C. These included the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Office for Combating Terrorism, among others.

After retiring, I moved with my Foreign Service wife to Montreal, Canada, and found a very pleasant and fulfilling life as an executive at a family foundation.

Before joining the Foreign Service, I wish I had gone to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. As a political officer I never was given any training whatever on how to perform in that position.

Before retiring, I wish I had known more about the not-for-profit world. As it happened, I found my next job in Montreal, working for a family foundation, but that was more a matter of luck than design.



Nick Heyniger (left) in Katanga Province, Southeastern Congo, in 1965 at the investiture of a new tribal chief up-country. Heyniger gave the chief a set of USIA books, and the chief gave Nick a leopard skin.

COURTESY OF NICK HEYNIGER

Nick Heyniger served overseas in Amman, The Hague, Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi, a city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Dar es Salaam and Oran, and in Washington, D.C., in the Visa Office, at FSI (learning Swahili), as desk officer for Portuguese Africa in the Bureau of African Affairs, with the U.S. Army General Staff as an exchange officer during the Vietnam War, and in the bureaus of Intelligence and Research, Personnel and the Office for Combating Terrorism.

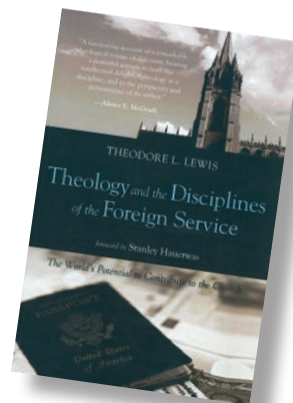
Theology and the FS

BY FR. THEODORE LEWIS

Life after the Foreign Service may be daunting to contemplate, at least for those not content with golf and cruises. The skills we develop in our careers, the disciplines we acquire, arise outside the usual American context. We may wonder how they can be relevant in that context. Further, in our assignments we deal with vital matters both national and international. Post-retirement, such activities as community service, consulting or teaching may be available to us. But can they give us anything like the same sense of purpose? I do not have final answers to these questions. But I can tell how in my own case they were answered positively.

My retirement came about abruptly; I had little chance for advance planning. But I had been to seminary along the way,

and I had already conceived an idea for a book. This was to discern a particular theme in biblical redemption history, the story running from Moses and the Exodus through the death and resurrection of Jesus (“power lies ultimately in acceptance of our powerlessness”). It would then trace application of this theme to subsequent history—history of the world, as well as the church. And my toolkit for the discernment and the tracing would be my Foreign Service disciplines.



My retirement gave me time to work on the book. But I lacked the supervision as well as access to needed research materials. To find them I went to England and took up residence in an Oxford theological college. One of the tutors there was pre-eminently qualified to supervise me; subsequently, he became one of the world’s best known theologians. But I lacked academic

Getting Involved in the Community

BY GEORGE G.B. GRIFFIN

On retirement, we decided to move to rural Pennsylvania. As we settled in, I began going to community meetings to meet our new neighbors.

At one of those meetings I learned that there was a movement to form an organization to ensure that local concerns were brought to the attention of authorities in our two-state, four-county area. (At the same time, I checked out a nearby foreign affairs study group. But, concluding that it was too simplistic and politically motivated, I didn’t join.)

The local group grew into a strong community organization, influencing county and state government actions. When I was elected its vice president, the president asked me to apply for membership on the board of a nearby Base Closure and Realignment Commission-mandated

parastatal, which our members considered too secretive and unsuccessful in redeveloping an important former U.S. Army base.

Soon after joining that board, I was elected chairman; three years later, I won a second four-year term. By the end of my tenure, I had successfully negotiated the sale of the entire 600-acre property, and got the developer to agree to join in paying \$6 million to build a new community center, which I helped design.

I later served as president of the community center, and convinced the board to donate a million dollars to the local primary school, keeping it open as an inducement to potential job seekers at the former Army base. I also became a trustee of an African wildlife conservation nonprofit organization, and was soon its primary fundraiser in the United States.

There is more than enough to keep one busy in retirement!



COURTESY OF GEORGE G.B. GRIFFIN

As chairman of the PenMar Development Corp., George Griffin (right) receives a plaque from Fire Chief Dale Fishack in thanks for the fire truck the company donated to the Smithsburgh, Maryland, Fire Department.

George G. B. Griffin entered the Foreign Service in 1959 and served in Kathmandu and Kabul as acting deputy chief of mission; as commercial counselor in Lagos and Seoul; as DCM in Nairobi; as consul general in Milan; and, briefly, as a senior inspector in Tel Aviv, Cairo, Jerusalem and Taipei, among many other assignments, before retiring in 1999.

credentials; would he take me on? He did, solely on the basis of my Foreign Service disciplines!

I did not finish the book while in Oxford, but I acquired sufficient momentum to carry it to completion later. That enabled not only continuing contact with my Oxford mentor but also acquisition of an American one, similarly world-famous. At the latter's urging, I wrote *Theology and the Disciplines of the Foreign Service*. It was reviewed in the April 2015 issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*, and its United Kingdom launch in Oxford the following October was well received.

My experience shows that Foreign Service disciplines are, in fact, applicable beyond its ranks, at least where theology is concerned. But what about the sense of purpose that the Foreign Service conveys? Can this, too, be found elsewhere? With regard to theology, I would answer as follows. Its issues may not have the immediacy of those in the Foreign Service. They are not quite



COURTESY OF THEODORE LEWIS

The Reverend Theodore L. Lewis.

like crises in a particular country to be dealt with or urgent queries from Washington to be responded to. But I have found the issues themselves, involving as they do final questions, to be no less serious. In fact, their resolution may be regarded as bearing on eternal life and death. Accordingly, theology, instead of diminishing my sense of purpose, has enhanced it.

That my experience can be replicated in fields other than theology I cannot be sure. But it certainly seems possible. My only caveat would be the need to develop an interest in such a field prior to retirement. This could serve not only as a preparation, but also as a balance for the exigencies of one's Foreign Service career.

The Rev. Theodore L. Lewis spent 29 years in the Foreign Service. After an initial assignment in Washington, D.C., he served in Vietnam (twice), Australia, Pakistan, Congo, Korea and Laos, ending with another Washington assignment. He retired in 1984.

CALLING ALL FS AUTHORS!

The November 2016 *Foreign Service Journal* will highlight recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

Authors from the Foreign Service community whose books have been published in 2015 or 2016 are invited to send us a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book, by Sept. 1. (Books that have been featured in a previous edition of "In Their Own Write" will not be featured again.)

Deadline for submissions is Sept. 1.
For more information, please email journal@afsa.org.

Send your materials and new book to:

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My Retirement Bucket List

BY GENE SCHMIEL

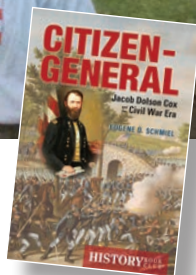
During the retirement seminar, I made a list of desirable activities that I thought were “doable.” I’ve crossed many of them off my bucket list:

1. Acting: I’ve been in several community theater plays,



Top: Gene Schmiel, in red, talks to fellow inmates of the asylum in a scene from the Fauquier Community Theater’s production of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”

Below: Gene Schmiel shakes hands with Ed Bearss, a renowned Civil War historian, in front of the Carter House, Jacob Cox’s headquarters during the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee.



including “Twelve Angry Men” and “Judgment at Nuremberg,” and have also directed productions.

2. Writing and speaking: I completed *Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era*, a biography of the Civil War figure that was published by Ohio University Press in 2014. Since then, I have spoken to several Civil War groups around the country about the book and related topics.

3. Sports: I joined the golf club and made a “bucket list” golf trip with my son to St. Andrews in Scotland and the British Open.

4. Travel: My wife, Kathryn, and I take at least one major trip a year, most recently to Tuscany and the Baltic nations.

5. Work: In addition to being a WAE in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs for 12 years, I taught foreign policy at a college internship program in Washington, D.C., for 10 years.

6. AFSA: I have worked with the AFSA-PAC team and as a judge for the High School Essay Contest.

7. Family: Most important of all, retirement allows us time to spend with our family, including our five grandsons, all living nearby.

Gene Schmiel was an FSO from 1973 to 1996, serving in Stockholm, Durban, Djibouti (where he was chargé d'affaires), Mombasa (where he was principal officer), Reykjavik and Washington, D.C. He currently works as a re-employed annuitant in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Going “NOVA!”

BY ROBERT ALLEN POWERS

Not having a new assignment to look forward to can make retirement unsettling for some FSOs. But whether they appear by serendipity, as in my case, or from diligent searching, opportunities abound. My advice would be to think about what you’d like to do well before your retirement is at hand.

After 25 years in the Foreign Service, I retired on Jan. 4, 1995. Although I was anticipating a more tranquil lifestyle, retirement turned out to be far busier than I’d anticipated. Just a week or two later a longtime friend who knew of my interest in technology called to ask if I’d join him in meeting some friends who wanted to create an Internet service provider site. Several days later I met Jim Southworth, a primary sponsor of the idea,

at his home, along with several highly skilled computer specialists. Most of them were younger and fully employed; but the idea of establishing and operating our own ISP, on a voluntary basis, excited all of us.

We quickly drew up a plan whereby these skilled computer technicians would run the internet service provider (ISP), taking turns monitoring our equipment. Some of them even donated their own computers, while two of us made interest-free loans to purchase the specialized equipment required. Soon NOVA.org was up and running out of a spare room in Jim's office building. Initially, the members of our small group were its only customers.

Not too long thereafter, Jim changed employers, so we had to find a new site for the equipment. Eventually, the Fairfax County public access TV station agreed to house us in Merrifield, Virginia. Our ISP's reliability improved, and our customer base grew rapidly.

My colleagues encouraged me to run for a seat on the Fairfax Public Access Board of Directors. I was elected and served for several years, ultimately becoming president of the board. NOVA.org soon became an integral part of Fairfax Public Access.

As president of the Fairfax Public Access Board, I initiated and negotiated FPA's purchase of its building, located in an area that was about to undergo a major renewal. There was considerable resistance from some board members when I proposed that we buy the building. Then, once I had the majority of the FPA board in agreement, there were members of the county Board of Supervisors to convince. I spent a good hour before the County Board of Supervisors explaining our reasons for buying the building. Finally, after explaining that our doing so would not cost the county a dime, the board gave me the green light to proceed with the purchase.

Within a week our treasurer and I met at the building owner's law firm in Washington, D.C. With a reasonable mortgage in hand, the bank representative and I signed the papers, making Fairfax Public Access owner of the building. I've since been told that the resulting increase in value has enabled FPA to purchase and install some of the latest broadcast technology in its studios and control rooms.

To this day, I use my email address, powers@nova.org, with pride. ■

Robert Allen Powers retired from the Foreign Service in 1995. He served in Manila, Beirut, Banmethout (Vietnam), Guadalajara, Santiago, Panama, Tel Aviv, Rome, Vienna and Washington, D.C.

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- D.C., Foreign Service Specialist

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Questions on joining or benefits?

Visit us on-line at www.afsa.org or email us at member@afsa.org.



Honoring Scholarship Donors and the 2016 Merit Award Winners



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and Scholarship Committee Chair Ambassador (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn (far left) met with the five local merit award winners.

On May 5, AFSA celebrated this year's merit award recipients and the program's donors at its annual AFSA Scholarship Program reception.

AFSA's scholarship program offers two separate scholarship routes to children of AFSA members whose parents are or were in the Foreign

Service: one-time-only merit awards for graduating high school seniors who compete on their academic, artistic and

Continued on p. 81

CALENDAR

July 4
Independence Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

July 6
12-1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

July 13
6:30-8:30 p.m.
U.S. Marine Corps
MESG Detachment
Commanders Reception

August 3
12-1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

August 26
12-1:00 p.m.
Job Search Program
Graduation at FSI

August 31
3-4:30 p.m.
10th Annual Adair Lecture:
Amb. (ret.) Rozanne
'Roz' Ridgway
American University

September 5
Labor Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

September 7
12-1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

ANNOUNCING THE 2016 AFSA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ruth A. Davis

Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy

Constructive Dissent Award

Jefferson Smith

William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-level Officer

Exemplary Performance Awards

John K. Naland

Achievements and Contributions to the Association Award

Michael Honigstein

Steven Hendrix (runner-up)

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Toni Kula

Nelson B. Delavan Award for Exemplary Performance by an Office Management Specialist

Sara Locke

Berna Keen (runner-up)

M. Juanita Guess Award for Exemplary Performance by a Community Liaison Officer

Shawn Akard

Amy Clutter (runner-up)

Avis Bohlen Award for Exemplary Performance by an Eligible Family Member

Karn 'KC' Carlson

AFSA Post Representative of the Year

Full coverage of AFSA's June 23 awards ceremony, profiles of the winners and related articles will appear in the September issue of The Foreign Service Journal.



Do I Need Professional Liability Insurance?

One of the most common questions we hear is “Should I purchase professional liability insurance?” Our response? “Absolutely.”

Professional liability insurance provides legal representation and indemnity protection against the risks and financial consequences of a claim, or allegation arising from the performance of one’s job duties.

Foreign Service members—especially consular officers, diplomatic security agents, management officers and senior managers—make decisions and take actions every day that can affect the people they work with or the public at large. Such decisions could include declining to issue a visa, launching a security investigation and more. Foreign Service employees may be investigated or sued for carrying out their official duties.

Employees have used professional liability insurance to cover costs associated with such things as Office of the Inspector General and Diplomatic Security/Office of Special Investigations inquiries, congressional testimony, defense from a civil lawsuit (foreign or domestic), allegations of wrongdoing and defense against a whistleblower or ethics complaint.

Employees who carry this insurance will have their administrative expenses

covered if the claim arises out of any act, error or omission committed by the employee in the course of the performance of his or her official duties. This means the insurance company will appoint a lawyer to represent the employee in any judicial sanction or disciplinary or criminal proceeding instituted against him or her because of his or her job actions.

In addition, the insurance company will be liable for defense costs and any monetary penalties (up to the limit of the insurance policy). The cost of professional liability premiums in such cases is certainly far more palatable for the employee than having to retain a private attorney, whose fees could range from \$275 to \$375 per hour in this area.

Many employees believe that they don’t need professional liability insurance because their agency will represent them if they are sued as a result of performing their duties. That decision is actually up to the particular agency—if it does not believe that you were acting within the scope of your employment, or if your interests conflict with your agency’s, then it will not represent you.

Your agency will provide a U.S. government attorney if you are called to testify before Congress; but that

attorney represents the agency, not you. Of course, if your agency is investigating or proposing discipline against you, it will not represent you.

Even if your agency agrees to represent you, a professional liability insurance policy is useful because the insurance company may assign an attorney to monitor and oversee the defense provided by the government.

Thus, professional liability insurance should be viewed as a “supplemental” insurance policy for those situations where the government will not pay attorney fees or, while paying the fees, may not pay any damage award assessed against the employee.

Some employees think they don’t need professional liability insurance because AFSA will represent them. While that may often be the case, AFSA’s resources are not limitless and must be prioritized. AFSA considers the following to go beyond what AFSA’s limited resources can support: EEO cases, FSGB hearings or appeals to courts.

What’s more, while AFSA routinely helps with non-criminal OIG cases and DS/OSI investigations, as well as disciplinary cases and grievances, AFSA does not represent members in criminal investigations or in civil lawsuits.

For instance, if a Diplomatic Security agent is involved in a shooting incident in the performance of his or her duties that could result in criminal or civil charges, or if a member of the Service is involved in a car accident while on the way to an official function that results in bodily harm to another person, professional liability insurance could provide coverage and representation that AFSA would be unable to provide.

We therefore advise our members to take out professional liability insurance. The State Department actively encourages the purchase of professional liability insurance, and even has a policy in place to reimburse certain employees for up to 50 percent or \$175 (whichever is less) of the cost of the insurance premium.

Visit <http://bit.ly/28LVTWt> for department guidance on this subject. Employees can find the Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business (SF-1164) on the forms page at the State Department intranet site.

While AFSA does not recommend any particular company, we do offer a list of possible providers of professional liability insurance at www.afsa.org/insurance-plans. ■



Should Consultants Write Annual Evaluations?

In my column this month, I want to address a disturbing trend. AFSA has learned from members recently that several missions are hiring expert consultants to fly out and assist with writing their annual evaluations.

Annual evaluations are the single biggest factor in determining whether an FSO is promoted or tenured. It is prudent that everyone take the time to understand what is needed to meet the standards of their class and that such achievements are expressed in their annual evaluation form (AEF).

But with so much at stake, it is no wonder that tensions rise high and it is obvious that transparency and fairness must be the cornerstones of the evaluation process. Members have reported that the contracted AEF “assistance” ranges from reviewing already written AEFs for clarity to actually taking raw information directly from the employees or supervisors and writing the AEFs.

Although such actions may have been well-intentioned, they are nonetheless shortsighted. The implications of sanctioned expert consultants working on some employees’ AEFs, while others don’t receive this benefit, are understandably troubling (this potentially gives select employees an advantage in the performance board review, promo-

The implications of sanctioned expert consultants working on some employees’ AEFs, while others don’t receive this benefit, are understandably troubling.

tion ranking and tenure decisions).

On April 25, 2016, AFSA requested that Human Capital and Talent Management provide immediate clarity on the situation and indicate what mitigating steps would be taken to eliminate any unfair advantage.

HCTM’s initial response was that they were not aware of the trend, but a later follow-up stated: “Foreign Service Officers, raters as well as the rated employees, use a variety of resources and techniques to finalize their self-assessments and/or manage AEF evaluations. ... However, in all cases, the person signing the AEF as the rater is ultimately responsible for the content under their signature.”

In researching the topic, AFSA notes that Automated Directives Systems 461.3.6 *Final AEF* states: “Using multiple sources of information described in 461.3.5, the rater of record must prepare the final AEF.”

ADS 461.3.5 Gathering Appraisal Information states that rating officials must base employee performance

appraisals on multiple sources of information, including the following:

- a. Direct observation of performance and evaluation of representative work products;
- b. The employee’s self-assessment of performance;
- c. Information solicited from individuals who can provide informed views of the employee’s performance during the rating cycle (360-degree input sources);
- d. If rating a supervisor, the Rating Official must receive comments from at least two subordinates; and
- e. All appraisal input forms (AIFs) received from Rating Officials.

According to *ADS 461.3.5.2 360 Degree Input Sources*, raters are allowed to solicit 360-degree input from other sources deemed appropriate (however “c” above states the source should be familiar with the employee’s work during that rating cycle).

Further, *ADS 461.3.1.5 Annual Evaluation Form (AID Form 461-1), Section 7 – Assessment of Performance, Skills, and Potential* prescribes: “Rating Officials

prepare a written assessment of the employee’s performance, skills, and potential. Rating Officials indicate the 360 degree sources used. Rating Officials indicate whether or not the employee met individual work objectives.”

AFSA contends that hiring consultants does not conform to the meaning of seeking input from “other sources deemed appropriate” under *ADS 461.3.5.2*. In any case, the rater is required, per above, to indicate the 360-degree input used.

If USAID’s efforts to transform HCTM are to be successful, trust and transparency must be the foundation.

AFSA invites members to send their thoughts on these topics to ebethmann@usaid.gov. ■



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

Thinking Outside the Box

As I have suggested in several recent articles, members of the Foreign Agricultural Service will find themselves in an extremely difficult position for the next five to 10 years, due to the dramatic dearth of officers in the FS-2 to Senior Foreign Service classes. To put it in baseball terms, we have no one left on the bench and everyone is in the field.

Conventional wisdom suggests that creative thinking can provide inventive and intelligent ways to resolve problems. I want to use this column to further the discussion about ways to turn our challenges into opportunities.

FAS AFSA members have widely differing views on this problem and the possible

solutions to it. Senior officers are under strain from forced assignments and the disregard FAS has shown for requests for consideration based on personal situations. (We should acknowledge that it is a disservice to our senior members that retirement for many is acrimonious, rather than a celebration of a career of exemplary service.)

At the same time, it is understandable that mid-level officers are eager to move up quickly and stretch into the many empty leadership roles. Similarly, the large classes of new FSOs are reluctant to embrace significant changes to the system that mitigate current problems but which they see as a potential disservice to

their future.

There are substantial concerns about short-termism, but there is common agreement on fundamental issues such as strong support for the new FSO hiring system and opposition to permitting mid-level FS entry or a “parallel Foreign Service” of civil servants filling Agricultural Trade Office positions.

There is no one, single solution to the problems FAS faces which is why an “all of the above” approach is necessary serve today’s needs while creating effective future leaders.

First, FAS should adopt several practices that are common among other agencies, namely State’s TIC/TIS rules, giving credit for long-term language training

and advocating the use of limited career extensions to permit retiring FSOs to complete full tours and depart on-cycle.

Second, the Office of Foreign Service Operations must dramatically increase the number of back-office staff and experienced area officers to permit a greater level of oversight, direction and mentoring to the next generation of officers.

Lastly, we must focus additional time and resources on training for emerging leaders and award promotions without delay to those operating at the next level. Only by retaining the best of our current staff and rewarding our future leaders will our common interests prevail. ■

NEWS BRIEF

2016 ADAIR LECTURE TO FEATURE AMBASSADOR ROZ RIDGWAY

This year the 10th annual Adair Memorial Lecture will be given by Ambassador (ret.) Rozanne L. ‘Roz’ Ridgway. The Adair lecture traditionally marks the beginning of the academic year for the American University’s School of International Service.

A veteran diplomat who specialized in trans-Atlantic relations during the final decade of the Cold War, Amb. Ridgway was the lead negotiator at all five of the Reagan-Gorbachev summits, bringing the first substantive reduction in nuclear weapons and signaling the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

She served as ambassador to Finland (1977-1980), as well as to East Germany (1983-1985). She also served as assistant secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs (1986-1989) and as counselor of the department (1980-1981).

The lecture series is the result of a partnership between AFSA and A.U.’s School of International Service in honor of Caroline and Ambassador Charles Adair. Generously funded by the Adairs’ son, former AFSA President Marshall Adair, through a perpetual gift to AFSA’s Fund for American Diplomacy, the lectures are designed to expose students to individuals who have spent their careers practicing diplomacy—adding practical insights to the students’ theoretical studies.

The Adair lecture will take place on Wed., Aug. 31 at 3 p.m. at the Kaye Spiritual Life Center on the A.U. campus. For additional information on attendance, please contact Communications and Outreach Specialist Allan Saunders at saunders@afsa.org. ■

Merit Awards
Continued from page 77

community service activities, and need-based financial aid scholarships for undergraduate college study.

We were pleased to welcome five of the 2016 merit award recipients (of the 22 winners), who currently reside in the Washington D.C. area. All of the winners were celebrated at this event. (See pages 82-83 for short biographies of the 22 merit award winners.)

Winners and Donors Celebrated

Three local merit award donors (of the 10 named awards) and five local financial aid scholarship donors (of the 65 annual and perpetual current and memorial scholarships) also attended the reception.

Presiding over the event, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and AFSA Scholarship Committee Chair Ambassador (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn presented certificates and medals to merit award winners Isabella Blackman, Helen Froats, Karl Keat, Sarah Scroggs and Rachel Silverman.

Participating in the ceremony were AFSA merit award donors Mr. and Mrs. John and Priscilla Becker, Ms. Gayle Nelson and Mr. Jim Elmore. Financial aid scholarship donors were represented by Mrs. Marita Dillery; Mrs. Beth Keene, her son Garrett, and AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp; Mr. Eric D.K. Melby; Ms.



(l-r) Top: Helen Froats with Ambassador (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn; Isabella Blackman; Rachel Silverman with distinguished donor Gayle Nelson; Bottom: Rachel and Young-Mi Silverman; Embassy Risk Management donor Jim Elmore, Amb. Schermerhorn, Dr. Josie Keat, Karl Keat, Stephen Keat and AFSA President Amb. Barbara Stephenson; AFSA State Vice President Angie Bryan meets with proud parents.

Constanza Valdes and her children, Mariana and Sylvia Patterson; and Ms. Caroline Van Hollen.

In 2016, AFSA awarded \$45,500 in prizes, including 10 sponsored awards which are bestowed on the highest-scoring students.

Four Foreign Affairs Agencies Represented

The AFSA Scholarship Committee is particularly pleased to note that this year's awardees included children of employees from the four largest foreign affairs agencies. The Commercial Service boasted three recipients, followed by USAID with two winners and the Foreign Agricultural Service with one, along with 15 winners from the State Department.

"It is a great pleasure and honor to give these awards

to children of Foreign Service families, and we are delighted to see such heavy interest and participation in our scholarship program," said Angie Bryan, AFSA's State vice president.

A total of 117 high school seniors submitted applications that were judged by the seven-member AFSA Scholarship Committee along with volunteers from the Foreign Service community. AFSA extends special thanks to the 14 volunteers who generously gave their time for this year's judging.

Students competed for \$1,000 or \$2,500 academic, art and community service awards. All art applicants submitted their application in one of the following areas: music, performing arts, visual arts or creative writing.

In the last 25 years, the

AFSA Scholarship Program has bestowed college aid totaling more than \$4.1 million dollars on more than 2,200 FS children. This has been accomplished with the generous help of individuals, affiliated organizations such as DACOR and AAFSW, and corporate donors such as BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Health Benefit Program and Embassy Risk Management.

No AFSA member dues are used to support AFSA scholarship activity.

For more information on the AFSA Scholarship Program and to view the AFSA art winners' submissions, please visit www.afsa.org/scholar. ■

—Lori Dec,
AFSA Scholarship Director

Meet the 2016 AFSA Merit Award Winners

1. Adele Birkenes – daughter of Robert Birkenes (USAID – FS) and Suzanne Polak, is graduating from the NIST International School in Bangkok, Thailand. She plans to attend Vassar College majoring in biology. Recognized as the Louis and Valeria Hebert Memorial Scholar. Adele also received the AFSA Merit “Best Essay Award.”

2. Isabella Blackman – daughter of Kirninder P. Braich (Stat-daughter of Brian Blackman (State – FS) and Allison Blackman (State – CS), is graduating from James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia. She plans to attend the University of Virginia majoring in biology. Recognized as the Donald S. Spigler Memorial and Maria Giuseppa Spigler Scholar.

3. George Christensen – son of Darin Christensen (State – FS) and Elizabeth Christensen, is graduating from the Radford School in El Paso, Texas. He plans to attend Brigham Young University majoring in physics. Recognized as the Turner C. Cameron Jr. Memorial Scholar.

4. Kyle Dominguez – son of Stacy Pearce (State – FS) and Daniel Dominguez, is graduating from the American School in London in London, United Kingdom. He plans to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in engineering and computer science.

5. Agnes Ezekwesili – daughter of Nestor Ezekwesili (State – FS) and Ogugua Ezekwesili (State – CS), is graduating from The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. She plans to attend the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

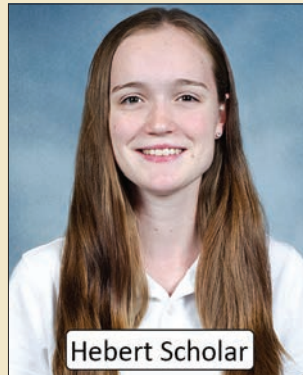
6. Samir Fierro – son of Jose Fierro (State – FS) and Sharon Fierro, is graduating from Millennium High School in Goodyear, Arizona. He plans to attend Arizona State University’s Barrett Honors College majoring in physics. Recognized as the Joanna and Robert Martin Scholar.

7. Helen Froats – daughter of Daniel Froats (State – FS) and Silvia Froats (State – CS), is graduating from McLean High School in McLean, Virginia. She plans to attend the University of Washington (Seattle) majoring in biology. Recognized as the Priscilla and John Becker Family Scholar.

8. Dylan Galt – son of Ambassador Jennifer Galt (State – FS) and Frederic Galt, is graduating from the International School of Ulaanbaatar in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. He plans to attend Brown or Princeton University majoring in mathematics. Recognized as the Joanna and Robert Martin Scholar.

9. Rienna Harker – daughter of Bradley Harker (FCS – FS) and Megumi Harker, is graduating from the International School of Beijing in Beijing, China. She plans to attend Middlebury College majoring in geology or earth science.

10. Peter Huson – son of Tim Huson (State – FS) and Anne Braghetta (State – FS), is graduating from the Country Day School in San Jose, Costa Rica. He will attend Brown University majoring in engineering. Recognized as the BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Health Benefit Program Scholar.



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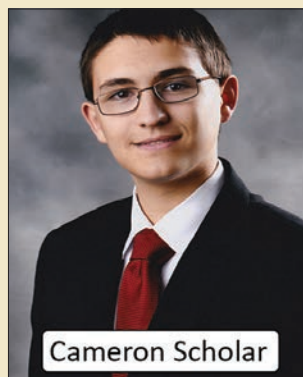
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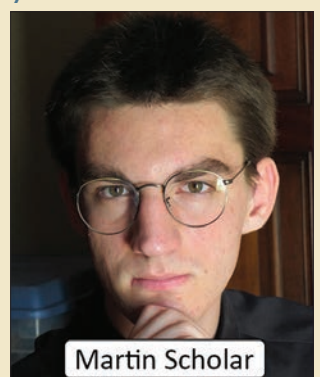
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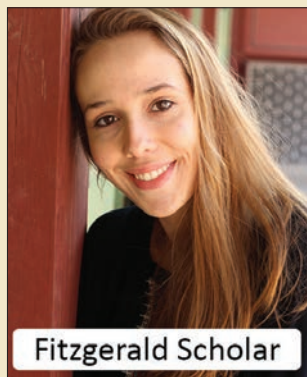
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11. Karl Keat – son of Stephen Keat (State – Retired) and Dr. Josie Keat, is graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. He plans to attend the University of Virginia majoring in computer science and biology. Recognized as the Embassy Risk Management Scholar.

12. Sarah Scroggs – daughter of Patricia Scroggs (State – Retired) and Stephen Scroggs, is graduating from T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. She plans to attend Cornell University majoring in engineering.

13. Rachel Silverman – daughter of Robert Silverman (State – Retired) and Young-Mi Silverman, is graduating from Winston Churchill High School in Potomac, Maryland. She plans to attend Princeton University with an undeclared major. Recognized as the BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Health Benefit Program Scholar.

14. Alessandra Youth – daughter of Marta Youth (State – FS) and Howard Youth, is graduating from The American Nicaraguan School in Managua, Nicaragua. She plans to attend Fordham University majoring in computer science.

Academic Merit Honorable Mention Winners

Agnes Goldrich – daughter of Ethan Goldrich (State – FS) and Maria Bywater Goldrich, is graduating from Cornwall Central High School in New Windsor, New York. She plans to attend Cornell University majoring in biology.

Maria Turner – daughter of Conrad Turner (State – FS) and Susanne Turner (State – CS), is graduating from Pechersk School International in Kyiv, Ukraine. She plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania majoring in engineering and business.

Art Winner

15. Helen Reynolds – daughter of Scott Reynolds (FAS – Retired) and Wuyi Ning, is graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She plans to attend Carnegie Mellon University majoring in visual art.

Art Honorable Mention Winners

Adriana Arancibia Tejada – daughter of Paola Tejada (USAID – FS) and Jesus Arancibia, is graduating from Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan. She plans to attend Manhattan School of Music majoring in music.

Maxwell Kaesshaefer – son of Joseph Kaesshaefer (FCS – FS) and Scoti Kaesshaefer, is graduating from Proctor Academy in Andover, New Hampshire. He plans to attend the University of Puget Sound with an undeclared major.

Nina Young – daughter of Sylvie Young (State – FS) and Jeffrey Young, is graduating from Southbank International School in London, United Kingdom. She plans to attend the University of California, Los Angeles majoring in anthropology.

Community Service Winner

16. Emily Larsen – daughter of Mitchell Larsen (FCS – FS) and Charlotte Larsen, is graduating from Seoul Foreign School in Seoul, South Korea. She will attend Biola University in La Mirada, California, majoring in cultural studies. Recognized as the Fitzgerald Community Service Award Winner.

Best Essay Winner

Adele Birkenes – see her biography on page 82, and her winning essay on page 84. ■

2016 AFSA MERIT AWARDS—BEST ESSAY

From the Classroom to the Field: My Journey as a Foreign Service Child

BY ADELE BIRKENES

My classmates faced the front of the room, right hands placed over their hearts. I looked around, certain that someone else would be as confused as I was, but everyone's eyes were fixed on the American flag. It was the morning of my first day of fifth grade, and I had just moved to the United States after eight years of living overseas.

As my classmates recited the Pledge of Allegiance, I mouthed the unfamiliar words, hoping no one would look my way. I promised myself I would memorize the pledge later that day so that I would no longer stand out.

On paper, my life as a third-culture kid seemed glamorous. I experienced new cultures in Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, but, in reality, I resented my family's lifestyle. I envied other kids who grew up in one place while I was forced to leave behind my school, home, and friendships every few years.

Eventually, I became used to adapting to new environments and the upheaval that accompanied moving. But this time was different; I felt like a stranger in the country that was supposed to be my home. I worried I would never

belong anywhere.

Then, last year, my perspective suddenly changed. We had again moved overseas, and I was in my junior year of high school in Bangkok, Thailand. Our school service group traveled to a rural community in Cambodia. We interviewed villagers with the aid of a Khmer translator, and I was deeply moved by the story of a woman named Lorn. She had spent her childhood hungry because her parents, who earned less than \$4 a day selling rice noodles, could rarely afford to feed their family of 12. Lorn hoped her children would not experience the hardships she had endured.

As she told us this, she broke down and struggled to continue speaking. Lorn's story resonated with me. Even though I had lived in developing countries for most of my life, I had considered poverty a statistic; now, I saw firsthand how it affected real individuals. My parents' careers at the U.S. Agency for International Development suddenly shifted from a conversation at the dinner table to something tangible that touches the lives of people like Lorn.

I, like my parents, believed that Lorn's children deserved a better future. It dawned



on me that the struggles I had faced adapting to new cultures were worthwhile because they had allowed my parents to devote their lives to helping the poor.

This experience not only put my past into perspective, it also gave me a new outlook on my future. That real world exposure allowed me to see the connection between

developing my academic interest in biology and supporting people in the developing world through environmental science. Although I once could not recite the Pledge of Allegiance, I now know that helping others is what it truly means to be American, and I am proud to be a child of the Foreign Service. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, May 4, 2016

April Governing Board Minutes: On a motion from State Vice President Angie Bryan, the board unanimously approved the April 6 Governing Board minutes.

PAC Liaison: The April board meeting recommended that, as a precaution to avoid violating Hatch Act rules, a retiree board member should be the liaison to AFSA's Political Action Committee. Retiree Representative Ambassador (ret.) Pat Butenis volunteered to take on the role of liaison. A motion to appoint Amb. Butenis as liaison to the PAC was proposed by Retiree Representative Ambassador (ret.) John Limbert. The motion passed unanimously.

FSGB Nominees: In a two-step process, the Governing Board was asked to approve AFSA's nominees to the For-

eign Service Grievance Board and, separately, to approve two nominees put forward by the other parties.

1—AFSA's nominees to the FSGB. The Governing Board was asked to consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee for AFSA's nominees to the Foreign Service Grievance Board. On a motion from State representative Eric Geelan, the board unanimously approved four candidates to be recommended to the FSGB selection committee.

2—Other parties' nominees to the FSGB. Retiree Vice President Ambassador (ret.) Tom Boyatt moved that the Governing Board accept Ambassador (ret.) Lino Gutiérrez and Frederick Ketchum to fill two of the three FSGB vacancies. The motion passed unanimously. ■

Governing Board Retreat



At the Governing Board retreat on June 2, State Representative Leah Pease leads a review of their previous year in office, with Retiree Representative Dean Haas facilitating. Board members also discussed goals for the future of AFSA. Considering the presidential elections in November, the board set out their message to the new administration—whoever it may be—“Use us, Trust us, Invest in us”.

NEWS BRIEF

AFSA BEGINS LEGACY PROJECT: DIGITIZATION OF THE FSJ ARCHIVE

AFSA is embarking on an ambitious project to digitize the entire archive of back issues of the *Foreign Service Journal*, as well as *The American Consular Bulletin* that preceded it. This digital archive, dating back to 1919, will be a valuable resource for AFSA members. In addition, we hope to be able to make the archive available to researchers and scholars seeking information about the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy.

Phase I of the project—scanning all back issues and creating optimized digital files—has begun, and should be completed by August-September. We hope to complete Phase II—providing access to the files—before the end of the year.

We will keep you informed as the project progresses. ■

AFSA BOOK NOTES

A Foreign Service Thriller; *The Wolf of Sarajevo*

On May 24, AFSA continued its popular Book Notes series with a talk from Matthew Palmer, FSO and author of the new book *The Wolf of Sarajevo* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2016).

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, who worked with Palmer on Balkans policy, introduced the author. Opening with a reading from his latest novel, Amb. Stephenson said that Palmer's books help Foreign Service officers tell their story to those outside the diplomatic world.

Palmer describes his novels as a "love letter to the Foreign Service"—a profession he feels is frequently misunderstood. He noted that the public's knowledge of the military and intelligence services is shaped by books and movies; if Foreign Service officers appear in those movies or books at all, they are

generally faceless bureaucrats getting in the way of the hero.

In his books, beginning with *The American Mission* and *Secrets of State*, Palmer turns that idea on its head, making the FSOs the heroes and providing the public with some insight into the varied roles taken on by U.S. diplomats at home and overseas.

Of course, to be a successful author, you have to entertain people. Palmer admits that he takes certain liberties to make the content as accessible as possible. He points out that it can be hard for those outside the diplomatic world to grasp the sheer complexity of diplomatic work. Accessibility, Palmer says, affects many aspects of his novels, even down to selecting easily pronounceable names for the characters.

The Wolf of Sarajevo tells the story of Eric Petrosian,



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson introduced Matthew Palmer, including reading from his latest book, *The Wolf of Sarajevo*.

a political officer at the embassy in Bosnia. Shaped by the genocide at Srebrenica, which he witnessed as a young journalist, he returns to Sarajevo at a time of political upheaval. With war looming, Petrosian must use his local knowledge and connections to find out what is really going on and how to stop another massacre.

Following his presentation, Palmer took part in a

Q&A session. In response to questions from the audience (which included former U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia Patrick Moon), Palmer spoke about his writing process and inspirations, Hollywood ambitions and how global events have shaped his books.

Visit www.afsa.org/video to view a recording of the event.

—Gemma Dvorak,
Associate Editor

NEWS BRIEF

OVERSEAS VOTING – PLAN AHEAD FOR NOVEMBER

As the November election season approaches, overseas Foreign Service members may need to make arrangements for voting. With a presidential election, Senate and congressional races, as well as state-specific contests, there will be plenty of ballots to cast this year.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program offers information and instructions for registering and voting while living overseas under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, which covers FS employees and their families.

At www.FVAP.gov, you can check the requirements for your state of residence, register to vote and request a ballot. Each state has different regulations on registration and submitting a voted ballot! Information is also available at the AFSA website: www.afsa.org/vote and from the Overseas Vote Foundation—www.overseasvotefoundation.org—a nonpartisan organization.

Don't forget the Hatch Act!

All active Foreign Service employees are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities while "on duty." For information about the rules and regulations regarding political actions while representing the U.S. government, check out our Labor Management guidance page at www.afsa.org/hatchact. ■

AFSA Hosts Diplomatic Security Mingle



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and DS Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Miller discuss matters of importance to DS and AFSA.



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

AFSA State VP Angie Bryan, AFSA State Representative Lawrence Casselle and AFSA President Barbara Stephenson at the May 13 event.

On May 13, AFSA hosted an informal event at Diplomatic Security headquarters in Rosslyn, Virginia. AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Director of the Diplomatic Security Service Bill Miller and AFSA's Labor Management team spoke with DS agents about the work AFSA does and how we can best serve the Diplomatic Security community. Governing Board member and DS Special Agent Lawrence Casselle also attended, along

with State VP Angie Bryan.

In remarks to the gathering, Amb. Stephenson thanked Director Miller, as well as Assistant Secretary Starr, for their insights and for putting forward DS views.

Director Miller, an AFSA member since joining the Foreign Service 29 years ago, said that he appreciates all that AFSA is doing, "preserving and protecting the responsibilities and rights of both the department and the employees." ■

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Part B or Not Part B? That Is the Medicare Question

This is one of the most critical decisions you'll make in retirement, with long-term implications for both your health and your pocketbook. So on May 12, AFSA brought back Paula Jakub of the American Foreign Service Protective Association, for an encore of her popular seminar: "Medicare and the FEHB—Putting It Together."

With almost 100 attendees, the house was packed. Beginning with a brief review of Medicare as a whole, Ms. Jakub explained that, for most, Medicare Part A (hospitalization) is a no-brainer, because it is premium-free for almost everyone. Most people sign up for it as soon as they reach 65, even if still actively employed. And the drug coverage is so good in most Federal Employees Health Benefits plans that few federal retirees apply for Medicare Part D.

So what about Medicare Part B, which covers providers (e.g., doctors, outpatient services, radiology, etc.) and for which you must pay a premium? Well, it's complicated.

Taking attendees through a series of informative slides, Ms. Jakub advised that in 2016, Part B will cost a new applicant at least \$121 per month, more if Modified Adjusted Gross Income exceeds \$85,000 (single) or \$170,000 (joint return). While many private-sector insurers require policy holders to sign up for Medicare Part B at age



Paula Jakub spoke to almost 100 AFSA Members, mostly retirees, about their Medicare choices

65, federal annuitants have a choice.

If you enroll in Part B as an annuitant, Medicare becomes your primary insurance and your FEHB policy becomes your secondary insurance. For example, Medicare pays 80 percent of the Medicare-approved amounts for physicians/providers who accept assignment of benefits, leaving your FEHB policy to cover the remaining 20 percent. That often leaves retirees with no outstanding balance.

Also, Medicare and your FEHB plan seamlessly coordinate payment ("electronic crossover"), virtually sparing you paperwork, another benefit for retirees. For providers who participate in Medicare but don't accept assignment, Medicare still pays its portion (although your out-of-pocket expenses may be higher), and payments are still coordinated, sparing you paperwork.

So why might you choose not to take Medicare Part B?

First Ms. Jakub reminded the audience that Medicare Part B coverage is, with rare

exceptions, only good in the U.S., so it may not work well for those who retire overseas.

In addition, if your doctor does not participate in Medicare (an "opt out" or "private contract" provider), Medicare will not pay for the services. Per federal regulation, your FEHB plan will be capped at 20 percent of the approved Medicare charge, leaving you with a huge out-of-pocket

cost—far more than if you had never signed up for Part B.

So make sure key doctors and providers participate in Medicare before you decide whether to take Part B.

To do more research on Medicare and your choices, watch the seminar online at www.afsa.org/video, or visit the Medicare website at www.Medicare.gov.

Remember; AFSA and AFSPA cannot provide definitive advice to you regarding your choices or entitlements. For other assistance, AFSA is just an email away at retiree@afsa.org.

—Todd Thurwachter,
Retiree Counselor

Women's Political Caucus Honors Marguerite Cooper

On May 16, the National Women's Political Caucus honored Marguerite Cooper with their first lifetime achievement award.

Ms. Cooper, a retired Foreign Service officer and current AFSA member, received the award from NWPC Vice-President for Membership Sherrill Mulhern.

When Ms. Cooper joined

the Foreign Service in 1956, fewer than 5 percent of FSOs were female. On her first posting, to Tel Aviv, she was prevented from undertaking some aspects of the job that her supervisor considered "not women's work."

In 1970, Ms. Cooper helped to found the Women's Action Organization, which helped pioneer efforts



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

Marguerite Cooper (center) received the NWPC Lifetime Achievement Award from NWPC President Donna Lent (left) and Sherri Loveland (right), president of the California chapter.

to address pervasive bias against women in the State Department Foreign Service. She was elected WAO president in 1975 and, during her tenure, WAO lobbied the department to remove some of the most basic barriers to women in hiring, promotions and assignments, and to provide training to help female officers advance their careers.

Having served as a consular officer in Fukuoka, Japan, and in Tel Aviv, then as a political officer in Mumbai and Islamabad, as well as assignments in Washington, D.C., Ms. Cooper retired from the Foreign Service in 1986.

Following retirement, she worked as a professional staff member on a presidential and several congressional campaigns.

Since joining the NWPC in 1988, Ms. Cooper has held leadership positions at all

levels. She has represented California on the NWPC board since 2001.

Accepting the award, Ms. Cooper spoke of the struggle women faced for equality at the time she joined the Foreign Service. "Women were not seen as leaders," she stated, adding "the way you change that is to put more women in leadership positions."

AFSA congratulates Ms. Cooper on her wonderful achievement.

AFSA encourages retiree members to stay connected to AFSA in retirement, wherever you may be. You may also consider joining the AFSA Speakers Bureau or your local FS retiree association.

Why not email AFSA and tell us about your activities?

Write to member@afsa.org. ■

—Gemma Dvorak,
Associate Editor

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■ **Charles Sidney Blankstein**, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, died on April 30 at the Washington Home in Washington, D.C., of congestive heart failure.

The son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, Mr. Blankstein was born in the Bronx, N.Y., the youngest of three children. He was raised in Greensboro, N.C., where his family moved during the 1940s.

Mr. Blankstein was an avid bibliophile from a young age, absorbing the adventures of Herman Melville, Alexandre Dumas and others. He became a regular newspaper reader at age 8 when his parents kept him indoors for two consecutive summers due to the polio epidemic that swept through the South.

As a young boy during World War II, he would spread out large maps of Asia and the Pacific, as well as Europe, in his bedroom to track the progress of the Allies. His uncle, Guy Dembo, was a U.S. infantryman who fought to liberate Italy.

After attending Riverdale Country School in the New York City area, Mr. Blankstein attended college at the University of North Carolina, graduating with a degree in economics in 1957. It was the same year that UNC's basketball team won its first national championship, and Mr. Blankstein remained a lifelong Tar Heels fan and an avid college basketball enthusiast.

He went on to attend Harvard Law School in a class that included the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Massachusetts governor and 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis and Attorney General William Ruckelshaus. He graduated with a J.D. degree in 1960, and later spent a year as a Sloan Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned a master's degree in management.

Mr. Blankstein began working for the federal government in 1962 as a lawyer for the Securities and Exchange Commission. He subsequently spent four years as an attorney in the General Counsel's Office of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

In 1967, Mr. Blankstein joined the USAID Foreign Service. He was posted in Bolivia and Ecuador in the late 1960s, and traveled extensively for this work in Africa, Asia and the Middle East during the 1970s.

Mr. Blankstein's diplomatic career was shaped by the expanding fortunes—and global role—of the postwar United States, as well as by President John F. Kennedy's 1960 Inaugural call for Americans to serve their country.

He was grateful for the opportunity to expand his knowledge and participate with extraordinary colleagues at a time when the United States lent its resources and expertise to help emerging nations realize their potential.

He worked to stabilize foreign governments by helping impoverished farmers improve their businesses, which would allow them to feed growing populations and better their own lives and that of their families. He also contributed to rural development programs, including the massive Caribbean Basin Initiative during President Jimmy Carter's administration.

Mr. Blankstein retired from USAID in the mid-1980s, after spending four years in the Dominican Republic. He continued working as a consultant.

He is survived by his wife, Lucy; his daughter, Amy; and his son, Andrew, daughter-in-law, Beth, and granddaughter, Emma.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Rock Creek Conservancy, 4300 Montgomery Ave., Suite 304, Bethesda MD 20814.

■ **John Harmon Clary**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, died on April 24 at Frederick Memorial Hospital in Frederick, Md.

Born on Sept. 26, 1934, in Osceola, Iowa, Mr. Clary was the son of the late Orville M. and Mary King Clary. He served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957, and then entered college, graduating from the University of Iowa in 1960 with a bachelor's degree.

In 1966, Mr. Clary joined the USAID Foreign Service, beginning what would be a more than 40-year diplomatic career. His first posting was to Saigon during the Vietnam War, where he sustained shrapnel injuries. In this four-and-a-half-year assignment he progressed from assistant provincial representative to area development administrator, and also received a superior honor award.

Mr. Clary also served in Paraguay, where the couple's two daughters, Heather and Hillary, were born. Assignments to the Dominican Republic, Nepal and Panama followed.

The Clarys retired to Braddock Heights, Md. In retirement, Mr. Clary worked for several years at Bon Ton department store in Frederick, Md. Friends and family will especially remember him for his dry sense of humor. An avid student of the Civil War and son of a World War I veteran, Mr. Clary had recently joined American Legion Post 297.

In addition to his wife, Barbara O'Neil Clary, he is survived by his daughters, Heather Clary and her husband, Sebastian Silvestro, of Annapolis, Md.; and Hillary Hawkins, and her husband, Kevin Hawkins, of Smithsburg, Va.; two grandchildren, O'Neil Silvestro and Penelope Hawkins; and a brother, James Clary, of

Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

Memorial contributions in his name may be made to Vietnam veterans' causes or to Doctors Without Borders. Send online condolences at www.staufferfuneralhome.com.

■ **Donald Boyd Easum**, 92, a retired Foreign Service officer and former U.S. ambassador, died on April 16 in Summit, N.J., of natural causes.

Mr. Easum was born in Culver, Ind., on Aug. 27, 1923, and raised in Madison, Wis., where his father was a professor and chairman of the history department at the University of Wisconsin and his mother a church organist. He graduated from the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut in 1942. Following service in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946, including 10 months on Iwo Jima in the U.S. Army Air Force, he received a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1947. He taught secondary school at the John Burroughs School in St. Louis, Mo., and then joined *The New York Times* as a city news reporter.

In 1950, Mr. Easum received two master's degrees, in public affairs and art, from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. Following studies at London University on a Fulbright scholarship, and in Buenos Aires on a Doherty Foundation grant and Penfield fellowship, he earned a doctorate in international politics from Princeton in 1953.

That same year, Mr. Easum joined the Foreign Service for what would be a 27-year diplomatic career. In basic training at the Foreign Service Institute, his hesitation, on principle, to state that he was anti-communist delayed his security clearance, and thus a diplomatic assignment, for more than a year.

During this time, he met and married

Augusta Pentecost of Gadsden, Ala., who had served as a Foreign Service secretary and consular assistant in Ethiopia and Spain. The couple had four children, each born on a different continent.

Mr. Easum's overseas postings included Nicaragua, Indonesia, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Niger. He was given the Department of State's Meritorious Service Award for his work in Indonesia.

In 1971, Mr. Easum was appointed U.S. ambassador to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), where he served until 1974. The host government bestowed the title of *Commandeur de l'Ordre National* on Ambassador Easum for his leadership of international famine relief activities.

He was named ambassador to Nigeria in 1975, serving there until 1979. He was instrumental in turning around previously acrimonious relations between the United States and Nigeria, and contributed to the country's first successful transition from a military regime to a democratically elected government.

During the Nixon-Ford administration, he served as assistant secretary of State for African affairs, working tirelessly to avoid greater conflict in southern Africa. In all, he devoted more than three decades of his professional career to the improvement of U.S. relations with Africa. Earlier Washington, D.C., assignments included executive secretary for the Agency for International Development and staff director of the National Security Council's Interdepartmental Group for Latin America.

A competitive but friendly tennis and ping pong player, Amb. Easum promoted diplomacy via both of those sports. He persuaded Chinese officials to fund coaching for promising Voltaïque table-tennis players. He also helped to organize the first professional ten-

nis tournament in West Africa, which featured international greats Arthur Ashe and Stan Smith, among others. He was also a fine trumpet and cornet player and enjoyed both choir directing and singing.

Amb. Easum retired from the Foreign Service in 1980 with the rank of Career Minister. He then assumed the presidency of the Africa-America Institute in New York, and led that organization from 1980 to 1988. This work was followed by more than 20 years of international lecturing, nonprofit board memberships and activism on behalf of global understanding and human rights causes.

Amb. Easum was predeceased by his wife, Augusta Pentecost Easum, in 1992. He is survived by four children and nine grandchildren: Jefferson (and his wife, Alessandra) of Mexico City, and their children, Nicole and André; David Easum (and his partner, Karine) of Lagos, his daughter, Lauren, and their son, Tom; Susan Easum Greaney (and her husband, Michael) of Scotch Plains, N.J., and their children Charlotte, Claire and Scott; John Easum (and his wife, Laila) of Tokyo, and their children Maya and Zachary; and a sister, Janet Easum Bay, of Traverse City, Mich.

Memorial donations may be made to the National Peace Corps Association, the American Foreign Service Association, Crescent Concerts (c/o Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church) or to the charity of your choice.

■ **Brandon H. Grove Jr.**, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on May 20 at his home in Washington, D.C., of complications from cancer.

Brandon Hambright Grove Jr. was born in Chicago on April 8, 1929. He graduated in 1950 from Bard College

in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y., and received a master's degree in public administration from Princeton University in 1952.

Mr. Grove served in the U.S. Navy from 1954 to 1957, and worked on the staff of Congressman Chester Bowles (D-Conn.) before joining the Foreign Service in 1959.

Early overseas postings included Abidjan, New Delhi and Berlin. In Washington, D.C., he served as staff assistant to the Under Secretary of State, as special assistant to the deputy under secretary of State for administration, as deputy country director for Panama, as deputy director of the Policy Planning Staff, as a senior inspector in the Office of the Inspector General and as deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

From 1974 to 1976, Mr. Grove served as chargé d'affaires and deputy chief of mission at the first U.S. embassy to open in East Germany. From 1980 to 1983, during Israel's war with Lebanon, he was consul general in Jerusalem.

Mr. Grove was then nominated to be ambassador to Kuwait, but the government refused to accept him because of his previous service in Jerusalem. He was then named ambassador to Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), where he served until 1987.

As director of the Foreign Service Institute from 1988 to 1992, Ambassador Grove was instrumental in establishing the diplomatic training facility in a new, permanent home and significantly raising appreciation for the essential role of continuous training in the State Department.

Amb. Grove was tapped to lead a task force to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Somalia in 1992, and then returned to the Policy Planning Staff before retiring from the Foreign Service in 1994.

In retirement, he served on the boards of directors of the American Academy of Diplomacy, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

A lifetime member of the American Foreign Service Association, Amb. Grove served as chairman of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board from 1992 to 1994.

Amb. Grove's memoir, *Behind Embassy Walls: The Life and Times of an American Diplomat* (University of Missouri Press, 2005), was described by historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. as "a solid contribution to recent history with fascinating characterizations of leading diplomatic players."

His marriage to Marie Cheremeteff Abernethy ended in divorce. His second wife, Mariana Moran Grove, whom he married in 1988, died in 2006.

Amb. Grove is survived by four children from his first marriage: John Grove of Boston, Mass., Catherine Jones and Paul Grove, both of Bethesda, Md., and Mark Grove of Los Angeles, Calif., and Washington, D.C.; a stepdaughter, Michele Parsons of New York City; and seven grandchildren.

■ **Peter Maher**, 78, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away on April 22 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

A native of Illinois, Mr. Maher served overseas with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1956 to 1959. He went on to receive a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1963. Mr. Maher spent a year working for the city welfare department before joining the State Department.

Mr. Maher joined the Foreign Service in 1965 and embarked on a long and varied 28-year career. His early overseas postings included Ankara, Asmara, Suva

and Reykjavík, where, colleagues recall, he was often honored as the oldest former Marine at the annual Marine Corps Birthday ball.

Mr. Maher also served as principal officer in Peshawar and deputy chief of mission in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. In addition, he had several assignments in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in Washington, D.C.

After retiring from the Foreign Service in 1993, he pursued his interests in carpentry and cooking.

Mr. Maher is survived by his wife, Sydel, of Scottsdale, Ariz., and their son, Andrew.

■ **Henry Sears Sizer III**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on April 7 at his home in Washington, D.C., of an apparent heart attack.

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Mr. Sizer earned a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1955 and graduated from Yale Law School in 1958.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1958. A specialist in Middle Eastern affairs, his overseas assignments included Syria, Yemen, Tunisia, Vietnam, France and Lebanon. He was chargé d'affaires in Oman from 1978 through 1979.

After retiring in 1986, Mr. Sizer settled in Washington, D.C. He worked with the American Foreign Service Association as a labor management officer for nearly a decade.

AFSA colleagues remember him very fondly as a congenial co-worker, who brought a steady and calming hand to their small and busy office. At the same time, his diligence and attention to detail ensured that the people he helped received the best advice they could get.

In 2003, Mr. Sizer retired for a second time, from AFSA. He was also a volun-

teer at the Washington charity Martha's Table.

Mr. Sizer's wife, Cathy, died of cancer in 1985.

He is survived by his daughter, Laura, his son, Michael of Baltimore, Md.; and three grandchildren, Zoe, Ingrid and Sylvia.

Donations in Mr. Sizer's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society.

■ **Jackson L. Smith**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on Aug. 28, 2015, in Gainesville, Fla.

Mr. Smith was born on Nov. 29, 1932, in Baton Rouge, La., to Dr. T. Lynn and Louwina Smith. He grew up in Baton Rouge, Rio de Janeiro, Nashville, Tenn., and Gainesville, Fla.

At the age of 9, Mr. Smith was introduced to Foreign Service life when his father, a sociology professor and expert on Brazil, was assigned to the embassy in Rio de Janeiro during World War II.

Mr. Smith graduated from the University of Florida in 1954, receiving a degree in political science and history, and later did graduate work at The George Washington University and Columbia University.

In 1955 he married Elizabeth Anne Henrichsen (formerly of Springfield, Tenn.) at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Smith joined the Foreign Service in 1956. He served overseas in Maracaibo, London, Bogotá, the U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels and Lima. In addition, he had a number of assignments at the Department of State and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

During the years abroad, Flagler Beach, Fla., was always his home leave address. After retirement to Gainesville, the Smiths still considered the beach home, as well, and spent at least half

their time there.

Mr. Smith was an avid reader and lover of books. His family and friends miss his sense of humor, his witty sayings, his love of history, literature, and knowledge in general—and his kindness in sharing these interests with others.

Family members recall that Mr. Smith's mother said years ago, "Jack is always a gentleman"—and that remained true to the end of his life.

Mr. Smith is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, and his daughter, Pamela Smith, both of Gainesville; and a nephew, Michael L. Smith of Salt Lake City, Utah.

■ **Monteagle Stearns**, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer and two-time ambassador, died on May 14 in Boston, Mass., following a period of declining health.

Born in Cambridge, Mass., to Gwendolyn Monteagle Stearns and William F. Stearns, Mr. Stearns grew up in Carmel, Calif., and New England. In 1943 he left Stanford University after his freshman year to enlist in the Marine Corps, serving overseas until 1945. He graduated from Columbia University in 1948 with a degree in English.

Mr. Stearns was an information specialist at the State Department early in his career, and then served with the U.S. Information Agency from 1953 to 1955 before joining the State Department Foreign Service in 1955.

During a more than 40-year career, Mr. Stearns' overseas postings included Turkey, Zaire, the United Kingdom and Laos. In Washington, D.C., his assignments included deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs and special assistant to W. Averell Harriman, then the State Department's roving ambassador.

In 1976, Mr. Stearns was named U.S.



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ambassador to the Côte d'Ivoire, and from 1979 to 1981 he served as vice president of the National Defense University in Washington.

Ambassador Stearns had three lengthy tours in Greece—the last, from 1981 through 1985, as U.S. ambassador. During the first, he met and married Antonia Riddleberger, the daughter of James W. Riddleberger, also a former U.S. ambassador to Greece.

In 2014, in recognition of his “unbending professionalism and deep respect for the history and culture of Greece,” Amb. Stearns was made Grand Commander of the Order of the Phoenix by the President of the Hellenic Republic.

After retiring in 1987, Amb. Stearns was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., Warburg Professor for International Relations at Simmons College in Boston, and Whitney H. Shepardson Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

He also published two books and numerous articles on U.S. foreign policy under the aegis of the Council on Foreign Relations and Princeton University: *Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy toward Greece, Turkey and Cyprus* (1992) and *Talking to Strangers: Improving American Diplomacy at Home and Abroad* (1999).

Amb. Stearns is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Antonia, of Boston; six children: Joanne Stearns of Wynnewood, Pa.; Pamela Pollack (and her husband, Fred) of Palm City, Fla.; Christopher Stearns of Silver Spring, Md.; Jonathan Stearns (and his wife, Barbara) of Brussels, Belgium; David Stearns (and his wife, Virginia) of London, U.K.; and Emily Stearns Fertik (and her husband, Elliot) of Chennai, India; eight grand-

children: Emma, Zoe, Pauline, Charlotte, Amélie, Alexander, Daniel and Ian; and a half-sister, Mary Lou Stearns Roppoli of Indian Mills, N.J.

■ **Frank C. Urbancic Jr.**, 65, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on May 17 in Rabat, where he had been working as export control and related border security adviser to the U.S. mission.

A native of Indianapolis, Ind., Mr. Urbancic earned a bachelor's degree in French literature from New York University in 1974, a master's degree in Byzantine history from City College of New York in 1978 and a master's degree in national security strategy from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., in 1993.

Mr. Urbancic joined the Foreign Service in 1983, and served overseas in Quebec City, Amman, Tunis, Istanbul and Riyadh. He was deputy chief of mission in Abu Dhabi, Freetown and Doha.

Among his Washington, D.C., assignments, Mr. Urbancic served as principal deputy assistant secretary and deputy to the coordinator in the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. There he was responsible for managing and overseeing all aspects of counterterrorism activities. He served as deputy director of the Office of Egyptian Affairs in 1995.

As chargé d'affaires and deputy chief of mission in Kuwait from 2002 to 2004, Mr. Urbancic coordinated U.S. priorities with the host government and managed the bilateral relationship to ensure access for U.S. and coalition forces into Iraq during the early stages of the Iraq War.

Mr. Urbancic was named U.S. ambassador to Cyprus in 2008 and served until 2011. He then served as principal officer at U.S. Consulate General Melbourne

from 2011 to 2012, when he retired. In January 2013, he joined U.S. Mission Morocco as a contractor.

Amb. Urbancic received a Presidential Distinguished Service Award in 2006 and the Department of State's highest acknowledgement for DCMs in 2003—the Baker-Wilkins Award for “DCM of the Year.” He received numerous additional distinctions, including Meritorious and Superior Honor Awards.

Amb. Urbancic is survived by his wife, Michelle, and two children.

■ **Charles R. Wilds**, 89, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, died peacefully on July 4, 2015, in San Antonio, Texas.

Born on Dec. 20, 1925, in Atlanta, Ga., Mr. Wilds was a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

A graduate of the University of Maryland, he began his career at the Navy Department and joined the State Department Foreign Service in 1962.

Mr. Wilds served with his family in India, Nepal, Hong Kong and Belgium, as well as in Washington, D.C.

Retirement, after 34 years of dedicated government service, brought decades of joy with family and friends and continued travel, hobbies, professional memberships, board appointments and charitable volunteer positions.

Family members and friends remember “Bob,” as many knew him, as a true gentleman of integrity who was held in great respect. He touched many lives with his genuine spirit, and his love of life's adventures and journey.

Mr. Wilds was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 54 years, Dorothea B. Wilds. He is survived by his loving daughter, Linda A. Wilds. ■

Nomads' Land

The Formless Empire: A Short History of Diplomacy and Warfare in Central Asia

Christopher Mott, *Westholme Publishing*, 2015, \$28/hardcover, \$10.99/Kindle, 256 pages.

REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Mysterious and vaguely menacing, the title of this book, *The Formless Empire*, sounds more suitable for a Harry Potter novel than diplomatic history.

But British historian Christopher Mott defines his coinage fairly straightforwardly, as signifying the fact that Central Asia has its own tradition of warfare and diplomacy—one that is rooted in the nomadic culture of its peoples, as well as the region's distinctive geography.

Specifically, he contends: "These are empires that did not seek total control or ideological or cultural conversion of their subject peoples, but rather behaved as arbiters between different communities and guarantors of trade.

"They effectively positioned themselves as an elite cadre akin to a modern rapid-reaction force that seeks to retain the military benefits of a mobile lifestyle, while at the same time feeding off the benefits of trade in goods and resources that they could produce themselves."

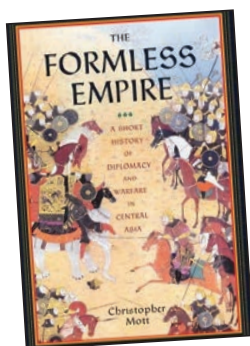
Mott applies this concept to more than two millennia of Central Asian and Eurasian history, coming all the way up to the present. That necessitates a brisk narrative pace, which occasionally forces him to give short shrift to key developments. But in return, it helps hold the reader's atten-

tion during long slogs through difficult names and obscure events.

Even if one does not fully accept Mott's thesis about the continuity of the region's history, he adduces plenty of historical examples from the foreign policies of China, Iran and Russia, in particular.

For instance, he usefully reminds us

This book is an engaging examination of the nature of non-Western imperialism and great-power strategy in Eurasia.



that in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Vladimir Putin seemed genuinely open to the George W. Bush administration establishing U.S. bases in Central Asia.

But within just a few years, Putin did "a 180" on that idea, and began employing a combination of threats and diplomacy to "persuade" Uzbekistan and other former Soviet republics not to be so welcoming to the Americans.

Mott clearly did prodigious amounts of research, which is commendable, but he does periodically succumb to the historian's temptation to go into excessive detail to make his points.

The index and maps are useful, but the book could have used a glossary of terms and a cast of characters, as well. In particular, while I'm certainly no expert on rendering Chinese names into English, I frequently had to use context to figure out which dynasties and emperors he was discussing.

Judging from the strange syntax and word choices that pop up from time to time—along with some truly impenetrable academic prose—Mott's editor did him no favors. Even so, *The Formless Empire*

is an engaging examination of the nature of non-Western imperialism and great-power strategy in Eurasia.

It demonstrates that regional histories can show us the variety of political possibilities in the past and explain how leaders have adapted them to changing circumstances. That is especially useful in light of the rapid changes unfolding in terms of global security and new forms of nation-building—and empire-building.

Foreign Service members who are serving in Central Asia, or who follow the region, will get the most out of this book, which would be a strong candidate for an area studies reading list.

Though anyone who enjoys world history may find it interesting, I would recommend casual readers look at the table of contents and select a chapter to sample rather than plunging in head-first.

Steven Alan Honley is The Foreign Service Journal's contributing editor.

A Glass Half-Full or Half-Empty?

The Great Surge: The Ascent of the Developing World

Steven Radelet, *Simon & Schuster*, 2015, \$28/hardcover, \$17/paperback, \$14.99/Kindle, 368 pages.

REVIEWED BY MARK WENTLING

I applaud Steven Radelet for this fascinating book. I'm enriched by all the information marshaled to support his argument that there are fewer poor people in the world today than at any previous time in history.

He quotes all pertinent sources; almost every sentence cites a key statistic or reference. His book is so chock full of facts and citations that it's a relief to read a sentence that puts a human face on the poor.

He's right that poverty has generally been reduced in developing countries. But I fear that most African countries are being left behind, as the gap between them and richer countries widens and the absolute number of people stuck in poverty remains stubbornly high.

I hope Africa is not an exception to the amazing "surge" Radelet describes, but much remains to be done before Africa's poor join the higher-income ranks. I note that 45 of the 109 countries he cites are in Africa.

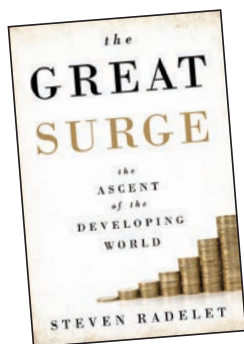
I do not have access to the author's plethora of resources. My case is simply based on my firsthand observations during more than 40 years of doing develop-

I hope Africa is not an exception to the amazing "surge" Radelet describes, but much remains to be done before Africa's poor join the higher-income ranks.

ment and humanitarian assistance work all over Africa. And my focus is on rural Africa, where 80 percent of Africans reside.

When I compare the quality of life there today with what I recall from when I lived in a village in the early 1970s, I arrive at different conclusions than Professor Radelet. Sadly, I see most rural Africans as being worse off than their parents.

Sure, they are living longer and they have clinics, schools and roads where there were none before, but they are struggling to survive. True, many Africans were so far down 30 years ago that, statistically, they could only go up.



They complain about many things. A big complaint is that there are no jobs, and they also complain about declining security. Many say life is too expensive, and they have too many mouths to feed. Rising prices for basic essentials and reduced purchasing power stresses them.

They do benefit from new technologies, such as cell phones and solar panels. Many are also more mobile because they possess motorbikes. But these technologies have not made a dent in satisfying their basic needs. You still see too many people, particularly women, struggling to haul water and collect firewood.

The percentage of African children who are permanently stunted has remained woefully high for decades, and there are now three times as many children than in 1970. Perhaps Africa's central development challenge is its enduring high fertility rates. Also of concern is the large gender gap. As long as African women can't get ahead, Africa can't get ahead.

Among Africa's most formidable development challenges is the management of its agricultural, forest and pasture lands. Deforestation and land degradation are widespread. Average crop yields are well below those in the rest of the world. Topsoil is vanishing. Groundwater levels are dropping. It is difficult to build a rising standard of living when soil fertility levels are falling.

Climate change adds to Africa's challenges. The high disease burden persists. While the fight to roll back malaria has had some success, it is still the biggest killer of children. A massive effort has brought HIV/AIDS under control, but its impact remains heavy.

And, as Radelet does note, progress was set back in three African countries affected by Ebola. It is tough to improve

health standards as long as water and sanitation are in such a deplorable state. And for most Africans, electricity is still a dream.

Africa needs to run quickly ahead to stay in the same place, and to run twice as fast to keep up with the rest of the world. Unfortunately, many African countries cannot move ahead because of natural and man-made calamities, incompetent leaders and managers, poor governance, weak or nonexistent institutions and excessive corruption.

New scourges add to Africa's problems: terrorists, drug trafficking, out-migration, and rising numbers of refugees and displaced people. Even after spending 40 years on the continent, I'm still searching for the lasting "answers" to Africa's long-standing development problems.

Many African countries are now reeling from China's economic slowdown, depreciating currencies, a slump in key export commodity prices, rising inflation and debt levels, and the worst drought in decades.

I wonder: If Prof. Radelet were to revisit the African countries he wrote about in his 2010 book, *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries Are Leading the Way*, would he come away with the same optimistic conclusions he presents in this book?

In 2022, when Africa is projected to have more people than China or India, I hope he can report that the majority of Africans are enjoying the "surge" he describes here. ■

A retired Senior FSO with USAID, Mark Wentling began his international career with the Peace Corps in Togo in 1970. During a 45-year career in diplomacy and development, he has traveled to all 54 African countries. He recently settled with his family in Lubbock, Texas. Born and raised in Kansas, Wentling says he was "made" in Africa.

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High Hopes and Mixed Feelings: Reflections of a Consulate Intern

BY WILLIAM ROBERTSON

As a graduate student in security studies in 2014, I was interested in U.S. foreign policy and the State Department's central role in managing it. To build on my academic background and further my career interests, I applied to the department's student internship program.

By August, U.S. Consulate General Düsseldorf had hired me for a 10-week, unpaid internship the following spring. The security clearance process was straightforward, with only one bureaucratic email hiccup. On Feb. 2, 2015, I began the internship and my eyes were opened to the daily routine and responsibilities of a Foreign Service post.

My primary assignment was to write daily reports, known as "squibs," on relevant news in the consular district. I took pride in knowing that my reporting would be read by officials in Washington, D.C. In addition, I attended various outreach events: political debates with the consul-general, Landtag (state parliament) sessions with local staff and regional trade fairs with U.S. Commercial Service members.

I also conducted research and pre-



William Stewart Robertson is a recent graduate of Kansas State University with a B.A. in history (2013) and an M.A. in security studies (2015).

He interned for U.S. Consulate General Düsseldorf for 10 weeks in the spring of 2015.

Not challenging interns, who shoulder significant personal costs to get a taste of being in the Foreign Service, with meaningful work and failing to use their full potential is a serious problem for an internship program.

pared briefing material for consulate personnel on various topics. And naturally, as an intern, I completed whatever odd jobs and tasks were requested of me.

I honestly enjoyed most of these responsibilities and eagerly walked to work each morning. In my free time, I was able to do some travelling, made new friends and even caught a German soccer match.

Altogether, these 10 weeks were a major moment in my life, particularly as a springboard for entering the workforce. The internship also afforded me valuable work experience, helped to build my self-confidence and strengthened my interest in a Foreign Service career.

There were, however, some negative aspects to the experience that point to improvements that could benefit the program, future interns and the posts that receive them.

Finding an apartment proved to be an exasperating process for me. Although I had lived away from home while at university and had studied abroad in Germany, I had never truly been on my own in a foreign country.

I spent the winter sending bilingual

emails on various websites asking for a 10-week lease. Not surprisingly, as a short-term renter and a foreigner, my response rate was extremely low.

In mid-January I finally found an apartment close to the consulate. I had sought help from the staff in Düsseldorf, but my contact, the vice consul, had arrived only two months earlier and was unable to provide much assistance.

The U.S.-based intern coordinators were similarly ignorant about the Düsseldorf housing market, and directed me back to the consulate for help. My fellow intern fared even worse. He was homeless until the day before he started work and was unable to move in until nearly midnight after his first day.

Already difficult for Germans, finding a short-term apartment in Düsseldorf as a foreigner was even more problematic. The lack of assistance with this was the first sign that the intern program might have some hidden weaknesses.

I encountered further difficulty in dealing with a medical issue. While warned early on that I would be on my own medically, this was an added, unbudgeted



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLIAM ROBERTSON

TOP: U.S. Consulate General Düsseldorf interns pose at a trade fair with two “Statues of Liberty.” William Robertson is second from the left; his fellow intern, Sam Yancho, is in the middle; and Lizette Bannies, the U.S. Commercial Service’s German intern, is at right. **LOWER LEFT:** A debate on the proposed Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership at the Deutsche-Welle building in Bonn in March featured (from left) Düsseldorf Consul-General Stephen A. Hubler; Stefan Engstfeld, a Green Party member of the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament; Deutsche-Welle Moderator Jule Reimer; and Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, vice president of the European Parliament. **LOWER RIGHT:** A soccer match in Gelsenkirchen.

expense. Fortunately the consulate staff recommended an excellent doctor, and I quickly recovered from an ear infection and paid the out-of-pocket cost to treat it. A more serious medical emergency, however, would have been far more expensive.

Including the unforeseen medical expense, the total cost of the internship was about \$6,000. That included trans-Atlantic airfare, rent and utilities, food and transportation around Düsseldorf. Although it was clear when I applied that this was an unpaid internship, only later

did I think to ask the question of what value we as interns would receive for our money.

Early on I learned that this particular consulate had been downsized several years before, losing many responsibilities to the consulate general in Frankfurt. The workload, therefore, had little excess for unpaid interns to pick up. While I usually had a few daily tasks (though I desired more), there were too many days when I had none.

When the second intern arrived a

month later, my already light workload was halved. Idle hands was not what the internship program touted, and it wasn’t what we had signed up and “paid” for. Although our work was highly regarded, and we were qualified, it was apparent that the consulate had barely enough real work for one intern, much less for two.

Not challenging interns, who shoulder significant personal costs to get a taste of being in the Foreign Service, with meaningful work and failing to use their full potential is a serious problem for an internship program.

If my experience is any indication, the program could benefit from a review to determine if both the intern and the State Department are getting the most out of it.

While I encourage others to consider this program, many may not be capable of personally funding such an expensive endeavor. To avoid disappointing internship experiences in the future, especially in light of the considerable personal expense involved, there should be a re-evaluation, or at least a clarification, of what the program’s value and goals are to the intern.

Furthermore, the program could benefit from having a uniform support system to help interns with such things as finding living quarters; and the Foreign Service posts, for their part, could benefit from guidance on how to maximize the internship experience.

In my case, despite an immensely welcoming staff, I felt unfulfilled—both as an intern and as a consulate contributor. Hopefully future modifications will strengthen the existing program and ensure the best-possible intern experience every time.

Overall, however, I am glad that I interned in Düsseldorf. It was my first work experience, and it convinced me to pursue a Foreign Service career. ■



Two students commemorate their graduation by posing for a picture at the Confucius Temple in Tainan, the oldest city on the island of Taiwan. Built in 1665, Tainan's Confucius Temple was conceived as part of a complex for higher education and scholarship. The temple continues to play a symbolic role associated with education in the life of the city. Ancient Confucian ceremonies related to education are still being conducted on a regular basis at the temple. Following a custom found elsewhere in the Chinese-speaking world, many local students come to the temple to pray for success before taking their final examinations. ■

FSO William Klein has served as chief of the political section at the American Institute in Taiwan since 2013. This month he begins his onward assignment as minister counselor for political affairs at U.S. Embassy Beijing. He took this photo in March with a Canon EOS 60D, f/5/6, 1/160 of a second exposure, 113mm focal length, 250 ISO.

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Pictured L-R: Dr. Josie Keat, Karl Keat, and Jim Elmore of Embassy Risk Management at the award presentation ceremony on May 5, 2016.

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We are proud to have presented the \$2,500 Embassy Risk Management Merit Award to graduating high school senior Karl Keat, who is attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. He will be attending University of Virginia majoring in Computer Science and Biology.



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