

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2023



Foreign Service Families
AT WORK

AFSA is pleased to announce the fifth annual

Foreign Service Night **AT NATIONALS PARK**

September 22, 2023 @ 7:05 p.m.



Nationals

vs.



Braves

Visit afsa.org/nationals2023 for more information,
including how to buy tickets.

This is a great way to reconnect with Foreign Service colleagues,
especially those returning home from overseas service.





PLAN YOUR NEXT GREAT ADVENTURE

Vinson Hall Retirement Community residents come from a variety of backgrounds, but they have one thing in common: a spirit of adventure. They are curious, engaged, well-traveled and excited about their next chapter. And they all love calling our community home. From art classes and pickleball to lively meals and happy hours on campus, there's no shortage of activities and entertainment. When you have seen all the wonders of the world, you want to make sure your home base measures up.

Whether they are returning from a vacation to Italy or a trip to the grocery store, military officers and their families, and leadership level (GS-14 and higher) government employees from any federal agency, love coming home to Vinson Hall Retirement Community. From friendly faces and exciting social activities to an experienced team on your side, discover the endless possibilities of a first-rate retirement.

**Be practical.
Be creative.
Be visionary.**

***The Foreign Service Journal* Centennial Writing Competition**

The U.S. Foreign Service is on the eve of its first centennial in 2024.

The past century has witnessed hot and cold wars, cyber advancements (internet, AI, crypto, etc.) and attacks, the war on terror, the rise of great power competition, and the ensuing transition to a multipolar world, among many other global developments. As an institution and a profession, the Foreign Service must continue to evolve to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

The Foreign Service Journal has been addressing these changes and challenges on its pages since becoming the flagship publication of the American Foreign Service Association in 1924.

Today, to honor the centennial—and AFSA’s role as the “Voice of the Foreign Service”—the *Journal* extends a special invitation to you to voice your own thoughts on the future of the Foreign Service by way of a writing competition. **The topic is:**

Looking ahead to the next century, describe the ideal Foreign Service— as an institution and a profession.

Possible areas to consider when writing your essay: diplomatic practice; FS reform and modernization; international development and foreign assistance; civilian-military relations; recruitment, hiring, and retention; and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF AFSA AND



THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN SERVICE

AFSA will award
as follows:

**FIRST PLACE
\$5,000**

**SECOND PLACE
\$2,500**

**THIRD PLACE
\$1,000**

Judges will be looking for originality, cogent and concise reasoning, clarity, and applicability.

The winning essay will be published in the May 2024 edition of *The Foreign Service Journal*. Second- and third-place essays will be published in later editions. All winning essays will be edited for style.

REQUIREMENTS

- You are an AFSA member. We especially want to hear from those newer to one of the foreign affairs agencies (entry- and mid-level), but welcome submissions from any active-duty or retired current AFSA members.
- One entry maximum per person.
- Your entry is 800 to 1,000 words. It has not been submitted to or published in any print or online publications.
- You have not included any AI-generated content.
- Essays will be attributed. Please include full name, current and previous postings, and agency/position as part of a one- to two-sentence bio note.
- Authors are responsible for getting any necessary clearances before submission.

**Please send your submission to journal@afsa.org by December 15, 2023,
subject line: FSJ Writing Competition + Your Last Name.**

We look forward to hearing from you!
—The Foreign Service Journal Team

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

September 2023 Volume 100, No. 7

Focus on FS Families at Work



28

Family Member Job Hunting After the Pandemic

By Donna Scaramastra Gorman

33

Making Overseas Telework Better

By Amelia Shaw

32

From the FSJ Archive FS Spouse Employment

37

What to Expect When You're Expecting Parental Leave

By Anne Coleman-Honn, Laura Hochla, and Isabel Rioja-Scott

42

Single Parents Serving

By Tamara Shie

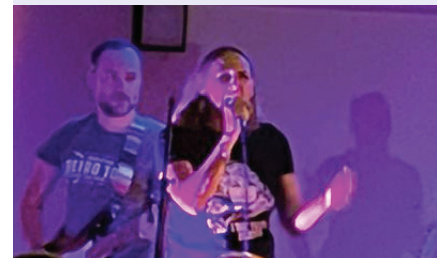
Feature

45

Rock Your Heart Out

If being a diplomat becomes your only identity, it's time to revive those things that brought you joy in the past.

By Alvaro Amador Muniz



FS Heritage

49

The Diplomat Who Started a (Culture) War

U.S. cultural diplomacy took on a new urgency following World War II. Here is a look at the bumpy beginnings of that change.

By Matthew Algeo



THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Perspectives

7

President's Views

Priorities for the New Governing Board

By Tom Yazdgerdi

9

Letter from the Editor

FS Families ... at Work

By Shawn Dorman

24

Speaking Out

Merit Pay for Family Member Employees

By Jonathan Geense

92

Reflections

From "Redneck Hillbilly" to "Radical" to Career Diplomat

By James R. Bullington

94

Local Lens

Old Delhi, India

By James Adams



Departments

- 10 Letters
- 14 Letters-Plus
- 19 Talking Points
- 74 In Memory
- 80 Books

Marketplace

- 85 Retirement
- 88 Real Estate
- 90 Classifieds
- 91 Index to Advertisers

AFSA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

- 53 New AFSA Governing Board Takes Office
- 53 AFSA Hosts Chiefs of Mission
- 54 State VP Voice—Your Voice Matters: People-Focused Conversations
- 55 USAID VP Voice—Advancing the Best Interests of USAID FSOs
- 56 AFSA on the Hill—Advocacy in Congressional Stalemates
- 56 AFSA Membership Team Welcomes New Hire
- 57 Diplomats at Work: Helping Americans Overseas as a Consular Officer
- 58 Debrief: Netflix's "The Diplomat" Visits the State Department
- 59 AFSA Member Survey on Overseas Road Safety
- 60 Meet the 2023-2025 AFSA Governing Board
- 65 Mid-Level FS Reentry Program
- 66 AFSA Scholarships: Meet the 2023 Merit Award Winners
- 70 AFSA President Concludes Tenure with Outreach
- 70 AFSA Governing Board Meeting, June 14, 2023
- 70 AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 19, 2023
- 71 Class Action Lawsuit Against TSP
- 72 AFSA Engages with Recruits and Members
- 72 Webinar: Financial Planning for the Foreign Affairs Community
- 73 AFSA Strategic Writing Award Winner: Emily Armitage



On the Cover—Illustration by Davide Bonazzi.

Priorities for the New Governing Board

BY TOM YAZDGERDI

As I take up my duties as AFSA president, I first want to thank all the AFSA members who supported me and the other members of the new Governing Board. We will do all we can to earn the trust you've placed in us by continuing the fight to make Foreign Service life better for our members and their families. After all, that is the main reason AFSA exists.

Our Governing Board members bring a wealth of experience in and commitment to the Foreign Service, and some have worked on previous AFSA boards. And for the first time, AFSA now has a full-time elected State Department representative who will focus on the issues facing specialist members—from strengthening the office management specialist (OMS) corps to dealing with the difficulty Diplomatic Security agents have getting promoted to the FS-2 level.

I want to leverage that experience and commitment to achieve positive outcomes for members, both on a collective and individual basis.

As of this writing, our board is at work defining our priorities and how we should go about achieving them. We plan to hold a retreat in early October to further discuss these priorities and fashion the way forward.

In previous years, our congressional advocacy efforts have fallen into three broad categories: health of the

Foreign Service as an institution, morale and retention, and parity with the military and other government employees.

To my mind, the overarching priority should continue to be getting an appropriation of at least \$65 billion for the International Affairs Budget. That would allow our member agencies to properly staff both Washington and the field.

Too long have our agencies had to deal with personnel shortages that sap morale and cause burnout.

Some other priority issues include the perennial ask for the third tranche of overseas comparability pay (OCP) for members serving overseas; per diem for all hires, not just those joining from outside the Washington, D.C., area; and the elimination of caps on hours and salaries for reemployed annuitants.

I will also fight for consistency across AFSA's six member agencies on how important initiatives related to issues like assignment restrictions reform and provision of benefits for members who suffer from anomalous health incidents (AHIs) are implemented.

The push for Foreign Service reform has kicked into high gear in recent months. One of the proposals is establishment of a diplomatic reserve corps—which AFSA strongly supports—that could more effectively manage the potentiality of having to surge our people, as was done in Afghanistan and Iraq. The idea to fund such a reserve corps has gotten some traction on Capitol Hill and is supported by the State Department.

A well-funded reserve corps would make a huge difference, because the State Department would not have to rely on pulling employees from current positions to staff emergency needs of the Service. The Foreign Service is still feeling the negative effects of dealing haphazardly with such contingencies in the past, as many of the jobs taken from other diplomatic posts to staff Afghanistan and Iraq were never given back to overseas posts.

Of course, none of this will be easy to achieve. Far from it. Given the debt ceiling agreement worked out earlier this year, our future appropriations are likely to be flat or close to flat, although thankfully they start from the 6 percent increase that the International Affairs Budget received in 2023. Partisan rancor will likely be even stronger next year, however, with the 2024 general election.

On the bright side, 2024 is the 100th anniversary of the modern Foreign Service and the creation of AFSA as a professional association. AFSA is planning a number of events to commemorate and celebrate these two milestones, including a gala dinner in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department in May 2024. This gives AFSA a rare opportunity to raise our profile and priorities with high-level leaders in Washington and around the country throughout the year.

Please write us at member@afsa.org to let us know what you think the priorities of our 2023-2025 Governing Board should be. I look forward to hearing from you. ■



Tom Yazdgerdi is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

Editor in Chief, Director of Publications
Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org

Senior Editor
Susan Brady Maitra: maitra@afsa.org

Managing Editor
Kathryn Owens: owens@afsa.org

Associate Editor
Julia Wohlers: wohlers@afsa.org

Publications Coordinator
Hannah Harari: harari@afsa.org

**Business Development Manager—
Advertising and Circulation**
Molly Long: long@afsa.org

Art Director
Caryn Suko Smith

Editorial Board
Vivian Walker, Chair
David Bagueño
Hon. Robert M. Beecroft
Lynette Behnke
Jane Carpenter-Rock
Gaïna Dávila
Steven Hendrix
Harry Kopp
Aileen Nandi
Dan Spokoyny
Hon. Laurence Wohlers

THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

The Foreign Service Journal (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly, with combined January-February and July-August issues, by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), a private, nonprofit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board, or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by email. The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. All advertising is subject to the publisher's approval. AFSA reserves the right to reject advertising that is not in keeping with its standards and objectives. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply endorsement of goods or services offered. Opinions expressed in advertisements are the views of the advertisers and do not necessarily represent AFSA views or policy. *Journal* subscription: AFSA member—\$20, included in annual dues; student—\$30; others—\$50; Single issue—\$4.50. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Indexed by the Public Affairs Information Services (PAIS).

Email: journal@afsa.org
Phone: (202) 338-4045
Fax: (202) 338-8244
Web: www.afsa.org/fsj
Address Changes: member@afsa.org

© American Foreign Service Association, 2023

PRINTED IN THE USA

Postmaster: Send address changes to
AFSA, Attn: Address Change
2101 E Street NW
Washington DC 20037-2990



CONTACTS



www.afsa.org

AFSA Headquarters:
(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820
State Department AFSA Office:
(202) 647-8160; Fax (202) 647-0265
USAID AFSA Office:
(202) 712-1941; Fax (202) 216-3710
FCS AFSA Office:
(202) 482-9088; Fax (202) 482-9087

GOVERNING BOARD

President
Tom Yazdgerdi: yazdgerdi@afsa.org
Secretary
Sue Saarnio: saarnio@afsa.org
Treasurer
Hon. John O'Keefe: okeefe@afsa.org
State Vice President
Hui Jun Tina Wong: wong@afsa.org
USAID Vice President
Randy Chester: chester@afsa.org
FCS Vice President
Joshua Burke: burke@afsa.org
FAS Vice President
Lisa Ahramjian: ahramjian@afsa.org
Retiree Vice President
John K. Naland: nalandfamily@yahoo.com
Full-Time State Representative
Gregory Floyd: floyd@afsa.org
State Representatives
Lynette Behnke: behnke@afsa.org
Kimberly Harrington: harrington@afsa.org
David Josar: josar@afsa.org
C. Logan Wheeler: wheeler@afsa.org
Whitney Wiedeman: wiedeman@afsa.org
USAID Representative
Christopher Saenger: saenger@afsa.org
FCS Alternate Representative
Jay Carreiro: jay.carreiro@afsa.org
FAS Alternate Representative
Zeke Spears: spears@afsa.org
USAGM Representative
Steve Herman: herman@afsa.org
APHIS Representative
Joe Ragole: ragole@afsa.org
Retiree Representatives
Mary Daly: daly@afsa.org
Edward Stafford: stafford@afsa.org

STAFF

Executive Director
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
Executive Assistant to the President
Maria Benincasa: benincasa@afsa.org
Office Coordinator
Therese Thomas: therese@afsa.org

PROFESSIONAL POLICY ISSUES AND ADVOCACY

Director of Professional Policy Issues
Julie Nutter: nutter@afsa.org
Director of Advocacy
Kim Greenplate: greenplate@afsa.org
Policy Analyst
Sean O'Gorman: ogorman@afsa.org

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Director of Finance
Femi Oshobukola: oshobukola@afsa.org
Director, HR and Operations
Cory Nishi: cnishi@afsa.org
Controller
Kalpna Srimal: srimal@afsa.org
Member Accounts Specialist
Ana Lopez: lopez@afsa.org
IT and Infrastructure Coordinator
Aleksandar "Pav" Pavlovich:
pavlovich@afsa.org

COMMUNICATIONS

Director of Communications
Ásgeir Sigfússon: sigfusson@afsa.org
**Manager of Outreach and Internal
Communications**
Allan Saunders: saunders@afsa.org
Online Communications Manager
Jeff Lau: lau@afsa.org
Awards and Scholarships Manager
Theo Horn: horn@afsa.org
**Communication and Educational Outreach
Coordinator**
Erin Oliver: oliver@afsa.org

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH

Director, Programs and Member Engagement
Christine Miele: miele@afsa.org
**Manager, Outreach and
Strategic Communications**
Nadja Ruzica: ruzica@afsa.org
Membership Operations Coordinator
Mouna Koubaa: koubaa@afsa.org
**Coordinator of Member Recruitment
and Benefits**
Perri Green: green@afsa.org
Counselor for Retirees
Dolores Brown: brown@afsa.org
Member Events Coordinator
Hannah Chapman: chapman@afsa.org

LABOR MANAGEMENT

General Counsel
Sharon Papp: PappS@state.gov
Deputy General Counsel
Raeka Safai: SafaiR@state.gov
Senior Staff Attorneys
Zlatana Badrich: BadrichZ@state.gov
Neera Parikh: ParikhNA@state.gov
Labor Management Counselor
Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan:
FallonLenaghanC@state.gov
Senior Labor Management Adviser
James Yorke: YorkeJ@state.gov
Labor Management Coordinator
Patrick Bradley: BradleyPG@state.gov
Senior Grievance Counselor
Heather Townsend: TownsendHA@state.gov
USAID Labor Management Adviser
Sue Bremner: sbremner@usaid.gov
Grievance Counselor
Benjamin Phillips: PhillipsBE@state.gov

FS Families ... at Work

BY SHAWN DORMAN

We regularly return to the evergreen topic of Foreign Service families, a top concern for the entire community. For this year's focus on families, there was so much interest and so much strong content that we expanded it into a two-edition focus. This month we zoom in on FS family issues related to work life, and next month we turn closer attention to the kids and life at home.

We begin this month with the age-old issue of FS family member employment, particularly the difficult quest for good jobs and careers for spouses and partners who accompany FS employees around the world, moving every few years, often starting over. Has the pandemic led to more opportunities as telework skyrocketed globally? Donna Scaramastra Gorman takes a look in "Family Member Job Hunting After the Pandemic."

Related, the "domestic employee teleworking overseas" (DETO) program is an innovative and still quite complicated option for teleworking overseas. FSO Amelia Shaw, who served in a State Department DETO position from Malawi, lays out recent changes that advance pay equity.

FSOs Anne Coleman-Honn, Laura Hochla, and Isabel Rioja-Scott are accomplished diplomats and moms. In "What to Expect When You're Expecting Parental Leave,"



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

they share tips for making it work. Bonus: a resource page for nursing mothers who plan to pump after returning to work.

Next, we hear from FSO Tamara Shie on the realities, and the pluses and minuses, of life and work for "Single Parents Serving" at posts abroad.

In the Feature, "Rock Your Heart Out," FS family member and leader of the San José rock band, Mid-Life Crisis, Alvaro Amador Muniz shares his personal journey finding meaning through music.

In FS Heritage, Foreign Service family member Matthew Algeo brings us the story of LeRoy Davidson, "The Diplomat Who Started a (Culture) War" by exhibiting American "modern" art abroad in the late-1940s postwar era.

In the Speaking Out, FS family member Jonathan Geense makes the pitch for "Merit Pay for Family Member Employees." And in Reflections, Ambassador (ret.) James R. Bullington tells his story "From 'Redneck Hillbilly' to 'Radical' to Career Diplomat."

In his first President's Views column, Tom Yazdgerdi introduces "Priorities for the New Governing Board." The new Governing Board will lead AFSA through the centennial year as both AFSA and the Foreign Service turn 100 in May 2024.

I am pleased to announce the FSJ Centennial Writing Competition, starting now. We hope this competition may spark bold thinking about the future of the Foreign Service. For extra inspiration, the author of the winning essay will receive a \$5,000 prize. See page 4 for details.

Be well, and be in touch. ■

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL
READ AROUND THE WORLD



For an
INSIDE LOOK
at diplomacy,
subscribe to

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Sign up at

www.afsa.org/subscribe-fsj
or email journal@afsa.org



Visit the FSJ Digital Archive
[www.afsa.org/
fsj-archive](http://www.afsa.org/fsj-archive)

Questionable Court Judgments

Thanks to our colleague Lee Ann Ross for her excellent article (*FSJ* July-August 2023) about the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism (USVSST) fund. In addition to what she writes, there are some other points worth mentioning.

Source of the funds. The fund is supposed to be financed by fines paid by individuals and companies who have had illegal dealings with state sponsors of terrorism.

Whom do you sue? To be eligible to collect under the law, most claimants need a judgment that one of the officially listed state sponsors of terrorism (Cuba, North Korea, Iran, or Syria) was responsible for their injury. In the case of the 9/11 victims who became eligible, in 2015 federal judge George B. Daniels ruled that Saudi Arabia (not a state sponsor) had sovereign immunity, and he dismissed all charges against the kingdom for its alleged role in the attacks.

The following year Judge Daniels ruled that Iran (a state sponsor) was responsible. In fact, this ruling seemed to contradict the reality that the Islamic Republic—like the other members of the original “axis of evil”—had no connection to the 9/11 events.

Where’s the money? There isn’t any. By assigning blame to a state sponsor (in this case Iran, although apparently any state sponsor would do), the effect was to dilute the fund with thousands of 9/11 claimants who were not eligible for compensation under earlier laws intended to help the direct victims.

As W.S. Gilbert wrote in *The Gondoliers*, “When everybody’s somebody, then no one’s anybody.” Some questionable court judgments have meant that almost no one—even those with legitimate claims—will ever see more than

a small portion of the compensation to which they are entitled. A sad story.

*Alan Golacinski
John Limbert
Michael Metrisko
Barry Rosen
Victor Tomseth*

The signers were members of the Foreign Service assigned to the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979, and among those held captive there for 14 months.

We Are Still Waiting

Thanks so much for covering the story of the 1998 embassy bombings in the July-August *FSJ* with the in-depth interview of the two former East African U.S. embassy ambassadors, Prudence Bushnell and John E. Lange, and the clear explanation given by Lee Ann Ross, who had been USAID Kenya deputy director at the time.

Lee Ann has given a very good and precise explanation on what the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund is all about and how to make a claim without employing too much lawyer terminology. Please thank her on our behalf.

This story still brings back very painful memories of what some of us went through that Friday, Aug. 7, 1998. It has been a long wait, going on 25 years now, and still we are going to wait more years for possible compensation. Some of the victims and family members are either dying or have already died due to natural causes or as result of bomb blast health-related complications.

*Francis Ywaya
Former USAID/Kenya FSN
Nairobi, Kenya*

Tribute to Julian Bartley

Commemoration of the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings in the July-August 2023 *FSJ* provoked a flood of memories.

I am remembering the late Julian Bartley, a career FSO, husband, father, hero, friend, and, until his untimely death in the 1998 bombings, my mentor.

In 1997, my sister was what consular folks call a “welfare and whereabouts” case in Kenya. The wheels of U.S. government from my small-town mayor to the Secretary of State (the late, great Madeleine Albright) and the upper echelons of the Department of Defense moved to rescue her in a perfect synergy that would bring a tear to the most government-cynical eye and made me as proud as I

have ever been in my life to be an American.

The consular team at Embassy Nairobi was a 24/7 mission control center that whole week she was lost on Mount Kenya, with Julian as consul general at the helm. They found her.

Julian and his son Jay lost their lives a year later when al-Qaida attacked our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

After Jess got lost and then found, I switched majors in college, and in the intervening year between her rescue and his murder, Julian gave me advice on classes to take and encouragement to persevere through the Foreign Service exam process. He called our house on every major holiday that year and sometimes “just because” to check on Jess and on my parents. He became a real friend.

On Aug. 7, 1998, we watched in abject horror as the scenes unfolded on CNN and, eventually, when both their names rolled across the ticker. Though we had





A gathering after Sarah Nuutinen's FS swearing-in ceremony in 2010. From left: Edith Bartley; Sue Bartley; Sarah Nuutinen; her sister Jessica; her father, David Lundquist; her mother, Mary; and her little sister, Lisa McDevitt.

less than no money, Jess made the trip from Wisconsin to D.C. for Julian and Jay's service.

She sat in the far back of National Cathedral as the person giving the eulogy talked about Julian's selfless public service, referencing my sister's case as a prime example of his stellar qualities as an officer and as a human being.

After grad school, I signed up for the Foreign Service exam, taking my husband along with me to also take the written exam. He's now an office director in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, and I am on the European affairs desk. Jess is alive and well in Wisconsin, and we remain in contact with the surviving Bartleys, Sue and Edith.

Sarah Lundquist Nuutinen

FSO

Washington, D.C.

Putin Confidant Busts Invasion Rationale

I want to thank the *Journal* for bringing to readers' attention the advertisement placed in *The New York Times* on May 16 by the Eisenhower Media Network and signed by several retired diplomats, including Ambassador (ret.) Jack Matlock, Matthew Hoh, Larry Wilkerson, and Ann Wright (July-August 2023 *FSJ*, page 17: "Former Diplomats Sign NYT Ad").

The gist of their open letter was that the U.S. should start negotiating with Russia now to bring peace to Ukraine because, after all, we are at fault for provoking Russia by expanding NATO to its borders.

I can see why the open letter was placed as an advertisement. It is so flawed intellectually, and so slavishly copies Russian disinformation arguments on the Ukraine war, that it would never have been printed as an editorial in any respectable newspaper.

The central argument is wrong on the facts, as many of the principals, including former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, former Secretary of State James Baker, and others have pointed out.

There was never any commitment not to expand NATO to the east, and such expansion came about because Central and Eastern European countries were clamoring to join, in the expectation that Russia might one day turn revanchist, which, under President Vladimir Putin, it did.

Beyond this, however, and perhaps most embarrassingly for the Eisenhower Media Network and its supporters, the arguments in favor of accepting Kremlin propaganda explanations for why Russia was forced to attack Ukraine have been blasted apart by onetime Putin confidant and Kremlin insider Yevgeny Prigozhin.

As Prigozhin noted in a lengthy video on Telegram on June 23: "The Armed Forces of Ukraine were not going to attack Russia with the NATO bloc." In other words, NATO expansion was just a propaganda excuse to invade.

Prigozhin said that the real reason for the invasion was that Kremlin insiders wished to promote their political prospects (decency forbids me from repeating his exact words), and Kremlin-linked oligarchs wanted to plunder Ukraine's resources after its military capture and the appointment of a puppet regime in Kyiv.

Naturally, Prigozhin studiously avoided the obvious point that Putin simply wanted to erase Ukraine from existence, as he has implied repeatedly in his own speeches.

The signatories of the Eisenhower Media Network open letter have a lot of explaining to do.

James F. Schumaker

FSO, retired

San Clemente, California

Potty Mouths and Gratuitous Sex

Commentaries about *The Diplomat* abound, including by our current ambassador in London quoted in *The New York Times* and Ambassador Barbara Stephenson's review in the July-August *FSJ*.

I've been surprised that no one has mentioned the potty mouths of the ambassador and her husband. In my 28 years at the U.S. Information Agency and State, at embassies and consulates in South Asia and Latin America, I have not once attended an official meeting or even an informal conversation among colleagues who curse like that.

Cursing for emphasis may have its place, but recreational cursing in official situations represented in the series does not resemble my experience in the Foreign Service and misleads viewers who are unfamiliar with the work we do in the field.

Even the British foreign secretary's character notes the Americans' language, letting loose his own stream of invective—to prove his bona fides, no doubt. And while I'm kvetching, the gratuitous sex does nothing to advance either character or plot, other than confirming that our middle-aged hotties can still get it on!

Rex Moser

FSO, retired

Pacific Palisades, California



Critical Shortage of FCS Officers in Africa

I am responding to the excellent article in the June *FSJ*, “The Business of Diplomacy: Prioritizing the U.S.-Africa Commercial Agenda,” by Scott Eisner.

I am a retired Senior Foreign Commercial Service officer who served as Commerce Department regional director for Africa, Near East, and South Asia from 1991 to 1994 at the end of apartheid in South Africa. I was also FCS AFSA VP from 1997 to 1999.

The critical shortage of commercial officers at U.S. embassies across Africa has been a constant since the FCS was created in 1980. This is primarily the result of institutional shortages of officers, inadequate budgets, and systemic priorities for other parts of the world markets, especially Asia and Europe.

To have one regional American officer located in Kenya, Morocco, Côte d’Ivoire, and South Africa is simply inadequate for the size and value of the African market—especially with China overwhelming the African minerals and metals industries essential to future global battery production.

The tragedy is that U.S. global trade policies still undervalue African markets both as sources of supply and as consumers. Unless and until we change that view, the opportunities will not be fulfilled, and U.S. manufacturing and trade will not reach full potential.

Charles Kestenbaum
Senior FCS FSO, retired
Vienna, Virginia

Advancing with Africa Requires More Ag Officers

Set apart by its list of specific recommendations on how to strengthen U.S.-Africa commercial relations, Scott Eisner’s article “The Business of Diplomacy:

Prioritizing the U.S.-Africa Commercial Agenda” in the June 2023 *FSJ* is must-reading, and hopefully he and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will disseminate it throughout Capitol Hill and the federal bureaucracy.

I would only add that not only do we need more Foreign Commercial Service officers on the scene promoting U.S. products and services but also many more Foreign Agricultural Service officers in the field because agriculture remains the primary engine for growth and employment in most African countries.

As the FCS and FAS backup in Morocco and Kenya, I witnessed firsthand the terrific networking and match-making these foreign affairs colleagues and their local staff members do in promoting mutually beneficial trade or, in Eisner’s words, “equitable growth for Americans and Africans alike.”

What I learned from them was extremely useful to my econ teammates and me in Sudan where, in spite of our broad sanctions regime, we were able to facilitate sales of more than 2,000 dairy cattle from Missouri, pivot and linear irrigation equipment and other agricultural machinery, pharmaceuticals, and imagery technology for the Khartoum Breast Care Centre established by radiologist Dr. Hania Morsi Fadl—one of the most inspiring women I have ever met.

We even tried to establish business links between farmers, herders, and entrepreneurs in Darfur with American suppliers.

As Mr. Eisner advocates so adroitly, we want to “Advance with Africa.”

George Aldridge
FSO, retired
Arlington, Texas

The Wrong Direction on Taiwan

At the highest strategic public policy level, our country has a choice to make between confronting the rise of China and wrestling down CO₂-based climate change. Robert S. Wang in his June 2023 *FSJ* Speaking Out article is sending us in the wrong direction.

He encourages the Biden administration to stand by democratic Taiwan and to be ready to deter and fight military or “coercive” pressures on Taiwan from the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

He downplays the costs and dangers of heightened conflict between the U.S. and the PRC, which could become lethal and tragic on the largest scale. The Taiwan point of friction needs to be made less military.

Mr. Wang’s argument is well presented, but it is bad advice. Taiwan’s thirst for autonomy is not unanimously supported on the island, and Taiwan is certainly not eager to have war for it.

Taiwan’s separatist drive is significantly our own creation, driven for more than 70 years by the American anti-communist right wing. This was revived by President Donald Trump, and a negative view of China remains preponderant in the U.S. Congress, and now even among the general public.

It’s striking how much talk about saving Taiwan is not really about Taiwan but about American uneasiness with the rise of the PRC. We should be listening hard and reflectively when the PRC says that it sees us as trying to “contain, encircle, and suppress” modern China and using the Taiwan issue for that purpose.

Mr. Wang posits, in effect, a moral obligation on us to continue to protect the small democracy, Taiwan, from the large authoritarian PRC. But such an

obligation, if fixed and invariable, makes us a prisoner of our client.

It is easy, but potentially fatal, to be inattentive to the dangers to a great power arising from its relationship with a much smaller client. In October 1962, the concerns of the client, Cuba, were narrow and intense, as they usually are, and Cuba's Fidel Castro was ready to see the superpower Soviet Union go to nuclear war with the United States.

Our obligations to Taiwan, then, cannot be immune to adjustment to meet real-world developments, such as the transforming growth in the PRC's capacity and our imperative need for China's cooperation in ending Russia's atavistic crime in Ukraine and in fighting climate change.

The U.S. needs to regain its capacity for independent action and emerge from the American right wing's view of Asia. We need a better footing with China, which requires a cooling of our relationship with Taiwan.

A respectful and respectable distancing can be gradual, discreet, and consultative. In the case of Taiwan, that means starting a detachment process soon, particularly so that the Taiwanese public understands that the island's relationship with the United States is changing when it votes for a new president to succeed Tsai Ing-wen in January 2024.

Peter Lydon

FSO, retired

Berkeley, California ■



Share your thoughts
about this month's issue.

Submit letters to the editor:
journal@afsa.org



Property Specialists, Inc.

A professional and personal service tailored to meet your needs in:

- Property Management
- Tenant Placement
- Tax-deferred Exchange
- Real Estate Investment Counseling

Specializing in
**PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT**

4600-D Lee Highway Arlington, Virginia 22207

(703) 525-7010 (703) 247-3350

Email: info@propertyspecialistsinc.com

Web address: propertyspecialistsinc.com

Serving Virginia, Maryland and D.C.



**FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**



RESPONSE TO JULY-AUGUST 2023 FOCUS ARTICLE, “DEIA IS NO LONGER JUST ‘NICE TO HAVE’”

New State Department Diversity Data Exposes Challenges and Opportunities

BY ELLICE HUANG, THOMAS SCHERER, VIC MARSH, AND DAN SPOKOJNY

We are writing in response to “DEIA Is No Longer Just ‘Nice to Have’” by Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley in the July-August 2023 *FSJ*. The State Department’s first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan states: “We need to be transparent in our efforts. This means transparency as we analyze and report DEIA-related data and trends.” The very first goal in the strategy is for the department to broaden the availability and analysis of demographic data to support an evidence-based approach to improving our diplomatic workforce and evaluate progress.

A key finding of our own organization’s research into evidence-based solutions for State Department’s workforce challenges is that *data is a vital strategic capability*. Demographic data is necessary to both diagnose obstacles and create targeted solutions. Transparency creates shared identification of problems, conveys to employees that diversity is an important goal, and creates accountability for progress.

The State Department should be commended for releasing demographic

baseline numbers this summer, as promised in the *FSJ* article. That said, the data still leave much to be desired. Only aggregated summaries of the data are presented, and only for the past two years. This makes it nearly impossible to run external analysis of the data or identify trends over time. For example, many officials at State believe they hit a glass ceiling blocking their career progression, but aggregated data cannot expose where people get stuck in the system.

A key finding of our own organization’s research into evidence-based solutions for State Department’s workforce challenges is that *data is a vital strategic capability*.

Our organization is working to fill this gap by using sophisticated data science tools and archival information to examine representation in American diplomacy. Our data source is the State Department Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts directory, which is a series of documents going back to 1965 that list Foreign Service officers and their positions assigned to each U.S. embassy.



Using text-scraping tools, we extracted the names and positions of more than 110,000 key officers—the people who serve as team leaders in embassies. We then used classification tools to identify each officer’s gender and race based on their first and last name. These classification tools are not perfectly accurate, but they provide reasonable estimates. More information can be found in the full report on our website.

Our analysis shows that the gender gap among those who lead embassy offices is steadily narrowing but will not completely close until 2040 (see Graph 1).

Ellice Huang is the operations executive at fp21 and a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley. Thomas Leo Scherer is the research director at fp21 and an academic practitioner. Vic Marsh is a researcher at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management and a former econ track FSO (2007-2015). Dan Spokojny, a former FSO, is the CEO of fp21 and is writing a doctoral dissertation on foreign policy expertise.

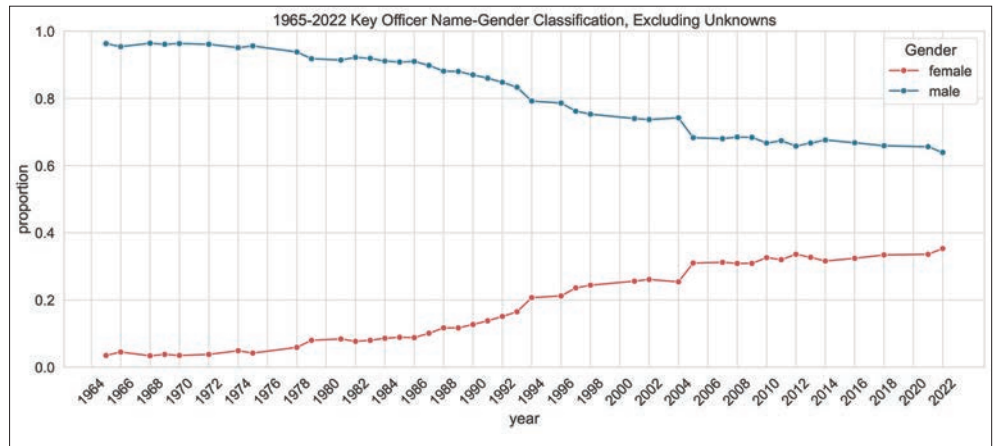
The picture is more complicated when one examines specific job categories. Underrepresented groups have long suggested that high-profile jobs are reserved for white males. Is this true?

We can see in Graph 2 that while consular and public diplomacy jobs are close to parity, political, economic, and management jobs are disproportionately male. This is significant because the expectation at the State Department is that political and economic jobs are feeder jobs to positions of higher authority.

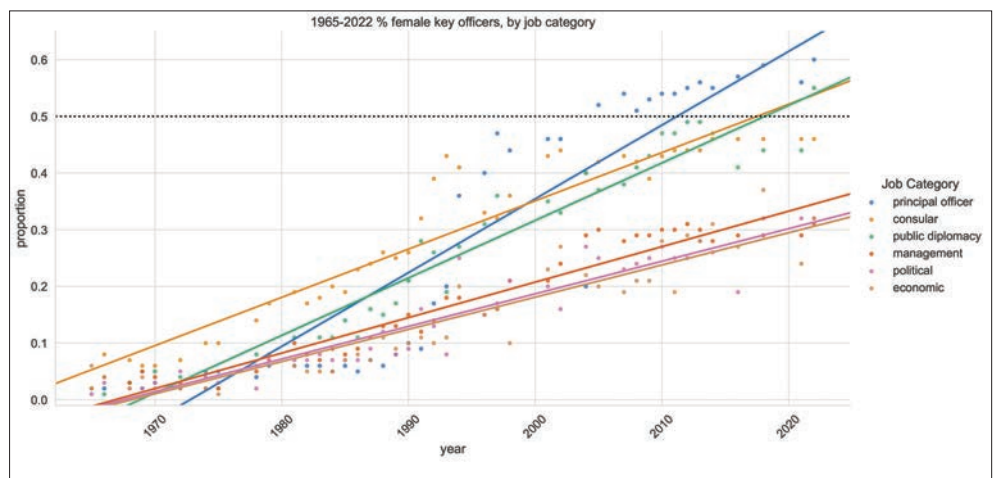
That said, our analysis shows more females than males over the past decade in principal officer assignments. Why might this be? Perhaps female officials are on average better qualified than their counterparts, leaders are going out of their way to select females for high-profile jobs, or women are disproportionately landing in less significant principal officer spots, such as one- or two-person outposts far away from capitals.

Our data on race and ethnicity is less accurate given the uncertainty of identifying these characteristics from names alone. The gap in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and cultural diversity is wide. Though the non-white and white proportions appear to diverge over time (see Graph 3), we estimate at least a 50 percent discrepancy between the two groups even today.

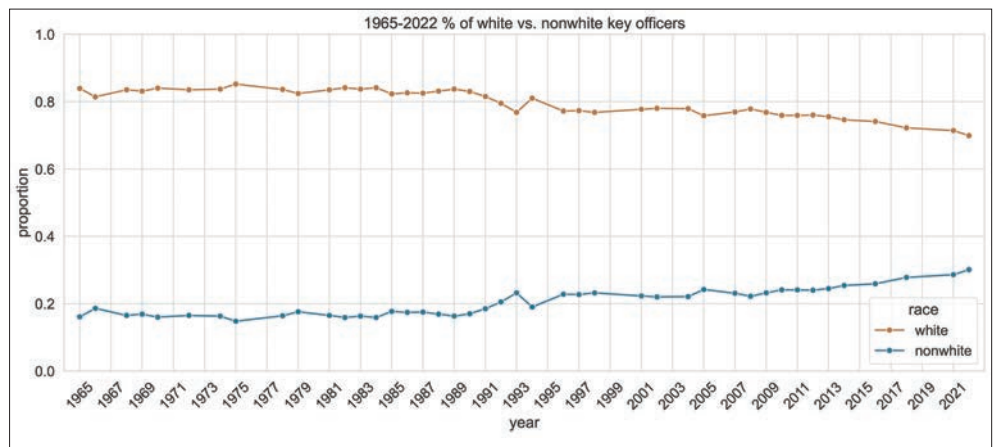
If more detailed (but carefully anonymized) data is made public, one would be able to answer many more vital questions at the State Department. Which mid-level jobs lead to high-profile positions down the road? What experience, skill,



Graph 1: The Gender Gap



Graph 2: The Gender Gap by Job Category



Graph 3: The White vs. Non-white Gap

MOVING?



**TAKE AFSA
— AND THE FSJ —
WITH YOU!**

Send your address updates to
member@afsa.org

and training are most useful for promotion? Are certain bureaus and embassies doing a better job of managing a diverse workforce?

Recent moves to publish demographic data are a step in the right direction. We hope the State Department will now

take the next step to follow through on its Strategic Plan and make its workforce data more transparent. Treating demographic data as a strategic asset would be a positive step for a department that has historically struggled to leverage the best that this diverse country has to offer.

RESPONSE TO APRIL 2023 SPEAKING OUT, “WHY OUR EVALUATION SYSTEM IS BROKEN AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT”

It’s the EER Itself ...!

BY JOHN BONDS

Virginia Blaser’s article, “Why Our Evaluation System Is Broken and What to Do About It” (April 2023 *FSJ*), was fantastic. It provided many tips to rated employees, raters, and reviewers, as well as pointers on what the Foreign Service agencies can do about the problem.

While all of those tips are wonderful, they fail to tackle the main obstacle to realistic, effective, and less time-consuming reviews. To bring our human resources efforts into the 21st century, we must take

a hard look at the actual problem: the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Report (EER) itself is broken.

The EER often fails to identify particularly high- and low-performing colleagues. It is time-consuming and onerous to produce. It distracts from our goals and often fails to reward skills that make both effective leaders and followers.

It often fails to reward basic effectiveness in a job, but rather demands extra projects that may even take away from a rated employee’s core work responsibilities. It has

essentially become a creative writing exercise.

It is time to take a close look at how we do things. A new EER could save massive amounts of labor-hours while simultaneously making it easier for the promotion boards to identify high and low performers.



John Bonds, a former U.S. Army officer, joined the Foreign Service in 2017 and has served in Hong Kong, Islamabad, and London. He is currently a student at the Foreign Service Institute and will serve in São Paulo upon completion of training.

The bulk of the EER consists of three narrative statements—from the employee being rated, their immediate supervisor, and their reviewer. These lengthy statements often focus on extra projects or additional work outside the scope of the rated employee’s principal tasks. Ideally, they will tie the achievements of the rated employee to the goals of their section, mission, or the department at large.

While the system has its benefits, the process of drafting and editing such lengthy statements lends itself to stretching accomplishments and, with shifting requirements and guidelines over the years, uncertainty about what is valued by the organization. On its best day, the system is hugely stressful and makes it

When everyone walks on water, how do you identify your highest performers?

extremely difficult for supervisors and promotion panels to identify the truly high-performing employees.

The U.S. Army faced a similar problem. When everyone walks on water, how do you identify your highest performers? Their solution was to numerically limit the number of employees who could receive the top mark.

A New System

A new EER could mirror their system. The major change would be the introduction of three or four check

boxes—from “exceeded requirements” to “failed to meet requirements”—where the reviewer could easily and effectively identify their highest performers. In most cases, the reviewer is reviewing many more EERs than the rater and would have a larger sample size to better identify the actual percentage of top employees.

In addition to the check boxes, the rater and reviewer would still have a narrative portion as in the current system, but the amount of space provided would be reduced based on the box

*Are you looking for a responsive property manager?
Fast turnaround of your rent proceeds?*

My experienced and competent team love to work with FSOs. We'll keep in contact with you, no matter where in the world you are, and that's a promise.

Hire us to rent and manage your **Northern Virginia** home.

Four year winner of the Best Falls Church Property Manager!



Call me:



Lindsey Peake

Best number (703) 408-2153



PEAKE
MANAGEMENT INC.

Peake Management Inc.
450 N. Washington St, Suite M
Falls Church, VA 22046
LINDSEY@PEAKEINC.COM
(703) 448-0212 (Office)

checked by the reviewer. For example, the top box and the bottom box would both require a lengthier justification, while the middle two could require a shorter narrative justification or none at all. The boxes would look something like the following.

(1) Far Exceeded Requirements.

This box would be numerically limited to some percentage of EERs reviewed, for instance, 10 percent of those reviewed at X grade, to enforce its use only for top performers. This percentage would be linked to the reviewer throughout their career. The Army calls this the individual's rating "profile," and it would be visible to promotion panels.

In this way, if a reviewer tended to rank people either on the high end or the low end, a promotion panel would be able to see that and take it into account—someone who consistently ranked their subordinates lower than others could be averaged out, essentially allowing everyone to be graded on a more level playing field.

If the reviewer thinks that no one is in the top 10 percent of employees they have ever reviewed at one post or rating cycle, he or she would then have the ability to use this box at the next post or rating cycle if everyone they review truly does a top job. Allowing reviewers to carry over unused top boxes would enable them to use those boxes when they are merited, like in a crisis response.

For example, if they review 10 employees, and the percentage limit is 10, they can rank only one person in this box. If no one reached that level of performance during the rating period, they could then rank two people as top 10 percent in the next cycle if they felt they deserved it. Or they could so rank one and carry the extra to the next cycle.

(Ten percent is just a suggestion; we could use any percentage that would still allow reviewers to identify their top performers.)

(2) Exceeded Requirements.

Top 50 percent of those reviewed at X grade (or whatever percentage would make the most sense). There would be no limit on these; most EERs would probably end up in this block. This would identify high-performing employees who perhaps didn't stand out to the level of those in the box above.

(3) Met Requirements.

Again, there is no limit, i.e., no requirement to low-rank. This part could show where someone needed improvement in certain areas, but it would not necessarily trigger any sort of review for continued employment.

(4) Did Not Meet Requirements.

The reviewer must state either that the employee should be retained/is able to be brought back to standard or that the employee should be separated from the Service.

There is no limit on these. This could potentially be used by promotion panels to low rank or trigger an automatic review if presented with more than one. This would require a longer narrative and potentially also require the rater/reviewer to attach their counseling statements where they have attempted corrective action.

EERs can be streamlined by requiring drastically less narrative for "Met" or "Exceeded Requirements," while requiring something lengthier for the "Far Exceeded" and "Did Not Meet Requirements" categories.

Finally, the rated employee statement should go away completely. If it isn't important to your rater or reviewer, then it is not important.

A More Straightforward Evaluation

This way of conducting evaluations reduces the time we spend writing EERs, identifies and rewards the truly outstanding people we work with, and provides a more straightforward way to identify when people are not performing and need to try something other than the Foreign Service.

Moving to this system would absolutely require some tougher conversations between leaders and the people they supervise, but isn't it the job of a leader to give honest feedback? Are we not hurting our higher performers and losing talent if their EERs get lost in a sea of people walking on water?

By numerically limiting the number of top blocks available to reviewers, they would be forced to save those for their actual top performers. The top block would clearly indicate to the promotion panel that the rated employee exceeded the expectations of effectiveness at their grade and has the potential to achieve at a higher level.

While this can be captured in narrative form, the fact that raters or reviewers are able to say this about all of their employees necessarily takes away from the highest performers. If everyone should be promoted in a system where you can't promote everyone, then promotions become mostly a game of chance.

Even if this may not be the best way forward, we need to have a conversation as an institution about what is working and what isn't. ■

Ordered Departure from Haiti

On July 27, the State Department called for the ordered departure of nonemergency U.S. government personnel and their families from Port-au-Prince as gang fighting overtook the capital.

The announcement came after a week in which Haitians swarmed the area outside the U.S. embassy, seeking protection from heavy gunfire in the vicinity. Embassy employees had already been ordered not to leave the U.S. compound.

Armed gangs have taken power in 90 percent of the Haitian capital since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse two years ago, *The Washington Post* wrote. As rival groups contest territory, they have engaged in widespread killing, rape, and displacement of civilians. To combat the gangs, vigilantes have begun forming their own armed groups.

While the U.S. has expressed reluctance to lead a response to the conflict, on July 31 the State Department announced its plans to introduce a resolution to the United Nations Security Council authorizing a multinational force to Haiti, *The New York Times* reported. Kenya has offered to lead a force to restore order.

Niger Coup Leads to Evacuations

As a military coup gripped the West African country of Niger in early August, the State Department prepared to evacuate U.S. embassy personnel.

The Biden administration has steered clear of calling the military-backed ouster of President Mohamed Bazoum a “coup.” More than just a word, the legal determination could trigger an end to U.S. security aid to a country that’s key to battling

Contemporary Quote

As many have heard me say, diplomacy is not for the faint of heart. But its promise is possible as long as individuals of conscience and leaders of principle sustain the courage to persist and persevere, and never lose hope in the cause of justice, the pursuit of peace, and the possibility of tomorrow.

—Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman in a July 28 farewell email to Department of State employees before retiring.

Logjam Breaks on Confirmations

Since our last update in June, 11 new nominees for high-level foreign affairs positions have been announced.

Three career FSOs were nominated for ambassadorships in Haiti, Burkina Faso, and the Marshall Islands, and an additional career FSO was named for the role of U.S. coordinator for international communications and information policy.

Political appointees were named for Croatia, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.N. agencies in Rome, and for the position of assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs.

There are also (finally) nominees to serve as inspectors general at State and USAID: Cardell Kenneth Richardson Sr.

and Paul K. Martin, respectively. AFSA welcomes this news, as the positions have been vacant for nearly three years.

For most of the summer, confirmations were minimal. Only political appointee Elizabeth Allen was confirmed to serve as under secretary of State for public diplomacy.

However, on the Senate’s last day before the summer recess, a logjam was broken, and 15 total nominees were confirmed that day, 13 of whom are career Foreign Service nominees serving as ambassadors in Palau (Joel Ehrendreich, a recent *FSJ* Editorial Board member), Micronesia (Jennifer L. Johnson), Rwanda (Eric Kneedler), Uganda (William Popp), Georgia (Robin Dunnigan), Niger (Kathleen FitzGibbon), Sierra Leone (Bryan David Hunt), Jordan (Yael Lempert), Ethiopia (Ervin Jose Massinga), Guyana (Nicole Theriot), the Maldives (Hugo Yue-Ho Yon), the United Arab Emirates (Martina Strong), and U.S. Senior Official for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Matthew D. Murray).

Of note, career FSO Hugo Yue-Ho Yon will be the first ambassador appointed to the Maldives without being double-hatted as the ambassador to Sri Lanka.

Two political appointees were also confirmed: Jack Markell to serve as ambassador to Italy and San Marino, and Julie Turner for the role of special envoy on North Korean human rights.

More than 30 of the nominees—mostly career Foreign Service members—had long been ready for a Senate vote but remained blocked by Senators J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who had issued sweeping holds on all State Department nominees.

In mid-July, the obstructions prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to issue a plea, urging senators to advance the dozens of nominees and decrying the impact of the holds on U.S. national security.

The summer saw two high-level positions vacated: Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley stepped down from her role as chief diversity and inclusion officer, and Rick Waters left his role as China coordinator and deputy assistant Secretary of State for China and Taiwan. He had also led the department's newly created China House policy division.

In late June, in an apparent response to congressional criticism of the Biden administration's approach to East Africa policy, John Godfrey was named special envoy for Sudan. Godfrey had already

been serving as ambassador to that country since 2022.

Finally, in a largely symbolic move in late July, President Joe Biden named Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns to his Cabinet, elevating one of his closest advisers on national security and foreign policy. In 2021, Burns became the first career diplomat to lead the CIA.

New Bill Preserves LE Staff Visas

In an effort to preserve the opportunity for long-serving locally employed (LE) staff overseas to obtain Immigrant Visas, Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) introduced S.1887 on June 8.

Known as the GRATEFUL (Granting Recognition to Accomplished Talented Employees for Unwavering Loyalty) Act, this bill would revitalize a visa category created in 1952 for LE staff and rename it the Government Employee Immigrant Visa (GIV) program.

In practice, the proposed legislation would reallocate visas from an under-

utilized existing program, redirecting 3,500 visas in FY2024 and 3,000 visas each year after, into the GIV program. This would allow foreign nationals with at least 15 years of exceptional service to the United States to immigrate with their families.

As it stands, retiring U.S. government employees abroad face an estimated 14-year wait between qualifying for and receiving a visa amid a backlog of more than 118,000 cases. Years of shifting immigration policy have placed these employees in line for visas alongside others who have no connection to U.S. government service.

The GIV program represents a commitment to employees abroad, particularly those who have placed themselves in harm's way in service of the U.S. mission. It has also received the full endorsement of AFSA, the American Academy of Diplomacy, and the Council of American Ambassadors.

As of early August, S.1887 was included in the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act. If included in the final version, it would become law in late 2023.

Short-Staffed Overseas

We know we don't have enough personnel in [U.S. diplomatic] missions in order to carry out what we expect them to do. We also know that we are regularly reprioritizing where we have to put our resources because of international events and circumstances, and that requires us to take personnel out of missions, and they become very short-staffed.

—Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) at an event on May 31 at the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement where he discussed S.3491, proposed legislation to modernize the State Department.

Creating a Reserve Corps

[Former diplomats] would come back in a heartbeat if they were needed. They will rise to the occasion. I am certain they will.

—Senator Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.) at an event on May 31 at the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement where he proposed legislation to create a reserve corps.



DoS Afghanistan Report: Not an A+

A long-awaited after-action report published by the State Department on June 30 found that the Biden and Trump administrations did not sufficiently plan for “worst-case scenarios” ahead of the summer 2021 withdrawal.

Notable findings from the heavily redacted review are as follows:

There was insufficient “senior-level consideration” of worst-case outcomes and the speed at which they could transpire.

While U.S. military planning for a possible evacuation operation was underway for some time, the State Department's

ability to participate was “hindered by the fact that it was unclear who in the department had the lead. Naming a 7th Floor principal to oversee the crisis response would have improved coordination across different lines of effort.”

Constantly changing policy guidance from Washington regarding which populations were eligible for relocation and how the embassy should manage outreach added to the confusion and often failed to take into account facts on the ground.

Up until almost the time Kabul fell to the Taliban, most predictions said that the Afghan government and its forces could hold the city for weeks, if not months.

The report called on the State Department to “insulate worst-case contingency planning and preparations from political concerns.”

“While it may not be possible to prevent information from leaking regarding contingency planning, making such plans routine would eliminate political considerations,” the report stated.

The document was released late on Friday before the long July 4 weekend.

Sec. Blinken on Fentanyl and Foreign Policy

On July 18, Secretary of State Antony Blinken led a town hall Open Forum event, “Fentanyl, Foreign Policy, and the Global Effort to Combat Synthetic Drugs.” It was his first appearance at the Open Forum since it was relaunched a year ago.

The Secretary was joined by Margaret Nardi, deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement for the discussion.

Nearly 110,000 Americans died last year of a drug overdose, and the vast majority of those deaths involved synthetic opioids. Secretary Blinken said the State Department needs to be a main actor in combating this crisis, a fundamental example of how domestic and foreign policy overlap.

At home, he said, the U.S. must work to mitigate the illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs, detect patterns, reduce demand, and offer treatment through public health interventions.

Internationally, the Secretary said the department is following the collaboration model created at the height of the

COVID-19 pandemic. On July 7, he hosted a virtual ministerial meeting with dozens of countries and international organizations to launch a Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

The coalition is a united effort to identify new drug threats and ensure a strong public health response around the world. It will reconvene on the margins of the 78th U.N. General Assembly in September and the March 2024 U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The Secretary’s Open Forum was established by Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1967 during U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict as a venue for debate and discussion of policy issues.

New Agreement for Canadian FSOs

U.S. Foreign Service members’ counterparts to the north signed a new “collective agreement” with the Canadian government on June 30 that will provide general economic and group-specific increases for employees, plus a one-time payment of \$2,500.

The agreement applies to approximately 1,927 members of the Canadian diplomatic corps and remains valid until June 2026.

Improvements in working conditions also include provisions for leave with pay for family-related responsibilities, an increase in the vacation leave accrual rate, and a new benefit for Indigenous employees who will now have access to paid leave to participate in traditional practices.

Both parties have signed a letter of agreement on telework that gives employees the flexibility to continue to work from home up to three days a week.

Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development—also known as Global Affairs Canada—currently employs about 12,000 people. This agreement applies only to members

Podcast of the Month: *Deep Dish on Global Affairs* (<https://bit.ly/DeepDishPodcast>)

Created by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Deep Dish* is a weekly podcast hosted by Brian Hanson, vice president of studies at the council, and Elizabeth Shackelford, a former FSO and senior fellow on U.S. foreign policy. In each episode, the hosts speak with thought leaders, journalists, and other experts to create a broader context for global events, helping listeners understand what happened, why it matters, and what to pay attention to as developments unfold.

Recent episodes cover U.S. strategy in China-Taiwan relations, the under-reported crisis of migrant treatment, and the complexities in Haiti two years after the president’s assassination.

The appearance of a particular site or podcast is for information only and does not constitute an endorsement.



of the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, which is both the bargaining agent and professional association for Canadian FSOs, including active-duty and retired employees.

Who Can Regulate AI

Sam Altman, chief executive of OpenAI—best known for its generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool ChatGPT—engaged in some private enterprise diplomacy in June, touching down in 10 countries and calling for “global cooperation” to make AI technology safer.

In Israel, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, India, South Korea, Japan, Sin-

gapore, Indonesia, and Australia, Altman met with students, venture capitalists, and leaders including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, and Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

In May, Altman testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee calling for the regulation of AI and acknowledging the dangers of its unfettered growth, even as his company is projected to bring in \$1 billion in revenue in 2024, according to Reuters. He said he wants to work with the government to regulate the technology.

During the June tour, he extended the call for regulation. Speaking remotely at an AI conference in Beijing, he said

China should play a key role in shaping the guardrails.

Recent Supreme Court decisions such as *West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency*, among others, have dramatically altered the legal landscape for business law that could regulate AI, “adding even more uncertainty and delay to enforcement actions,” *Harvard Business Review* wrote in May.

These limitations, combined with jostling among Congress, federal agencies, and states to write the rules, suggest that major regulation may come first from outside the U.S. Are China and the CEOs of for-profit AI companies best suited to lead the way?

First Demographic Baseline Report Released

On June 23, the Secretary’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (S/ODI) released the department’s first-ever DEIA demographic baseline report (DBR) via an interactive dashboard.

Designed to be updated annually, this first edition provides a bureau-by-bureau breakdown of FY21 and FY22 data across race, ethnicity, sex, disability, grade/rank, and job series/skill codes.

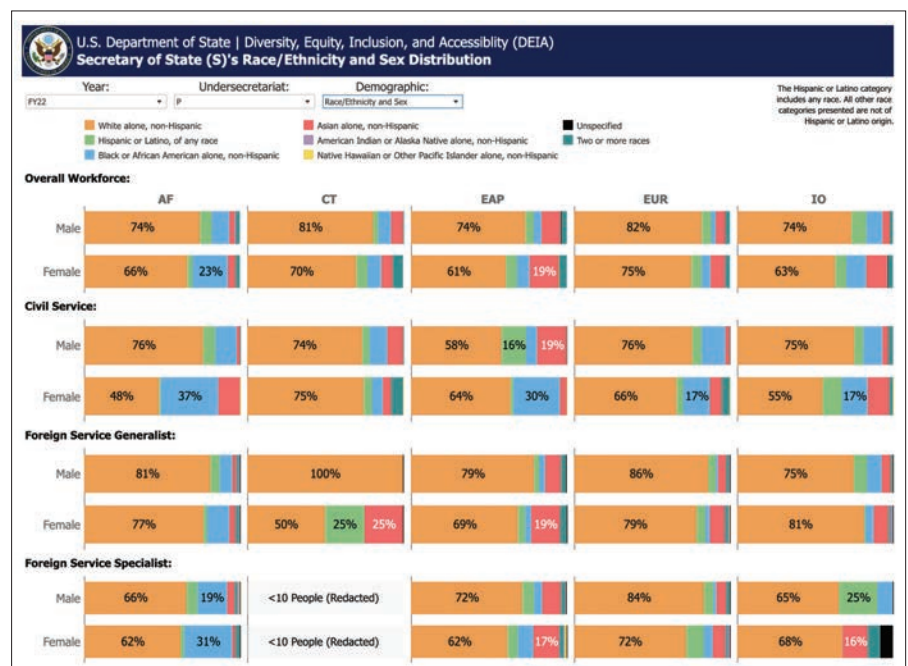
The initiative to transparently share workforce data began in 2020 when a Government Accountability Office report issued that year found that State Department employees from racial and ethnic minorities were less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts.

S/ODI says the DBR data will be used to determine if there are anomalies indicative of a barrier to equal employment opportunity. If discovered, barrier analyses may be conducted to see if there are policies that need to be changed to correct disparities in opportunity across demographic groups.

The DBR includes all full-time, permanent, direct-hire Civil Service and Foreign Service employees (career and non-career) as of Sept. 30, 2022, as collected

in the department’s Global Employment Management System (GEMS).

Contractors, locally employed staff, interns, eligible family members, and reemployed annuitants are not included in the report.



An intersectional bureau view of data included in the DBR.



What Happens to the Overseas Kid?

Because kids, as a rule, are so remarkably adaptive, there is a tendency to overlook the fact that they, as well as the adults, have to undergo a rapid environmental and cultural adjustment each time the family moves.

The overseas kid has a unique set of behavioral needs. In an attempt to be American he can be accused of cultural imperialism; by trying to be himself he may behave in a manner that could possibly affect his father's efficiency report.

Just what happens to kids who live for protracted periods of their lives in a constantly changing foreign environment?

Where do they ultimately settle? Do they settle? Do they have adjustment problems? Does anybody know—or care?

Their cross-cultural experiences can become seed beds for the brotherhood the world so desperately seeks; they can serve to close cultural gaps.

—Thomas F. Kelly, educator and former associate Peace Corps country director, excerpted from his article, "Who's the Kids' Advocate," in the September 1973 FSJ.

More Consular Officers, Please

The State Department hired almost 200 new passport adjudicators this year, boosting its consular workforce by about 10 percent and aiming for further growth, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Rena Bitter said in June.

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on June 6, Bitter reported that the bureau is seeing "historically high demand" for passport and visa services.

The State Department set a record last year when it issued about 22 million passport books and cards, according to *Federal News Network*. But it is on track to break that record and issue about 25 million passport books and cards this year—a 15 percent increase from last year.

In addition to ramping up hiring, the bureau also plans to modernize its information technology (IT) systems to drive down wait times.

"Every passport [adjudicator], every visa [adjudicator] is a national security position. And it does take time to onboard people, to ensure that they have the appropriate clearances, to

make sure they're suitable, to train them, in many cases, in quite difficult languages," Bitter told the Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability.

New Bill Takes Aim at State DEIA

In late June, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Representative Brian Mast (R-Fla.) introduced a piece of legislation in response to "how wokeness is weakening the U.S. State Department," according to a press release from Senator Rubio's office.

The bill, called "Stop Wasteful, Odious, and Kooky Exercises (WOKE) at State Act" (for real), or H.R.4255, seeks to eliminate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) requirements during the Foreign Service tenure and promotion process. It would also remove DEIA references in the Foreign Affairs Manual, Foreign Service precepts, and employee evaluation reports.

Separately, Senator J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) acknowledged to *Politico* that he had sent questionnaires to some U.S. FSO ambassador nominees to determine whether any were too "woke" to be ambassadors. Senators Vance and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) have been responsible for dozens of holds on career FSO appointments in recent months.

PRC Targets DoS Emails

Hackers affiliated with China's military or spy services penetrated the email accounts of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and State Department officials in the weeks before Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to Beijing in June, officials said on July 12.

The intrusion, first discovered by the State Department's cybersecurity team on June 16, is still under investigation, but no sensitive or classified information is believed to have been accessed, according to *The New York Times*.

Officials believe Raimondo was the only Cabinet-level official to be successfully hacked in the attack. While the hackers got access to other State Department email inboxes and hundreds of thousands of individual U.S. government emails, they were not able to acquire emails in Secretary Blinken's Microsoft 365 account.

The two most senior diplomats to be hacked were Nicholas Burns, U.S. ambassador to China, and Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant secretary of State for East Asia, the *Wall Street Journal* reported. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Julia Wohlers.

Merit Pay for Family Member Employees

BY JONATHAN GEENSE

“**M**eritorious Service Increase (MSI) 2022 Open Season: Call for Nominations!” I distinctly

remember seeing that cable. I am an eligible family member (EFM) employed as community liaison office coordinator (CLO) in Chisinau and have been for nearly four years. The cable caught my eye because I am at a Grade 6 Step 6, and for the last three evaluation cycles, I have achieved an “Outstanding” rating on my Employee Performance Report (EPR).

I eagerly read through the cable, hoping that surely there would be an opportunity for someone like me, who has performed at a reasonably high level, to earn a pay increase on the merits of my work. I read the cable a second time, dug deeper into the Procedural Precepts, and spelunked my way through the guidance on MSIs from the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM). Was I missing something?



Jonathan Geense recently left Embassy Chisinau where he served as community liaison office coordinator (CLO). He is a husband, father of three daughters, and a Foreign Service family member. He and his spouse, Maureen, a USAID officer, are looking forward to their next tour, in Colombo, where Jon hopes to continue his advocacy for issues affecting eligible family members.

As it stands today, EFMs have no way of increasing their pay via a merit-based system.

Unfortunately, no. As it stands today, EFMs have no way of increasing their pay via a merit-based system. Not through MSI, not through annual performance reviews, nor through any other mechanism that I have found in almost four years working for the State Department.

In fact, a “quick” read through the text of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 reveals that, yes, it does explicitly provide for salary increases for “especially meritorious service,” and no, it *does not* exclude EFMs from that mechanism. But the bureau’s guidance document is clear that EFMs are—ironically enough—not eligible for MSI.

I believe it’s long overdue for EFMs to be able to participate in the same MSI system that officers have access to and that shows the value they bring to the department’s workforce.

Good news is on the horizon, however. As of spring 2023, there were working groups within the Department of State—with input from GTM, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), and other stakeholders—aware of this issue and moving it forward. I am pleased that this is being given serious consideration.

What follows is my argument for *why* allowing EFMs access to a merit-based promotion system is so important.

Our Value

As many in the Foreign Service community know, completely uprooting from the U.S. or a current post every two, three, or four years is immensely difficult. Adding financial uncertainty and stress only compounds the issues.

Many spouses who accompany their partners into the Foreign Service are giving up professional degrees, six-figure incomes, friends, family, and other support networks, only to be faced with job opportunities that pay considerably lower than what they had been making.

I appreciate that the State Department identifies EFMs as “vital” and “integral” to the important work of missions around the world (20 STATE 21900). But the limitation on ways EFMs can permanently increase their base salary stands in contrast to the kind words. Let me explain.

There are two ways EFMs can increase their pay while encumbering a position at an overseas post. First, through some type of award system like State Department annual awards or the Secretary of State Awards for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA), Champions of Career Enhancement for EFMs Award (CCE-EFM), the Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award, or AFSA’s M. Juanita Guess or

Avis Bohlen awards. These are temporary, one-off lump sum payments. The second is through a within-grade increase (WGI), which occurs annually on your date of entry for steps 1 to 9 and every other year once you reach step 10.

The latter is a nice feature of employment overseas but can be problematic for EFMs because of the erratic nature of our employment and the varied grades and positions we can encumber throughout our careers. This isn't true for our officer spouses, who are enticed by full-grade promotions, tenure, MSI, and much more. For us, it is a nonlinear, asymmetrical process.

Just because I'm a Grade 6 Step 6 now does not guarantee that I will always be a Grade 6. If I were to remain employed in my current position, I could look forward to an annual step increase that would take me to Step 7. However, when we move to a new post and I take a job that is a Grade 7 and Highest Previous Rate puts me at Step 10, I must now wait *two years* to see the next step increase. Access to MSI could help to alleviate this issue for high-performing EFMs.

Ultimately, this is less an argument about money, and more about EFMs' value to the State Department. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been very vocal about departmentwide diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives. In fact, there's even a guiding question about our career advancement opportunities in cable 21 STATE 109880 of Oct. 29, 2021, "Guidance on Integrating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility into Integrated Country Strategy Management Objective and Sub-Objectives": "Are all employees, including LE Staff and EFMs, equitably offered career advancement and training opportunities?"

DEIA is a worthy endeavor that should be embraced by the Foreign Service

This is less an argument about money, and more about EFMs' value to the State Department.

community. The issue of EFM value should be part of this. In my view, access to merit-based pay increases would fall very squarely in the equity and inclusion buckets. A more equitable, inclusive, and just Department of State is one that offers hardworking EFMs a merit-based opportunity to improve our own financial station.

Our Compensation

I have heard the argument that spouses/EFMs don't *really* need higher salaries because of the other benefits we receive such as U.S. government-paid housing, access to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) participation, annual and sick leave, health benefits, life insurance, and the opportunity to earn noncompetitive eligibility status.

But let's not also pretend that all personal finance situations are created equal. There are mortgages, college, elder care, childcare, a rising cost of living due to inflation, and much more to pay for, which higher salaries would alleviate.

I've also heard the unsettling argument that EFMs are coming in with lower skills and lower education. I don't think that was ever true of spouses, but the skill sets of today's EFMs are truly remarkable. Look no further than right here in Chisinau. We have multiple spouses with Ph.D. and master's degrees. I, myself, hold two master's degrees and come from an international development-related background.

But when I hear officers say (as a point of pride), "I treat my EFM employee just like any other officer," I'm concerned that there is a structural inequity in that one is being paid for that value while the other is not. In fact, the idea of keeping pay low based on "other benefits" is a strawman argument at best, outright spurious at worst.

The family member appointment (FMA) system—created 35 years ago, in 1988—already precludes us from benefits that officers receive, including hardship differential and COLA. When EFMs are under FMA appointment, we are not given the same benefits or differentials. A brilliant discussion of FMA and its limitations can be found in Debra Blome's 2016 *FSJ* article, "Taking On Family Member Employment. Really!"

The Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) has leveled the field to a degree. EFMs with the requisite education and work background who are eligible for those positions will see a substantial increase in their starting grade. The trouble comes when that EFM who is holding an EPAP position heads to a new post and finds that the same or similar EPAP position is not available.

The positions that *are* available are lower grades (sometimes two or three grades lower). This EFM cannot be paid less than their previous high salary (Highest Previous Rate), except when the highest step for that graded position is still below what they were making as an EPAP.



PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Ask Around.

FEDS Protection covered me. I'm sticking with them.

- Former Ambassador William B. Taylor

APPLY NOW
fedsprotection.com
866.955.3337

In my view, access to merit-based pay increases would fall very squarely in the equity and inclusion buckets.

Here's an example using the 2023 FS salary schedule including 21.66 percent overseas comparability pay (OCP): An EFM in a Grade 4 Step 7 EPAP position making \$90,826 leaves post and takes ... a Grade 7 Step 14 non-EPAP position (due to circumstances beyond the EFM's control) and earns \$72,337, the highest pay level allowed.

As it currently stands, this EFM cannot change the grade of their current position or go to another step. Why is this EFM unable to carry their previous grade and step with them? I understand that positions are graded based on level of responsibility and other factors. However, this quirk in the system could be alleviated in a small but significant way if EFM were given access to the MSI program.

The Foreign Affairs Manual (3 FAM 4891.5-6) has already accounted for this situation, noting that "those approved for an MSI who have reached the highest step of their grade ... by the effective date of an approved MSI will be granted a cash payment in the amount of \$2,500 in lieu of a step increase."

Our Future

In Chisinau, we started the EFM Professional Development Initiative, which is specifically designed for EFM spouses employed at the embassy. At our kickoff meeting, we identified issues of interest such as benefits, compensation, training, support networks, and more. Our post's leadership, Deputy Chief of Mission Laura Hruby, a champion for EFM professional development, drove the conversation.

This has been a worthwhile endeavor for me personally, as it has given me a sense that I'm not alone and someone has my back. I look forward to continuing the discussion within my own community and hope that we will be able to share the successes and challenges of our group with other interested missions.

For now, the work needs to get done, and I aim to continue performing at an outstanding level despite the fact that not having the potential for merit-based pay increases challenges my motivation.

Whether an oddity of bureaucracy or an oversight in design, it is wrong that there is no merit-based system for EFM—a cohort described as a "vital" and "integral" part of the State Department's workforce. These highly qualified EFM do important (and sometimes indispensable) work at embassies around the world, but in the absence of merit-based pay increases, they're left asking, "Why not?"

For spouses and other EFM who continue to work hard while our skills and abilities go unrewarded, another, more ominous question looms: "Why?" ■

Speaking Out is the *Journal's* opinion forum, a place for lively discussion of issues affecting the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy. The views expressed are those of the author; their publication here does not imply endorsement by the American Foreign Service Association. Responses are welcome; send them to journal@afsa.org.



BACK PAIN? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

Worldwide health and prescription coverage, as well as generous alternative benefits.

Foreign Service Benefit Plan

Our plan covers:*

- 50 Massages
- 50 Chiropractic
- 50 Acupuncture




High Option FEHB health insurance open to eligible federal civilian employees.

2023 Open Season: Mon. Nov. 13–Mon. Dec. 11



Visit afspa.org/fsbp

 LEARN MORE

*Up to \$60 per visit; 50 visits per year for each type of service. All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the Foreign Service Benefit Plan's Federal brochure (RI 72-001)

FAMILY MEMBER *Job Hunting* AFTER THE PANDEMIC

A veteran Foreign Service family member explains how the search for employment is changing (and not changing) for FS spouses.

BY DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

I'm a Foreign Service old-timer. My spouse joined the Foreign Service, and I became an EFM—that's "eligible family member" for you newbies—back in the last century. It's always fun to scare the new spouses with stories about the olden days, back before Jeff Bezos created Amazon, when we were just figuring out how to get dial-up internet in our houses, and blogs and FaceTime hadn't yet been invented.

A lot has changed since then, but one thing still seems to cause the same angst: spouse employment.

When I "joined" the Foreign Service alongside my spouse, the employment landscape was severely limited at post. There was no such thing as "telework," so we spouses all either chose not to work or we competed for the same few, frequently menial, jobs that were available at post. Although it was rumored to be possible, nobody I knew managed to find paid

work outside the mission with any international organizations except the local international schools. Many of us grew bitter about the situation, and some of the people we joined with ended up leaving the Service because of it. We wanted to work, but the State Department, it seemed, didn't want us.

In the May 1991 *FSJ*, EFM author Katrina Ecton wrote: "The Foreign Service is wasting a valuable resource: spouses. The scarcity of employment for spouses in the United States and overseas is causing serious morale problems. Jobs are difficult to find, and a career for spouses is almost impossible."

Since that article was published, the work environment has slowly evolved—too slowly, most spouses would argue—to include a few professional jobs at many posts, and more options to work outside the mission, either on the local economy, with an international organization, or, more occasionally, remotely. More bilateral work agreements have been put in place, giving spouses at more posts the opportunity to work on the local economy. And some U.S. employers have become more open to remote work arrangements, allowing spouses with jobs in the U.S. to take those jobs with them when they move.

When COVID-19 came along in 2020, it shut down many embassies but introduced the business world to the idea of remote workers. Zoom became not just a company but a verb. Google Meets, Microsoft Teams, and other software for connecting became the norm. All of these broad global changes made us wonder: Have any new employment opportunities opened up for EFMs overseas since the outside world went remote in 2020? As the pandemic winds down, turning into more of a



Donna Scaramastra Gorman's articles have appeared in Time magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, and the FSJ. A Foreign Service spouse, she has been posted in Moscow (three times), Yerevan, Almaty, Beijing, and Amman. She has worked as a consular associate, a human rights assistant, a CLO, a public diplomacy EPAP, a personal trainer, an associate editor for the Journal, and more, re-creating her résumé anew with each move. She currently lives in the D.C. area with her very recently retired Foreign Service spouse and works remotely for an EFM-owned communications consultancy.



low-level nuisance for many, have the remote jobs it spawned also gone away? Or has the employment outlook for spouses changed for good in our post-pandemic world?

EFM Employment by the Numbers

The Global Community Liaison Office (GCLO, formerly called the Family Liaison Office [FLO]) tracks family member employment over time through their annual Family Member Employment Report (FAMER). The most recent report showed that from fall 2019 to fall 2022, the number of family members overseas increased slightly, from 12,159 to 12,373. In the same period, the number of family members employed inside our overseas missions dropped slightly, from 3,154 in 2019 to 3,124 in 2022.

A whopping 58 percent of family members overseas—7,151 individuals—are unemployed. Of the 5,219 family members who have found jobs, 2,095, or less than half, are employed outside the mission.

Posts in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) region are some of the worst places for spouses looking for jobs, with just 19 percent employed inside our EUR missions. By contrast, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) missions can boast that 46 percent of their spouses are employed inside the mission, with another 14 percent working outside the mission. The Bureau of African Affairs (AF) is close behind, with slightly more than half of its total family members employed—24 percent of them inside the mission.

The FAMER does not include statistics about family mem-

bers who were employed outside the mission in past years, but it does show that of the 2,095 EFMs employed outside the mission globally in 2022, 764 of them were teleworking, 415 ran a home business or worked as freelancers, 265 held DETO (domestic employee teleworking overseas) positions, and 247 were working in education. The remaining 404 EFMs were classified as “other,” with just 169 working on the local economy.

Beyond the Numbers

Surely some of those 7,151 unemployed family members are choosing not to work. But many others report they are unable to find suitable work in line with their interests and education. And the rise of remote work—though significant, in that fully half of EFMs working outside the mission are teleworking—seems yet to become sufficiently broad-based. Many spouses report that U.S. employers are still wary of hiring overseas spouses, fearing tax, legal, or cybersecurity implications for their businesses.

Spouse employment at the mission is often not a front office or human resources priority. One spouse currently serving at a large European post—certainly large enough to accommodate and even need extra personnel—reports: “I’ve been told no fewer than three times that ‘people get here and don’t want to work,’ but this could not be further from the truth. We get here and *can’t* work, as there either aren’t jobs, EFMs from other agencies are in them for extended lengths of time, or post does not look for more opportunities (even though I dare say most sections need the help!).”

Getting Started: Veteran EFM's Share Their Thoughts

It might feel like you're alone in your job search frustration. But long-term spouses have some ideas to help you transition into your new work reality.

Create a USAJOBS account. And keep it up to date so you're ready at the start of the EPAP hiring season or after you return to the United States. You can upload multiple résumés and store important documents such as the SF-50, which proves your work history, making it easier to apply for jobs without re-creating the wheel each time. If you know where you're moving next, you can set up a job alert for specific positions and locations.

Get that clearance however you can. "Don't feel like you have to apply to every job just because one is open," advises DS spouse Jen. But "having a clearance can be a boost, as you can start work faster down the line. It may be worth it to apply for a rover or even part-time admin position just to get the clearance process going."

Join the FSFRC. Join the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps (FSFRC) during the next open season, whether or not you're working. This will help you transition more quickly into new jobs at your next post.

Pursue a passion. Jessica advises spouses to stay flexible and be creative, and to think about trying something new. "I know many spouses who have started their own businesses while overseas—many consulting or coaching. It's a terrific way to work on your own time and chase a passion."

Request an informational interview. Several spouses—including this one—suggest that you ask to meet with the head of human resources when you first arrive at post, to make sure they know you are there and are interested in working. Even go so far as to tell everyone you meet that you are looking for work—you never know who is going to know of an interesting job.

—D.S.G.

The Rise of Remote Work

An interconnected world makes it feel like the problem is getting worse. Facebook groups for spouses allow us to see beyond our own front door, and we realize the problem of finding a job is more common than we knew. Yet this connected world also offers new opportunities for some.

Jessica, a lawyer and EFM, has been working remotely since 2013, and she says remote work was more rewarding in the years before COVID-19. "When the pandemic hit, I felt like everyone could work the way I was, but what happened instead was virtual working became a lot more like working in an office," she says. "People substituted calls for actual work. I was on back-to-back video calls all day, working in an EST time zone while based in Europe, and the work became exhausting. And because it was all on video, I had to be in-seat in front of my computer, giving me so much less flexibility than I had previously."

Still, says Jessica, the ability to work remotely has allowed her to build her résumé in the field she chose before she got married. "What helped me maintain a 20-year career in law while hopping from country to country was to take ownership over my career. Though I did hold one EFM position at USAID, I largely sought work on my own terms. But I had to do so in a flexible way. I think where it gets really challenging is when spouses have a very specific career track in mind that doesn't blend with an expat lifestyle."

The Problems with EPAP

The jewel in the EFM job crown is the Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP). The program was created in 2008

as a way to fill empty Foreign Service officer slots at post while offering well-paying, professional jobs to qualified family members. There are currently about 400 centrally funded EPAP positions shared across regions, plus up to 50 information resources positions and 30 facilities management positions.

These coveted positions are, however, getting harder to win. Seth, an EFM currently based in Africa, found the process of getting from application to paycheck riddled with frustrations, saying: "The fact that the program is run by Washington, but applicants only have contact with post HR, exacerbates the problem." As he explains: "Requiring a top-secret security clearance for EFM positions while waiting to initiate the clearance process until after an offer is given is untenable for people on two-year assignments. In my case, I'm losing out on an entire year of my wife's two-year assignment."

"What was supposed to be a great program has become a great way of creating strife and divisiveness among EFM's," says another spouse with experience working in human resources at post. "The qualifications for specialists are still too strict, which makes it hard for anyone to break into a specialist EPAP position and easy for the same people to keep getting them at different posts. It's a perpetual cycle, and I know of some trying for more than 10 years to get an EPAP position in their field of choice."

The program "should be run by posts," this spouse suggests, "and all EPAP positions should have the same year-round hiring flexibility of other family member appointments [FMAs, five-year limited non-career jobs created specifically for qualified spouses at overseas posts]."

What's the Good News?

It's not all bad news, even if it sometimes feels that way to those of us trying to secure new jobs every time we move. The Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM), GCLC, and even Diplomatic Security (DS) have joined forces to try to make things easier for spouses who want to work.

Faster clearances. Several spouses told the *FSJ* the clearance progress seems to be getting faster. According to a DS spokesperson, they're not wrong. DS recently overhauled the clearance process, partnering with GTM and the Bureau of Information Resource Management to create a "clearance coordinator program," which began as a pilot in April 2020 and was phased in worldwide in 2021. Part personnel security specialist and part customer service representative, the clearance coordinator is "engaged across the whole spectrum of security clearance requests, from applicants for employment, to contractors, to student interns." Using this new model, a DS spokesperson says they've reduced the time needed to process clearances from "55 days or even longer" to just two weeks.

Increasing DETOs. Family members can earn noncompetitive eligibility through their overseas employment and use it to land Civil Service positions back in Washington, D.C. But what happens when they're assigned overseas again? Michael Phillips, deputy assistant secretary for GTM, says many such family members are finding work as a DETO. In the last two years, says Phillips, the number of DETOs grew by 165 percent,

with more than 200 Civil Service employees currently teleworking from posts around the world. And, adds Phillips, Civil Service DETOs now receive locality pay under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. (See Amelia Shaw's article on DETO on page 33.)

Expanding bilateral work agreements. GTM also supports family members who want to work on the local economy (the most common positions, according to Phillips, are in teaching, photography, and consulting). The State Department has 150 bilateral work agreements and de facto arrangements, and Phillips says these agreements provide opportunities for family members to work on the local economy at 84 percent of posts. In the past two years, the State Department has enacted two new bilateral work agreements, one with France and one with Oman.

Educated People Marry Educated People

So what do the other old-timers think of the never-ending quest for spouse employment? One spouse with more than two decades of EFM and Civil Service work experience rolls her eyes and says it's obvious: "Educated people marry educated people—so we should hire them."

"I do not know of a single embassy or consulate that would say, 'Yes, we have enough employees to get the work of the mission done.'" She continues, "And we have talented EFMs sitting around, waiting to work." ■

Online Resources for EFMs

According to GCLC Director Gabrielle Hampson: "Every post is different, but generally a quarter of family members at post find work inside an embassy or consulate, and about 17 percent work outside the mission, either teleworking or on the local economy." Her office offers numerous online resources for job-hunting EFMs.

GCLC manages 20 regionally based **global employment advisers** who can help family members explore employment and professional development options at post. Family members can access this free resource as they prepare to apply for positions at post or return to the States.

In the last two years, GCLC saw a 2 percent increase in family members teleworking overseas and launched the **Telework Overseas Guidance for Family Members**

page to offer guidance to EFMs interested in pursuing telework options.

The **Family Member Employment Report (FAMER)** provides detailed information about the employment situation at post. It won't tell you what jobs are open, but it will give you a sense of whether the posts you are bidding on have a large or small cohort of working spouses.

GCLC's **Professional Development Fellowship Program** offers EFM spouses and members of household grants of \$1,000 to \$2,500 for enrichment activities.

The Network is a subscription newsletter that distributes information about job opportunities to spouses in and around the Washington, D.C., area.

—D.S.G.

From the FSJ Archive

To find these articles and more related content, visit the FSJ Digital Archive Special Collection on FS family issues at <https://afsa.org/fsj-special-collections#fsFams>.

One Step Ahead for Spouses

by Katrina Ecton, May 1991

A great deal has to be done to assist spouses overseas, but also at home as they struggle with gaps in their résumés and unintelligible job titles.

Unwilling Unemployment

by Barbara Frechette, June 1992

Unwilling to do unpaid “support” work, but unable to find paid roles overseas, what other options are there for Foreign Service spouses?

Helping a Spouse Find Work Abroad

by Francine Moddero, September 1994

More than ever, both partners in dual-income families are demanding meaningful jobs. How does this work with the Foreign Service lifestyle?

The Reality of Foreign Service Spousal Employment

by Shawn Dorman, May 2002

Employment for Foreign Service family members has become an increasingly critical issue for recruiting and retaining employees. But how can it be done?

Family Member Employment: At Work in the Mission

by Shawn Dorman, July-August 2005

A comprehensive look at the employment options available to family members inside U.S. missions overseas.

FLO is Here to Help with Career-Employment Issues

by Donna Ayerst, November 2005

The Family Liaison Office explain how they advocate on behalf of family members and bring their employment concerns to the State Department.

“Virtually” There: FS Spouses Build Careers Without Borders

by Katherine Jacobs and Carolyn Ho, September 2009

More than ever before, Foreign Service spouses and partners are pursuing successful careers in their own right. Here, two FS spouses explain how.

FS Spousal Employment: Slow but Steady Progress

by Shawn Zeller, April 2012

It’s getting easier for Foreign Service family members to find meaningful employment overseas, but there is still a long way to go.

Patience: The Key to Successful EFM Employment

by Jen Dinoia, April 2012

Eligible Family Members can land amazing jobs with the right combination of flexibility, preparation, and, yes, luck.

Local Employment in Mozambique and Brazil

by Raquel Lima Miranda, April 2012

Is it possible to live and work overseas, pursuing a professional career, despite frequent moves? Absolutely!

My So-Called Career

by Francesca Kelly, April 2012

The career you start with probably won’t be the one you end with, explains one Foreign Service spouse.

Going Back to Work: A Step-by-Step Guide for FS Spouses

by Anna Sparks, September 2015

One of the great challenges of Foreign Service life is how an FS spouse can maintain or develop a career. This article provides some practical tips.

Taking on Family Member Employment. Really!

by Debra Blome, July-August 2016

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.

Out in the Cold: How the Hiring Freeze Is Affecting Family Member Employment

by Donna Scaramastra Gorman, July-August 2017

Employing family members overseas isn’t just good for morale. It makes financial sense, too, and helps keep our embassies functioning.



MAKING OVERSEAS *Telework* BETTER

Spurred by employees and aware of the benefits, officials at the State Department are working to remove roadblocks to remote work assignments.

BY AMELIA SHAW



Amelia Shaw is a Foreign Service officer in public diplomacy who joined the State Department in 2014. She has served in Mexico, Laos, and Ecuador, and she recently completed a DETO (domestic employee teleworking overseas) assignment from Malawi. In

2015, she was the recipient of AFSA's W. Averell Harriman Award for Constructive Dissent. Prior to joining the Department of State, she was a foreign correspondent for National Public Radio, the BBC, and CNN. The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely the author's and do not reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.

The past year has seen positive changes for federal employees who are serving on domestic employee teleworking overseas assignments (known as DETOs). Since the pandemic proved the efficacy of remote work arrangements, the significant increase in demand for DETOs has put a spotlight on the program.

Early in the year, a couple hundred Civil Service (CS) employees serving on DETOs in the State Department and interagency got a massive boost, thanks in part to the work of a committed group of CS employees, human resources personnel—and last December's passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

The NDAA brought a welcome change because it included a provision for the Civil Service Federal Employee Serving Overseas Pay Equity Act, which enables Civil Service employees on DETOs to receive either the same overseas comparability pay that Foreign Service employees do, or their home office locality pay.

Prior to passage of the NDAA, Civil Service employees on DETO assignments had been taking whopping pay cuts (32 percent in 2021, up from 24 percent in 2015) because there is no overseas locality consideration in the General Services pay scale. When CS employees moved overseas, their salaries automatically defaulted down to base pay without Washington, D.C., locality pay or comparability pay of any kind.

More broadly, the change in pay equity is encouraging news for all federal workers and their spouses, whether Civil Service,



Asha Beh, pictured here in her home office in Dhaka, was one of hundreds of Civil Service employees who benefited from a legislative fix to create greater pay equity among employees serving on DETO assignments.

Foreign Service, or military, because it signals the government’s commitment and willingness to adapt and meet the changing needs of the federal workforce.

DETOs at State Are on the Rise

Currently the State Department has around 250 employees under DETO arrangements stationed all over the world. Because of its flexibility, the DETO program has been gaining popularity and has grown rapidly at State since its advent in 2009.

The pandemic vastly reshaped the world’s remote work experience, and teleworking in some form has become normalized across the job market—and the federal government. At State, the pandemic forced the department to make much-needed technological upgrades to its online communications platforms and cloud-based computing, which have facilitated the transition for parts of the federal workforce to a remote work environment, and this has positive implications for workforce recruitment and retention.

In line with national trends showing that roughly a third of Americans in a position to do so work from home, more State Department employees say they prefer working remotely in some form. According to the American Foreign Service Association’s (AFSA) Future of Foreign Service survey of 1,800 active AFSA members, 72 percent of U.S.-based staff reported partly or fully working from home at the time of the survey, and a significant number of those who were not expressed a desire to do so. A majority of respondents cited workplace flexibility as the top benefit.

As reported in an April 2022 article in *State Magazine*, DETOs have also been embraced by State’s Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) because they help the department fill staffing gaps and reduce the loss of talent. In fact, GTM currently employs the highest number of active DETOs of any office in the State Department, followed by the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

So by all indications, the DETO program is likely to expand.

Increased Flexibility, but It’s Complicated

There are many clear benefits of DETO arrangements. They allow highly trained employees to contribute meaningfully to government service. They can be cost-effective. And they keep families together. But the issue is complicated and has produced adverse effects on staff depending on their hiring category.

For example, members of the Foreign Service who are physically overseas on a DETO are considered domestic employees in most things except salary. They receive overseas comparability pay (OCP) for statutory reasons. However, they forgo any local mission-based entitlements such as post differential or cost-of-living allowance, which results in a pay cut. Further, FS DETOs are not entitled to home leave and have experienced challenges with housing allowances when returning to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) for long-term training under “same status” rules for tandem couples.

In addition, some officers have voiced dismay over the lack of clarity in how to find and apply for DETO opportunities at State. Others have experienced long delays in getting their DETO paperwork authorized, forcing them to take leave without pay while they wait for approvals. Many have also struggled with obtaining adequate computer and office equipment to do their DETO job, often paying out of pocket.

Military spouses share some of these issues and have also had their own share of problems in securing DETO agreements with Department of State. The Defense Department and State are now in negotiation on these matters. And in June 2023 the White House issued an executive order—“Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors”—that, among other things, specifically directs agencies across the executive branch to develop common standards for application processing and approvals for military spouses seeking DETO employment.

Working on a Fix at State—the Backstory

Many people have been working behind the scenes to find creative solutions to even the most intractable problems—such as the Civil Service pay disparity, which even some GTM insiders

believed was virtually unsolvable due to the statutory nature of the problem. The backstory of how pay parity in DETOs was achieved offers vital lessons to anyone at State interested in the power of internal advocacy.

In 2021 CS employee Michelle Neyland was looking for a way to accompany her Foreign Service spouse overseas and still hold on to her own federal job of 14 years. A DETO position seemed like a great way to keep the family together while continuing her career with State.

“We don’t have that many options as eligible family members [EFMs] overseas. Sometimes we can find jobs in the local economy or the embassy,” Neyland said. But even though U.S. missions make every effort to create viable employment for EFMs, embassy jobs are not always available and may not match the more sophisticated professional skill sets of CS employees.

So Neyland took a DETO job—and the 32 percent pay cut—and immediately began working on a fix. She organized a committee of like-minded colleagues from both CS and FS ranks to form an internal advocacy group. They created communications channels on Teams and Facebook, participated in town halls, and requested meetings with senior leadership. They researched the Foreign Affairs Manual, the Foreign Affairs Handbooks, and statutory guidelines; and they consulted with State Department lawyers, concluding that the only viable solution was a legislative fix.

The network and the advocacy effort grew in size and momentum, involving more than 65 employees across the State Department, including Military and DoD Families @ State, Balancing Act, and other employee groups. They worked closely with GTM, management, and the Secretary’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion; consulted with unions AFSA and AFGE to explore legal options; and connected with FS employees serving as Pearson Fellows in congressional offices.

Finally, with support from AFSA and two Pearson Fellows, Annie Wiktowy and James Allman-Gulino, the coalition had success on the Hill. Congressman Joaquin Castro’s (D-Texas)

The DETO program has been gaining popularity and has grown rapidly at State since its advent in 2009.

office drafted legislation, which Senator Chris Van Hollen’s (D-Md.) office successfully introduced as an amendment to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s State Department Authorization Bill, and it made its way successfully into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

The NDAA was signed by President Joe Biden on Dec. 23, 2022, with the hard-fought CS DETO pay equity language included in Section 9717, now allowing for CS DETOs to receive either the same overseas comparability pay that FS employees do or their home office locality pay, whichever is lower.

Two years in the making, this was a stunning legislative fix and a massive win for hundreds of Civil Service, Foreign Service,

and military families that immediately improves DEIA and retention outcomes at the State Department. It was announced to State employees by GTM on Jan. 5, 2023, in a cable aptly titled “Taking Care of People.”

Advocacy + Institutional Buy-in

This extraordinary success can be attributed to the advocacy group’s careful organizing and GTM’s proactive efforts to find solutions. The bureau’s WorkLife Division is effusive in its enthusiasm to grow the DETO program and has been working hard to tackle some of

the biggest complaints with creativity and empathy.

For one thing, GTM is developing an app to increase efficiency and transparency in applying for DETO and remote work, a significant step forward for streamlining the onboarding process. Expected to launch sometime in 2023, the new technology will eliminate the onerous system of sending PDF documents



While serving on a DETO from Malawi, FSO Amelia Shaw advocated with GTM for changes to the “same-status” rule to give greater support to officers returning to FSI for long-term training.

COURTESY OF AMELIA SHAW

Michelle Neyland was instrumental in galvanizing efforts to advocate for pay equity for Civil Service employees serving on DETO assignments.



COURTESY OF AMELIA SHAW

back and forth for signature between a multitude of offices. Electronic signatures will allow officers to track and proactively support approvals, which will likely make the process much faster and relieve a lot of officers' stress and anxiety during job transitions.

GTM is aware of other challenges officers face and is working to resolve them. It is improving its data management capacity, so it can better understand its DETO population and make informed policy changes to better serve the department's workforce needs. In April, GTM released a cable announcing that they had removed the "same-status" policy that inadvertently disadvantaged tandem couples assigned to long-term FSI training, a move that will offer more flexibility to families when one officer is returning from DETO or leave-without-pay status. By all accounts, GTM is making good on its word to take care of people in collaboration with employee advocates.

"I am feeling hopeful," Neyland said. "Our advocacy effort worked because it included so many dedicated individuals from across the State Department," she said, adding that this inte-

grated grassroots approach could help solve other seemingly intractable problems.

Teleworking is clearly here to stay. It's good for officers, it's good for families, and it's good for the State Department. As we've learned from the CS pay disparity example, we all have a vested interest in making the overseas teleworking environment a better place.

And by working together, we just might succeed. ■



Caring for your physical, mental, and **financial health.**

AFSPA's Financial Wellness Program provides tools to help achieve financial goals.

 **Join Now**



AFSPA Financial Wellness Program

Enroll Anytime!

Call or visit our website today to learn more

(202) 833-4910



AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Sponsored by Prudential Workplace Solutions Group Services, LLC. Some restrictions apply, visit afspa.org/professionalservices for details.



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARE *Expecting* PARENTAL LEAVE

Tips on managing parental leave and return to work from three accomplished FSO moms.

BY ANNE COLEMAN-HONN, LAURA HOCHLA,
AND ISABEL RIOJA-SCOTT



Anne Coleman-Honn is the deputy director in the Office of Eastern Europe in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and previously served in Chisinau, Stockholm, Panama City, Montreal, Manila, and Washington, D.C. She and her tandem husband have three children, ages 13, 11, and 7.



Laura Hochla is currently deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Vatican and the mother of a tween and a teen.



Isabel Rioja-Scott is currently economic counselor at U.S. Embassy Madrid and has served in the National Security Council, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and on the 7th Floor. She is the mother of a 9-year-old and a 12-year-old.

Your family is expanding! Congratulations! Both moms and dads have considerations to bear in mind as they prepare for these unforgettable changes coming their way. Here we offer some practical suggestions on planning for parental leave and setting yourself up for a smooth return to the office after your family welcomes a new baby.

As federal employees, we are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave at any time within a 12-month period beginning with the birth or adoption of a child or children (employees must have at least 12 months of qualifying federal government service to be deemed eligible). Before this monumental and long overdue development—passage of the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act, effective Oct. 1, 2020—we were also privileged among American workers in having the possibility to take a block



Laura Hochla (at left) and Isabel Rioja-Scott with their kids at the office. The authors noted that they had a hard time finding photos of their little ones at work, as it never really seemed OK to bring them. But when it did happen, it was always around Halloween.

of time off from work following the birth of a baby—cobbled together from sick leave, annual leave, and leave without pay—without losing our jobs.

Other new parents in the United States are not so lucky. A recent report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed more than three in four private sector employees do not have access to paid family leave and nearly three in four fathers take less than 10 days of parental leave after adding a child to the family.

Our suggestions are based on observations, conversations with colleagues about their experiences, and on our own personal experiences, having welcomed seven babies into our respective families over the past 10 years. (Note: Some of the recommendations we offer could also apply to situations in which people are preparing to be out of the office for medical leave or other extended leave.)

Sharing the News

Once you share the news that you or your partner is expecting a baby, it will spread like wildfire. If informing people yourself is important to you, try to share it on the same day with all important people on your team and in your chain of command, starting with your immediate supervisor. Your happy news may also create a management puzzle as your team grapples with the prospect of your upcoming absence, given there is not yet an immediately available float of officers to cover short-term gaps.

Do your homework so that you can pair the news with some possible next steps, helping your office navigate your absence. How long will you be out? How might your portfolio be covered?

For birth mothers, do you want to telework before the birth, and if so, what options are there? It is also useful to speak with your supervisor in advance about medical appointment timing and other requests for flexibility you may require. Fathers should not shy away from asking for this time as well, as these experiences are equally applicable to either parent. For those adopting, to the extent possible, identify in advance your anticipated appointments to allow the office to plan around your absence.

Know what you can ask for within regulations. The Bureau of Global Talent Management’s (GTM) “New Parent Guide” and the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) “Handbook on Flexibilities for Childbirth, Adoption, and Foster Care” are helpful resources. There are other considerations to include as you plan.

Proposed leave length. Will you be out 12 weeks, 16 weeks, or longer? Will you work up to the delivery date? One of our colleagues was surprised to run into her supervisor’s assumptions about when she would go on leave, which were based on old rules. Also, give yourself room to change your mind.

Another colleague, having worked up until the day of delivery with baby number one, assumed she would do the same with baby number two, and she did—but he was a much heavier baby, and she found it more difficult than she anticipated to stay mobile in the last weeks of pregnancy the second time around. A first-time father received pushback from his supervisor when he gave notice that he was taking 12 weeks of leave. The supervisor was not aware of the then-new policy. Bottom line: know the policy and communicate your plans early.

Delivery location. Your plans regarding the location for the delivery will determine when you plan to be out of the office. If you are overseas and plan to medevac to deliver your baby, the department, with post concurrence, will allow you to telework in the U.S. or at post for the time between your departure from post and your baby's arrival. This makes it possible to keep working from the delivery location while saving your leave for after the baby's arrival. You may also be able to work remotely for a domestic office. If you choose to stay at post to have your baby, you may be planning to work until the day the baby arrives or just shortly before.

Dealing with varying reactions. Sadly, some parents have faced reprisals—from subtle sarcasm to offenses on an equal employment opportunity (EEO) level—when they announce, plan for, and take leave after the birth of a child. One colleague advises: “Be prepared to advocate for your continued inclusion in travel and leading important issues in your portfolio.” Pregnancy is an EEO-covered status. (See more about the definition of pregnancy discrimination at www.eeoc.gov/pregnancy-discrimination.)

Options for Coverage While You Are Out

Although you are not solely responsible for helping your office figure out how to cover your absence, being prepared with information and options can help make this process easier and can lead to a better outcome while you are away from the office. If you are in a supervisory position, your absence can also give your deputy or others on your team an opportunity to step up and cover different aspects of your job. Here are some possible options.

- State Department employees on temporary duty (TDY) status: A Foreign Service or Civil Service colleague in temporary duty status may be available to cover the length of your absence, budget permitting (normally the bureau covers TDY expenses). This could be a Washington, D.C.-based individual or a colleague at a neighboring post. Also consider colleagues currently on leave without pay (LWOP) who may be in a position to accept a short TDY assignment.

- Retired Foreign Service officers on contract with State (known as reemployed annuitants, or REAs): With deep knowledge of the State Department, and pending available funding, these employees may be able to come to post for a short-term rotation. Your home bureau would have to fund the position, travel, per diem, and housing.

- Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs): Participants in this program are allowed to work temporarily at other agencies,

Being prepared with information and options can help make this process easier and can lead to a better outcome while you are away from the office.

including overseas, for short periods. Coordinate with the PMF office in GTM. If you are leaving post, consider making your housing available to the person who will cover your position during the time you are away; this can reduce the cost to your post and make a PMF an easier sell.

- Employees on detail from other agencies: This option may work only for those covering certain very specific portfolios (for example, energy) to make a detail from another agency attractive.

- Remote coverage of your job: If there is no funding for a physical-presence TDYer, perhaps there is someone in D.C. or another post who would want to work remotely conducting some of your duties. There is precedent for this, even for office management specialists!

Planning the Handoff

A well-crafted handoff memo—covering ongoing projects and listing key points of contact and timelines for the issues likely to emerge during your absence—can ensure that no balls are dropped during your absence. It also reduces the chances of receiving a panicked phone call in the hospital or while you are bonding with your new baby.

Plan final handoff meetings with your backup, your supervisor, and the rest of your team to discuss your handoff memo and coverage plan and to answer any questions before you depart. If you have a work evaluation (for yourself or those you supervise) coming due during your planned absence, try to complete it well before your planned departure. Submitting all vouchers early can also ease the administrative burden while you are on leave.

Set Clear Expectations and Boundaries

Think about how much contact you want to have with your office during your time away—including zero!—and be clear about your approach with your team. Designating one person (possibly a deputy or the person filling in for the bulk of the work during your absence) as a point of contact and setting up a call

For Nursing Mothers Planning to Pump

Foreign Service moms have pumped milk all over the world—while staffing VIP visits, helping American citizens in trouble, visiting foreign assistance projects in remote locations, observing foreign elections, and beyond. And we have found colleagues, supervisors, and foreign counterparts across multiple posts to be remarkably supportive in this endeavor, both helping identify private spaces to pump or accommodating pumping needs in the course of Foreign Service work.

Partners take note: Enabling support for your nursing partner is critical. Not all working moms will choose to pump. A whole book could be written (and many are) about the choices we make to continue pumping versus using formula and making it all work. But for those who do choose to pump, here's what we found to be useful:

- If you plan to continue breastfeeding after returning to work, begin planning a schedule and approach for pumping during the workday. Many find it helpful to begin pumping at least a few weeks before heading back to work, both to build experience and comfort with pumping itself and to begin building a freezer reserve of milk.
- Well in advance of your return to work, identify where you can pump and obtain necessary door codes and access to the sign-up SharePoint. In Washington, you can reserve lactation rooms in advance by searching in the general room reservation system, "Reservelt"; GTM cautions that availability can be limited if you're reserving same-day, so plan ahead.
- Use calendar alerts to remind you to pump, which is especially helpful on packed days.
- Consider hiring a lactation consultant if you are having difficulties pumping or to support your planning to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. (This is covered by many federal insurance plans.)
- The breastfeeding support group in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is open to all nursing moms and has excellent tips for pumping at work, as does the FSO Moms page on Facebook. There are also great tips on pumping while on official travel, pumping in classified space, and even tips on the best brands of pumps to buy.
- Health insurance covers the cost of one pump per pregnancy.

- Have an up-front conversation with your supervisor once you return to the office about the fact that you are pumping and the time commitment involved.
- Know your rights as a nursing mother in case there is pushback. The new PUMP Act, passed in 2022, provides protection for nursing mothers for two years after birth, mandates certain characteristics for pumping spaces, and guarantees employers allow enough daily times to pump. In addition, if there is no dedicated lactation space available during the times you need to pump, please be aware that legally your management must help you find a suitable location.
- The Breastfeeding Center of Greater Washington offers great resources for nursing moms, including sessions focused on preparing for the transition back to work, setting up a pumping schedule, and a pumping space near Main State.

Pumping During Orientation and Long-Term Training Courses

The State Department's intensive initial Foreign Service orientation training class or long-term training courses can be tricky because for the most part you are not the master of your time or your space. Here are a few tips from those who have found a way.

- Email your course coordinators to let them know you're a nursing mother, so they can give you up-to-date information about lactation facilities and other resources. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has a large lactation room in the newly built B building (with three private pumping areas, a fridge, and sterile microwave), as well as other lactation areas in, for instance, the F building. The FSI Registrar and orientation staff have the door code you need to enter.
Many breaks in FSI courses are 15 minutes, which may be insufficient time to pump. In that case, check with coordinators, who may advise that it is better and less distracting to quietly leave at the end of a session than to come in late. In the first week, request to be seated in the back row for the duration of a large course.
- On days at sites other than FSI, consider using the health unit at your destination—many have accommodations for nursing mothers. Work with the coordinator in charge of the field trip ahead of time.

—The Authors

with that person every few weeks to check in can cut down on the emails and questions received while on leave and still ensure that what's necessary gets done. Some may find this option stressful and prefer to be completely disconnected while on leave.

If you choose to stay in touch, this approach could also help you stay connected enough to what is happening in the office so that you have an easier time reentering the office when your leave concludes.

Thinking about, and drafting, your out-of-office message in advance is also important, especially if you are planning to work right up until the birth of your baby.

Reentry

In the overwhelming, (sometimes) delightful, sleep-deprived first days of parenthood, the return to the office may seem another world away. We found there were a few things that, if done in the final weeks of post-baby leave and then during the first weeks back in the office, smoothed reentry to the office and made it easier to embrace the new normal of being a working parent.

Connecting with Your Team.

Setting up calls with your supervisor and direct reports in the week or two before the first day back in the office can give you a chance to begin slowly refocusing on the office, get more up to speed on any personnel or other policy developments during your time away, and put your approaching return on your supervisor and colleagues' radar.

As always in Foreign Service life, it is possible you will find yourself getting a new supervisor either shortly before you depart or during your parental leave. Share the transition memo you prepared with the new supervisor. Request a meeting with them a few weeks before your formal return to work to clarify the exact date for your return to the office, develop a direct relationship with your future supervisor, and make your future boss aware of your subject matter expertise and previous supervisory role in the office, if you had one.

We won't sugarcoat it—the return to work can be rough, even when you love your job.

You may also want to reach out via phone before you go on leave, even if the new boss has not yet arrived, to introduce yourself. The goal is to reestablish your role now so that you can fully reintegrate when you return to the office.

First Weeks Back. We won't sugarcoat it—the return to work can be rough, even when you love your job. You may feel

bone-tired and off your game. Sleep deprivation, combined with the need to establish a whole new rhythm for you, your partner, and your baby can make the whole process seem impossible. Here are a few practical tips.

Consider a phased return to work.

If you have enough leave accumulated and your office is supportive, consider scheduling regular annual leave days in your first month back.

Avoid sudden changes. One wise friend cautions against making rash decisions in the first month following the return to work. "No matter how miserable you are, stick with the new routine for 30 days. You may come home the first day vowing to quit the Foreign Service and become an organic goat farmer in Oregon, but give it time and don't make any big decisions (about work schedules, jobs, hours, etc.) for the first month," she suggests.

Start on a Friday. Make your first day in the office a Friday so you can get through a full day with the weekend immediately ahead. One colleague notes that she "started baby in daycare

on a Friday and used that day to adjust to having her away, including working out a pumping schedule for myself. It also gave me a full workday to complete paperwork/emails for my new position."

Finally, be kind to yourself. Working and taking care of a baby can be exhausting, and you will do yourself and your baby no favors by taking care of everyone but yourself. ■



COURTESY OF ANNE COLEMAN-HONN

Anne Coleman-Honn and her two older children at Embassy Chisinau's Bring Your Child to Work Day in 2019.



SINGLE PARENTS *Serving*

As single parents become a significant demographic in the U.S., it is not surprising that their number is rising in the Foreign Service.

BY TAMARA SHIE

As I prepared to head out to one of my early overseas assignments, I received a puzzling email. It concerned a housing issue at my upcoming post. I read it over several times, not quite believing I had read it correctly: “We are sorry about this, but there is no way we could have anticipated this. We have never had this kind of situation.”

What was the situation? That I am a single parent.

In 2011 I joined the Foreign Service as a political officer and a pregnant, soon-to-be single parent. I certainly did not anticipate being both a single parent and a diplomat would be easy, and here I was taking on both at the same time; but it has been both more rewarding than I could ever have predicted and, at times, quite a bit stranger.

Some Challenges

When I joined, I did not know of any other single parent serving, so in 2015 when I met a single mother specialist online we formed Single Parents in the Foreign Service (SPiFS), an affinity and support group on Facebook for single parents serving in any of the foreign affairs agencies—including the State Department Foreign Service, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Commerce Department’s Foreign Commercial Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service—and professionals in regular overseas positions with the Peace Corps and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Tamara Shie joined the Foreign Service in July 2011. A political-coned officer, she has served in Ciudad Juárez, Shanghai, Lilongwe, and Conakry, and currently works domestically in the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Unit. She is single mom to an 11-year-old daughter and is the founder and administrator of the Single Parents in the Foreign Service (SPiFS) group.

One of the biggest challenges for SPiFS is that we do not fit into the usual categories at the embassy or consulate and can sometimes feel excluded: we are not singles without kids, we are not married without kids, we are not married with kids. Single parents have the same sort of interests as anyone, be it hiking or wine bars or book clubs; still, sometimes embassy communities do not quite know how to include us. Though we come to single parenthood in a variety of ways—by choice or adoption, or through divorce or death—stereotypes of single parents persist, and negative characterizations may extend to our children.

As both single officers and parents, we often straddle the line between the two. We understand our single colleagues' frustrations with managing the logistics of a packout solo or meeting facilities at our home during the workday. We appreciate the struggles of tandem parents trying to arrive in a new country, start their respective jobs, and manage the hiring of childcare and/or registering kids for school.

Over the course of my time with the State Department, I have had some surprising reactions to my serving as a single parent officer from both within the department and from locals where I have served. An instructor teaching my basic consular course made a joking but derogatory reference to children of unwed mothers acquiring citizenship. At a Fourth of July fair in Shanghai, a Chinese woman with tears in her eyes pressed a free mug into my hands when she learned I was an unmarried mother.

On another occasion, a med unit emailed me about a surprise-to-me medevac, asking if I would like to depart in one day or three; but when I asked about my toddler accompanying me, the individual responded: "It would be best if she stayed here" — "here" being another country five hours away by plane from the medevac point. My question: "Best" for whom?

So, what attracts single parents to the Foreign Service?

Certain Benefits

In most instances, the reasons are the same as for everyone: to serve our country, make a difference, and spend time overseas. Additionally, single parents report affordable childcare, community support, educational support, and opportunities to expose their children to different countries and cultures as significant advantages to the lifestyle. When I asked some fellow single parents to give me the highlights of single parenting in the Service, here is some of what they said:

"The amazing cultural and educational opportunities for my kids ..."

I also found that single officers who were raised by single parents were among my greatest champions.

"The Foreign Service has given me the opportunity to bring my girls all over the world, introducing them to all sorts of cultures where women have large roles."

"[My] biggest surprise was how supportive my little communities are (other friends, male and female and parents—mothers and fathers—single and otherwise) to help me fill in the gaps."

"As a family we are extraordinarily lucky, blessed beyond words, because I have her, she has me, and we live a very diverse, culturally rich, and extremely privileged life."

"Even if I leave before mandatory retirement age, I will not regret the career choice and tours I've had because they've all shaped me personally and helped all of us grow as citizens of a fascinating world."

I, too, have had some great experiences. Allies, in the form of supportive colleagues at my posts, have made good tours into better ones. Though many were parents themselves, I also found that single officers who were raised by single parents were among my greatest champions. In China, where single mothers are often ostracized, I found unexpected connections with Chinese women looking to have children on their own. In Malawi, where single moms are far more common, my similar parental status helped me to relate with Malawian women in many circumstances, especially other public servants.

When my colleague and I started the SPiFS Facebook group in 2015, we began with five members. Today we have more than 250. Although I know of no official statistics, single-parent families are still underrepresented in the Foreign Service. Yet single parents are a major U.S. demographic: According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Press Release Number CB22-TPS.99 of Nov. 17, 2022, there are nearly 11 million single parents in the United States raising nearly a quarter of our country's children. This is more than in any other country, according to the Pew Research Center. It should then come as no surprise that single parents are joining and remaining in the Foreign Service in growing numbers, and a department that seeks to build a diplomatic workforce that reflects America's diversity should become increasingly inclusive of single parents.

There are nearly 11 million single parents in the United States raising nearly a quarter of our country's children.

Significant Strides

Recently, the State Department has made some significant strides in incorporating measures that improve the lives of SPiFS. The department's Employee Consultation Services currently offers a once-a-month virtual discussion group for single parents in State, USAID, and other federal agencies under chief of mission authority. In 2021 the department recognized Singles at State as an employee organization; it raises awareness of and advocates for single employees, including single parents. And in late 2022, the department announced a change to housing space authorizations starting in 2023 that would better accommodate the needs of single parents.

For years, single parents were assigned accommodation based solely on the number of family members and not family roles. For instance, my daughter and I were on two occasions given one-bedroom apartments in PCS Lodging. Noting that previous "space authorization did not account for the practical reality that a single-parent household generally has the same effective space needs as a dual-parent household," single parents are now counted as two parents in housing considerations.

These are welcome changes, but there is more that can be done to better include single-parent employees. For instance, several SPiFS have mentioned their interest in taking on longer temporary duty opportunities. However, though the employee pays out of pocket for the air tickets, lodging, and meals, the children are not granted access to the health unit of a diplomatic mission of temporary assignment. This limits some excellent officers from taking on assignments that fill critical gaps.

Although marital and parental status do not fall under the protected classes covered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, protections against discrimination in the federal government based on these statuses are covered under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, and Executive Order 13152.

Every diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) group at the State Department should integrate single-parent voices, and DEIA policies, programming, and training should incorporate single-parent needs.

The bottom line is, single parents are serving! We serve alongside you at home and abroad, representing America in every foreign affairs agency and every rank from entry level to the front office. We are generalists in every cone and specialists in every field, from office management specialists and political officers to information specialists and general service officers, from regional security officers and deputy chiefs of mission to consular and medical officers. Single parents are your neighbors, community members, and colleagues. ■

Resources

- *Single Parents in the Foreign Service (Facebook group)*—a group for single parents in the U.S. Foreign Service or U.S. Foreign Affairs Agency to share ideas, seek support, or just vent. To join, send an email to Tamara Shie in the GAL or a message on Facebook with request to join. Please include your foreign affairs agency affiliation and parental status.
- *Balancing Act @ State*—employee organization at the State Department, welcoming men, women, Civil and Foreign Service, and all ranks to discuss and advocate for work-life balance and employee-friendly policies. Add your single-parent voice! (Facebook group available.)
- *FSO Moms (Facebook group)*—a place to share tips, thoughts, and questions about being a Foreign Service officer mom.
- *Singles at State Employee Organization*—contact SinglesatState@state.gov to join the Teams group, raise any issues, or ask questions.
- *3 FAM 3750 Travel of Separated Families*—provides payment for one round-trip ticket per year for each child below age 21 of a Foreign Service member to visit the other parent or for the parent with whom the children do not normally reside to visit the children abroad.

ROCK YOUR HEART OUT

ISTOCKPHOTO/CESARE FERRARI

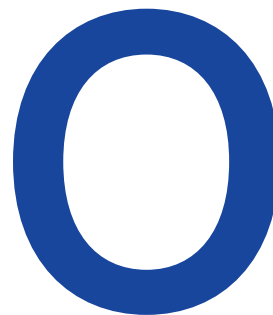
If being a diplomat becomes your only identity, it's time to revive those things that brought you joy in the past.

BY ALVARO AMADOR MUNIZ



Alvaro Amador Muniz is a Foreign Service family member currently serving as the Engineering Services Office logistician at U.S. Embassy San José. He describes himself as a “Rednexican” who hails from Ciudad Juárez, an adoptive Tennessean, an amateur

history writer for Yucatan Magazine, an average baller, and a loud guitar player. The author thanks Sean Scott, Amir Kazim, Scott Latham, Kristin Haworth, and Molly Amador for sharing their talents and helping him rock his way back to himself. Reach him at alvaroamadormu@gmail.com.



On a late April afternoon, the dark clouds dissipated after an unseasonal thunderstorm showered the banana trees and the tropical gardens of the deputy chief of mission's (DCM) residence in San José, Costa Rica. The residence was ready to receive the embassy community and local friends for the long-awaited debut

of U.S. Embassy San José's own rock band, Mid-Life Crisis.

As the sun set behind the mountains, intrigued guests were lining up at the security checkpoint. Foreign Service members, local staff, contractors, and even the ambassador were ready to enjoy the show. Guitars were tuned, drums were set up, sound equipment was equalized, and the band was hyped and ready to rock and roll.



Embassy San José's own rock band, *Mid-Life Crisis*, performing at the deputy chief of mission's residence in April 2023. From left: Alvaro Amador, Molly Amador, Amir Kazim, Scott Latham, Kristin Haworth, and Sean Scott.

The crowd burst with excitement when the sound of the first strident notes of the bass floated across San José's serene night sky. They screamed and clapped when the lights dimmed, and the band began to play their opener, "Enter Sandman" by Metallica. The band continued with a set list that took the crowd through rock classics of the 1990s and 2000s, with songs from the Black Keys, the White Stripes, Weezer, and the Strokes. The DCM, boosted by the crowd, joined the group and delivered an electrifying performance of "Song 2" by Blur, bringing everyone to their feet.

After almost two hours of show, the lead singer wrapped up the performance by reminding the crowd that the show was the result of a group of colleagues and friends coming together to decompress and have fun, and at the end of the day we should all take the time to "pursue your passions, don't ever forget who you really are." Though the band played their closer, "Gigantic" by the Pixies, the euphoric fans were not ready to go home and demanded an encore. With one more surprise for the crowd, *Mid-Life Crisis* returned to the stage and told the audience: "*Tengo una buena canción para ustedes* [I have a great song for you]." As the guitar player hit the first power chords, the crowd went wild for the song, "De Música Ligera," one of the all-time rock classics in Spanish by an Argentinian band called Soda Stereo. Everyone was dancing and singing at the top of their lungs in the crisp night air.

Putting Professional Identities Aside

Mid-Life Crisis had formed just a few months prior to the show as a jam session between two friends, a consular officer

with vast musical experience and me, the ESO logistician who had just bought an electric guitar as an attempt to revive my high school years of rock 'n' roll glory. As we talked about how much fun it was to play together, the word spread rapidly in the embassy; more colleagues came out of the woodwork, dusted off their musical instruments, and joined us. Soon we had a full rock band: the two original *amigos*; (my wife) the visa chief as our lead singer; the office management specialist as our lead guitarist; the public affairs officer on backup vocals; and a Canadian neighbor on drums. Even the DCM jammed with us occasionally.

We practiced once a week, during the weekends, or whenever our parenting and professional responsibilities allowed. Sometimes we even had to bring our kids to practice with their noise-canceling headphones. That's also why our 8-year-old daughter ended up singing backup vocals in the concert too. We were probably not *Rolling Stone* magazine material, but we sure had a blast every time we practiced. When we played together, we put our professional identities aside; we reconnected with our true selves and left the practice feeling like we had been to the spa.

Music allowed us to forget for a moment about our next assignments, employee evaluation review (EER) deadlines, visa wait times, public affairs crises. During practice, we were only concerned about hitting the right note, about not messing up lyrics, and about pressing that foot pedal on time for the solo. We were just some friends from very different backgrounds rocking our hearts out. (We did bring the duty phone with us to practice though.) When the song sounded right, it was all worth it.

When I joined Foreign Service life as a spouse (technically, an “eligible family member,” or EFM) back in 2011, I quickly learned that this exciting career could also be absorbing and overwhelming. This reality hit me hard when I moved to our first post and suddenly all aspects of my new life were associated with work. My housing assignment, the transportation of my belongings, my job opportunities, the part of the world where I lived, and even the furniture of my apartment were constant reminders of *the job*. On the weekends when we gathered with friends for cookouts or parties, the conversation was almost always ... about work. Our neighbors were also our colleagues, and our friends were 90 percent people from work. I realized then that more than a career, the Foreign Service was a lifestyle, a thrilling but challenging one.

Within a matter of months I was not only fluent in a foreign language but was also capable of understanding Foreign Service lingo. Suddenly, I was an expert on acronyms, I knew the meaning of HHE, UAB, GSO, RSO, TSP, and a long list of terms needed for basic Foreign Service survival. Soon, and without realizing it,

Music allowed us to forget for a moment about our next assignments, employee evaluation review (EER) deadlines, visa wait times, public affairs crises.

I had difficulty defining myself outside the Department of State world. My EFM life had sneaked into my personal life and taken over. Who was I, if not an EFM serving overseas?

The Struggle for Work-Life Balance

The more I talked with my friends and colleagues about my struggle, the more I realized I was not alone, that many of them were experiencing similar feelings. Some of them had been professional basketball players, teachers, dancers, cartoonists,



September is Life Insurance Awareness Month

Enroll today!



AFSPA’s plans can cover caregiving expenses, funeral costs, outstanding bills, living expenses and beneficiary services such as funeral, estate planning, and more.



AFSPA Life Insurance Plans

Enroll Today!

Call or connect online to discover the unique features of our three life insurance plans:

(202) 833-4910

No federal endorsement implied.

afspa.org/life



afspa

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Happy individuals make successful professionals.

sommeliers, and worked in other exciting professions in their life before the Foreign Service. At some point, the Foreign Service took over their whole identity, and just like me, they struggled to define themselves. This type of problem is not exclusive to the Foreign Service; I know many people who define themselves by their job title, especially in the Washington, D.C., area. It is an issue that we need to confront in American life, to balance our work with our outside lives.

The constant self-questioning threw me into a deep existential crisis, and it inevitably landed me on the chaise lounge where I spent long hours talking with my psychologist trying to get some clarity about what I was going through and how I could change it. I could not help feeling silly whining to my therapist about how difficult my life was in Milan, Mexico City, and San José; I was complaining about what others might consider a dream life. But my psychologist understood very well: the daughter of a diplomatic family, herself, she knew exactly what I was talking about.

She explained to me that what I was going through was a condition called “professional enmeshment,” a situation where the boundaries between people and their professions become imperceptible, and individual identities start losing relevance. She hit the nail on the head with this diagnosis. At some point, I had become a professional EFM, expert on learning a new job every three years, always flexible, ready for new challenges, an authority on shipping rules and international pet relocation protocols. I forgot about my passion for music. I had also abandoned my enjoyable if fruitless attempts to dunk the basketball and my desire to become a published writer. I had forgotten about myself.

I identified my problem, and that was great progress; but now I had more questions. “How do I get out of this?”

My psychologist warned me up front: there were no shortcuts—reconnecting to myself was going to be a long and uncomfortable process. She asked me to look deep inside and to revive those things that brought me joy in the past, that used to define me as a person. I had to start doing something that did not require work-related skills, and I had to start exercising those other parts of my brain that I had not used in years.

The Way Back to Myself

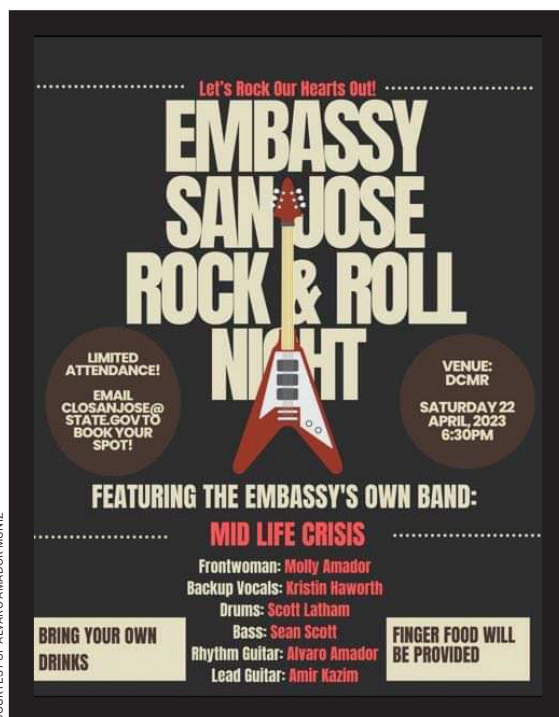
The therapist also insisted on the importance of rebuilding my neglected network. I had to somehow look beyond my title (professional EFM) and understand that a career is just one component of our overall life. It was then that I had a eureka moment, and a voice inside whispered, “an electric guitar,” and then grumbled a little: “I used to love making noise with that thing.”

My old friends teased me for wanting to rekindle those rock dreams, but I felt it was time. So I did it! I bought that Stratocaster guitar, an amp, and some pedals. I started jamming with a friend, then another, then started the band—and that showed me the way back to myself.

Now, let me clarify something. Being proud of your title and going the extra mile is not a bad thing. Becoming a U.S. diplomat is as hard as making it to the NBA; it is an accomplishment and an honor you should be proud of. We sometimes work in exceptionally stressful environments, and we want to give it our all, but we need to be mindful, aware of our mental health. You don’t need to stop being yourself to be a good diplomat or EFM; happy individuals make successful profes-

sionals. Go out there and join a soccer team, run that marathon, learn painting, write that book, or form an awesome rock band like I did.

Since our first performance at the DCM’s residence, we have added more songs to our set list and booked a gig in a local bar in downtown San José. We are not only having fun, but we are bringing our own sort of music diplomacy to town. We are “the band of the Americans (and one Canadian),” fully integrated and enjoying being part of the Costa Rican community. ■



The Diplomat Who Started A (Culture) WAR

Exposing the Bunk of So-called Modern Art

Best in U.S. Art? They Find It Crazy

W

hen the fires of World War II had finally been extinguished and the Cold War dawned, America seemed superior on every front: the only nation in the world with nuclear weapons, a homeland that had escaped the war

practically unscathed, and an economy strong enough to finance the rebuilding of Europe under the Marshall Plan. In one area, however, the U.S. was clearly deficient: culture.

The rest of the world still regarded America as a cultural backwater where profits were prized more than paintings, pennies more precious than poetry. The Soviet Union exploited this advantage even while the rubble was still smoldering in Berlin. The Russians organized orchestral performances in the ruined shells of German opera houses to advertise their cultural superiority. "Cultural diplomacy" became a catchphrase.

U.S. diplomats felt an urgent need to demonstrate American accomplishments in the arts and culture. One in particular, LeRoy Davidson, hit upon an idea: to organize an exhibition of America's best modern art. The exhibition he would organize, called "Advancing American Art," would, like a nuclear bomb, set off a chain of events that triggered a new kind of war: a culture war at home.

U.S. cultural diplomacy took on a new urgency following World War II. Here is a look at the bumpy beginnings of that change.

BY MATTHEW ALGEO



Matthew Algeo is a Foreign Service family member whose spouse, Allyson Algeo, is a Foreign Service officer. They have been posted to Bamako, Rome, Ulaanbaatar, Maputo, Sarajevo, and Washington, D.C. He is the author of When Harry Met Pablo:

Truman, Picasso, and the Cold War Politics of Modern Art (Chicago Review Press, November 2023), from which this article has been adapted. His website is malgeo.net.



J. LeRoy Davidson, assistant director, far left, and Walker Art Center staff at a promotional shoot for the exhibition, “Paintings and Their X-Rays,” 1941. Inset: Davidson’s article, “Advancing American Art,” was the lead of the December 1946 *Journal*.



A Cultural Diplomat Is Born

Joseph LeRoy Davidson was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in March 1908. He studied art history at Harvard and New York University, and in 1936 he and his wife, Martha, moved to Minneapolis, where he became the curator at the Walker Art Center. In 1940, at age 32, Davidson registered for the draft. In 1943 he was assigned to the Army Signal Corps, where he worked in the graphic arts department preparing propaganda materials. After the war, the couple stayed in Washington, D.C., and Davidson went to work for the State Department. State had inherited several cultural programs from wartime bureaucracies like the Office of War Information, combining them into a new cultural affairs bureau where he was put in charge of the international art program.

For years, State had sponsored exhibitions of American art abroad, but these were conservative affairs, and the planning was usually farmed out to the National Gallery. A typical show might include works by old stalwarts like Gilbert Stuart and Frederic Remington—lots of American Revolution and Wild West stuff—and even Old Masters from the collections of wealthy Americans, works that, as one critic put it, the “broadest segment of the American public would find accessible and unobjectionable.” This left foreigners with the impression that America was an aesthetic wasteland, a nation obsessed with money and technology but indifferent to the arts.

Davidson was determined to change that perception. In an article in the December 1946 edition of *The American Foreign Service Journal*, he explained that he wanted to put on a traveling show of “creative and experimental work produced in America” to show the world “the United States is a country which produces gifted artists as well as brilliant scientists and technicians.” The exhibition would also draw a sharp contrast with the Soviet

Union, where the only art tolerated was socialist realism (think stylized paintings glorifying factory workers and farmers and, of course, Stalin himself). And it would promote core American values: individualism, freedom of expression, tolerance of dissent.

From the outset, the exhibition was unusual for two reasons: First, Davidson himself would select the paintings, in consultation with other experts in modern art (including his wife, Martha, who was now a freelance writer for the magazine *Art News*). Davidson feared a jury or committee would automatically default to the safest works—and he did not intend for this show to be safe. Second, rather than borrowing the paintings from galleries, the State Department would purchase them outright. “When material is the property of the Government it may be used indefinitely,” Davidson explained in the *AFSJ*. And packing and shipping costs can be reduced to a minimum and flexibility in scheduling raised to the maximum, he added.

Given a budget of about \$50,000 (\$750,000 today), Davidson began scouring galleries in New York. In all, he purchased 117 oil paintings and watercolors by 47 artists. The artists, many of whom were either immigrants or first-generation Americans, represented a broad swath of American modernists at the time: Romare Bearden, Stuart Davis, Marsden Hartley, Edward Hopper, Jacob Lawrence, Georgia O’Keeffe, Ben Shahn. All but one (Hartley) were still living.

The plan was to divide the collection into two parts: one to tour Europe, the other Latin America. A preview at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the autumn of 1946 received almost unanimous praise from critics. *Art News* proclaimed it “the most significant modern exhibition” of 1946 in the United States. But some critics anticipated that it would raise hackles. “The pictures make a beautiful show, vital, imaginative, representative of the most progressive trends in American art today,” Emily Genauer wrote in the *Ladies’ Home Journal*. “But I’ve a notion some of the stuffer gentlemen in Congress, the ones who haven’t been to an art exhibition since their school days and consequently know all about art, won’t like it. They’ll fill the air with their lamentations for the poor taxpayer and his money.”

“Your Money Bought These Paintings”

While the preview was ongoing at the Met, an event took place that would have grave implications for the “Advancing American Art” exhibition. On Nov. 5, the first national election since the end of the war took place, and Republicans won control of the House and Senate for the first time since FDR’s

first election victory in 1932. After 14 long years in the political wilderness, the Republicans were eager to wield their power ferociously, something that President Harry S Truman, eyeing his own reelection in two years, was acutely aware of.

The day after the election, the American Artists Professional League (AAPL), a conservative art group, sent a letter to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes complaining that the exhibition was “strongly marked with the radicalism of the new trends of European art,” which “is not indigenous to our soil.” The AAPL also encouraged its members to write to their representatives in Congress to protest the exhibition.

In February 1947, *Look* magazine published a two-page spread about the exhibition, titled “Your Money Bought These Paintings.” The article was accompanied by large color reproductions of some of the most provocative paintings in the exhibition, including Yasuo Kuniyoshi’s “Circus Girl Resting,” the picture that would come to symbolize the exhibition. The painting depicts a young woman with short dark hair seated on a chair next to a bowl containing bananas and grapes. What made it unconventional was the woman’s skimpy attire, as well as her size; this circus girl did not conform to the prevailing standards of feminine beauty. *The Chicago Tribune* said Kuniyoshi’s painting “portrays a beefy female in a state of undress, seated on a chair, leering at whoever stops to look at the painting.”

Kuniyoshi, the artist at the center of this storm, was born in Okayama, Japan, in 1889. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1906 and worked odd jobs in Spokane and Seattle before moving to Los Angeles, where he enrolled in a public school. A teacher encouraged him to go to art school, so he took classes at the Los Angeles School of Art and Design. By 1910 he had moved to New York.

Kuniyoshi painted “Circus Girl Resting” in 1925. The picture had languished in obscurity until Davidson purchased it for \$700. Then it became, briefly, the most famous painting in America. “No wonder foreigners think Americans are crazy,” said Representative Karl Stefan (R-Neb.) when he saw “Circus Girl Resting” in *Look*. Stefan’s opinion was not unimportant; he was the new chairman of a House subcommittee that funded the State Department.

The Republican chair of the House Appropriations Committee, John Taber, called the paintings in the exhibition “a travesty” in a letter to George C. Marshall, who replaced James Byrnes as Secretary of State in January 1947. “They were evidently gotten up by people whose object was apparently to (1) make the United States appear ridiculous in the eyes of foreign countries, and to (2) establish ill-will towards the United States.” The loyalty of the artists was also called into question. It turned out that the names of 18 of the 47 artists in the exhibition appeared in the records of the

House Un-American Activities Committee; three were reported to have been members of the Communist Party.

Shortly after the *Look* article came out, President Truman unveiled a painting recently purchased for the White House: “The Peacemakers” by George Peter Alexander Healy.

A picture very much of the academic, realistic variety, it depicts President Abraham Lincoln, Generals William Sherman and Ulysses Grant, and Admiral David D. Porter on the Union steamer *River Queen*. This was Truman’s kind of art. In his widely syndicated newspaper column, the *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, Drew Pearson explained what happened next.

“While in his office, newsmen were shown some of the art the chief executive despises most. He produced a spread of modern paintings from a magazine, which apparently he had been saving for just such an occasion,” wrote Pearson. “‘This is what I mean by ham-and-eggs art,’ [Truman] told the reporters, pointing to a painting of a fat semi-nude circus performer. ‘I’ve been to a million circuses, and I’ve never seen a performer who looked like her.’”

Truman’s comments were blithely dismissive of the entire “Advancing American Art” exhibition. Clearly, this was not a fight the president was willing to pick with the new Republican Congress.

A Success Abroad, but at Home ...

After another well-received preview in Paris, the European edition of the exhibition officially opened in Prague on March 6, 1947. It was to be the first stop on what was expected to be a five-year tour. The three-week show was a resounding success, with more than 8,000 people attending. The exhibition then moved on to two more cities in Czechoslovakia—Brno and Bratislava—where it also proved popular.

“Advancing American Art” was equally well received in the Western Hemisphere. In Port-au-Prince, it was well attended, and one Cuban art critic said the show proved the United States



Yasuo Kuniyoshi, “Circus Girl Resting,” ca. 1925, Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, Auburn University. This oil painting came to symbolize the “Advancing American Art” exhibition, organized by LeRoy Davidson.

© 2023 ESTATE OF YASUO KUNIYOSHI / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NY

“is able to contribute to the spiritual riches of man in general in the same way in which its machinery, its railroads, its refrigerators, and its radios have contributed to enrich and to make more comfortable the life of the common man.”

Back home, however, the political attacks against it were growing fiercer. Republicans were threatening to withhold the \$31 million the Truman administration had requested for State Department information programs, including Voice of America, as punishment for sending American modern art abroad. On April 2, 1947, Truman, clearly tiring of the controversy, fired off a letter to Davidson’s boss, Assistant Secretary of State William Benton. “I don’t pretend to be an artist or a judge of art, but I am of the opinion that so-called modern art is merely the vaporings of half-baked lazy people,” Truman wrote. “An artistic production is one which shows infinite ability for taking pains, and if any of these so-called modern paintings show any such infinite ability, I am very much mistaken.”

Secretary Marshall could take a hint, and in early May, he pulled the plug on “Advancing American Art.” Appearing before a House committee, he told lawmakers the pictures would be recalled to Washington and auctioned off. The State Department was getting out of the modern art business. Davidson would be dismissed, his position abolished. There would be no more government-funded exhibitions of modern art.

The Republican Congress still ended up slashing the State Department’s budget for information programs to \$10.8 million, less than half the amount the administration requested. Soon after he was fired, LeRoy Davidson and his wife, Martha, left Washington. Davidson went back to college, earned a Ph.D. in art history from Yale in 1951, and later became head of the art department at UCLA. He specialized in Chinese and Indian art. His 1954 book, *The Lotus Sutra in Chinese Art: A Study in Buddhist Art to the Year 1000*, is still considered an important work in the field. Martha continued to work as an art critic and co-edited *Arts of the United States*, a pictorial history of American art published in 1960. He died in 1980, she in 1993.

The works in the “Advancing American Art” exhibition were auctioned off in 1948. Considered government surplus, the pictures were sold at a steep discount. The collection was appraised at \$80,000, but due to the bidding rules, the government took in just \$5,544 for the works. A Georgia O’Keeffe piece fetched just \$50. Republicans, of course, made much of this fact, saying it proved the pictures were worthless, while ignoring the fact that their appraised value had increased 60 percent since the State Department purchased them. The bulk of the pictures went to Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) and the University of Oklahoma. “Circus Girl Resting” went to Auburn for \$100, and there she resides today. ■

POSTSCRIPT

The failure of State’s 1947 “Advancing American Art” program to win support in the U.S. Congress was, of course, not the end of the story. Ironically, the existence of a “culture war” over modernism in the United States would prove to be an excellent advertisement for America’s democratic freedoms.

While Secretary of State George Marshall was telling the Congress there would be no more government funding of exhibitions of modern art, the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had already embraced the idea.

American avant-garde art demonstrated America’s creativity, cultural sophistication, and, especially, intellectual freedom, the CIA believed. And it would be hard for Soviet modernism, called socialist realism, to compete, given the rigidity of communist ideology.

The CIA began covertly funding an initiative centered on a nongovernmental organization called the Congress for

Cultural Freedom to promote the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, Willem de Kooning, and others. The CIA operation grew, establishing offices in 35 countries and subsidizing international tours by American jazz artists, symphony orchestras, and more until its exposure in 1967.

Meanwhile, in 1953 the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was created to “tell America’s story to the world.” By engaging with the world through international information, broadcasting, culture, and exchange programs, USIA made cultural diplomacy an essential element of American foreign policy.

Until its 1999 absorption into the State Department, USIA’s “Arts America” program was instrumental in bringing unique American achievements in music, painting, literature, and architecture, as well as industrial arts, to the rest of the world. And its successor, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, has continued the tradition.

—M.A.

New AFSA Governing Board Takes Office

The 2023-2025 AFSA Governing Board convened for its first monthly meeting on July 19 at AFSA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The outgoing 2021-2023 Governing Board met in person on June 16 at AFSA headquarters for its final monthly meeting.

The new AFSA Governing Board includes several returning members: President Tom Yazdgerdi (formerly State vice president), Secretary Sue Saarnio, Treasurer John O’Keefe, State Vice President Hui Jun Tina Wong (formerly State representative), Foreign Agricultural Service Vice (FAS) President Lisa Ahramjian, Retiree Vice President John Naland, State Representative Kimberly Harrington, U.S. Agency for Global Media Representative Steve Herman, Retiree Representative Mary Daly, and Alternate Foreign Commercial Service (FCS)



AFSA/ANADIA RUIZCA

AFSA/JULIA WOHLERS

Top: The 2023-2025 Governing Board met for the first time on July 19 at AFSA headquarters.

Inset: New AFSA President Tom Yazdgerdi with outgoing President Eric Rubin at a July farewell event.

Representative Jay Carreiro. New Governing Board members for the 2023-2025 term include USAID Vice President Randy Chester; FCS Vice President Joshua Burke; State Representatives Gregory Floyd, Lynette Behnke, David Josar, C. Logan Wheeler, and Whitney Wiedeman; USAID Representative Christopher Saenger;

Alternate FAS Representative Zeke Spears; APHIS Representative Joseph Ragole; and Retiree Representative Edward G. Stafford.

Profiles of all the members of the 2023-2025 Governing Board begin on page 60. ■

CALENDAR

Please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information.

September 4
Labor Day
AFSA Offices Closed

September 10-14
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Washington, D.C.

September 20
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

September 21
4:30-6:30 p.m.
AFSA Happy Hour at HQ

September 22
7:05 p.m.
Foreign Service Night
at Nationals Park

September 24-29
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Chautauqua, N.Y.

October 9
Columbus Day/
Indigenous Peoples Day
AFSA Offices Closed

October 18
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

AFSA Hosts Chiefs of Mission

On June 14, AFSA hosted a breakfast for U.S. chiefs of mission who were in Washington, D.C., for the State Department’s annual chiefs of mission conference. Some 25 ambassadors attended and contributed to a candid conversation about the most pressing challenges currently facing career ambassadors.

Then-AFSA President Eric Rubin welcomed attendees

and reminded them that the association is here to help by advocating for the needs of Foreign Service members.

The chiefs of mission expressed a range of concerns, including gaps in encumbered positions overseas, particularly at hard-to-fill posts; the onerous and time-consuming requirements of the State Department’s anti-nepotism policies that often complicate legiti-

mate EFM hiring; the rising cost of living in Washington, D.C., that causes FS members to dread domestic tours; and a dearth of mid-level and senior positions at small posts, leading to the assignment of first-tour officers as section chiefs.

They also noted that salaries for locally employed (LE) staff overseas have not risen in recent years and are no longer competitive with

local employers in many countries. This has national security implications, as U.S. embassies and consulates may be forced to lower hiring standards; and some LE staff, particularly local guard forces, are leaving for other employment, sometimes with other governments and even with organizations not friendly to the United States.

AFSA will continue to monitor and seek to alleviate these and other issues affecting the Foreign Service. ■



Your Voice Matters: People-Focused Conversations

I am incredibly honored to serve as your elected State vice president and am ready to get right to work for you.

I begin this conversation by sharing what this role means to me and our institution. In the 1980s, I was a 6-year-old immigrant traveling to this country from China. We were the last of our family to be reunited with my maternal grandparents after the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. From those first days in the United States, I could never have imagined what I would be doing in 2023.

I am now breaking this glass ceiling as the first Asian American female and first-generation American to serve as AFSA State VP. I have served our country for the last 13 years, from confronting the People's Republic of China's unfair trade practices to today's onboarding as AFSA's chief labor negotiator with State. I can't wait to break more barriers and give voice to those who have not had the chance to make a positive difference in our institution.

In this 2023-2025 term, we have opportunities to push further in every aspect of our work—for progress on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) across the State Department. I am committed to working within AFSA's Governing Board, building support in the department,

and catalyzing allies across Washington to get things done.

Count on me to challenge the Governing Board to think and act creatively to address existing and new lines of effort. I am committed to giving voice to all those who join me to champion this work. We are going to create a broad and inclusive talent pipeline not just in the department, but also in all future AFSA Governing Boards so that our efforts are not a one-off, but institution-making.

First, as someone who has been a leader of employee organizations and bureau DEIA councils, I will advocate within AFSA and across our institution on: reforms to our employee evaluation reports (EERs), bidding, and promotions; improvements to our retention policies, ensuring all disadvantaged groups have the support they need to thrive; development of a culture of accountability and stamping out unconscious and conscious biases; data transparency and timely appeals of security clearance-related issues holding groups back; employment opportunities for our spouses, partners, and other family members overseas; and support for our special needs children.

Second, my work is a constant, two-way street. Here's a small sample of what I have been hearing:

Our institution needs you, and we will speak up for you and with you.

An FSO is forced to pay out of pocket for childcare while taking the foreign affairs counter threat (FACT) course.

A female officer who is unable to pump breastmilk in secured spaces overseas is joining forces with AFSA and others across the department to push for policies to authorize lactation devices in those spaces.

An FSO acknowledges that, due to the lack of a telework policy, her partner will either have to quit their private sector job or the couple will have to live in different countries.

A new employee waits nearly a year—confused, worried, and without knowledge of available resources—to begin their first assignment because no one in the department can provide clarity on the holdup.

A Rangel fellow scrambles to find money to pay for graduate school after the department sent an “intent to deny” to the fellow regarding their security clearance status without any explanation for this determination. Concerned about its ramifications, the individual withdraws from the fellowship.

And yet another employee, a fluent speaker in the target language, never

attempts to apply for an assignment in the first place, deterred by rumors about the drawn-out and humiliating assignment review process.

Sadly, these stories are not from years past, but are situations our colleagues have faced over the past 18 months.

We are going to tackle every one of these scenarios and more from a policy and labor management perspective. We will leave no stone unturned to come up with creative solutions to improve your situation. Our institution needs you, and we will speak up for you and with you.

I will be hosting monthly office hours (both virtual and in person) for any member, employee group, or DEIA council. Contact me at wong@afsa.org or member@afsa.org with any questions or reflections. Watch my future messages to learn more about these office hours.

Through our conversations, let's fine-tune our approach as we steer our department's institutional reforms, and, yes, take calculated risks so that we can be more inclusive and equitable in our hiring, retention, and promotions. Let's trailblaze together. ■



Advancing the Best Interests of USAID FSOs

Many thanks to the USAID Foreign Service community for putting its trust in me to be your AFSA representative. I want to thank Jason Singer for his exceptional leadership these past four years, for helping my transition to vice president, and for his continued support of AFSA and USAID.

Additionally, I want to thank all the staff at AFSA, especially Sue Bremner, for their efforts supporting USAID FSOs. Finally, I want to recognize the efforts of the USAID FSOs and their role in organizing, educating, and promoting an inclusive work environment, work-life balance, and most importantly, USAID's development agenda.

Returning to the U.S. after 17 years overseas, I know my concerns and some of yours, but by no means do I know the entirety of USAID FSO concerns. When this column goes to print, my transition to VP will still be underway, as I take the time to learn, listen, meet, and understand the issues facing USAID FSOs.

As I said during the election, my priorities as vice president include:

- Improving transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of the promotion and assignments process;
- Advocating for a strategic workforce plan addressing Foreign Service staffing requirements, recruitment, and retention;

- Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in leadership, teleworking, alternative work schedules, entitlement and official travel, and eldercare/childcare;

- Engaging leadership on other work-life balance and workplace issues;
- Recruiting and empowering FSOs for senior domestic positions, currently vacant or held by political appointees; and
- Ensuring the rights of FSOs are protected and promoted in all matters.

Many of these issues will always be works in progress, a fact that only underscores the need for continued advocacy and dialogue.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of promoting work-life balance and assisting FSOs to reach their professional goals. Now, as Washington, D.C., moves into a post-pandemic work posture, it is essential that we diligently protect the workplace gains we made.

We must work with management to: institutionalize workplace flexibilities; improve effective technology use for the hybrid environment; and enhance a positive workplace environment built on trust and mutual respect while maintaining our collective high standards and productivity, demonstrating cost savings, and increasing staff morale.

It is also important that

we continue to dialogue with the leadership on needed changes to the hiring, promotion, and assignments process.

Unilateral actions often have negative results and increase mistrust. For example, in March, the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) announced the addition of a new DEIA core skill requirement for FSO evaluations, without any meaningful discussion with or input from the FSO community.

This prompted a strong reaction from FSOs around the world, with more than 600 FSOs signing a letter requesting dialogue and discussion—a reaction that highlights the need for management and staff to listen, communicate, and understand.

As a result, full implementation of the new core skill has been delayed until the 2024-2025 rating period, and HCTM is now working with a community of FSOs to develop the needed guidance, tools, and training materials for a smooth rollout. This successful effort shows how rank-and-file and AFSA can work together to promote change and dialogue.

Working together with a single strong voice, we can ensure that all employees, regardless of hiring mechanism, are provided equitable opportunities to succeed in

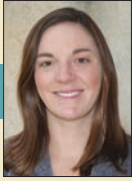
an inclusive, accessible, and supportive environment.

Finally, it is important that we maintain vigilance, protecting and promoting our agency's core values, no matter the tenor or tone of the administration in power. But without constant dialogue and advocacy, policies and practice can and will change.

Currently, certain activity on the Hill gives me pause, namely efforts to: force all federal employees to return to the office full-time, reduce Foreign Service pensions and restructure the Thrift Savings Plan; and replace the current salary step structure with a "merit-based" structure.

As USAID VP, I will work with you to strengthen the current system, promote and protect the balance between career and personal lives, provide support navigating the promotion and assignments processes, lead or assist FSOs in our collective dialogue with leadership, aid employees struggling through the grievance process, and address your other concerns.

Together, we will meet the challenges facing a 21st century post-pandemic workforce. Thank you again for entrusting me with the role of AFSA USAID VP. You can reach me at rchester@usaid.gov, or by stopping at our AFSA office in the Ronald Reagan Building. We are here to support you. ■



Advocacy in Congressional Stalemates

The uncertainty earlier this summer surrounding the possibility of the U.S. defaulting on its debt put a pause on annual congressional considerations such as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). While Congress will consider these must-pass bills later in 2023, the delayed schedule leaves less time to address other legislative priorities.

We see disagreement lead to gridlock in Congress frequently: Appropriations bills don't come to the floor because of controversial policy riders; ambassadorships remain vacant with holds placed on nominees based on policy disputes unrelated to the individual; and few bills pass on their own, without larger legislative vehicles.

It is imperative for AFSA to keep our priorities for Congress at the top of our minds, especially during times of political strife when focus is elsewhere. The reality is that not much becomes law throughout the year, and stalemates exacerbate that lack of productivity.

AFSA is often rewarded only at the end of the calendar year when the NDAA and, recently, State Department authorization acts, finally become law. AFSA sends out a list of supported provisions for these larger pieces of legislation with the hope that they will be included in a final version of the bill. We must encourage continued passage

of authorization bills, ideally as stand-alone bills rather than riders on larger bills.

AFSA also works to influence the annual appropriations package by making requests to individual members of Congress and submitting related testimony to the appropriations committees.

Discussions and reminders on appropriations requests are relevant throughout the year, not just during one season, with short-term funding bills acting as band-aids until agreement can be reached. Prioritizing our influence on appropriations is even more important in these tumultuous times.

Congress views defense and non-defense discretionary spending separately when discussing topline budget numbers, as was clear from the debt ceiling discussions this past spring.

AFSA advocates for the broader international affairs budget (IAB) as part of non-defense discretionary spending (NDD), which Congress controls through 10 of the 12 appropriations bills. The small universe of discretionary spending is the only place for funding cuts.

AFSA must work with other foreign affairs advocacy groups to minimize the impact of NDD cuts on the IAB. Misperception of the IAB, despite its small size, causes it to be a target for proposed cuts year after year.

Many on the Hill think that all IAB funding goes to foreign nations, rather than the hiring and work of our diplomats.

To address this, AFSA educates members of Congress and their staff on the importance of the operational accounts in the IAB. Changing such misperceptions is a perpetual facet of AFSA's advocacy work.

AFSA strives to put the

Foreign Service at the top of the authorization and appropriations priority lists for Congress, amid the ever-increasing stalemates that consume legislators' attention.

We do this by constantly reminding the legislative branch of the Foreign Service's work that aids Americans at home and abroad—work that continues even when Congress' work is at an impasse. ■

AFSA Membership Team Welcomes New Hire

AFSA is pleased to welcome Mouna Koubaa as membership operations coordinator.

Mouna has direct knowledge of the Foreign Service from her work in three different embassies over 18 years in Consular Services in Tunis, Paris, and Dubai. There, she managed complex cases involving U.S. citizens, liaising with government agencies and local authorities to ensure their safety.

Her collaboration also led to the successful resolution of crises including terrorist incidents, missing persons, and repatriation.

She brings this extensive experience as a locally employed (LE) staff member to AFSA.

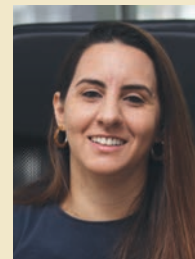
Mouna is the recipient of several State Department awards and has attended

specialized training programs at the Foreign Service Institute and the Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

A Tunisian-Dutch dual national, Mouna was raised in a multicultural

European—North African environment. She speaks English, French, Arabic, and Dutch, with additional knowledge of Spanish.

Mouna enjoys reading, particularly classical French literature, learning new languages, cooking international cuisine, and indoor cycling. She lives in Fairfax, Va., and can be reached at koubaa@afsa.org. ■



C/O. MOUNNA KOUBAA

Diplomats at Work Event

Helping Americans Overseas as a Consular Officer

Foreign Service Officer Andrew Byrley joined AFSA for its latest Diplomats at Work event, held virtually on June 20. During the interview, he recounted his time as a consular officer at U.S. Embassy Belize, assisting Americans in crisis.

Byrley began by tracing his unconventional path to the Foreign Service: He started out as a security engineer with the Diplomatic Security Service. Two tours later, he converted to an FSO through the Mustang Program and embarked on his first consular tour.

This role, he explained, is incredibly important to the United States' mission overseas.

"If you talk to any Foreign Service officer abroad and you ask, 'What are you guys doing out there?' the number one thing anyone is going to say is that the embassy's primary responsibility is the safety and security of U.S. citizens in country. That's [the job of] consular services," he said.

In addition to issuing immigrant and nonimmigrant (or tourist) visas to citizens of other countries, consular officers at U.S. embassies and consulates are tasked with providing American citizen services, Byrley told the audience.

While the embassy can't spring anyone out of jail or "send in the Marines" upon

request, it fulfills a number of vital functions for U.S. citizens.

From assisting with passport replacements and visiting Americans in jail to issuing birth and death certificates, consular officers are often the first responders for Americans facing challenges overseas, particularly in a country like Belize, which is a popular destination for tourists and retirees.

Byrley recounted one especially harrowing month when, in unrelated incidents, two Americans were killed in the country. After confirming one individual's identity with the Belizean police, he had to call the young man's mother to inform her of his death.

"I will never in my life forget the emotional reaction and cries that came through the other side of the phone that day," Byrley said. "That's something that sticks with me. But it's not unique to me. Consular officers all over the world are doing these kinds of things. It was just my turn."

Days later, he had to make a similar phone call to another American traveler's family. "It's an emotional process," he said. "You're trying to be a government official. You want to stay calm, poised, and then you put the phone down and take a moment to process your own feelings. Because after this call, a bunch of people out in the waiting room need to talk to you about their passports or their consular



Foreign Service Officer Andrew Byrley judges a fish taco contest at an embassy-sponsored event in Placencia, Belize, in June 2015.

COURTESY OF ANDREW BYRLEY

report of birth [abroad]. The days are varied."

Byrley credited his supportive boss with helping him "bounce back" from difficult interactions. He also said the training he received prior to going to post prepared him to handle consular work.

Known as "con gen," this consular course teaches new officers how to conduct visa interviews, adjudicate applications, and manage the legal paperwork. Training also involves role playing the types of "next-of-kin" calls Byrley made in Belize.

"It was some of the best training I've had at the Department of State," he said, "because it's very thorough and forces you to think about—how are you going to react to that human being on the other side of your

window?"

Andrew Byrley currently works as an economic and commercial officer at the U.S. embassy in Riga. In addition to his consular tour in Belize, he previously served as an economic officer in Mauritania, as desk officer for Guinea and The Gambia, and as assistant chief of staff in the bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. He became an FSO in 2014 after working for the department for four years as a security engineering officer.

Diplomats at Work tells the story of the Foreign Service, introducing the important and varied work of diplomats to new audiences as part of AFSA's outreach efforts.

A recording of this event is available at bit.ly/DaW-Byrley. ■

Debrief

Netflix's "The Diplomat" Visits the State Department

On June 12, the National Museum of American Diplomacy hosted a panel discussion with Debora Cahn, showrunner of the Netflix political thriller series, "The Diplomat," and Ambassador Beth Jones, who inspired the creation of the show.

Attended by an audience of State Department employees and AFSA staff, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Global Public Affairs Bill Russo moderated a conversation about the making of the show and its depiction of diplomacy.

"The Diplomat" follows the main character, career Ambassador Kate Wyler (portrayed by Keri Russell), as she is suddenly assigned to be ambassador to the United Kingdom and must defuse international crises while adjusting to her new place in the spotlight.

Cahn, who is well-known for her work as writer and producer on "The West Wing" and executive producer of the series "Homeland," first became acquainted with Ambassador Jones—a career diplomat who served as U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan as well as Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasia—when Jones served as a consultant for Cahn.

"She sat down and started talking very quickly," Cahn recalled, noting her impression at the time that she was hearing from an action hero in

a pantsuit. "I found her stories to be jaw dropping. The intersection between the little bit that we know in the world about diplomacy and the actual experience of it [made it clear that] she needed to be a series."

Amb. Jones said that her goal during the consultations was to convey the kinds of things that foreign policy practitioners do on a daily basis. For example, she spent much of her career talking to people in an effort to explain U.S. goals and gauge feedback.



Anna Hagen, a writer and associate producer for "The Diplomat," posed with the July-August issue of the FSJ and *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, which she said served as a vital resource in the writers' room and on set.

"That's a main feature of what Debora has written into 'The Diplomat,'" Jones explained. "Talking to people to find out what they're thinking, but also to advocate for a change in behavior. That's the basis for any kind of work

[in the field], and that's what Kate Wyler does in the show. She's constantly talking to all kinds of people."

Cahn was also interested to learn how a diplomat deals with a problem at the minute-to-minute level. "We spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to portray that process accurately and finding

really, really specific details that we can then marry with melodramatic fantasy elements that turn your work into my work," she said.

Amb. Jones praised the show for reflecting many realities of a diplomatic career. Like Kate Wyler, she joked, "I have a lot of black suits." But the series also captures the challenges of leadership.

U.S. diplomacy, said Cahn, "is a universe where people are representing the better angels of both America and democracy in a really practical way. Kate Wyler's anxieties are on her sleeve all the time, and that's deliberate. In the gender breakdown of leadership positions, I notice a lot of women assume that they aren't prepared for the job and maybe shouldn't take it until they are. There's no way to prepare for that.



Ambassador Beth Jones, left, and showrunner Debora Cahn spoke at a panel discussion on June 12.

You're going to go in and do something bigger and wilder than you imagined you would."

"Kate Wyler is a character who makes it clear that whether or not you're ready, whether or not you can keep your coffee off your clothes, you can still dive in with the skills you bring to the table and the intellect that you have and create positive change."

Both Cahn and Jones expressed hope that this series inspires the next generation of diplomats to join the FS. "Anybody who's outgoing, who's curious, who's interested in having some impact on the world—the Foreign Service is where they need to go," said Jones. "We have the chance to work on all kinds of things. We are the lucky ones."

A video of the panel discussion can be viewed at <https://interactive.state.gov/the-diplomat>. ■

AFSA Member Survey on Overseas Road Safety

Vehicle crashes are a major cause of death for people living in lower- and middle-income countries around the world. In fact, even though these countries have only 60 percent of the world's vehicles, they are home to 90 percent of global road deaths.

Members of the Foreign Service are certainly not immune to the dangers of overseas road travel. There are 16 names on the AFSA memorial plaques in the State Department's C Street lobby of Foreign Service members who were killed in car crashes while on duty overseas.

Founding of the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT). Road crashes are also one of the leading causes of U.S. citizen deaths overseas. One of those Americans killed overseas was Aron Sobel, a fourth-year medical student on vacation in Türkiye in

2003 when his bus crashed.

After his death, Aron's mother, Rochelle Sobel, started ASIRT to help prevent other needless deaths by raising awareness of the prevalence and causes of overseas road crashes.

In the run-up to the U.N. Global Road Safety Week in May 2023, AFSA partnered with ASIRT to send a survey to members to better understand their experiences with road safety overseas. We received almost 800 responses.

Many Foreign Service members and their families have been involved in crashes resulting in deaths and serious injury, and cited reckless driving, speeding, and poor road design and conditions as principal reasons for these incidents.

Location and Circumstances of Crashes. The countries in which respondents experienced crashes

were diverse. Vehicle crashes occurred most frequently in Nigeria and Pakistan; bicycle crashes occurred most often in Mexico and Peru; and pedestrian fatalities and injuries due to crashes happened most often in Uganda, Liberia, and Poland.

Respondents told us that reckless driving, driving with excessive speed, poor road conditions, and unsafe road design were the principal reasons contributing to road crashes.

When asked to recommend improvements, members suggested that better road design, more accountability for reckless drivers (including stronger law enforcement), and improved maintenance of roads could prevent future deaths and injuries.

More Consistent Information Sharing Needed. One of the primary purposes of conducting the

survey was to raise awareness of the dangers of crashes overseas, generally, and to help increase consistent information sharing, especially in overseas posts.

Many respondents told us they received information on road safety either

before they left for post or upon arriving at post. However, a significant number said they had not received information or a briefing on road safety upon entry on duty or that they received briefings only upon arrival but would welcome refresher briefings.

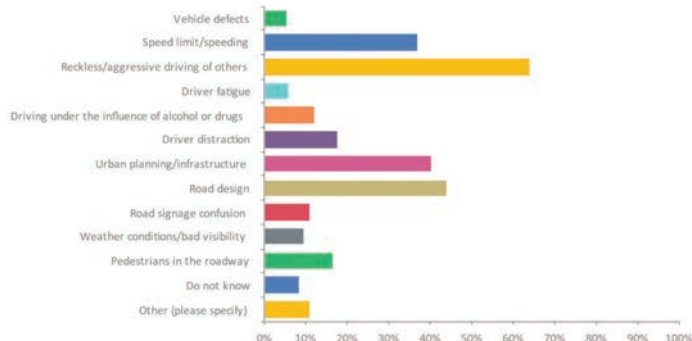
A high number of respondents commended foreign affairs counter threat (FACT) training as being very useful in increasing defensive driving skills, and others suggested making the Smith System Driver Improvement Institute course, most commonly given to drivers of U.S. government vehicles, available to all U.S. direct hires in the embassy/consulate community.

AFSA cares deeply about road safety for Foreign Service members; in April 2023, President Eric Rubin made road safety the topic of his column in the *FSJ*. Find his reflections at <https://bit.ly/PV-RdSafety>. The association will continue to urge greater efforts to reduce road deaths and injuries.

AFSA also negotiated a discounted price on ASIRT's road safety country reports. The reports are usually \$50 each but are offered to AFSA members at \$40. To obtain one, fill out the form at <https://bit.ly/ASIRT-report> and enter \$40 in the "Subscription Level Amount" field for a one-time purchase. ■

Q3: Relative to the above-mentioned incident, which of the following elements would you cite as a reason for the crash? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 194 Skipped: 601



Meet the 2023-2025 AFSA Governing Board

The American Foreign Service Association is proud to introduce the elected officers and representatives of the 2023-2025 Governing Board. The AFSA Governing Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 12 to 2 p.m. at AFSA headquarters. AFSA members are welcome to attend any board meetings.



THOMAS YAZDGERDI PRESIDENT

A member of the Senior Foreign Service, Tom Yazdgerdi served from 2019 to 2023 as the AFSA State VP and is proud of the many wins that AFSA has secured for members. Before that, he was special envoy for

Holocaust issues in the European and Eurasian Bureau at the Department of State.

Mr. Yazdgerdi has served as director of the Office of South Central European Affairs, political counselor at U.S. Embassy Kabul, head of U.S. Consulate Kirkuk, and deputy political counselor for Iran affairs at U.S. Embassy Baghdad. He also served as deputy chief of mission and political-economic chief at U.S. Embassy Pristina during the run-up to and aftermath of Kosovo independence.

Before joining the Foreign Service in 1991, Mr. Yazdgerdi worked on Capitol Hill. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Cornell University and a master's degree in Central European history, security studies, and American diplomatic history from The Fletcher School at Tufts University.



SUE SAARNIO SECRETARY

Sue Saarnio retired from the Foreign Service in 2021 after serving as consul general in Tijuana. A career economic officer, she worked at U.S. embassies in Mexico City, Panama, and Ottawa, and at

U.S. Consulate Jerusalem.

She served as principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Energy Resources and deputy assistant secretary for Mexico, Canada, and regional economic policy in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. In the Economic Bureau, she served as deputy special representative for commercial and business affairs and special adviser for conflict diamonds.

Ms. Saarnio has served twice before as a State representative on the AFSA Governing Board.

Prior to government service, she worked as a journalist in Montana and Minnesota. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., and she

also spent a year at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, through a study abroad program.

She has two grown children and lives in Falls Church, Va., with her Mexican dog, Daisy.



JOHN O'KEEFE TREASURER

Ambassador (ret.) John O'Keefe served for 32 years in the Foreign Service, beginning in Moscow as a general services officer. He joined the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute as a Global Fellow in 2019.

On retirement from the Foreign Service in 2007, he headed the Open World Leadership Center, a legislative branch agency, for 10 years, then served for two years as counselor to the board of trustees. He expanded the center's programs from Russia and Ukraine to all countries of the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, Türkiye, and Mongolia.

As ambassador to Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2003, he negotiated the treaty allowing coalition forces to establish a base there to support operations in Afghanistan. From 2003 to 2004, he headed the Office of Career Development and from 2004 to 2006 was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources, serving as acting Director General of the Foreign Service.

Amb. O'Keefe has received the Distinguished Honor Award, the Replogle Award for Management Improvement, and the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, as well as several Superior Honor Awards and Meritorious Honor Awards. The American University of Central Asia awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. He is married to Monica O'Keefe, a retired public diplomacy officer. This is his second term as AFSA treasurer.



HUI JUN TINA WONG STATE VICE PRESIDENT

Tina Wong is a State Department economic officer who brings more than 13 years of State Department experience leading DEIA initiatives, deepening data transparency, and building allies to champion institutional reforms.

She most recently led Western Balkans energy, infrastructure, sanctions, and regional economic integration issues in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs' Office of South Central Europe Affairs. Previously, she advanced U.S. national security in the European and Eurasian Affairs

Bureau's Office of Policy and Regional Affairs.

Ms. Wong brings to AFSA her experience advising U.S. government partners and leveling the playing field for American companies in infrastructure, telecommunications, agricultural, and defense sectors in emerging markets.

She is also a mentor on diversity and inclusion efforts across the State Department and interagency to increase underrepresented groups in international affairs.

Her overseas tours included Beijing and Mexico City. Her previous domestic assignments included economic adviser, public diplomacy, and policy roles in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Bureau of International Information Programs, and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Ms. Wong is fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish. She received her master's degree from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and her bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University. She served as a State representative to the AFSA Governing Board from 2021 to 2023.



RANDY CHESTER
USAID VICE PRESIDENT

A proud graduate of the University of California, Davis, and a former Peace Corps volunteer to Senegal, Randy Chester brings 30 years of development experience, nearly 20 years with USAID, and

25 years of experience as a union member, including five years as a teamster in San Francisco, Calif.

As a USAID Foreign Service officer, he has served in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Pakistan (four tours), and Madagascar. Joining USAID as an agriculture officer, Mr. Chester has led diverse technical teams working on food security, governance and trade, energy regulation, humanitarian assistance, natural resource management, and education.

Prior to USAID, he worked for an environmental think-tank and a nonprofit supporting small farmers in the California Central Valley.

He holds two master's degrees from UC Davis, in agriculture economics and international agriculture development. In 2021, he was named the co-winner of the AFSA USAID Post Representative of the Year award.

He is a strong advocate for unions having a loud and active voice, promoting workers' rights, and advocating for inclusive and constructive dialogue.

Mr. Chester is half of a USAID tandem. Together, they have visited more than 70 countries on five continents and one day hope to settle down in an Airstream trailer.



JOSHUA BURKE
FCS VICE PRESIDENT

Joshua Burke has served the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service for more than 11 years in roles in the domestic field, Ankara, Bucharest, Lagos, and at headquarters in Washington, D.C.

He has developed strategies that have assisted three-star generals in combating the ISIL terrorist group, countered malign influence in Romania, supported three Secretary of State visits and two bilateral POTUS meetings, and helped to create or retain nearly a million American jobs through advocacy and investment promotion efforts.

While at Commerce HQ, Mr. Burke led initiatives that will save the U.S. government more than \$5 million annually and developed a detailed operations assessment for the Office of Talent Management. He has received numerous awards, including the Department of Commerce Silver Medal.

Prior to joining the Department of Commerce, Mr. Burke worked as a strategy and operations consultant and, earlier, served as a Peace Corps volunteer.

He earned a bachelor's degree in management from Iowa State, an MBA from the University of Notre Dame, and a certificate in mastering trade policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He holds Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and Global Business Professional certifications. He is proficient in Romanian, Turkish, and Spanish.

Mr. Burke has started several charitable enterprises and served on the boards of nonprofit organizations. He is an avid triathlete and yoga teacher, and dabbles in real estate investing and the Native American flute. He and his wife, Anca, have been married for 17 years and have two daughters and a Vizsla named Cooper.



LISA AHRAMJIAN
FAS VICE PRESIDENT

Lisa Ahramjian joined the AFSA Governing Board as FAS VP in 2021 and was reelected in 2023. A key focus of her tenure has been on renegotiating the FAS-AFSA collective bargaining agreement, which was last sub-

stantially renegotiated almost three decades ago. In addition, she has worked to significantly improve human resources support, safeguard the future of FAS' Foreign Service, and improve morale and retention.

Ms. Ahramjian is proud to be a member of FAS' small but mighty Foreign Service, with only approximately 150 FSOs worldwide. She has been a fierce advocate for her constituents and is honored to continue serving as vice president.

She has served as agricultural attaché in Ukraine (with regional coverage of Moldova), Burma/Myanmar, and the Dominican Republic (with regional coverage of Haiti and Jamaica). In each market, she sought to gain or maintain access for U.S. agricultural products, promote them to regional consumers in coordination with U.S. industry groups, provide market intelligence on local conditions, and help increase food security through a variety of capacity building programs.

Since joining the federal workforce in 2006, Ms. Ahranjian has also worked at USDA's National Organic Program, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and the National Institutes of Health.

Originally from Wilmington, Del., she received a B.S. in animal science from the University of Delaware and an M.S. in biotechnology from Georgetown University. She currently resides in Washington, D.C.



JOHN K. NALAND
RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT

John Naland's 29-year Foreign Service career included service in Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico (as principal officer in Matamoros), and Iraq (as leader of the provincial reconstruction team in Basra).

Washington assignments included the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff, the White House Situation Room, and the Bureau of Human Resources (as director of the Office of Retirement).

Mr. Naland was AFSA State vice president from 1999 to 2001 and served two terms as AFSA president, from 2001 to 2003 and from 2007 to 2009. He retired from the Foreign Service in 2015 and is in his fourth term as AFSA Retiree VP. He is also president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation and coordinator of the Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia.

Mr. Naland is co-author of the fourth edition of *Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service* (Georgetown University Press, 2021). A former U.S. Army cavalry officer who served in West Germany during the Cold War, he is a graduate of the Army War College. Born in Kansas, he grew up in New Orleans and graduated from Tulane University. He is married and has two daughters.



GREGORY FLOYD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Greg Floyd has worked with the State Department since 2005, serving in Nassau (political officer), Shanghai (consular officer), Bridgetown (deputy political / economic / commercial chief), New Delhi

(American Citizen Services chief and regional ACS coordinator), Vienna (consul general), Kabul (consul general), Doha

(AAU consul general), and Vancouver (consular chief).

He received the State Department's Heroism Award and the Mary A. Ryan Award for Public Service as a result of his work to protect U.S. citizens in Afghanistan and Qatar after the closure of U.S. Embassy Kabul in 2021.

Before his diplomatic career, he represented public entities in labor, employment, and constitutional law matters. He was also a lecturer at Fresno State University, teaching courses related to labor and employment law.

During his tenure on the AFSA Governing Board, he looks forward to working cooperatively with AFSA members and the State Department to help facilitate positive change, particularly with regard to the protection and development of specialists. Mr. Floyd is the first board member to serve as full-time State representative focusing primarily on FS specialist issues, a position created and approved by the State Department in 2023.



LYNETTE BEHNKE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Lynette Behnke joined the Foreign Service in May 2006. She has been head of the unit for the Republic of Korea and Mongolia in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs since July 2022. From August 2020

to June 2022, she served as U.S. Embassy Kyiv's deputy political counselor. In this role, she managed the section's evacuation from Ukraine and the process of rebuilding the team as the embassy resumed in-country operations.

Prior to Kyiv, she worked on financial sanctions and counterterrorist financing at U.S. Embassy London. Her overseas tours also include Hungary and Haiti.

Ms. Behnke has served as a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow at the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Europe director at the National Security Council, and NATO desk officer.

Originally from California, she holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and French from Tulane University in New Orleans. She is married with two children.



KIMBERLY HARRINGTON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Kim Harrington is currently director for Israel and Palestinian affairs at the National Security Council. Previously, she was acting deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Energy Resources. In her

most recent overseas posting, she served as political and economic counselor at U.S. Embassy Kampala. She was deputy economic counselor in Bogotá from 2014 to 2018

and political-military affairs officer in Jerusalem from 2011 to 2014.

Since joining the Foreign Service in 2002, Ms. Harrington has also served in overseas assignments in Manila, Cairo, and Tripoli. At the department, she worked as a staff assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. On detail at the Pentagon during the Arab Spring, she worked as an adviser in the Joint Staff's Office of Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) for the Middle East.

She received a bachelor's degree in international politics from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service and studied abroad at the American University in Cairo. She has a master's degree in national resource strategy from National Defense University. Ms. Harrington and her husband, a USAID Foreign Service officer, have two young children. She was a State representative on the 2021-2023 AFSA Governing Board.



DAVID JOSAR
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

David Josar joined the State Department in 2010 as a public diplomacy officer but in 2023 changed skill codes and is now a consular officer.

He served as vice consul in Angola and Chile; as information officer in Phnom Penh; as fraud prevention manager in Hyderabad; and is currently assigned to children's issues in Washington, D.C., where he works on resolving cases of international parental child abduction. His onward assignment will be as deputy consular chief in Myanmar.

He was on the ground in Kabul as part of the department's evacuation efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr. Josar is married and has a seventh grade daughter who was born in South Africa when he was assigned to Angola. His wife, who worked at post as an eligible family member (EFM) in Chile and India, is currently pursuing a master's degree in landscape architecture.

Prior to joining the State Department, Mr. Josar was a newspaper reporter for 20 years. He has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Rochester and a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University. He was born in Allentown, Pa.



C. LOGAN WHEELER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

C. Logan Wheeler joins the Governing Board in 2023 in his 15th year as a Foreign Service officer. A political-coned officer, Mr. Wheeler currently serves as an assessor with the department's Board of Examiners.

His prior tours include U.S. Embassy Bogotá as chief of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Policy Division, U.S. Embassy Asunción as acting political/economic chief, Bolivia desk officer, Operations Center watch officer, U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam as a political officer, and U.S. Embassy Moscow as a consular officer.

Mr. Wheeler holds a master's degree in sequential art from the Savannah College of Art and Design, a master's degree in public policy from Tec de Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico, and a bachelor's degree in Spanish and Russian from Rhodes College in his home state of Tennessee. His wife, Molly, is an assistant professor with St. Catherine's University in Saint Paul, Minn. They have two children.



WHITNEY WIEDEMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Whitney Wiedeman has been a Foreign Service officer since 2007. He has served in Ciudad Juárez, Dusseldorf, Bogotá, in Washington, D.C. (in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's

Western Hemisphere Programs, INL/WHP), Guatemala City, Kabul, and most recently Oslo.

Prior to joining the State Department, he worked as a prosecutor and defense attorney in Texas.

He is married and the father of three children born on three continents.



CHRISTOPHER SAENGER
USAID REPRESENTATIVE

Chris Saenger currently leads USAID's Ukraine unit in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau. Since joining USAID in 2009, he has served in Ecuador, Iraq, Washington, D.C. (as Jordan desk officer), USAID's

Middle East Regional Platform covering Tunisia and Libya, and, most recently, as program office director in Colombia.

He has also served as co-chair of the Program Officer Field Advisory Council and is a volunteer facilitator in the RISE program.

Mr. Saenger grew up in Delaware but has been a proud District of Columbia resident since 2003. He holds a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University and a master's degree in international development from American University. His wife, Caroline Adams Saenger, is a landscape painter. They have two children.



JAY CARREIRO
ALTERNATE FCS
REPRESENTATIVE

Jay Carreiro is a career Foreign Service officer and a 22-year veteran of the Commerce Department. He served as AFSA vice president from 2019 to 2022

and is currently the commercial consul in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Mr. Carreiro first joined the Commercial Service in 2009, serving as special assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for international operations. Other assignments include Rio de Janeiro, where he was responsible for promoting U.S. commercial interests in a variety of areas including energy, safety and security, architecture, construction and engineering, naval defense, aviation, and the 2016 Summer Olympics.

After leaving Brazil, he served as director for the Business Liaison Office and special adviser to the U.S. executive director at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C.

Originally from Massachusetts, he holds a bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Rhode Island College, and a master of public administration and juris doctor degrees from Rutgers University. He is married with one child and, when in the U.S., lives in Alexandria, Va.



ZEKE SPEARS
ALTERNATE FAS
REPRESENTATIVE

Zeke Spears joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2016. He worked in Washington, D.C., on bilateral and multi-lateral trade issues prior to departing

in 2019 for his first overseas assignment, in Tokyo. He is currently in language training for his next assignment, in Seoul.

Prior to joining the Foreign Agricultural Service, Mr. Spears worked with agribusiness, industry groups, and farmers as an agriculture and environmental policy consultant based in Washington, D.C.

Originally from Atlanta, Ga., he holds degrees from Georgia Southern University and American University. Mr. Spears is married to a Department of State Foreign Service officer.



JOSEPH RAGOLE
APHIS REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph M. Ragole is the area director for South Asia for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, posted in New Delhi.

He began his Foreign Service career resolving trade issues in Brussels at the U.S. Mission to the European Union. He subsequently served in Santo Domingo, where he helped coordinate the initial response to an outbreak of African swine fever.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Ragole worked on domestic regulatory programs with APHIS, including export certification and emergency programs such as fruit fly outbreak eradication. Mr. Ragole also served as an agriculture specialist with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Mr. Ragole holds a bachelor's degree in ecology and German from the University of Colorado, Boulder. An avid motorcyclist and enthusiast of all things mechanical, he is joined in New Delhi by his wife and their son.



STEVEN L. HERMAN
USAGM REPRESENTATIVE

Steve Herman is the Voice of America's chief national correspondent and former White House bureau chief.

The veteran correspondent has been a member of the Foreign Service since 2007 when he was named VOA's South Asia bureau chief, based in New Delhi. After his India posting, Mr. Herman was Northeast Asia bureau chief, based in Seoul, and then Southeast Asia bureau chief in Bangkok. He returned stateside in 2016 to cover diplomacy at the State Department and traveled extensively with then-Secretary of State John Kerry.

Mr. Herman spent 16 years living in Tokyo, working in media, before joining VOA as a staff correspondent. He is also a former news reporter for the Associated Press and began his career in radio and television news in Las Vegas.

He is a former president of both the Japan Foreign Correspondents' Club and the Seoul Foreign Correspondents' Club and an adjunct lecturer of journalism at the University of Richmond. This will be his second consecutive term as USAGM representative on the AFSA Governing Board.



MARY DALY **RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE**

Mary Daly is a senior adviser in the Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs where she works on Holocaust restitution issues. She was a political officer in the Foreign Service for 23 years, serving as political counselor, speechwriter, policy planner, and legislative liaison, among other assignments, before retiring early to care for a family member.

Since retiring, she has served as chief of staff for the coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts, directed the Franklin Fellow program, and served as a senior inspector in the Office of the Inspector General and as editor in chief of the department's "Report to Congress on International Religious Freedom" in addition to her work in EUR.

Ms. Daly served as AFSA's director of advocacy and speechwriting from July 2017 to March 2018. In that capacity, she built relationships for AFSA with House and Senate Appropriations and Authorizations Committee members and staff, and helped launch the Friends of the Foreign Service caucus.

This will be her third consecutive term on the AFSA Governing Board.



EDWARD G. STAFFORD **RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE**

Ed Stafford is a retired FSO now living in southern New Jersey after serving for 27 years in the Foreign Service, mostly in political-military affairs assignments.

Since retiring in November 2016, Mr. Stafford has busied himself with volunteer work near his new hometown of Brigantine, N.J., including teaching English as a second language to recently arrived immigrants, preparing adolescents for sacraments at his church, and leading several theological discussion groups.

He particularly looks forward to serving AFSA members by being responsive to the interests and concerns of the FS retiree community.

Mr. Stafford's wife, Nancy, is a retired FS human resources officer. They have three adult sons and five grandchildren. ■

NEWS BRIEF

Mid-Level FS Reentry Program

On July 5, the State Department issued a general solicitation for former mid-level Foreign Service officers who had resigned (but not retired) within the past five years to consider reentry into the Service.

The notice is part of a broader effort to recruit and retain talent to address significant staffing deficits in the State Department's mid-ranks. AFSA helped publicize this call to all our Foreign Service members, including those who have resigned.

AFSA strongly supports making Foreign Service reentry more streamlined and less bureaucratically challenging. We have heard from members that the current process can take up to two years and requires candidates to jump through numerous bureaucratic hoops. We hope the new call involves a substantial improvement in procedures.

AFSA also believes that actively inviting former Foreign Service members to apply for reentry is a much preferable option to general mid-level entry.

Deploying former Foreign Service members who are already trained and aware of the rigors of overseas service makes more sense to us as a productive and frugal way to expeditiously fill positions that form the backbone of our Foreign Service workforce.

As it happens, the widely read *FSJ* Speaking Out article by Sonnet Frisbie, "Boomerang Diplomats? Another Look at Reappointment," published in the July-August issue, argues that creating a more streamlined policy for the reentry of former Foreign Service members would be well worth the effort.

Expanded reappointment, she says, would strengthen retention and diversity in the workforce, cost-effectively upskill the department's mid-levels, and achieve incremental positive change.

Read the full article at <https://bit.ly/BoomerangDiplomats>. ■

AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS

Meet the 2023 AFSA Merit Award Winners

Founded in 1926, the AFSA scholarship program awarded \$395,500 this year. In need-based Financial Aid Scholarships, \$254,000 was divided among 78 students. In Merit Awards, 38 awards totaling \$141,500 were dispersed.

AFSA is proud to present the 2023 AFSA Merit Award winners, listed here alphabetically by last name. Winners received \$3,500; Honorable Mentions received \$2,000; the Best Essay \$2,000; Second-Place Essay \$1,500; and Third-Place Essay \$1,000. AFSA thanks all the judges and donors who made this year's Merit Awards possible.

Academic Merit Scholarship Winners

Anaia Clarice Baker—daughter of Andrea (State) and Kevin Baker, graduated from Washington Liberty High School, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend Virginia Commonwealth University to study business.

Joseph Barboriak—son of Eric Barboriak (State), graduated from McLean High School, Fairfax, Virginia. Plans to attend Georgetown University to study operations and analytics.

Samantha Belleman—daughter of Melissa (State) and Guy Belleman, graduated from the International School Suva, Suva, Fiji. Plans to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study aerospace engineering.

Ella Beschta Westfall—daughter of Derek Westfall (State) and Shayne Beschta, graduated from the American International School of Budapest, Hungary. Plans to attend Swarthmore College to study neuroscience.

Lexy Jane Boudreau—daughter of Douglas (State) and Lexy Boudreau, graduated from American Community School Amman, Jordan. Plans to attend North Carolina State University to study civil engineering and science, technology, and society.

Daniella Carew—daughter of Jeremiah (USAID) and Flor de Maria Carew, graduated from Colegio Nueva Granada, Bogotá, Colombia. Plans to attend Tufts University to study psychology.

Donna Cazeau—daughter of Shannon (State) and Elder Cazeau, graduated from River Hill High School, Clarksville, Maryland. Plans to attend the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to study global studies.

Elena Elizabeth Diaz—daughter of Katherine (State) and Miguel Diaz, graduated from the International School of Brussels, Belgium. Plans to attend University of St. Andrews to study medicine. Elena is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Ela Faith Drinkard—daughter of David (State) and Ozge Drinkard (State), graduated from the International School of Brussels, Belgium. Plans to attend the University of St. Andrews to study classical studies.

Jesse Evanson—daughter of Katherine (State) and Paul Evanson (State), graduated from Hong Kong International School, Hong Kong, China. Plans to attend Purdue University to study professional flight.



Anaia Clarice Baker



Lexy Jane Boudreau



Joseph Barboriak



Daniella Carew



Samantha Belleman



Donna Cazeau



Ella Beschta Westfall



Elena Elizabeth Diaz



Ela Faith Drinkard



Jeffery Sean Groth



Jesse Evanson



Amelia Harn



Isabella Fazio



Benjamin Harris



Kiara Adrianna-Stephenson Fenn



Carter Horner

Isabella Fazio—daughter of John Fazio (State), graduated from Meridian High School, Falls Church, Virginia. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study biochemistry. Isabella is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Kiara Adrianna-Stephenson Fenn—daughter of Molly Stephenson (State) and Philip Fenn, graduated from Fairfax High School, Fairfax, Virginia. Plans to attend Cornell University to study biomedical engineering.

Jeffery Sean Groth—son of Gregory (State) and Dephty Groth, graduated from Saint John's Preparatory School, Danvers, Massachusetts. Plans to attend Colgate University to study psychological science.

Amelia Harn—daughter of Nathan Harn (State), graduated Crofton High School, Gambrills, Maryland. Plans to attend the University of Maryland, College Park, to study computer science and machine learning.

Benjamin Harris—son of Nicholas Harris (State) and Jennifer Davis (State), graduated from Wakefield High School, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend the College of William and Mary to study pre-medicine.

Carter Horner—son of Matthew Horner (State) and Constance Mills, graduated from St. Andrew's College, Dublin, Ireland. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study physics.

Percival Liu—son of Kendrick Liu (State) and Jingjing Hu, graduated from Georgetown Day School, Washington, D.C. Plans to attend the University of California, Los Angeles, to study history.

Aliya Abigail Lu—daughter of Donald Lu (State) and Ariel Ahart, graduated from McLean High School, McLean, Virginia. Plans to attend Haverford College to study fine arts. Aliya is also the winner of an Art Merit Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Annabelle Lyons—daughter of Christine (State) and Jonathan Lyons, graduated from the American Embassy School, New Delhi, India. Plans to attend the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) to study political science.

Ethan Ricardo Mandojana—son of Marcos (State) and Christine Mandojana, graduated from Yorktown High School, Arlington, Virginia. Plans to attend Princeton University to study economics. Ethan is also the winner of an Art Honorable Mention Scholarship.

Lillian Moo—daughter of David (State) and Lynne Moo, graduated from the American International School of Budapest, Hungary. Plans to attend Oregon State University to study ecological engineering.

Daniel Matthew Murray—son of Matthew (State) and Sharla Murray, graduated from Arundel Senior High School, Gambrills, Maryland. Plans to attend Virginia Tech to study computer science.

Justin Murri—son of William (State) and Amy Murri, graduated from Taipei American School, Taipei, Taiwan. Plans to attend Brigham Young University to study computer science and data science.

Martin Neisuler—son of Peter (State) and Mariana (State) Neisuler, graduated from the Walworth Barbour American International School, Even Yehuda, Israel. Plans to attend Georgetown University to study biochemistry.

Saya Adrianna Nylin—daughter of John (State) and Mariko Nylin, graduated from the American School in Japan, Tokyo, Japan. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study human biology and foreign affairs.

Samuel Hyunung Quade—son of Christopher (State) and Carol Quade, graduated from the American School in Japan, Chofu, Japan. Plans to attend the University of Washington to study economics. Samuel is also the winner of the Third-Place Essay.

Blair Margaret Schooling—daughter of Michael (State) and Christine (State) Schooling, graduated from the International School of Brussels, Belgium. Plans to attend Stanford University to study human biology. Blair is also the winner of a Community Service Honorable Mention Scholarship and the Best Essay.

Eleanore Strong—daughter of Martina (State) and John Strong, graduated from The Madeira School, McLean, Virginia. Plans to attend Harvard College to study economics and government.

Caroline Toyryla—daughter of Kendra Toyryla (State), graduated from the American International School of Budapest, Hungary. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study biology.

Senya Urbom—daughter of Scott (State) and Sonya (State) Urbom, graduated from Meridian High School, Falls Church, Virginia. Plans to attend Colorado College to study economics.

Alessandra Tullia Veveiros—daughter of Andrew (State) and Julie Veveiros, graduated from the International School of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya. Plans to attend Boston College to study environmental entrepreneurship. Alessandra is also the winner of a Community Service Scholarship.

Evan Wu—son of Carson Wu (State) and Clare Missin, graduated from Montgomery Blair High School, Silver Spring, Maryland. Plans to attend University of Cambridge to study math.

Art Merit Scholarship Winner

Olivia Tilley—daughter of Sterling (State) and Eurona Tilley, graduated from Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School, Dumfries, Virginia. Plans to attend the Julliard School to study harp.

Art Merit Scholarship Honorable Mentions

Shea Hamblin—daughter of Cassandra (State) and Dane Hamblin, graduated from Colonel By Secondary School, Ottawa, Ontario. Plans to attend Toronto Metropolitan University to study media production.

Aliya Lu—see biography under academic merit.

Ethan Mandojana—see biography under academic merit.

Daniel Petry—son of Mark (FAS) and Yekaterina Petry, graduated from Marshall High School, Falls Church, Virginia. Plans to attend the Oberlin Conservatory and College to study vocal performance and biochemistry.

Community Service Scholarship Winner

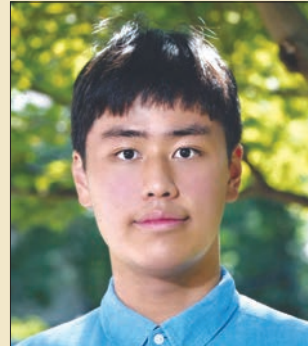
Alessandra Veveiros—see biography under academic merit.

Community Service Scholarship Honorable Mentions

Elena Diaz—see biography under academic merit.

Isabella Fazio—see biography under academic merit.

Arden Haas—daughter of Sabrina Haas (State), graduated from Seoul Foreign School, Seoul, South Korea. Plans to attend Newcastle University to study biomedical genetics.



Percival Liu



Lillian Moo



Aliya Abigail Lu



Daniel Matthew Murray



Annabelle Lyons



Justin Murri



Ethan Ricardo Mandojana



Martin Neisuler



Saya Adrianna Nylin



Caroline Toyryla



Olivia Tilley



Alexander Liesegang



Samuel Hyunung Quade



Senya Urbom



Shea Hamblin



Emma Cassayre



Blair Margaret Schooling



Alessandra Tullia Veveiros



Daniel Petry

Alexander Liesegang—son of Katherine Nichols (USAID), graduated from the School Without Walls High School, Washington, D.C. Plans to attend the University of California, Davis, to study environmental policy and planning.

Blair Schooling—see biography under academic merit.

Best Essay Scholarship

Blair Schooling—see biography under academic merit.

Emma Cassayre—daughter of Mark Cassayre (State) and Susan Jay, graduated from the International School of Geneva Campus Des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. Plans to attend the University of Virginia to study biology and humanities.

Samuel Quade—see biography under academic merit. ■



Eleanore Strong



Evan Wu



Arden Haas

AFSA President Concludes Tenure with Outreach



AFSA/NADJARUZICA

AFSA President Eric Rubin, center, spoke at the Chautauqua Institution in June alongside colleagues (from left) Amb. James Zumwalt, Jane Zimmerman, Philip Shull, James Bever, Ann DeLong, and Molly Williamson.

As AFSA President Eric Rubin's tenure drew to a close this summer, he dedicated his efforts to a final outreach tour, furthering awareness of the work of the Foreign Service.

On June 12, Ambassador Rubin spoke at the Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, N.Y. alongside six distinguished colleagues as part of AFSA's long-standing program, "Foreign Policy in Chautauqua with the American Foreign Service."

Addressing the group of 75 adult participants, Rubin shared his thoughts on the state and future of the Foreign Service and provided an overview of AFSA's role in supporting the institution and the people of the Foreign Service.

The presentations drew

on the diplomatic careers of Amb. Rubin, Amb. (ret.) James Zumwalt, retired USAID FSO James Bever, FSO Ann DeLong, retired FSO Molly Williamson, retired FSO Jane Zimmerman, and retired Foreign Agricultural Service FSO Philip Shull, who all shared their insights and experiences.

Later that day, Rubin spoke to the business community at the World Trade Centers Association in Buffalo, N.Y., where he discussed the importance of diplomacy to international trade and relations as well as significant geopolitical changes over the last decade. The next day, he returned to Washington, D.C., to host the annual chiefs of mission breakfast (see page 53). ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, June 14, 2023

The Governing Board met in person at AFSA headquarters.

Awards: The board adopted the Awards and Plaques Committee's recommendations for eight recipients of AFSA's annual dissent and performance awards and one honorable mention. The full list of award recipients will be announced in the October issue of the *FSJ*. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 19, 2023

The new Governing Board for the 2023-2025 term met in person at AFSA headquarters.

FSJ Editorial Board: The Governing Board voted to appoint Vivian Walker as the new chair of the FSJ Editorial Board, and to appoint Steven Hendrix (USAID), David Bagueño (State), and Dan Spokojny (State alumni) as new Editorial Board members for the 2023-2025 term.

Committee Assignments: The board voted to approve the following AFSA committee assignments:

Awards and Plaques Committee: Hui Jun Tina Wong (chair), John Naland, Kimberly Harrington, C. Logan Wheeler, Zeke Spears.

FSJ Editorial Board Governing Board Liaison: Lynette Behnke.

Scholarships Committee: John Naland (chair), Steve Herman, David Josar, Lynette Behnke, John O'Keefe.

Governance Committee: Sue Saarnio (chair), Mary Daly, Joshua Burke, Edward Stafford, Randy Chester.

Membership Committee: Randy Chester (chair), Joe Ragole, Zeke Spears.

Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Committee: Lisa Ahramjian (chair), Jay Carreiro, David Josar, Joshua Burke, Whitney Wiedeman.

AFSA-PAC: John O'Keefe (chair), Sue Saarnio.

Centennial Committee (ad hoc): John Naland (chair), Hui Jun Tina Wong.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

Committee (ad hoc): Kimberly Harrington (chair), Hui Jun Tina Wong, Christopher Saenger.

The board also voted on alternates to succeed Lisa Ahramjian and Steve Herman in 2024 when they leave the Governing Board:

Whitney Wiedeman to succeed Steve Herman on the Scholarship Committee.

Jay Carreiro to succeed Lisa Ahramjian as LDF Committee chair.

C. Logan Wheeler to join the LDF Committee upon Lisa Ahramjian's departure. ■

Class Action Lawsuit Against TSP

On June 1, 2023, seven Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) participants filed a class action lawsuit, seeking damages after alleging they were harmed by the botched rollout of TSP's "Converge" overhaul a year earlier, AFSA learned recently.

The lawsuit, which is being handled by the firm Sauder Schelkopf, was announced through a press release that can be found at <https://bit.ly/SS-ClassAction>.

In June 2022, TSP introduced significant changes to its systems through a revamping known as Converge. Touted as an upgrade, the rollout did not go smoothly.

Since then, TSP participants have reported a multitude of problems with the new system, including inability to access their accounts, failure to receive withdrawals and loans, and insufficient support in resolving complaints.

Though the issues are separate from and unrelated to the State Department's problems with its new payroll system and ongoing hitches with Employee Express, AFSA members have brought the TSP problems to our attention. AFSA has, in turn, raised them with the department and with TSP itself; but the problems persist.


Sauder Schelkopf is interested in hearing from TSP participants who were negatively affected by the new system. Instructions on how to contact them are contained in the press release.

The plaintiffs are demanding a jury trial and calling for an award of appropriate damages, as well as a declaration that the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, Accenture Federal Services, and Alight are financially responsible for participants' losses.

AFSA is not party to this lawsuit and is unable to answer any questions about it. Anyone who would like to learn more should contact Sauder Schelkopf directly.

TSP has more than 6.5 million members and more than \$838 billion in assets. Though the exact size of the class is unknown, the plaintiffs said they "believe that the class consists of hundreds, if not thousands, of persons and entities that were harmed by defendants' conduct." ■


Windecker Financial Planning LLC
Financial Planning & Investment Advisory Services



CASHFLOW & BUDGETS	INVESTMENT ADVICE
RETIREMENT PLANNING	HOME FINANCING
COLLEGE SAVING	ESTATE PLANNING
INSURANCE PLANNING	TAX PLANNING


*Independent, Fiduciary, Fee-only Financial Planner
30+ Years Living and Working Overseas
Focused on Foreign Service Professionals*

GEORGE WINDECKER, PRINCIPAL
(571) 310-3520
GWINDECKER@WINDECKERFP.PRO



VISIT US AT WWW.WINDECKERFP.PRO

NEW



AFRICA, YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN WASHINGTON

A memoir by Amb. Herman J. Cohen

Available on Amazon

AFSA Engages with Recruits and Members

This summer, AFSA continued to develop and sponsor programming for the Foreign Service community by welcoming new recruits and deepening engagement with those already serving.

On June 12, AFSA hosted a lunch at its headquarters for the State Department's new class of limited non-career appointments (LNAs). The group consisted of about 65 participants who will soon be posted abroad to support the work of the Foreign Service.

In his opening remarks, then-AFSA President Eric Rubin explained AFSA's role as a nonpartisan professional

association and union serving Foreign Service employees.

On June 14, AFSA hosted just under 20 new Foreign Agricultural Service trainees poised to head to post. AFSA's FAS Vice President Lisa Ahramjian explained how AFSA serves members from the Foreign Service's smaller agencies and the benefits of membership for FAS officers.

Finally, on July 11, AFSA sponsored a lunch at the FAS annual global attaché conference, held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ahramjian presented



AFSA's FAS Vice President Lisa Ahramjian addresses Foreign Agricultural Service officers at the annual global attaché conference on July 11.

AFSA/HANNAH CHAPMAN

the association's reform priorities and highlighted AFSA advocacy efforts on behalf of FAS officers. She

also provided an update on renegotiation of the FAS-AFSA collective bargaining agreement. ■

Webinar

Financial Planning for the Foreign Affairs Community

On June 22, AFSA welcomed for the second year in a row financial planner and retirement management counselor William Carrington of Carrington Financial Planning, LLC, to present "Pathways to Financial Independence: Financial Planning for the Foreign Affairs Community."

When putting together a financial plan, Carrington explained, FS members should choose between goals-based planning, which ties a selected date to a dollar amount, and standard-of-living planning, which maintains a certain lifestyle for the future.

Though income increases over time through raises and promotions within the up-or-out system, Carrington advised viewers to keep their spending relatively flat.

He also assured them that the Foreign Service pension system is extremely well designed and provides an unusual level of financial security.

"The typical financial rules of thumb do not apply to For-



William Carrington.

Foreign Service employees," he said. For example, retirement can begin sooner than in other professions, and many FS members buy real estate that they manage from overseas.

Despite the challenges of uneven cash flows or the unpredictability of available employment for family members when at post, those who actively maintain a financial plan throughout their relocations will find themselves well positioned when they return to the U.S.

Tailored to active-duty personnel looking ahead to retirement, Carrington's guidance touched on the most common problem areas for Foreign Service employees, as well as on how to leverage technology to enhance advanced planning, pension comparisons, and home ownership.

Members can view the video recording at afsa.org/videos. ■

2023 AFSA Strategic Writing Award Winner: Emily Armitage

Emily Armitage, a public diplomacy–coned Foreign Service officer, is this year’s winner of AFSA’s Strategic Writing Award (formerly known as the George Kennan Writing Award). Mark Erickson, State Department academic chair at the Joint Forces Staff College, presented the award to her at the program’s graduation ceremony on June 9 in Norfolk, Va.

AFSA offers the award annually to a Foreign Service graduate from any of the National Defense University’s five colleges whose research paper is singled out as the best essay on strategy or policy from among their cohort.

Armitage says it was a wonderful honor to receive this award as she completed her master’s degree in strategy and campaign planning. After a year at the Joint Forces Staff College’s Joint Advanced Warfighting School in Norfolk, Va., she says her most important takeaway was gaining a better understanding of the interaction between the Department of State and the Department of Defense in crisis response.

Her award-winning paper—“Semantics Matter: If Everything Is War, Then What Is War?”—explores how overuse of the term “war,” and related terminology, has weakened and confused its meaning, leading to



MARK ERICKSON

The 2023 AFSA Strategic Writing Award winner, Emily Armitage (right), with Mark Erickson, at the National Defense University’s Joint Forces Staff College graduation ceremony in Norfolk, Va.

an overreliance on military solutions and an inability to articulate when the use of force is necessary.

She tells the *FSJ*: “My paper describes how semantics have the power to influence responses and shape policies to determine how societies mold, message, and manage their national security challenges. I contend that semantics may blur the lines between war and peace, politician and soldier, combatant and noncombatant.”

Incorporating the views of both new and old war theorists, Armitage says, her paper explores “the premise that while the characteristics of war are facing an era of unprecedented change, the fundamental nature of war is constant. Understanding the contemporary dynamics of how, where, and who is fighting, is essential to gain strategic advantage,

identify policy options, and determine which instrument of national power is best positioned to respond.”

She believes it is important for policymakers to have a more flexible mindset about responses to the broad issues of human security, low-level conflict across multiple domains, and strategic competition—“because not every adversarial activity is war,” she concludes.

Foreign Service members play a crucial role throughout the process.

“Diplomacy is often characterized as something that happens before and after conflict; yet as diplomatic professionals, we know that it is far more complex,” she says.

Armitage joined the State Department in 2009 and has served overseas in the United Kingdom, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and New Zealand (overseeing programs in Samoa, Niue, and the Cook Islands). Her domestic assignments include senior Serbia desk officer, watch officer in the Operations Center, and special assistant to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria. Her foreign languages include Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian.

Armitage completed undergraduate studies at the College of William and Mary and graduate studies at Johns Hopkins University. Armed with her most recent master’s degree, she headed to Brussels in July as a political-military officer at the U.S. Mission to the European Union. ■



AFSA/MARIA BENINCASA

AFSA’s Awards and Scholarships Manager Theo Horn congratulates Emily Armitage at AFSA headquarters on June 22.

■ **Thomas Millard Coony**, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away peacefully at his home from complications of heart disease on May 21, 2023. His wife, **Jane Comeau Coony**, 84, passed away on June 19, 2023, after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Coony was born in Los Angeles to Thomas Edmund and Helen (Billings) Coony. He spent much of his youth in Germany, completed high school at Culver Military Academy in Indiana, and, in 1960, graduated from Georgetown University with a degree in economics.

He served as a lieutenant (junior grade) in the U.S. Navy at Naval Base Kenitra, Morocco, as part of the Fleet Intelligence Center for Europe, known as FICEUR, from 1960 to 1963.

In April 1961, Mr. Coony married Jane Comeau, who then joined him for the rest of his time in Morocco, six months in Europe, and in New York City where he spent some time working for IBM.

In 1966, the couple embarked on a career in the Foreign Service with postings in Spain, Pakistan, Greece, Curaçao, and Belize.

Both Tom and Jane Coony threw themselves into Foreign Service life. They appreciated, respected, and took great joy from the countries they lived in. Returning from their posting in Islamabad, the couple traveled by car with their then 7-year-old son, Tom, through the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan, through Iran and Turkey into Greece.

While stationed in Thessaloniki, Mr. Coony bought a wooden sailboat, the *Gauchucha*, which he sailed throughout the northern Aegean. He took up scuba diving and windsurfing in Curaçao and had many wonderful adventures (and misadventures) exploring the jungles and cays of Belize.

Upon retirement, the Coonys bought

a home in Castine, Maine, where they spent more than 20 summers, enjoying tennis, golf, socializing, and family. Both were enthusiastic tennis players and served as co-chairs of the Tennis Committee of the Castine Club for many years. Later, Mr. Coony was club president. The wooden benches he built are still being used courtside.

An avid runner, he could often be seen jogging the streets of Chevy Chase in Washington, D.C., at dawn. His friends remember him as an enthusiastic squash player. At least one of his Foreign Service friends continued playing squash with him until they were both decades past the age when most men give it up.

Tom and Jane Coony are survived by their sons, Thomas and Jonathan; their grandchildren, Elsa and Benjamin; and seven nieces and three nephews. Tom was predeceased by a sister, Anne Hunninghake, of Stillwater, Minn.

■ **Robert L. Fretz**, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on May 26, 2023, of pulmonary fibrosis.

Mr. Fretz was born in 1952 in Camden, N.J. He received a bachelor's degree from Florida State University in 1974 and then served with U.S. Customs and Border Security in Nassau, Miami, and Key Largo.

Mr. Fretz joined the Foreign Service in 1978. Specializing in consular affairs, he also served as political officer on the Cuba desk and as deputy chief of mission twice, in Guinea-Bissau and Belize.

Other posts included Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Barbados. He worked in the Operations Center and as chief for Europe in Overseas Citizen Services, as well.

He received the 2004 Thomas Jefferson Award for outstanding service in Barbados and the Superior Honor Award

for managing the evacuation of 600 Americans from Grenada after Hurricane Ivan, as well as the Secretary's Career Achievement Award from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

After retiring in 2005 to Edmonds, Wash., Mr. Fretz obtained a teaching certificate at Seattle Pacific University. He taught for 11 years at King's High School, a prestigious Christian school in Shoreline, Wash.

Mr. Fretz traveled to all 50 states and more than 150 countries. He spoke Spanish, French, Portuguese, Danish, and German, and was the first FSO to test in Melanesian Pidgin at the Foreign Service Institute.

He was a member of the Fretz Family Association, which holds America's oldest family reunion, dating back to 1888.

He is survived by his daughter, Sarah Fretz, of Mill Creek, Wash., who was adopted at birth in Belize. He will be buried in Deep Run West Mennonite Church in Perkasio, Pa., alongside seven of his ancestors, the oldest of whom were born in the 1720s before immigrating to the U.S. from Germany.

■ **Clarence Steven McGann**, 71, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, passed away on May 24, 2023, at his home in Arlington, Va.

Mr. McGann was born on June 28, 1951, in Harlem, N.Y., to Evangeline Marshburn McGann and Clarence Duke McGann. After spending his early years exploring and absorbing the vibrant culture of New York City, he made the first of many trips across the country and around the world when he relocated with his mother to Los Angeles, Calif. There he completed his schooling at Mount Carmel High School.

In 1973, guided by a strong intellect and keen interest in international affairs,

Mr. McGann earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Claremont McKenna College, and from 1975 to 1978, he pursued graduate studies in comparative government at Cornell University. He went on to earn a master of science degree from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

In 1978, Mr. McGann joined the U.S. Foreign Service, marking the start of what would be a long and decorated career devoted to public service.

That same year he married Doris Bolen in Mount Holly, N.J. The couple had two sons, Leyland Seth McGann (1978) and Steven Bryce McGann (1981-2006). The marriage ended in divorce.

In 1989, Mr. McGann married Bertra Bradford in Austin, Texas, and welcomed daughter Bethany Lauren McGann (1990), son Bradford Warren McGann (1992), and son Benjamin Vance Stevenson McGann (1995).

In 2008 he was nominated by President George W. Bush to serve as ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu, guiding U.S. policy in the Pacific from 2008 to 2011.

He also served as deputy commandant and international affairs adviser of the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at the National Defense University and became the first vice chancellor of the College of International Security Affairs there.

During his 40-year tenure, he became a member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor.

Ambassador McGann's commitment to public service and drive to mentor the next generation of foreign affairs professionals continued after his retirement from the Foreign Service. He served on numerous boards and advisory committees, including as co-chair of the

Women's Refugee Commission, president of the Association of Black American Ambassadors, and adviser on the Council of Advisors for Black Professionals in International Affairs.

In 2015 Amb. McGann joined the board of trustees of Claremont McKenna College, bringing his academic endeavors full circle as he gave back to the next generation of political science students through his support of the school's Washington Program.

He also founded The Stevenson Group, an international consulting firm specializing in providing strategic counsel to clients, and was an affiliate of the Walsh School of Foreign Service's Center for Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Studies at Georgetown University.

On Feb. 2, 2023, Amb. McGann was honored by the Thursday Luncheon Group with the Pioneer Award in recognition of his support, advocacy for, and mentorship of African American foreign affairs professionals.

In his quieter moments, he was a classic car enthusiast and a jazz aficionado. He will be remembered forever as a child of New York City and a citizen of the world. He made friends everywhere he went, and nurtured a network that spans geographies and generations.

Amb. McGann is survived by his wife, Bertra; his mother, Evangeline Marshburn Hutson; and his children: Leyland Seth McGann, Bethany Lauren McGann, Bradford Warren McGann, and Benjamin Vance Stevenson McGann.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Amb. McGann's memory may be sent to The Arc of Northern Virginia: <https://thearcofnova.org/>.

■ **Joan McKniff**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at home in Florida on April 17, 2023.

Ms. McKniff was born in 1941 and raised in Lowell, Mass. Although she went on to live around the world and earned enough money to one day leave the Ringling Museum of Art a sizable legacy, she never forgot her working-class roots nor lost her Lowell accent.

The time she spent in Lowell as a student, cheerleading for the high school football team and leading others in all sorts of activities, set the path for the rest of her life.

Ms. McKniff's college years were spent at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She was an active member of the class of 1963, where she served on a number of committees and was a member of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. She performed with the Precisionettes drill team, marching alongside the band at sporting events. They were busy and fun-filled years.

Fresh out of college, Ms. McKniff headed to Villa Restrepo in the Tolima department of Colombia, to work in rural community development and public health as a Peace Corps volunteer. By the time President John F. Kennedy was assassinated a few months later, Ms. McKniff had so endeared herself to the villagers—who thought that she would have to leave town since her patron was no longer in office—that they committed to providing her with sustenance, mostly eggs, if she would stay.

Returning to the United States in 1965, Ms. McKniff discovered her friends were protesting the Vietnam War. Certain that she didn't know enough about the war to take a stand, she joined the Red Cross as a Donut Dolly supporting U.S. service-members and shipped out.

Rumor has it that she was the only Donut Dolly to learn Vietnamese, which led others to suspect that she was really a CIA agent; but no one cared because her

personality won everyone over. Ms. McKniff joined the anti-war movement upon her return to the U.S. 14 months later.

She then held many jobs related to foreign affairs, women's rights, and education, including a stint that required her to fly around the U.S. in the company of a monkey named Nelson. In 1981, Ms. McKniff found herself in London as the deputy director of the World Bureau of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

She joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1985, serving in Spain (twice), Guatemala, Mexico, Madagascar, and in France as the deputy director for Africa Regional Services.

Ms. McKniff endeared herself to people in the arts, education, human rights, and other fields, while soaking up knowledge about their cultures and histories and traveling around the world to visit her widespread friends and colleagues. Her big heart facilitated her big life.

She also introduced much of America to the Foreign Service when she called into the Car Talk program on National Public Radio to ask what sort of spare "cah pahts" she should bring to Madagascar, and then again 10 years later when the show's hosts, "Click" and "Clack," called her back to ask whether their advice had helped.

In 2006, upon retirement to Sarasota, Fla., Ms. McKniff accidentally wound up as a foreign affairs adviser to then-Senator Barack Obama's presidential campaign, as well as a campaign worker on the ground in Iowa and Colorado. It may be hyperbole, but she is said to have personally called every Spanish-speaking voter in Colorado and learned enough Creole to call Haitian-American voters in Florida.

After the 2008 election, Ms. McKniff transferred her energy and enthusiasm to

Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art, where she was a Legacy Society member and a top volunteer.

A decade later, she moved into Bay Village, a senior community south of Sarasota, and promptly became a member of the program and events committee. Relations Ms. McKniff had already forged with the Ringling, the New College of Florida (NCF) music program, Selby Gardens, and other cultural organizations came in handy, as did her lifelong experience in managing people and programs. She was most proud, perhaps, of not only getting her fellow residents to attend an NCF experimental music program but to participate in it as well.

Ms. McKniff's health declined during the pandemic, but she never lost her enthusiasm for learning new things and making connections with and between others. Although she never stopped sending physical greeting cards to friends and acquaintances, social media suited her. In her last Facebook post, just a day before she died, she shared her winning Wordle score.

Ms. McKniff is survived by her sister, Anne Marie Sheaffer, of Livermore, Calif.

■ **Matilda "Til" Horn Purnell**, 101, wife of the late Foreign Service Officer Lewis M. Purnell, died peacefully on May 28, 2023.

Ms. Purnell was born on Sept. 1, 1921, in Hell's Kitchen, New York City, to Nettie Tappan and William Arden Horn. Her parents had grown up in Delaware, and during Ms. Purnell's childhood, they divided their time between New York City and Rehoboth Beach. She would later return to live near Rehoboth and become an inspired defender of southern Delaware's estuaries and wetlands.

In 1945 Ms. Purnell married Lewis

"Skipper" M. Purnell. That same year, he joined the Foreign Service, and together, the couple spent more than 30 years representing the United States in countries around the world. They had a series of postings in Italy just after World War II and also served overseas in Myanmar (then Burma), Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines.

To that partnership Ms. Purnell contributed her organizational skills and proficiency in languages (Burmese, Malay, Japanese, Italian, and French), as well as her grace and wit. The weekly letters she wrote to her family back home are vivid evocations of their colorful and fast-paced diplomatic life.

For special occasions, such as Christmas and birthdays, she also wrote, and would continue to write until close to the end of her life, comic verse in irregular rhythm, also known as doggerel, of incomparable virtuosity.

A hospitable entertainer, Ms. Purnell delighted in hosting friends wherever she lived. While her husband served as deputy chief of mission in Jamaica, the couple hosted a reception for Dr. Martin Luther King when he came to give a commencement speech at the University of the West Indies in Kingston.

The photo of Mr. Purnell with Dr. King was always displayed in their home and was also in Ms. Purnell's nursing home room when she died.

An assignment in Washington, D.C., from 1954 to 1958, was marked by a steady stream of visiting friends who stayed in the family's Georgetown apartment, including the deputy prime minister of Burma.

Upon their retirement in 1976, the Purnells moved to the shores of Herring Creek, an estuary of Rehoboth Bay. In her post-diplomatic life, Ms. Purnell was

active in the League of Women Voters, the Possum Point Players, and the Sierra Club. She found her true voice and passion in protecting the estuaries, bays, and wetlands of coastal Delaware.

She was a perennial presence at meetings of the Sussex County Council, keeping a skeptical eye on the council's pro-sprawl proclivities. Her fierce, well-turned letters to the editor—stirring opposition to proposals threatening the coastal environment—were a favorite of the local press.

Ms. Purnell helped found the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays—a private, nonprofit National Estuary Program dedicated to the restoration and preservation of these vulnerable local watersheds. In 2005 the Sierra Club recognized her dauntless advocacy with its National Special Services Award.

At the time, the *Cape Gazette* wrote: “For the past 28 years, Purnell has been an environmental warrior champion who has worked fearlessly and tirelessly to protect Delaware’s Inland Bays from unbridled development pressures.” That year, the Delaware legislature voted to name the state’s 599-acre Angola Neck Nature Preserve in her honor.

In 2006 the Purnells moved to Free Union, Va., to be near their daughter and family. Ms. Purnell took endless delight in the views of the Blue Ridge Mountains through her window and was a proud Free Union Homemaker.

Ms. Purnell was predeceased by Skipper, her husband of 70 years. She is survived by her daughter, Alice Purnell Cannon (and husband Jon); three grandchildren, Ariel, Maia (and husband Jeremy Carr), and Ben (and wife Katie Goldman-McDonald); and five great-grandchildren: Elizabeth Carr; Samuel, Ruth, and Nathan Wigotsky; and Lew Goldman-Cannon.

■ **Herbert Rathner**, 96, a retired Foreign Service officer, passed away on June 16, 2023.

Mr. Rathner was born in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 14, 1927. He served with the 82nd Airborne Division during World War II and went on to obtain a degree in physical education from the University of Maryland in 1951.

After graduating, he worked with the Washington, D.C., and Prince George’s County Recreation Departments as a recreation supervisor, and with the Departments of the Army and Air Forces in Europe as a civilian sports consultant and recreation supervisor for the U.S. Forces in Europe.

In 1965, Mr. Rathner joined the U.S. Foreign Service. Over the course of his career, he served as a general services officer in Freetown, Seoul, and La Paz.

He was also conference attaché at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, administrative counselor in Kingston, and had details to the U.S. Information Agency as the State Department representative to the U.S. Olympic Committee.

He served as assistant to the mayor of Natchez, Miss., under the State Department’s Pearson Program, and had assignments in Washington, D.C., as an international narcotics officer, international conference officer, and as a deputy examiner with the Foreign Service Board of Examiners.

He received a Superior Honor Award before retiring in 1990.

After retirement, Mr. Rathner continued to work as a reemployed annuitant until 2007 as a Foreign Service examiner and recruiter with the bureaus of Personnel and Diplomatic Security.

Mr. Rathner was predeceased by his wife of 52 years, Norma, on Sept. 29, 2008. He is survived by his three children: Kathryn (of Montana), James, and Wil-

liam (both of Nevada). He will be buried alongside his wife in Arlington National Cemetery.

■ **George A. Trail III**, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on May 13, 2023, in Pinehurst, N.C., in the loving presence of his wife, family, and friends shortly after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Born on Oct. 16, 1936, in Chambersburg, Pa., the third of six children, Mr. Trail grew up in a house full of laughter and hard work, and was instilled with a love of music and sports. In high school, he excelled academically, acted in school plays, and wrote for the school newspaper.

Accepted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology but without the funds to attend, Mr. Trail applied, with the help of a kind pastor who knew his potential, to a local college, Franklin and Marshall, where he received a scholarship.

After graduation, he enlisted as an officer in the U.S. Navy, serving from 1959 to 1965. While stationed in Hawaii, he was known as the best ukulele player on Waikiki Beach. He then taught in the Navy ROTC program at Rice University in Houston, Texas, using his time there to earn a second degree, in economics.

Joining the Foreign Service in 1965, Mr. Trail was first posted to Munich and Bonn (1966-1968), followed by a stint as political officer in Freetown in 1968.

Returning to Washington, D.C., in 1970 as Liberia desk officer, he subsequently spent a year as a congressional fellow in the offices of Representative Lee Hamilton (R-Ind.) and Senator Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.).

Mr. Trail served as consul general in Kaduna from 1973 to 1975 and as a political-military officer covering the Vietnam War from Bangkok from 1975 to 1978.

On his return to Washington, he served as deputy director of the Office of West African Affairs (1978-1980).

From 1980 to 1984, as consul general in Johannesburg during a seminal period of that country's history, Mr. Trail facilitated the release of political prisoners, protected the freedom of journalists, and organized behind-the-scenes electoral negotiations.

Professionally, he met Sharon Manfred, a low-income-housing expert working in Soweto, whom he subsequently married.

From 1984 to 1987, he was deputy chief of mission (DCM) in Nairobi, where he helped advance a nascent democratic movement evolving under an authoritarian regime. He also played a key role in assisting the U.S. delegation to a successful conclusion of the U.N. World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985.

As ambassador in Lilongwe from 1988 to 1991, he devoted much of his attention to working with U.S. and multilateral aid agencies to help the Malawian government manage a vast influx of refugees (then the largest in Africa) from the neighboring Mozambican civil war.

Quietly, Amb. Trail also prodded the government to ameliorate conditions for political prisoners while seeking to temper its repressive instincts.

From 1991 to 1993, he served as DCM in Nigeria, where he oversaw the embassy's transfer from Lagos to the new capital in Abuja.

Retiring from the Foreign Service in 1993 with both Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards, Amb. Trail returned to South Africa where he formed a consultancy with three retired newspaper editors. Their annual monograph, *South Africa at a Glance*, is still in publication.

He also helped found Gun Free South Africa in 1995, which has grown to be one

of the country's most important nongovernmental organizations.

From 2000 to 2010, Amb. Trail and his wife divided their time between South Africa and North Carolina before settling permanently in Pinehurst.

Reconnecting with the Christian faith of his childhood, Amb. Trail steadily assumed greater leadership positions in his North Carolina church, where he enjoyed singing in the choir. Taking charge of building a new Sunday school and youth center, he raised \$3 million for its construction, which he supervised and considered his proudest achievement.

During a career spent abroad, Amb. Trail always returned to his Pennsylvania roots and cherished a deep connection with extended family. His thirst for knowledge was unquenchable, and his love of history inspired him to read several books at a time until the day he died.

Family members recall that he never tired of watching a good movie, often more than once, especially musicals. In retirement, he also perfected his golf game in Pinehurst, home to one of the largest concentrations of courses in the nation.

He is survived by wife Sharon, three children, 12 grandchildren, many great-grandchildren, and three siblings.

■ **Geraldine S. Ward, 87**, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on March 21, 2023, in Albuquerque, N.M., from complications of COVID-19.

Ms. Ward was born in 1936 in Tulsa, Okla., to Helen M. (Watson) Mulrenin and John G. Mulrenin.

While serving in the U.S. Air Force as a flight attendant in the Military Air Transport Service, she participated in Operation Safe Haven, which was responsible for airlifting Hungarian refugees from West Germany to New Jersey (1956-1957).

Upon leaving the Air Force, she attended Tulsa Business School, after which she worked for Hearst Publishing Company.

Ms. Ward joined the Foreign Service in 1962 and served in Beirut, Paris, and Bridgetown as a consular officer. Following the Barbados assignment, she took a leave of absence and accompanied her husband, Larry, then a Foreign Service specialist, and their two sons on assignments to Lahore, Brussels, Nairobi, and Bonn.

Becoming an active consular officer again in 1978, she received assignments to London and Manila. In 1984 she was assigned as a refugee and migration affairs officer back in the State Department.

After retiring in 1991, she assumed a position in the Refugee and Migration Services Office as a rehired annuitant. Ms. Ward retired for the last time in January 1994. She and her husband moved to Albuquerque, N.M., in May 1998.

A member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she loved visiting local Indigenous open markets and sharing these cultural elements of her community with her family. She was always eager to spend time in various museums, exhibits, and art galleries and had countless stories and facts to supplement her experiences.

Her diverse Foreign Service assignments allowed her to expose her sons to widely varied environments and cultures that were integral to their upbringing. Her grandchildren have fond memories of her visits to their home state of Virginia during their childhood.

Their ventures to New Mexico to spend time with her during their adolescent years were full of exploration of the state's disparate areas. Her sons were able to fly from the East Coast to spend time with her in her final months.

This lifted her spirits and harnessed her affection for her family.

Ms. Ward was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, John Mulrenin.

She is survived by her husband of 56 years, Larry; sister Francine Gruette of Cushing, Okla.; her two sons, John Ward of Front Royal, Va., and Michael Ward, daughter-in law-Michelle Ward, grandson Evan Ward, all of Clifton, Va.; and a granddaughter, Macy Ward of Washington, D.C.

■ **Brooks Wrampelmeier**, 87, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, died after a brief illness on Feb. 9, 2022, at his home in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Wrampelmeier was born on Sept. 27, 1934, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Fred and Shirley (Brooks) Wrampelmeier, and grew up in the nearby town of Wyoming. After graduating from Wyoming High School, he attended Princeton University, earning his degree with high honors in 1956 in the Department of Oriental Languages and Literature.

He spent his junior year at the American University of Beirut, where he further developed his Arabic language skills and studied Arabic and Middle Eastern history.

He later obtained a master of international public policy degree in Middle Eastern studies from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in 1977.

Mr. Wrampelmeier began his 33-year career with the Foreign Service in 1956, assigned to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) School of Languages and then to the executive secretariat of the International Cooperation Administration.

He met his future wife, Ann Dartsch, who was also a Foreign Service officer, on a blind date in 1957. He and Ann married in May 1958.

In 1959, the couple moved to Lebanon, where Mr. Wrampelmeier attended Arabic language training at FSI's Arabic Language School in Beirut. In 1960, he was assigned as a political officer to Amman, serving there for four years.

After a subsequent two-year tour as a political officer in Jeddah, he returned to Washington, D.C., serving first as an analyst of Egyptian affairs in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and then as the country officer for Saudi Arabia, receiving a Meritorious Honor Award during this time.

In late 1974, the State Department sent Mr. Wrampelmeier to Lusaka, somewhere completely different for him. Despite his unfamiliarity with sub-Saharan Africa, he learned quickly, developing contacts within both the Zambian government and major southern African freedom movements. Before his departure in 1976, he served as acting deputy chief of mission (DCM).

In 1977, Mr. Wrampelmeier became the DCM in Abu Dhabi, and three years later moved up the Persian Gulf to serve in the same role in Kuwait for two years.

During that time, Iraq invaded Iran. An Iranian air attack led to the emergency evacuation of 200 Americans to Kuwait, many without entry visas and some without passports, while Mr. Wrampelmeier was in charge of the mission. The Department of State gave the embassy a Group Superior Honor Award for its work getting Americans into and then out of Kuwait within three days.

He returned to Washington in 1982, becoming deputy director, and later director, of the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs. In 1984 he became coordinator of mid-level and executive level training at FSI.

In 1986, Mr. Wrampelmeier was posted for a year as a senior fellow at the

Strategic Concepts Development Center of the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University.

From Fort McNair, he went to his final post as principal officer and consul general in Dhahran, serving until his retirement in September 1989.

Mr. Wrampelmeier remained in Washington, D.C., after retirement. He was a lifelong student of the Middle East, studying Gulf history at Georgetown University and participating actively in his memberships with the Middle East Institute, the Middle East Studies Association, and the Society for Gulf Arab Studies.

He pursued his passion for genealogy, incorporating research into trips with his wife to Germany and Poland. He continued to work part-time for the State Department for many years, assisting with Freedom of Information Act requests.

Mr. Wrampelmeier is survived by his wife, Ann; daughter Susan Atkinson (and husband Robert); son Peter; son Chris (and wife Hortencia); and grandchildren: Claire, Cole, Claudia, and Holly. ■



If you would like us to include an obituary in In Memory, please send text to journal@afsa.org.

Be sure to include the date, place, and cause of death, as well as details of the individual's Foreign Service career. Please place the name of the AFSA member to be memorialized in the subject line of your email.

Rediscovering Ralph Bunche: Two Views

The Absolutely Indispensable Man: Ralph Bunche, the United Nations, and the Fight to End Empire

Kal Raustiala, Oxford University Press, 2022, \$34.95/hardcover, ebook available, 688 pages.

I: A Penetrating New Look

A REVIEW BY JIM DANDRIDGE

When I was asked to write a review of *The Absolutely Indispensable Man*, I could not imagine that I would find anything new. I had been a Bunche super-fan for many years, from my student days when I had the privilege of knowing him as a teacher and, later, as I closely followed his contributions to diplomacy and to humankind.

I have read everything I could get my hands on by and about Ralph Bunche, including the biography by Sir Brian Urquhart and one by Benjamin Rivlin, as well as the collection of Bunche's travel notes from his 1937-1938 fieldwork in Francophone Africa edited by Robert Edgar.

And in 2001 I was involved in organizing a symposium at the Library of Congress in connection with the premiere of filmmaker William "Bill" Greaves' two-part PBS documentary, "Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey," based on the Urquhart biography, *Ralph Bunche: An American Life*.

It was in the Library of Congress that Ralph Bunche had had his office as chief of the Africa Division in the Communications Information Office (CIO), precursor to the Office of Strategic Services, precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency. Our symposium was held in Room L11, adjacent to the Woodrow Wilson Room (a point to which I will return later).

Chaired by Ambassador Donald McHenry, former U.S. U.N. Permanent

Representative, our panelists included Sir Brian Urquhart, Bunche's successor as U.N. Under-Secretary General, friend, and confidant; and Professor Benjamin Rivlin, Bunche's CIO assistant and later dean of research and university programs at the City University of New York.

These gentlemen had written the most comprehensive tomes on Ralph Bunche's life and achievements. They could do this because, as creator of the Broadway play "Hamilton," Lin-Manuel Miranda, put it: "They were in the room where it happened."

As we looked toward the Aug. 4, 2003, centennial of Bunche's birth, we agreed that too much of the man and his momentous contributions had slipped from memory. Our idea was to reintroduce Bunche and his vision for a world of lessened conflict as one of the principal architects of the United Nations at a moment of global need to understand and support this too-often-denigrated institution.

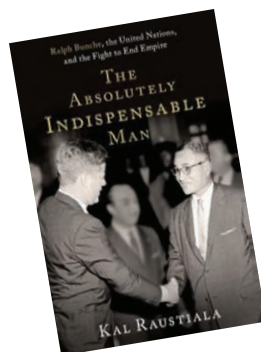
Now, two decades later, along comes a 552-page text on Ralph Bunche by Kal Raustiala—the Promise Institute Distinguished Professor of Comparative and International Law and director of the

Ronald W. Burke Center for International Relations at the University of California at Los Angeles—that does just that with well-researched analysis and compelling prose.

The Absolutely Indispensable Man far exceeded my expectations. More than a conventional biography, it not only presents a detailed portrait of the person and his career; it also presents another perspective on Bunche and the role of the United Nations—as a global agency of conflict resolution and peacekeeping but, more importantly, an agency that went beyond the original premises of the League of Nations by freeing nearly half the world's population in Bunche's lifetime.

Raustiala does a masterful job tying Bunche's biography into his professional statesmanship role, including the consciousness of purpose that was geared into his successive accomplishments. He describes Bunche's role as one of the pre-eminent architects of the United Nations, all the way from Dunbarton Oaks and the Department of State to the San Francisco Conference in 1945. (See my article on that theme, "Ralph J. Bunche, U.N. Architect," in the September 2020 *Foreign Service Journal*.)

Nowhere in the U.N. charter is peacekeeping mentioned. Yet Raustiala shows that, thanks to Ralph Bunche, the success and *raison d'être* of this organization is not only peacemaking but *peacekeeping*. Bunche deservedly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his work in negotiating



Raustiala shows that, thanks to Ralph Bunche, the success and *raison d'être* of this organization [the U.N.] is not only peacemaking but *peacekeeping*.

the first peace treaty between Israel and its four Arab neighbors. But the 1956 Suez Canal crisis ended with deployment of the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) at Gaza in 1957—it was a pioneering Bunche solution.

Raustiala also shows Bunche’s careful, cautious, yet deliberate approach to his Africa research project. Bunche applied the lessons he learned about the post-World War I mandate system under the League of Nations as head of the post-World War II U.N. Trusteeship Division. His work resulted in the decolonization of almost half of the world’s population, who happen to have been people of color.

Ralph Bunche was an outstanding and effective individual. As Brian Urquhart put it during our 2001 symposium: “Bunche was a very unusual public figure. He liked getting things done, but deeply despised and disliked taking credit for them. So, the efforts that he pioneered are still well known to us—civil rights, peacekeeping, decolonization—while *he* has virtually disappeared, which is exactly what he wanted.”

Speaking in support of a resolution acknowledging Bunche’s accomplishments in October 2003, then-Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joe Biden capped it: “Bunche did not want to be remembered as the first African American to graduate from UCLA as valedictorian, or the first to graduate from Harvard with a Ph.D. in government and international relations, or the first to become Chief U.N. Mediator. Least of all, the first to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He wished to be remembered simply as an American who answered his country’s call to duty.”

Returning to the 2001 Ralph Bunche event at the Library of Congress, I can’t help but think of the irony of our assign-

ment adjacent to the Woodrow Wilson Room. Wilson was, of course, a proponent of the colonial mandate system that in the Treaty of Versailles divided the spoils of World War I—colonized peoples—among the victors and was a central part of the newly established League of Nations Wilson fiercely championed.

I like to think of the poetic justice that might be realized at the Library of Congress by renaming Room L11, where we rejuvenated Bunche’s unique and far-reaching contributions to humanity, the Ralph J. Bunche Room.

In the meantime, read this book! It is full of excellent insights and refreshing revelations. It is meticulously researched. The book should be required reading

in every political science class, at all academic levels, and used as a fountain of information in all fields. It is political science, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and, of course, a biography of an indispensable man.

A retired Senior Foreign Service officer and U.S. Army pioneer special operations officer, James T.L. Dandridge II is vice chairman of the board of directors of the Diplomacy Center Foundation for the establishment of the National Museum of American Diplomacy and immediate past president of the DACOR Foundation and DACOR Bacon House board of governors and trustees. He served as chair of the board of directors for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training at the Foreign Service Institute from 2005 to 2015.

II: A Great American

A REVIEW BY ALEXIS LUDWIG

It’s a rare thing to pick a new book from the library shelf with casual curiosity, become quickly engrossed, and never once consider stopping until you’re finished, especially if it goes for 557 pages. But Kal Raustiala’s biography of Ralph Bunche—*The Absolutely Indispensable Man*—is that kind of book. Even the footnotes never fail to entertain and nicely complement the narrative’s smooth, limpid flow. This is an impressive work—scholarly, entertaining, and accessible.

One comes away from its reading convinced that Ralph Bunche, a star in his day—the first Black man to win a Nobel Prize (1950), a confidant of presidents, chief consigliere to the first three U.N. Secretaries General, and mentor to illustrious contemporaries including Martin Luther King—should be much better

known in our own. Bunche was a great American, a superb global diplomat, and a quietly towering figure—with no further qualifying adjectives required.

The issues facing Bunche remain germane today: the competition between superpowers blocking multilateral cooperation on big issues; the acute governance challenges of fragile states; and, not least, the intertwining of American foreign policy interests with thorny domestic problems in which the U.S. role as leading democracy of the “free world” is tainted and hampered by the shortcomings of our democracy at home.

The backdrop to Bunche’s diplomatic work birthing new states and mediating conflicts in faraway places—from Israel-Palestine and Cyprus to Kashmir and Congo—was the rising pitch of the civil rights struggle inside the United States.

In both arenas, Bunche favored pragmatic approaches within existing institutions based on the idea of peaceful

coexistence among nations and peoples over fiery speeches and twisted ideologies rooted in spurious dreams of national or racial separation.

There are useful lessons there.

The Absolutely Indispensable Man focuses not so much on the life as the diplomatic career of Ralph Bunche, and mostly on the 25-year span he spent working on or at the U.N.—from its birth in San Francisco in 1947 until Bunche’s own death in 1971.

Midwife to newly sovereign states during the early heyday of decolonization and founding father of U.N. peacekeeping as conflicts within these new states multiplied, Bunche had all the right qualifications and just the right temperament for the job. Even critics of U.N. fecklessness in times of Security Council gridlock can applaud his success in those spheres where multilateral action was the best, and perhaps the only, way forward.

Since excellence often has an intangible quality, I found myself wondering about the ingredients in Bunche’s diplomatic secret sauce. Raustiala himself has difficulty reducing it to words, often

borrowing from others: Bunche was an “idealistic realist,” a “pragmatic problem-solver,” “the absolutely indispensable man.” No doubt Bunche possessed a keen intelligence, real personal charm, and a work ethic that never quit.

He combined deep academic learning on timely questions—the governance structures of “non-self-governing” territories before World War II being one—with the practitioner’s feel for the mood of the moment and what might actually be done. He was a lightning quick drafter, with a gift for capturing the nub of an issue succinctly with just the right frame.

He was powered by an unflagging optimism, that welcome “force multiplier” (as the late Secretary of State Colin Powell used to say). Everybody wanted to work with him, and nobody wanted to let him go.

Importantly, he was blessed by the gift of good luck. Two of his Swedish bosses—Count Folke Bernadotte in Palestine and Dag Hammarskjöld in Congo—were killed in tragic circumstances that, had things gone only slightly differently, could easily have claimed him.

Most of all, Bunche had the core diplomatic skill of supremely sound judgment in spades: the ability to read people, understand situations, and (if it were possible at all) get stuff done. People knew that Bunche’s assessment—and recommendation—was worth taking to the bank.

To the end, Bunche believed not just in the U.N. but in the American project, notwithstanding its faults and shortcomings. His demand was simple: He wanted “to be an American”—to live fully at home in his own country judged by his abilities, his accomplishments, and the content of his character but by no other separate criteria or thing.

All Americans, and particularly American diplomats, should better understand the scope of Ralph Bunche’s accomplishments while appreciating the still-unrealized nature of his aspiration. Reading this book is a good place to start.

Alexis Ludwig was a Foreign Service officer from January 1994 to September 2023, with tours in East Asia, Latin America, and Washington, D.C. He chaired the FSJ Editorial Board from 2018 to 2023.

Considering Military Diplomacy

Boots and Suits: Historical Cases and Contemporary Lessons in Military Diplomacy

Edited by Ambassador (ret.) Philip Kosnett, Marine Corps University Press, 2023, PDF and ebook available for download at <https://bit.ly/BootsandSuits>, 440 pages.

REVIEWED BY ROBIN HOLZHAUER

Boots and Suits offers valuable insights for military personnel, policymakers, students, and researchers interested in

the military’s evolving role in diplomacy. Edited by Ambassador (ret.) Philip Kosnett, the book includes contributions by nearly 25 authors—diplomats, scholars, and servicemembers alike—covering three general areas: historical case studies, contemporary challenges, and U.S. interagency cooperation in global contexts.

Although this edited volume has the trappings of an academic publication, which can make it seem daunting (footnotes, explanations, jargon), readers who do not let that deter them will find interesting examples and insights into the many facets of military diplomacy.

A hurdle to the book’s goal of explaining and examining the uses of military diplomacy, however, is the lack of an agreed-upon definition of “military diplomacy” both within its pages and in society. Even though one chapter makes a case for what the definition should be (which the authors presented to the Netherlands’ Ministry of Defence to use) and how the term differs from security diplomacy and defense diplomacy, it is clear there is not a one-size-fits-all definition.

Reflecting the authors’ diverse perspectives and backgrounds, the essays discuss military diplomacy in terms ranging from military sales and training

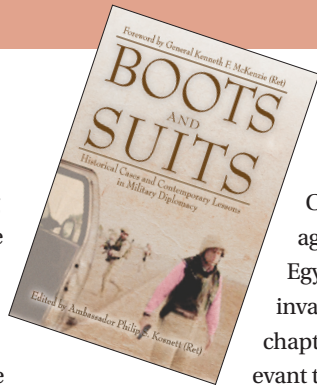
to negotiation and engineering projects, also including the role of political-military advisers and military attachés at U.S. embassies. Despite the aforementioned hurdle, the chapters give readers a global cross section of historical and contemporary events and issues where military and diplomatic efforts both intersect and diverge.

The first section of historical case studies includes a discussion of the Ottoman Empire's arms purchases from the United States. Via a comparison between U.S. and German success in relationship development, Bestami Bilgiç shows that a piecemeal approach to dealing with countries can lead to a collapse in bilateral relations.

David Campmier's essay analyzing the failure of the Confederate States in the U.S. Civil War to get more international support for their efforts points to the importance of cultural knowledge in negotiations and how its leaders' refusal to end or even moderate slavery led Britain to deny the economic and military support the Confederacy wanted.

In the case study on the shah of Iran's use of his country's geopolitical position to obtain military equipment, Kyle Balzer shows that supplying military equipment cannot always persuade leaders to do what one would like. He argues that "military diplomacy can build strong relationships with partners and strengthen deterrence, but it can hardly bend allies to America's worldview."

In his chapter on military aid to Egypt under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, James Bowden discusses the use of equipment as a carrot to achieve political aims, as well as the politics and geopolitical positioning that drove arms sales to Egypt in the 1970s and 1980s. Both essays show how countries used Soviet Union and U.S. fears of each other in the



Cold War era to advance agendas. With Iran's and Egypt's support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, these chapters seem especially relevant to current military actions.

The second section explores the challenges of military diplomacy in contemporary contexts, with essays on hybrid warfare, Ukraine, Türkiye, the Netherlands, and the Pacific. Chapter 5 on hybrid warfare and chapter 6 on Ukraine show how Russia's use of economic, political, informational, and military warfare in the 21st century culminated in its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. They also trace U.S. and European diplomacy and security assistance with Ukraine since the 1990s, including guarantees to protect Ukraine's security and sovereignty if it relinquished its nuclear weapons.

Tuba Ünlü Bilgiç and Stallion Yang's chapter on the Turkish-U.S. defense relationship in the 21st century is good background for people who want to understand more about why Türkiye held up Sweden's membership in NATO for more than one year.

Although Türkiye's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the two issues were not linked, observers believe the opposition arose, in part, to Türkiye's desire to have 40 U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets and modernization kits for its existing fleet. After Türkiye dropped its resistance to Sweden joining the alliance, the U.S. revived discussion on selling Ankara the jets—military diplomacy on display.

Tucked into the chapter on attempts to gain or maintain influence in the Pacific is a case study on Palau—an essay anyone posted to that small country should read for a solid understanding of U.S.-Palau relations. Even if you have no plans to travel to the Pacific, Ambassador John T. Hennessey-Niland highlights the value

100+ YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

INCLUDING SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OF CURATED ARTICLES



THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL DIGITAL ARCHIVE

A treasure trove of primary source material and wisdom, this digital archive is a rich legacy of the U.S. Foreign Service, diplomacy, and the American Foreign Service Association.

afsa.org/fsj-archive
afsa.org/fsj-special-collections

of long-term interagency engagement. While the Foreign Service and military often must focus on problems in the headlines, this chapter shows how diplomatic efforts categorized as “soft power” or “smart power” build the trust and cooperation needed for positive interactions.

The third section, “Lessons from Practitioners,” examines military diplomacy in alliance relationships and operations, and the challenges diplomats face in a changing global landscape that includes counterterrorism and humanitarian emergencies. It also addresses situations faced by military personnel who engage in diplomatic activities and the importance of both country and interagency cultural awareness in successful military diplomacy.

FSJ readers may notice former col-

leagues in this section, especially, as the authors include Joanne Cummings, Heather Steil, Alison Storsve, and Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann. It may also be the section Foreign Service families find most interesting because it reflects the experiences and challenges many diplomats had—or may have.

Diplomats considering being a political-military adviser—known as a POLAD—and officers and enlisted personnel who will serve at a U.S. embassy, including as the defense attaché, should read the chapters on those two roles to get both a basic understanding of the positions and examples of how their experience can be used in another agency.

The book begins and ends with words of advice for future practitioners from

Amb. Kosnett. While it seems a shame that people need to be told to respect and listen to each other, set realistic goals, and build trust, the experience and research of the authors show these reminders are needed—for those in boots and in suits. ■

Robin Holzhauer is the senior editor at “Diplomatic Diary” and consults on communications, entrepreneurship, and foreign affairs issues. She previously served as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, worked as a journalist, and founded a not-for-profit public relations firm. During her 23 years in the Foreign Service, assignments included Russia, Kosovo, Venezuela, Lebanon, and Gabon, and Washington, D.C., Rhode Island (at the Navy War College), and Connecticut (at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy).



GET YOUR DYNAMIC & MODERN HEADSHOT
from the top rated & most reviewed photographer in the DMV area!



For more info, call 202.669.2239 or sam@samheadshots.com
STUDIO ADDRESS:
6153 Fuller Ct. Alexandria, VA 22310



**What do diplomats do?
Who works in an embassy?
What is the Foreign Service?**

Find the answers...

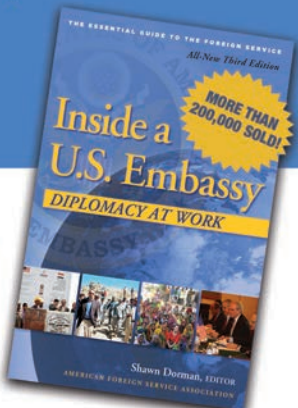
Inside a U.S. Embassy

DIPLOMACY AT WORK

The essential guide to the Foreign Service.

Inside a U.S. Embassy has been adopted for more than 60 university courses, as well as at least a dozen courses for U.S. military personnel. Help AFSA raise awareness about the Foreign Service and the role of diplomacy and development by sharing the book when you teach a course or give a presentation.

www.afsa.org/inside
Phone orders: (800) 848-6224
Special AFSA Member Discount: 40% - use code 6AFSA
Questions? Email embassybook@afsa.org



Shawn Dorman, EDITOR
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

RETIREMENT SECTION

Are you retiring or close to retirement? Looking at "next stage" planning?

Enjoy this showcase of options as you plan for the future.

If you're interested in advertising or know someone who would be, contact Advertising Manager Molly Long at long@afsa.org to be in the next edition of this special section.

MOVING? Don't forget to send AFSA your new address (member@afsa.org) so the FSJ can reach you.

"Taking Care of our Own"

The **Senior Living Foundation (SLF)** provides support to retired Foreign Service personnel and their spouses (includes surviving or divorced). Discover our services today at slfoundation.org



Visit our website or call to learn more

slfoundation.org
(202) 887-8170

Long Term Care

Senior Housing

Basic Living Expenses

Medical Expenses

Case Management

SLF is sponsored by the American Foreign Service Protective Association.



GETTING READY TO RETIRE?

AFSA MEMBERSHIP IN RETIREMENT KEEPS YOU ENGAGED AND INFORMED

Keep the benefits you value
at almost half the price!

Contact us at member@afsa.org.

Make



DACOR

An Organization of
Foreign Affairs Professionals

Your Home



*Your
Community*

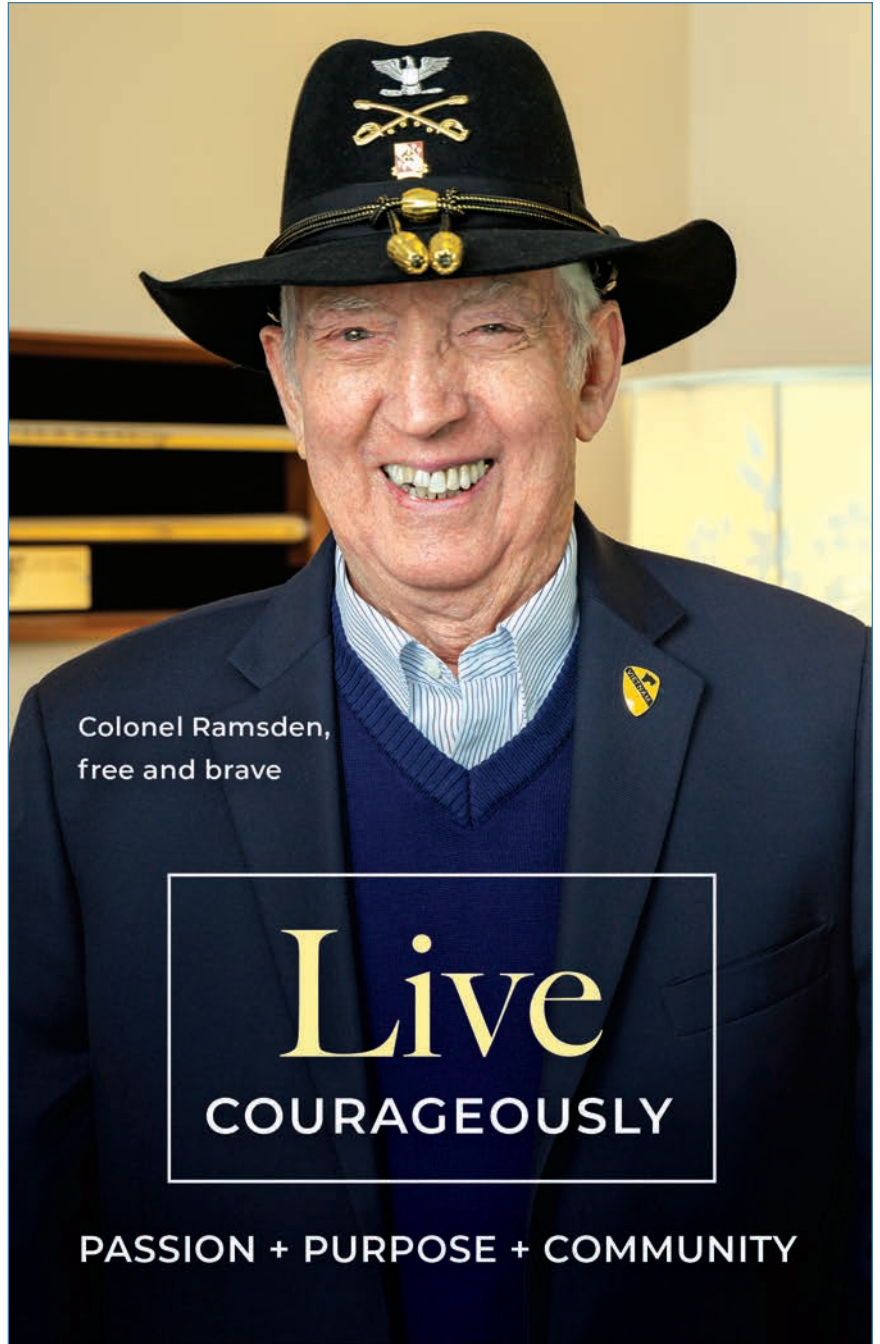


Learn • Network
Engage • Mentor
Have Fun!

www.dacorbacon.org



DACOR Bacon House
1801 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202.682.0500



Colonel Ramsden,
free and brave

Live
COURAGEOUSLY

PASSION + PURPOSE + COMMUNITY

Live the life you love.

Find out how at AboutActs.com/ForeignService
or call (877) 216-4309.

Buckingham's Choice | Fairhaven



Where loving-kindness lives

FROM THE MAY 2022 FSJ FOCUS SECTION

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE RE-EMPLOYED ANNUITANT PROGRAM

BY JOHN K. NALAND

If early- and mid-career employees think at all about life after the Foreign Service, they most probably envision happily turning in their badge and going on to pursue other interests. But as retirement nears, many of us have second thoughts about completely leaving government service. The topics and tasks that we worked on during our careers still interest and energize us. The knowledge, skills and abilities that we acquired over many years give us much to continue to contribute to the nation. And, especially for those of us obligated by the up-or-out system to retire in our late 50s or early 60s, we may need additional income for at least a few more years.

Thus, many newly retired Foreign Service members return to work for the government. A survey conducted by FSI of employees who retired in 2018 and 2019 found that 32 percent had taken new federal positions. Those

numbers undoubtedly would have been higher if Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had not frozen hiring from February 2017 to March 2018.

Some Foreign Service retirees who return to government service find employment under a personal services contract (PSC) or, more rarely, in a full-time Civil Service job. But the vast majority work part time in the re-employed annuitant (REA) program. Because 85 percent of the Foreign Service works for the State Department and my REA experience was there, this article focuses on the REA program at State. ■

Retired Foreign Service Officer John K. Naland is in his fourth term as AFSA retiree vice president. He has also served as AFSA State Department vice president and twice as AFSA president.

The complete article appears in the May 2022 FSJ.



David L. Mortimer, CPA, has over 25 years of experience in tax planning and research, including developing tax minimization strategies, planning business/real estate transactions and audit representation.

- Income tax services
- Financial planning
- Practiced before the IRS



David L. Mortimer, CPA

120 S Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: (703) 869-0272 • Fax: (202) 204-5199
Email: David@mytaxcpa.net
Website: www.mytaxcpa.net

FIRST CONSULTATION FREE

- Financial and portfolio strategies that reflect the unique Foreign Service lifestyle
- Portfolios with optimal mix of investments
- TSP rollover options
- Retirement income modeling
- Social Security claiming strategies
- Stand-alone financial planning also available

William Carrington

Certified Financial Planner (CFP®)

Retirement Management Advisor (RMA®)



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Foreign Service specialized **financial planning** and **retirement planning** along with world-class **portfolio management** for a single flat fee.

Integrated fee-only service under one roof from the fiduciary firm you trust to put your interests first.



Book a free, no-obligation consultation today at:
www.CarringtonFP.com



ATTENTION FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL

Rent your home fast!

A Message About How To Keep Your Property In Excellent Condition When You Are Transferred Overseas & Have A Good Tenant Who Pays...

From Sue Richey, Richey Property Management CEO



Foreign Service and military clients make up a majority of our RICHEY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT client base. **We are honored to serve you... while you serve our country.**

You have unique needs. When on assignment, you need eyes and ears here at home. You need someone to manage your property, take care of problems should they occur, and make certain everything is maintained in good order. You need your property rented to good tenants, who pay on time and treat your home with respect, **so your property increases in value while you are gone and you have a well-maintained home when you return.**

And it is critical you know what's going on. You need 24/7 and 365 access to all information concerning your property.

Richey Property Management gives you all this and more. We are a FULL SERVICE property management company.

We take care of your property: INSPECT, REPAIR, MAINTAIN. **We take care of the money:** TRACK AND MANAGE INCOME & EXPENSES. **We minimize liability:** REDUCE RISK AND EXPOSURE. *Our full-service management and leasing plan gives you EVERYTHING you need to go on assignment with peace of mind, knowing tenants will be screened. Rents will be paid. And your property will be in excellent condition when you return.*

Here's What You Get

- ◆ **FAST RENTAL:** Our average time to rent a home is less than 30 days.
- ◆ **GOOD TENANTS:** Our comprehensive tenant screening process, *which includes a credit check, employment verification, eviction history and more,* has a perfect track record for applicants we recommend approving.
- ◆ **FAST PAYMENT:** Owners receive rent deposits in 2-3 business days, regardless of where they are in the world.
- ◆ **INSTANT ACCESS:** You get 24/7 online account access and emergency on-call service, so you can check in any time.
- ◆ **NO HIDDEN FEES!** Transparent pricing - you'll never be caught off guard.

Your IRONCLAD Guarantees

We guarantee you will have a quality tenant for in your home in 30 days, *or the first two months of management fees are FREE! *certain rules apply*

We guarantee the tenant will stay for 12 months, or we find a replacement **ABSOLUTELY FREE.**

If the tenant fails to pay as agreed, you don't pay the management fee. **We are only paid when you are.**

You pay NOTHING until we produce! We do all the work up front. You don't pay us until you get a qualified tenant and they move into your property.

If you are not satisfied with our service for any reason, you can cancel any time with 60-day notice.

(NO TERMINATION FEES)

Exclusive VIP Offer FOR FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL

- ◆ You Receive 50% OFF Management Fees For The First 60 Days
- ◆ You Receive FREE Professional Marketing Photos
- ◆ You Receive FREE In-Home Consultation to get your house ready before you leave.
- ◆ You Receive A FREE Rental Analysis to maximize rent price.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Peace Of Mind - No Matter What Happens - We Handle It.

We make owning property while you are overseas on assignment easy!

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR EXCLUSIVE FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL OFFER AND FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOUR HOME WILL RENT FOR WITH OUR FREE NO-OBLIGATION RENTAL PRICING ANALYSIS

"You can't come to a better place. They have many Foreign Service customers...so they understand what you face working long distances overseas with a rental property".

-Highly respected career ambassador, Tom Pickering

Phone: 703-721-7233

Email: FSO@RICHEYPM.com

Or visit online

www.RicheyPM.com/foreignservice



One fan.



You'll get 1 month's **FREE** management plus a **\$400** Signing Bonus!

Many fans.

Our reputation speaks for itself as we celebrate more than 35 years of service.

WJD Management

Residential property management and leasing specialists serving all of Northern Virginia and clients around the globe.

Property Management is our only business!

Get to know us at wjdpm.com or email our Director of Operations Gina Talotta at gina@wjdpm.com.

CORPORATE HOUSING
in **Washington, DC**



Stay with Confidence.

We have certified corporate housing providers on staff.

- TDY per diems accepted
- Sliding scale welcome
- Local woman-owned business
- Wireless broadband internet
- Fantastic Foggy Bottom and Dupont locations
- Certified corporate housing providers on staff
- All major credit cards accepted
- Room and ride packages available.

CAS Corporate Apartment Specialists
Throughout Metropolitan Washington, DC

www.CorporateApartments.com

(800) 914-2802 | F: (703) 979-2813 | sales@corporateapartments.com

WASHINGTON MANAGEMENT SERVICES

WMSTM

ASSET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Since 1983, Washington Management Services has been connecting residential property owners with qualified, responsible tenants in the DC metropolitan area. Let us show you why we are the partner of choice for Foreign Service residential property owners and tenants.



4405 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
NUMBER 306
BETHESDA MD 20814

PHONE 301 654 1400
FAX 301 654 1426
WWW.WMSDC.COM

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

BOOKS

DOGS ON THE RUN All about DOGS—"round the world" (2023 Picture Book/Calendar—large print) by Phyllis Chestang, MBA, International Business, George Washington University, PhD@dissertation, Walden University, Sharing insights from Frankfurt Buchmesse 2023 USA Pavilion. Former Capital Dev. Loan Officer/USAID/FSO, Middle East & E. Africa and lived professional experiences.



For all dog lovers, your best friends & companions plus fondest memories. Great for homes, offices, and gifting, made in America/USA, 22 pages, print book, premium color, 100#, landscape (11 X 8.5 in), Wire-O, glossy cover.

Email: peachtree5319@gmail.com
Website: www.phyllissecondwind.com

LEGAL SERVICES

ATTORNEY WITH OVER 25 YEARS' successful experience SPECIALIZING FULL-TIME IN FS GRIEVANCES will more than double your chance of winning: 30% of grievants win before the Grievance Board; 85% of my clients win. Only a private attorney can adequately develop and present your case, including necessary regs, arcane legal doctrines, precedents, and rules.



Bridget R. Mugane
Tel: (301) 596-0175 or (202) 387-4383.
Email: fsatty@comcast.net
Website: foreignservicelawyer.com

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING FS officers in matters involving security clearances; grievances; performance, promotion, and tenure; financial claims; discrimination; and discipline. We represent FS officers at all stages of proceedings, including at hearings before the FSGB. We provide experienced, timely, and knowledgeable advice to employees, from junior untenured officers through the Senior FS, and often work closely with AFSA.

Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch
Tel: (202) 331-9260.
Email: intake@kcnlaw.com
Website: kcnfdc.com | clearancelawyers.com

REAL ESTATE

As a full-service Realtor and former FSO, I am passionate about assisting those serving abroad or heading to Foggy Bottom. Learn how my service differentiates ensuring a seamless transition whether buying or selling.

"Knowing the market extremely well, Alan suggested the best locations per our budget. He kept us informed and always secured our input even though we were several time zones away overseas. Alan Davis was the perfect Realtor for our Foreign Service family, and I recommend him without reservation for a hassle-free purchase experience. Thanks, Alan!" —FH 2022

ALAN DAVIS, Licensed Realtor
Samson Properties
4720A Langston Street
Arlington, VA 22207
Cell/Text: (571) 229-6821.
Email: alandavisrealtor@gmail.com
Website: www.alandavisrealtor.com

These listings are paid advertisements and do not imply endorsement of or recommendation by AFSA or The Foreign Service Journal.

FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST—Naples, Bonita Springs, Estero
Excellent amenities, activities, cultural events in beautiful Southwest Florida. Outstanding home values.

Thomas M. Farley, LLC. Retired SFS.
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty
Email: tomfarley@BHHSFloridaRealty.net

SARASOTA FLORIDA REALTOR—Best Beaches, Fine Dining, Theater, Opera, World Class Museum—yours to enjoy!

Marian Walsh, Medway Realty
Tel: (941) 483-0803.
Email: florida.walsh@gmail.com

Invest in a Commercial or Residential Property! Contact an experienced Realtor, offering a complimentary consultation to Foreign Service officers. Licensed in Virginia and DC. EHO.

Contact: Erika Garcia—Investment Properties
Long and Foster, Inc.
438 Maple Avenue E
Vienna, VA 22180
Tel: (703) 628-6622.
Email: Erika.Garcia@LNF.com
Website: Longandfoster.com/ErikaGarcia

R&R In Jamaica at Timbuktu by the Sea! Spend your next holiday in Jamaica with us at our villa, Timbuktu by the Sea! Enjoy luxurious furnishings from around the world, exquisite local cuisine, and warm, friendly Jamaican hospitality. Amenities abound. Go snorkeling, kayak, play pickleball, or just relax and enjoy the sunset with your favorite cocktail by the pool or fire pit. You earned it!

Email: info@timbuktujamaica.com
Website: TimbuktuJamaica.com

Stunning Villa with pool and gardens near Paphos, **Cyprus**. Rent "Villa Yasmin" as your getaway from NEA or EUR posts. 3 bedrooms/2 baths. The Airbnb link is: <https://bit.ly/Cyprus-rentals>.

E-mail: edmundjhull@gmail.com

TAX & FINANCIAL SERVICES

IRVING CPA, PLLC. Scott Irving, CPA, has more than 20 years of experience in public tax practice and specializes in Foreign Service family tax preparation and tax planning.

Tel: (202) 257-2318.
Email: info@irvingcpa.com
Website: www.irvingcpa.pro

PROFESSIONAL TAX RETURN PREPARATION. Arthur A. Granberg, EA, ATA, ATP, has more than 40 years of experience in public tax practice. Our Associates include EAs & CPAs. Our rate is \$200 per hour; most FS returns take just 3-4 hours. Located near Ballston Mall and Metro station.

Tax Matters Associates PC
4600 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 414
Arlington, VA 22203
Tel: (703) 522-3828.
Fax: (703) 522-5726.
Email: aag8686tma@gmail.com

**Contact Advertising Manager Molly Long
to be included in the Classifieds section:
ads@afsa.org or (202) 719-9706**

■ TEMPORARY HOUSING

CORPORATE APARTMENT SPECIALISTS. We have 25 years of experience serving the Foreign Service community. Sliding scales and TDY per diems are welcome! We offer a variety of locations throughout Virginia, Maryland, and DC. Our all-inclusive pricing includes updated furniture, tasteful décor, all houseware items, all utilities, high-speed Wi-Fi, and an expanded cable package.

Tel: (800) 914-2802.

Email: bookings@corporateapartments.com

Website: www.corporateapartments.com

DCDIGS GUEST APARTMENTS: We're different from your typical "corporate" apartments! Located in Dupont Circle, our apartments are designed as places where we'd like to live and work—beautifully furnished and fully equipped (including high-speed internet, computer, printer, and TV). We don't believe in extra charges like application or cleaning fees. Most importantly, you only pay for the nights you stay, even if your plans change at the last minute.

Tel: (202) 536-2500.

Email: DCDIGS@gmail.com

Website: www.dcdigs.com

DCLuxe Properties. Washington, D.C., corporate housing, offering large fully furnished and generously equipped one- and two-bedroom units in the heart of the popular Dupont Circle neighborhood. In-unit washer/dryer, TV, high-speed internet, and weekly housekeeping are standard amenities. Your privacy is important to us—no shared spaces or large apartment buildings. The subway, grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners, and restaurants are all within 3 blocks of your unit. We have more than 20 years of experience with USG sliding scale per diem.

Live like a local!

For more information and photos, contact us:

Email: host@dcluxe.com

Website: dcluxe.com

■ OTHER SERVICES

Kitchen Bathroom Remodel. Georgetown Kitchen and Bathroom. Founder and architect with 10 years' experience. Free Estimate.

Tel: (202) 812-2047.

Email: georgetownkitchenbath@gmail.com

Website: www.georgetownkitchenbath.com

Arlington-Alexandria Acupuncture & Wellness

Retired DOS Medical Provider Rebecca Reynolds FNP/LAc offers a unique combination of Eastern & Western health care with a deep understanding of FS issues & stressors.

Office located between FSI & Ballston

Tel: (401) 533-2790.

Email: RGR22203@gmail.com

Website: A-A-Acupuncture.com

Editor/Writing Coach

As the trailing spouse of a Foreign Service officer for 12 years, I have lived and experienced life abroad. As a book editor and writing coach of 20 years, I have the chops to help you tell your story of life in the Foreign Service, as a book-length memoir or as fiction or nonfiction. Your story is your legacy. I can guide you in writing that legacy.

Ann Aubrey Hanson

Tel: (858) 449-1906.

Email: ann@annaubrey.com

Website: www.annaubrey.com

Professional Organizing

"It's Your Move," but it shouldn't be stressful! Unsure how to split your shipment among HHE, UAB, and storage, or overwhelmed with settling into your U.S. assignment? Put Amiel Landor's 20+ years of professional organizing experience to work for you and never worry about pack out again!

Tel: (919) 475-2661.

Email: amiel@amiellandor.com

Website: <http://www.creatingspacenow.com>

AD INDEX

When contacting one of our advertisers, kindly mention you saw their advertisement in *The Foreign Service Journal*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Africa, You Have a Friend in Washington" memoir / 71
Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park / Inside Front Cover
FSJ Centennial Writing Competition / 4

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

Classifieds / 90, 91

FINANCIAL PLANNING & TAX SERVICES

AFSPA – Financial Wellness Program / 36
Windecker Financial Planning LLC / 71

INSURANCE

AFSPA – Foreign Service Benefit Plan / 27
AFSPA – Life Insurance Plans / 47
Clements Worldwide / Back Cover
FEDS Protection / 26

MISCELLANEOUS

AFSA Social Media / 13
Change of Address / 16
FSJ Digital Archive / 83
FSJ Gift Subscription / 9
Fund for American Diplomacy / Inside Back Cover
Inside a U.S. Embassy / 84
Sam Headshots / 84

REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Corporate Apartment Specialists / 89
Peake Management, Inc. / 17
Property Specialists, Inc. / 13
Richey Property Management / 88
Washington Management Services / 89
WJD Management / 89

RETIREMENT LIVING, PLANNING & SERVICES

Acts Retirement Life Communities / 86
AFSA Retiree Membership / 85
Carrington Financial Planning / 87
DACOR Bacon House / 86
David L. Mortimer, CPA / 87
Senior Living Foundation / 85
Vinson Hall Retirement Community / 3

From “Redneck Hillbilly” to “Radical” to Career Diplomat

BY JAMES R. BULLINGTON

My family background is a combination of north Alabama redneck and east Tennessee hillbilly. I grew up on a small cotton farm west of Huntsville and in a working-class neighborhood of Chattanooga, and when I entered Auburn in 1957, I was the first in my family to go to college.

In that culture, and that time, the State Department and the Foreign Service were as unknown as the dark side of the moon. And yet I went directly from being a redneck hillbilly student at Auburn to being a career diplomat.

Now how the hell did that happen?

The governor of Alabama had a significant role in making this transformation possible. To explain, it's necessary to recall the Foreign Service and the entry process of that era.



When Congress created the Foreign Service in 1924, it instituted a competitive entrance examination, beginning with a nationwide written test similar to the GRE or LSAT. That was followed by an oral exam at the State Department that featured a three-hour grilling by a panel of senior Foreign Service officers.

Jim Bullington, a retired Foreign Service officer, was ambassador to Burundi and dean of the Senior Seminar. He served three tours in wartime Vietnam, followed by assignments in Thailand, Burma, Chad, Benin, and Senegal. His post-Foreign Service jobs included director of international affairs for the city of Dallas, Texas, and Peace Corps country director in Niger. He is the author of Global Adventures on Less-Traveled Roads: A Foreign Service Memoir. He and his wife of 55 years, Tuy-Cam, who was a Foreign Service National at Hué, Saigon, and Danang, are now retired in Williamsburg, Virginia.



The author (left) receives Auburn University's Lifetime Achievement Award from Auburn Alumni Association President Regenia Sanders in 2022.

Plus, academic records, foreign language competency, recommendation letters, and work experience were all taken into consideration. Only about 3 percent of the applicants ended up as FSOs.

Until the 1970s, FSOs were almost always the sons of wealthy elites and professional people; and the overwhelming majority were graduates of Ivy League and other prestigious universities, mostly with advanced degrees and international experience.

Half the members of my entering Foreign Service class graduated from three universities: Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. The rest were alumni of Georgetown, Stanford, Duke, and similar schools.

My university, Auburn, the land-grant university of Alabama, produced primarily farmers and foresters, engineers and schoolteachers, and lots of military officers through one of the country's largest ROTC programs. It had never produced an FSO. I got the idea of joining the Foreign Service from a *Newsweek* article.

Consequently, when I came to Washington in 1962 to enter the Foreign Service, I felt seriously out of place among my junior officer classmates. On discovering that the State Department had recently begun an effort to diversify its recruitment base, I concluded that I must have been that year's token redneck.

In addition to possibly benefiting from some affirmative action, I'm confident that the most important reason for my success was my Freedom Riders editorial and the reaction to it.



I became editor of the Auburn University student newspaper in May 1961, at the time of the Freedom Riders incidents, which involved young people riding Greyhound buses across the South in an attempt to integrate bus terminals. When the Freedom Riders got to Anniston, Montgomery, and Birmingham, they were attacked by white mobs as Alabama state troopers stood by and did nothing. These scenes were featured on national television.

I had always accepted segregation as the natural order of my limited world. At Auburn, it was in full force. No one in my family or among my friends or teachers or



Governor John Patterson on the cover of *Time* magazine, June 2, 1961. The diagonal banner references the Freedom Riders.



Freedom Riders sit in front of their bus that was destroyed by a white mob, 1961. These men and women were attempting to integrate public transportation facilities by riding buses across the South, a movement that spurred the author to action that year.

preachers questioned the Jim Crow system, and I had not given it much thought.

But as I watched reports about the Freedom Riders incidents and reflected on a newly published book I had just read, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I had a civil rights epiphany. In an editorial that I put on the front page of the newspaper, I denounced the mobs that attacked the Freedom Riders and the Alabama political leaders who promoted this violence; rejected the Jim Crow culture in which such actions and attitudes were rooted; and called for the peaceful integration of Auburn University.

This doesn't sound at all radical in 2023, but in Alabama, in 1961, it was downright revolutionary! Reaction to the editorial was swift, beginning with a Ku Klux Klan cross-burning at the Sigma Pi house where I lived. There were also threatening phone calls, and students burned copies of the paper and shouted insults as I walked across campus.

The university president called me an "irresponsible radical" and told me to submit all future editorials to the dean of student affairs.

The next day the story was in newspapers across the state and beyond, even *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. This prompted Governor John Patterson to get involved.

Patterson had defeated George Wallace in his first run for governor, in 1958, because he was even more extreme than Wallace in his defense of segregation. In his inaugural address, he declared: "I will oppose with every ounce of energy

I possess and will use every power at my command to prevent any mixing of white and Negro races in the classrooms of this state." His campaign against the Freedom Riders earned him a cover story in the June 2, 1961, issue of *Time* magazine.

Patterson's response to my editorial was both vigorous and vociferous, including a threat to cut Auburn's appropriations if something were not done to "throttle that damn radical agitator editor." The university president told me that I had "really pissed off" the governor.

But the national media attention gained by my editorial and the reactions to it, plus fear of endangering Auburn's accreditation if they fired or expelled me, caused the university administration to stop short of such drastic action. I refused to accept censorship and continued to publish material opposing segregation for the remainder of my yearlong term as editor, pretty much daring the university administration to remove me.

I passed the Foreign Service written exam in December 1961 and was invited to come to Washington for the oral exam the following April. The examiners were especially interested in hearing my views on civil rights, which gave me the opportunity to tell them the story of the Freedom Riders editorial.

This, I'm convinced, is the only thing that could have sufficiently set me apart from my better educated and more expe-

rienced competitors to pass the oral exam and be invited to join the Foreign Service, the youngest member of my class—before I had even graduated from college.



Fast-forward to 1979. The State Department had sent me for a year of training at the Army War College, and my class was about to graduate. For the graduation ceremony, as it did every year, the Army invited prominent citizens from around the country to attend. Among the group that year was none other than John Patterson, former governor of Alabama.

The day before the ceremony, there was a reception for the graduates and distinguished visitors. I recognized Governor Patterson and made my way to him through the crowd. "Governor," I said, "we've never met, but when you were governor of Alabama, I was editor of the student newspaper over there at Auburn."

He immediately drew back, poked his finger at my chest, and exclaimed: "So you're the son of a bitch that wrote that editorial!"

I was proud to acknowledge that I had indeed written that editorial. I was delighted that it had bothered him all those 18 years; but I passed up the opportunity to thank him for unwittingly helping me get into the Foreign Service in 1962. ■

LOCAL LENS



captured this busy street scene in the Old Delhi area of Delhi, India, in 2018. Now a popular tourist destination filled with shops and food stalls, Old Delhi was the capital of Mughal India from 1648, when it was founded as a walled city by Emperor Shah Jahan, until 1857. (At that time, the British Empire took over and established their imperial capital in what is today the New Delhi part of Delhi.) Once filled with the mansions of nobles, Old Delhi is also known for its Islamic architecture and Jama Masjid, one of the largest mosques in India. ■

James Adams is a Foreign Service regional medical laboratory scientist currently serving as director of laboratory programs and services in Washington, D.C. He took this photo using a Canon EOS 100D and EF-S18-55mm lens.

Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8" x 10", or 1 MB or larger) and must not be in print elsewhere. Include a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata, and the type of camera used. Send to localens@afsa.org.

**FUND FOR
AMERICAN
DIPLOMACY**

**OUR STORY
IS IMPORTANT.
HELP US TELL IT.**

As AFSA and the Foreign Service approach their centennial in 2024, AFSA remains hard at work telling our story to the American public.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF AFSA AND



THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN SERVICE

Please help us by supporting the Fund for American Diplomacy, which makes possible all of AFSA's public outreach and education.



Donate online at
[afsa.org/donate](https://www.afsa.org/donate)

Make a tax-deductible gift to the Fund for American Diplomacy and help AFSA tell the story of the Foreign Service.

AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy (FAD) is a 501(c)(3) that supports outreach to tell the proud story of the Foreign Service to the American people. The FAD's aim is to educate and build a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service so that we have champions, ideally in all 50 states, prepared to stand up for the Foreign Service and defend our vitally important mission.

You can make a contribution at www.afsa.org/donate

A jungle of options can overwhelm you,
Clements can help you find your way.

Insuring peace of mind since 1947.
Discover our international solutions.



Clements.com/FSJ

+1.800.872.0067

info@clements.com

**Global Aspirations
Without Limitation**

Insuring peace of mind so you can live
and operate anywhere in the world

scan to learn more

