

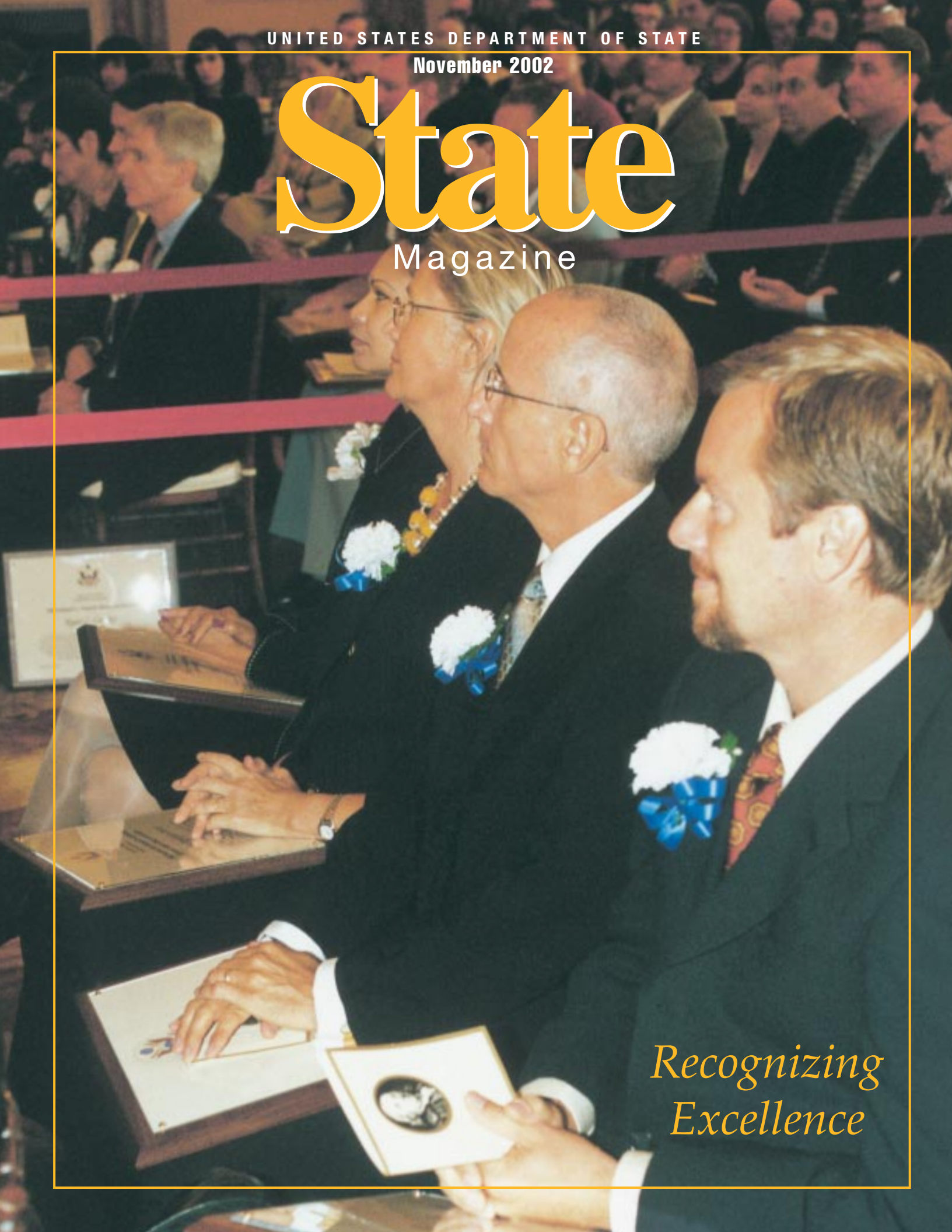
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

November 2002

State

Magazine

*Recognizing
Excellence*



In our next issue:

Special Issuance Agency



To learn how the SIA keeps diplomatic and VIP passports moving, go behind the glass.

Photo by Jeanne Dorado

State Magazine

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Photo courtesy of NATO archives

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Photo by Michael Gross

FROM THE SECRETARY

SECRETARY COLIN L. POWELL



Fighting HIV / AIDS

By the time you finish reading this column, HIV/AIDS will have killed 30 people and infected another 45. Right now, more than 40 million of our fellow human beings, at home and abroad, are sick. And in just a few years, that number will likely double unless the nations of the world work in partnership to stem the pandemic.

HIV/AIDS has hit the countries of southern and central Africa the hardest. But as a recently released National Intelligence Council study stressed, the spread of HIV/AIDS continues unabated in much of the developing world. The study warned that the next wave of the pandemic could strike China, India, Russia, Ethiopia and Nigeria—countries encompassing more than 40 percent of the world's population.

HIV/AIDS is not just a compelling humanitarian issue. It tears social fabrics and robs young democracies of the citizens they need to build freer, better futures. It deprives nations of the human resources they need to develop, sapping global growth. Unchecked, HIV/AIDS can threaten whole countries and destabilize entire regions.

President Bush has made stemming the AIDS pandemic a priority of his Administration. In addition to the billions the United States spends on research, he pledged \$500 million to the public-private Global Fund that fights HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—making the United States the world's largest donor. We are also contributing more than any other nation to bilateral efforts against HIV/AIDS. And last June, President Bush unveiled a new \$500 million program to stop the transmission of HIV from mothers to their babies.

HIV/AIDS is now an important part of our foreign policy agenda. One of the key ways our missions abroad are making a difference is by helping create partnerships that pool the resources and expertise of both public and private sectors. Consider the wonderful work that has been done in the last few months:

■ In Botswana, where more than one in three adults is HIV-positive, Ambassador John Lange has brought together all U.S. agencies at the embassy, local partners in the Botswanan government, the media and community-based organizations to create new avenues of cooperation.

■ In Lesotho, Ambassador Robert Loftis recently helped open a community-based, American-funded HIV/AIDS treatment and counseling center.

■ In Kenya, an inter-agency team working with local marketing professionals helped launch the nation-wide media campaign, "Stop AIDS—Face It—It Starts with You." The campaign is increasing awareness, encouraging testing, reducing stigmatization of those inflicted and encouraging individual responsibility to prevent the disease from spreading.

■ In Spain, one of our officers assisted an AIDS foundation with good ideas but insufficient funds in contacting American drug companies. Since then, the companies have donated more than \$700,000 in resources to local education and treatment programs.

■ In Haiti this April, Ambassador Dean Curran convened a Caribbean chiefs of mission conference to share lessons learned and to develop regional responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

We have just held a regional conference in South Africa and will soon hold another in Eastern Europe with a follow-up meeting in Russia. These conferences will bring together government officials, experts and our diplomats to discuss "best practices" and ways we can maximize our assistance.

And senior State Department officers are meeting with their Chinese counterparts to explore ways we can cooperate and help China deal with its growing AIDS problem.

Within our own State Department family, we have colleagues who need our help. We have expanded medical insurance to cover more HIV/AIDS-related expenses of Foreign Service National employees who live with the disease. And many posts have established education and prevention programs for their local employees. I encourage those who have not yet done so to launch such programs immediately, particularly in high-risk countries.

I also want to applaud those of you who are exercising leadership at a personal level. I recently presented Laurie "Sibo" Bopp—an embassy spouse in Botswana—the Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism in Africa because of her outstanding work at an AIDS hospice and at a day care center for AIDS orphans and children of AIDS patients.

December 1 is World AIDS Day. I hope all of us will take this occasion to rededicate ourselves as a Department, as embassy teams and as individuals to the global fight against HIV/AIDS. ■

Those Oh So Subtle Adjectives

I very much enjoyed Mr. Neuberg's informative letter on the former (but not so ancient) capital of Hue, Vietnam, in your September issue.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to point out to readers who may be students of the French language that Mr. Neuberg's observations on the French word "ancien" are only partly correct. In English, the French word "ancien" can, in fact, mean either "ancient" or "former." The subtlety lies in whether the adjective comes before or after the noun.

Hence, "un ancien professeur" is a former professor whereas "un professeur ancien" is correctly to be translated as an ancient professor. Only a few French adjectives have this characteristic. Another example is "ma maison propre" (my clean house) and "ma propre maison" (my own house).

Liam J. Humphreys
Public Affairs Officer
U.S. Consulate General, Durban
Former (and somewhat ancient)
FSI French professor

More on Spousal Employment

The Family Liaison Office's response on spousal employment in the July–August issue was well written and very telling. FLO directly addressed the concerns many of us share on the subject and clearly stated the efforts under way to improve the situation.

Unfortunately, the letter also clearly highlighted a long-term class issue within the Department. Instead of indicating that Foreign Service [or Department] employees are briefed "on spousal employment issues," FLO felt it necessary to list the "classes" or levels of service, with *specialists* dead last.

This "Freudian slip," or subconscious labeling of classes, indicates a situation that has existed during my entire tenure and shows that discrimination is not always race or gender oriented.

Richard E. McCormick
Information Management Officer
U.S. Embassy, Seoul

Correction

The Eastern Market on Capitol Hill dates from 1873, not the 1850s, as stated in a feature about retirees in the July–August issue. Adolph Cluss, a German-born architect who drew plans for many of Washington, D.C.'s late 19th century buildings, designed the landmark.

In the age of the supermarket, the redbrick, block-long building seven blocks from the U.S. Capitol is the last survivor of a food-distribution system that reflects President Jefferson's efforts to make the new city work for its residents.

Letters to the Editor

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for length and clarity. Only signed letters will be considered. Names may be withheld upon request. You can reach us at statemagazine@state.gov.

From the Editor

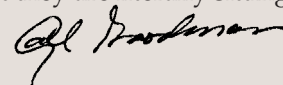
Our cover story this month is all about excellence. Inside you'll meet Department employees from around the globe who have been judged by their supervisors and peers to possess that certain quality.

As Secretary Powell stated at the start of the awards ceremony, we should always "take time" to tell people when they do a good job. For our part, we have taken the time and devoted more than a dozen pages to the awardees so that you, too, can share in their accomplishments.

Speaking of sharing, I want to thank those retirees who have responded to the invitation in our July–August issue to tell us about where they have chosen to retire and why. We ran our first "Our Town" in the October issue, and we look forward to running many more.

The employees of the U.S. Mission to NATO, our post of the month, are preoccupied with the Prague Summit, where seven new members will be added to the alliance and President Bush and Secretary Powell will speak.

You can't dig in Rome without unearthing the past. And employees at the U.S. Embassy have found once again that they are literally sitting on history.



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Ceremony Marks Sept. 11

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage presided at a ceremony in the C Street lobby of the Harry S Truman Building honoring those who died during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The Ground Zero photo exhibit by Joel Meyerowitz is on display in the lobby until it begins a tour of 134 cities worldwide.

The deputy secretary's remarks followed the presentation of colors and the singing of the national anthem on a day the President has declared Patriot Day.

In his remarks, Mr. Armitage honored victims of Sept. 11 and the 209 State Department employees who have fallen in the line of duty—many also the victims of terrorists. He introduced a survivor of the 1998 bombing in Nairobi, Tobias Otieno, a senior trade specialist with the Foreign Commercial Service, who has long since returned to work at the new embassy. He praised Mr. Otieno's courage and commitment.

The deputy secretary also spoke of Barbara Green, who was killed along with her daughter Kristin in Islamabad



in March. Her husband Milt has reported to his new post in Thailand, accompanied by his son Zach, who received minor injuries in the church blast. "They will never fully recover from the loss they suffered," Mr. Armitage said. "But none of them has given up."

The ceremony concluded with a moment of silence.



Photo by Ann Thomas

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, director general of the Foreign Service and director of Human Resources, listens as Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage delivers remarks marking the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

East Asia Creates New Offices

With the growing number of issues facing U.S. policy makers in Southeast Asia, the importance of the area to the global war on terrorism and the birth of the 21st century's first new nation, East Timor, the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs has created two new offices: the Office of Indonesia and East Timor Affairs, and the Office of Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs. The move effectively splits the former office that covered all of these countries.

The Office of Indonesia and East Timor Affairs manages relations with the world's largest Muslim nation struggling to develop a democracy through political, economic and military reform and contending with a separatist insurgency in Aceh. Indonesia receives more U.S. bilateral development assistance than any East Asian country, approximately \$130 million in FY03. During his recent visit to the area, Secretary Powell brought bold new proposals for bilateral counterterrorism cooperation that were welcomed by President Megawati and her government.

By contrast, East Timor, the poorest country in East Asia, will receive \$19 million in U.S. assistance in FY03 to help the Timorese jump-start their democracy and free-market economy. It is the largest per capita U.S. development assistance program to any nation in the world.

The Office of Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs focuses more sharply on U.S. relationships with these four countries. During Prime Minister Mahathir's visit to Washington, D.C., last May, Malaysia and the United States signed a bilateral declaration reinforcing cooperation on coun-

terterrorism. Singaporean senior minister Lee Kuan Yew advanced similar goals during his April visit to Washington, D.C. The Philippines will receive a robust \$70 million in U.S. economic and development assistance in FY03. The United States and the Philippines recently completed a successful joint military exercise to enhance Philippine capabilities to end the terrorist threat in the southern part of the country. Brunei chaired the August meeting of the ASEAN post-ministerial conference, where Secretary Powell signed a U.S.-ASEAN joint declaration for counterterrorism cooperation.



James Kelly, assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, cuts a ribbon held by Eunice Reddick and Tom Cynkin.

Open Season for Long-Term Care Insurance

Federal employees may sign up for the new federal long-term care insurance program during a special open season that ends Dec. 31.

By enrolling during the open season, current federal employees complete only an abbreviated form to elect a variety of options for services ranging from nursing home and home health care and assisted living facilities to adult day care, caregiver and respite care.

Besides federal employees, those eligible include members of the uniformed services, annuitants,

spouses of employees and annuitants, children 18 and older, parents, parents-in-law and stepparents of employees.

Enroll online at www.ltcfeds.com. To receive an information kit and application, call toll-free 1-800-582-3337 (voice) or 1-800-843-3557 (TDD).

Until payroll deduction becomes available in January 2003, State employees should pay their premiums directly.

Applications are not available in the Department.

Room With a View

After 14 years in a cramped residential apartment building visitors often ignored or couldn't find, the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna has moved up in the world—37 floors up to be exact—into a modern high-rise office tower with a panoramic view of the Danube River and downtown.

The new downtown location in the Vienna International Center has the added bonus of a cafeteria overlooking lush parks and canals with sailboats. And no longer are official visi-



David Fisher confers with colleague Kathleen Barmon.



tors—often ambassadors from other missions—driving by the former office, assuming it couldn't possibly be a U.S. diplomatic post.

The new location is ideal for a mission that hosts 1,000 delegates to international meetings annually and for employees to conduct personal business.

The employee with the best view is David Fisher, deputy counselor for political, economics and narcotics affairs.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK 2002

The Department of State, in partnership with the Department of Education, will observe the third annual International Education Week, Nov. 18 to 22.

The worldwide celebration offers an opportunity to reach out to young people in every nation, to develop a broader understanding of world cultures and languages and to reinforce the conviction that enduring friendships and partnerships created through international education and exchange are important for a secure future.

Everyone engaged in international education and exchange are encouraged to organize events, including schools, colleges and universities, international organizations, embassies, businesses and associations, international program alumni and the exchange network of citizen diplomats and constituencies. State Department employees are encouraged to visit schools or universi-

ties during the week to talk about topics such as State Department careers or international affairs.

Included among the many programs being planned to foster global understanding are symposiums, conferences, panel discussions, workshops and Sister City linkages. Foreign Service officers, Peace Corps volunteers, Fulbrighters, International Visitors and other exchange program alumni are invited to share their experiences.

Overseas, embassies and educational advising centers are coordinating a wide range of scholarly and social events. For more information on International Education Week 2002, visit <<http://exchanges.state.gov/iew/>>. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is asking participants to report a brief summary of planned activities by e-mail to feedback@pd.state.gov so that they may be available to the public.

Foreign Service National Employees Deserve Our Thanks

When this issue of *State Magazine* reaches you, most of you will be preparing for Thanksgiving Day, that uniquely American holiday President Abraham Lincoln instituted during the Civil War.

It isn't hard to find things to be grateful for—our vibrant democracy, the blessings of prosperity and the effectiveness of our diplomacy—among many other things. But as you sit down to your turkey and pause to think of things that deserve our gratitude, I hope you will include the contributions of our Foreign Service National employees.

Those of you living in places where turkeys are an exotic curiosity are likely to have a more immediate reason to appreciate our FSNs, for they are likely to have helped find, deliver or clear your Thanksgiving turkey through customs.

Two recent events here in Washington prompted me to reflect yet again on the importance of our FSN colleagues and caused me to single them out in this column.

The first was our worldwide conference of our FSNs the Bureau of Human Resources co-hosted with the Foreign Service Institute. The event brought together about 45 representatives of our 30,000-plus FSN workforce for a week of meetings and workshops. Geographically, the group was as varied as America's engagement throughout the world—from Asuncion to Vladivostok, from Cotonou to Kabul and Beijing to Tel Aviv. Not only that, but the work they do is equally varied—mail clerk, visa assistant, protocol secretary, economic specialist, motorpool supervisor and political specialist.

When I met with our FSNs on the first day of their conference, I promised them a few surprises, and I had the distinct pleasure of hearing them gasp in surprise (and start their cameras flashing) when Secretary Powell dropped by to thank them for their contributions to our diplomatic work. And he said that he tells every new ambassador going out to post that our FSNs are critical members of every embassy team and that they must be given the credit and respect they deserve.

That particular day, the Secretary was juggling calls from half a dozen foreign ministers and holding a session with a visiting head of state, but he still made time for our FSNs. Missions that think they're "too busy" to meet with



and listen regularly to their FSNs should heed the Secretary's message.

Discussions ranged across all kinds of issues: training, retirement programs, EEO issues, the role of FSNs in embassy inspections as well as cross-cultural issues in the American workplace. The exchanges were not a one-way street, I can assure you. We came away convinced this conference should remain on our yearly planning calendar.

The conference is just one of a number of initiatives we have under way to engage our FSNs more actively. FSI has been providing increased training opportunities for some time, but FSI's Joyce Marshall is always looking for new training ideas and feedback from the field. In HR, we are also working on an offshore pension system for FSNs in countries where the local social insurance system is not functional. We are also developing the new Computer Aided Job Evaluation System for use worldwide to bring coherence to job descriptions. Doug Frank's Office of Overseas Employment is busy, believe me.

The second event that caused me to reflect on the importance of our FSNs was a good deal less joyous. When I hosted the Department's award ceremony a few weeks back, I had to note the absence of one of our very best FSNs—Alli Alamin of the U.S. Embassy in Asmara. He was unable to attend the ceremony because he and a co-worker have been held as political prisoners in Asmara for more than a year without being charged. I was, nevertheless, proud to announce Mr. Alamin's selection as the Bureau of African Affairs' FSN of the Year and to note that his citation praises his "personal sacrifice, courage and grace under exceptionally difficult circumstances."

That event served to remind me that association with the United States of America, or working with our diplomats, can sometimes entail risks. That is yet another compelling reason for praising and respecting the contribution of our FSN workforce.

I'm sure that most of you serving overseas, as chief of mission or Foreign Service specialist, have stories of FSN kindness, skill, courage and hard work. I certainly have. That's why I hope that as you prepare for Thanksgiving 2002, thanking our FSNs will figure prominently.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Post of the Month:



Conference Room #1 at NATO headquarters during a special meeting of the North Atlantic Council.

Photo courtesy of NATO archives

U.S. MISSION TO
NATO

By Barry Levin

When Americans awoke on the morning of Sept. 12, 2001, after the horrific attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, their first expression of international support was from NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

European and Canadian allies invoked NATO's famous Article V—an attack on one is an attack on all—and came to our defense. In the months that followed, all NATO allies put troops on the ground in the Afghan Theater to fight terrorism shoulder to shoulder with the United States.

NATO is America's most important alliance and, arguably, the most powerful in modern history. Created in 1949 to deter a Soviet attack in Europe, it helped to win the Cold War.

But that's not the end of the story—far from it. NATO, now 19 countries strong, is poised today to make a historic transformation at the Prague Summit in November, which President Bush will attend.

NATO is changing again, this time in reaction to the Sept. 11 attacks. The alliance is now confronting the toxic mix of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The United States will launch a new action plan at the Prague Summit along with a package of commitments designed to give NATO

the advanced military capabilities it needs to take the fight to its enemies wherever they are.



At the NATO Olympics, Staff Sgt. Kermit Smith, in red shirt and khaki hat, lends a hand to the Canadian team.



The Grand Place in Brussels at night. The buildings date from the late 17th century.

Photo courtesy of Office de Promotion du Tourisme

For the past year, the U.S. Mission has been working with allies to better protect forces and populations from these new threats. There's a new relationship with Russia. In May, President Bush and his counterparts launched the NATO-Russia Council, a body that will expand cooperation on issues ranging from peacekeeping to civil defense. NATO also continues to maintain more than 40,000 troops in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.

NATO is a regular stop on the itineraries of senior U.S. government officials. The organization hosts five ministerial-level meetings annually: two with Secretary of State Powell and three with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. President Bush is no stranger to NATO either.

The U.S. Mission is unique among American diplomatic posts. It com-



Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns open a display of NATO history.

biner civilian and military personnel into what the Pentagon calls a “Purple” or joint organization that develops policy recommendations for Washington, D.C., and advances America’s security agenda with allies. A three-star Air Force general heads the U.S. military delegation. More than 200 Americans represent a wide spectrum of the U.S. security policy establishment.

NATO headquarters is also a unique locale, with delegations from the 19 allies and 27 Partnership for Peace countries all to be found “on campus.” Located in the converted Brussels hospital that was intended to be a “temporary” facility after NATO was expelled from France in 1967, the alliance is currently constructing temporary quarters for the new members invited to Prague and building a new headquarters across the street.

USNATO is a unique overseas post combining the best mix of policy formulation and advocacy. In addition to terrorism, the Balkans, enlargement and defense capabilities, officers and staff are working on missile defense, nonproliferation and NATO’s relations with the European Union and allied support for U.S. policies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

All this makes the U.S. Mission to NATO a fascinating and challenging workplace. Foreign Service political officers at the O2 level regularly represent their country at multilateral meetings, and mid-level public diplomacy officers find themselves briefing senior members of the Departments of State and Defense or the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

While the work has its own excitement, members of the U.S. Mission to NATO get to live in Belgium, a country known for its beer, chocolate and food. Eating is serious business in Belgium and for many—Belgians and visitors alike—this is the best food in Europe.

The beautiful medieval towns of Bruges (Brugge in Flemish) and Ghent are a short drive from Brussels. And there is historic Antwerpen, one of the centers of the world diamond industry and Europe’s second largest port. Drive just a bit farther and you are in France, Germany or the Netherlands.

You can explore Europe’s religious and artistic heritage and, of course, military history. The U.S. Mission staff recently visited the battlefield of Waterloo, where resident military experts retraced the brutal battle and brought history

to life. Earlier, employees toured the town of Bastogne, site of the 101st Airborne’s heroic defense during WWII’s Battle of the Bulge. In the woods where Easy Company hunkered in foxholes while German artillery splintered the trees above them, visitors found 57-year-old shrapnel.

Almost 60 years later, NATO serves as a lasting reminder of America’s willingness to stand with Europe in defense of freedom. ■

The author is public affairs adviser to the U.S. Mission to NATO.



Hikers approach a village in the mountainous region of the Ardennes in the Belgian countryside.

Office of the Month:
EMPLOYEE SERVICES CENTER



Joan Waggener assists customer at the reception desk.

**Service Is Their
Most Important Product**

By Regina Belt
Photos by Ann Thomas

For more than 40 years, the Employee Services Center—previously known as the Foreign Service Lounge—has been serving customers. The first stop for employees returning from overseas assignments, the ESC is the last stop for those departing from a domestic assignment and an office away from post for those in transit. It is a place to reconnect with colleagues and an alternative mailing address for Foreign Service employees.

The center is the initial point of contact for assistance following the in-service death of a State Department Foreign Service or Civil Service employee or family member, either in the United States or abroad. It is an ESC responsibility seldom noticed except by those who



Customers use the center's reception area.



Marguerite Fry helps a customer at the AAFSW housing desk.

deeply need and appreciate the service during a time of personal crisis.

On call 24 hours a day, officers are notified immediately by the Operations Center or by a post of the death abroad of an employee or family member. ESC notifies the next-of-kin and informs pertinent offices and processing agencies. The center cables the post requesting information regarding the return of remains, the transportation of family members and the shipment of household effects. ESC also prepares letters of condolence for the Secretary's signature.

ESC notifies more than 14 offices and agencies of an employee's death and is the primary liaison between the Bureau of Administration, benefit offices, family members and designated beneficiaries until all of the paperwork is completed. Working closely with the Office of Transportation, ESC ensures that despatch agents transport the remains and family members through customs. The center coordinates the payment of survivor benefits with the Office of Retirement, the Payroll Office and the Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance Co. in New Jersey.

ESC staff participates in briefings and task force operations related to post evacuations and other critical incidents. Crises like these demonstrate how important it is for Foreign Service employees worldwide and Civil Service employees on excursion tours to maintain up-to-date locator and emergency contact information in the "FS Employee Locator." Since April, ESC's online locator has given Foreign Service employees direct access to enter and update their individual records through the Department's Intranet at

<http://esc.a.state.gov>. An overview of procedures for handling deaths, illnesses and emergencies is on ESC's web page at <http://aoprsm.a.state.gov/esc>.

ESC prepares Leave Data, Departure from Post forms and Leave, Travel and Consultation Status forms for all Foreign Service employees transferring to or from a domestic assignment. These forms initiate personnel actions for locality pay and determine the first day of accounting for the storage of household effects. The center also reports leave for approximately 40 employees assigned to the Pearson Program and detailed throughout the United States.

The center briefs new Foreign Service employees during orientation classes at the Foreign Service Institute on the services available in the ESC. "Information for Foreign Service Personnel," a 12-page brochure issued annually, is available on ESC's web page.

Five officers and two receptionists staff the ESC. The two receptionists sort, hold and redirect 5,000 to 6,000 pieces of mail monthly. The center is equipped with telephones, one TDD device for hearing-impaired employees, local fax transmissions, a copier, BNet monitors and reprintable forms for federal, District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia taxes. Notary services are available for official government matters or documents related to overseas transfers. A recent face-lift to improve the center's appearance also added technological advances, including Internet and E*phone access. The AAFSW housing office and the passport desk have new quarters

in the Employee Services Center. Nearby are the travel and transportation offices, the claims office, American Express and the Diplomatic Security ID Unit.

The Employee Services Center, part of the Bureau of Administration's Office of General Services Management, is located in room 1252 of the Harry S Truman Building. The center is open from 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m; phone: (202) 647-3432; e-mail: EmployeeServicesCenter@state.gov; web page: <http://aoprsm.a.state.gov/esc>. ■

The author is the chief of the Employee Services Center.



Maggie Morris, senior employee services specialist, obviously enjoys serving customers.



Staff members, from left, are Doris Lortman, Maggy Morse, Joan Slaght, the author and Jacqueline Pridgen.

STATE RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE



EVERY JOB IS IMPORTANT

Every job is important and people who do their jobs well serve as models and inspiration for others, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told his audience during the Department's annual awards ceremony Sept. 23 in the stately Benjamin Franklin Room.

The Secretary said he had learned early in his long military career the value of recognizing people for jobs well done. As a young Army colonel, he recalled dropping by the base communications shop where field radios were stored and maintained. Impressed by what he saw, he



Secretary Powell keynotes awards ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room.

Thomas Dannenberg/Masterfile

Photo by Michael Gross

STATE RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE



Ambassador Ruth A. Davis and Under Secretary for Management Grant Green share duties at the awards ceremony.

Photos by Michael Gross

praised the private on duty and shortly afterwards sent him a note. Later, during a formal inspection, he saw that his note had been framed and prominently displayed on the private's wall.

"It only took me 10 seconds to write that note," the Secretary said, as he encouraged Department managers and leaders to "take the time" to thank their employees when they excel. The "thanks," he noted, can come in many forms—from the informal thank-you to formal recognition.

The event that day was about the latter—formal recognition for 29 Department employees recognized by their peers and supervisors as having served as role models in their respective fields. As Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, director general of the Foreign Service and director of Human Resources, called their names and read their citations, the employees came forward to accept their plaques from Grant Green, under secretary of State for Management.

Many of the awards included cash payments underwritten by donors. Ambassador Davis thanked the

sponsors for their generosity and noted that several were in the audience.

For the standing-room-only occasion, the Armed Forces Color Guard presented the colors and the U.S. Air Force Band played the national anthem.



The U.S. Air Force Band plays the national anthem.

STATE RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE

ANNUAL DEPARTMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of African Affairs



Alli Alamin, an economic and commercial assistant from the U.S. Embassy in Asmara, was recognized for his sustained, outstanding performance in furthering U.S.-Eritrean relations through comprehensive reporting and in-depth analysis of economic and commercial issues. He was also cited for personal sacrifice, courage and grace under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs



Thi Bich Ha Nguyen, an economic assistant in the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, was commended for her outstanding work since the establishment of diplomatic ties in improving U.S.-Vietnam relations. She also played a critical role in the successful negotiation and ratification of the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement.

Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs



Anjela Begjanova, a cultural affairs specialist in the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, earned her award for outstanding support of key cultural outreach projects that successfully supported American efforts in the war on terrorism. She was also commended for her courage and commitment to developing Turkmenistan's youth and civil society.

Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of South Asian Affairs



Mohammad Pervaiz Ansari, a financial specialist from Islamabad, demonstrated exceptional dedication to duty, knowledge, leadership and management skills in making the budget and management section a top-notch operation. He also assisted temporary duty personnel who were in Pakistan fighting the war on terrorism. Mr. Ansari played a pivotal role in the fiscal year closeout and in preparing budgets and financial work for the missions in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs



Kimberly Joy Klassen, a political and economic assistant from Calgary, was recognized for her distinguished service, exceptional creativity and remarkable energy in advancing U.S. foreign policy interests in western Canada, including the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Her expertise in the areas of regional U.S.-Canadian politics, regional economics concerning the oil and gas industries and her mastery and exceptional commitment to building bilateral bridges exemplified the finest qualities of a Foreign Service National employee in furthering U.S.-Canadian relations.

Foreign Service Employee of the Year



Qassem Abu Hadid, a security investigator in the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, received his award for exceptional resourcefulness, courage, creativity and initiative. At key points during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he employed these skills to help defuse specific flash points that, before his interventions, had threatened to spread conflict to other areas. In particular, his successful efforts to serve as a channel of communica-

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tion between Israelis and Palestinians in the Beit Jala-Gilo area helped to prevent a larger conflict in the Bethlehem-Jerusalem region, saving lives on both sides of the conflict.

Award for Excellence in Labor Diplomacy



Mark A. Mittelhauser, the labor officer in the U.S. Consulate General in Sao Paolo, earned his award for developing innovative approaches to U.S. labor policies in Brazil. He was recognized for promoting effective protection and support of internationally recognized worker rights, helping Brazil combat the problems of forced labor, child labor and the trafficking in people.

James A. Baker III-C. Howard Wilkins Jr. Award for Outstanding Deputy Chief of Mission



Stephen D. Mull, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, was recognized for his outstanding performance in leading and managing the U.S. Mission in Indonesia, for protecting the lives of U.S. citizens and personnel, for advancing the war against terrorism and for building a strong, dedicated team during a period of extraordinary stress and crisis.

Charles E. Cobb Jr. Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development



Pamela E. Bridgewater, U.S. Ambassador to Benin, received her award for expanding U.S. trade and investment opportunities, for advancing U.S. economic policy initiatives in Benin and for strengthening U.S.-Benin bilateral relations.

Charles E. Cobb Jr. Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development



Laura C. Byergo, former economic officer in Ulaanbaatar and currently a language student at FSI, shares her award with Ambassador Bridgewater for successfully promoting U.S. trade and investment and for advancing U.S. economic policy in Mongolia.

Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs



James P. McAnulty, director of the narcotics assistance section in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, was commended for his superb performance while serving as regional refugee coordinator in Nairobi. He was recognized for advancing long-standing U.S. goals of humanitarian assistance and stability in the region and for his skillful diplomacy in Kenya.

James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence



Mark F. Wong, deputy coordinator of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, was recognized for his extraordinary contribution to the promotion and protection of U.S. interests and especially for his efforts after Sept. 11, 2001. He exercised uncommon leadership in supporting U.S. policy objectives and in marshaling resources across geographic and functional lines. His integrity, commitment, intellectual and moral courage, discipline and patriotism were in keeping with the finest traditions of the Department.

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Director General's Award for Impact and Originality in Reporting



Patricia Haslach, director of the Afghanistan reconstruction office, earned this award for her incisive reporting from the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad before and during Operation Enduring Freedom. Her reporting ensured that Washington, D.C. policy makers understood the complexity of the trade and financial problems facing Pakistan and the specific steps the United States could take to help address them. The quality and timeliness of her work were truly outstanding and of immense value to U.S. policy makers.

Diplomatic Security Employee of the Year



Bartle B. Gorman was recognized for his superlative performance as the regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan. He ensured the mission's security preparedness by methodically conducting drills and reviewing security plans. Mr. Gorman was sensitive to the needs and feelings of his colleagues and skillfully juggled his many roles as a regional security officer. Because of his extraordinary talent, the mission in Yerevan is far more prepared to face any threat.

Equal Employment Opportunity Award



Ronald J. Tomasso, a project architect in the architectural design branch in the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, received this award for his untiring work in removing barriers and improving accessibility for disabled employees at U.S. Missions abroad and for his leadership as architect and coordinator of the Barrier-Free Accessibility Action and Policy Implementation Plan. His extraordinary efforts to promote equal access for all employees have enhanced the quality of life for everyone who uses Department facilities throughout the world.

Robert C. Frasure Memorial Award



Ryan C. Crocker, deputy assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, was recognized for his exceptional courage in Afghanistan during an untenable political situation, for exercising extraordinary leadership under fire, for his commitment to effective management under the most difficult circumstances and for his creativity in facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles. His outstanding efforts contributed to the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, establishing communications with the Afghan Interim Government and rebuilding the Afghan Army. Mr. Crocker's work to release \$200 million in Afghan resources and his role in executing the USAID Afghan support program empowered the Afghan people.

Leamon R. Hunt Award for Administrative Excellence



Ola B. Criss was recognized for her skill, judgment and dedication to her work as the administrative officer in the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia. She personified true administrative excellence in establishing new administrative systems, policies and procedures in reversing over a decade of crisis-driven administration. In the face of deteriorating bilateral relations with Liberia, she significantly raised post morale and operational effectiveness in an extremely tense and dangerous environment, ensuring that essential systems and operations functioned normally.

Swanee Hunt Award for Outstanding Achievement in Improving the Status of Women Globally (Foreign Service Employee)

Barbro Appelquist Owens, former U.S. Ambassador to Niger, received the award for her extraordinary contribution to advancing the status of women and their influence over public policy in Niger during her three years of service. With vision, energy and commitment, she engaged Niger's local and national women leaders in promoting programs to reduce the isolation of rural women, promote income generation by women, halt

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child marriages, protect young women injured by early child-birth and end the practice of female genital mutilation.

Swanee Hunt Award for Outstanding Achievement in Improving the Status of Women Globally (Foreign Service National Employee)



Howaida Nadim, public affairs specialist in the U.S. Embassy in Doha, was commended for her long history of outstanding work in advancing the status of women in Qatar. She played an indispensable role in expanding the participation of women in politics and public policy, supporting Qatari women who are taking the

lead in educational reforms, assisting Qatar's nascent nongovernmental organization sector and engaging with the small but growing network of Qatari business-women.

Innovation in the Use of Technology Award



Ronald L. Acker, visa regulations coordinator in the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Legislation, Regulations and Advisory Assistance, was recognized for conceptualizing and overseeing the development and implementation of the federal government's first completely electronic visa system, the Olympic Visa Issuance Data-

base. His achievement resulted in a seamless process for adjudicating and issuing electronic visas, allowing 16,000 electronic visas to be processed for foreign nationals accredited to the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Linguist of the Year Award



Jason L. Davis, former chief of the political section in the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, earned this award for his exemplary achievement in acquiring and using the Arabic and Hebrew languages, for his outstanding application of his linguistic skills in four critical Near East posts and for his unique contributions

in supporting U.S. policy goals in that area. Mr. Davis is currently studying Farsi at the Foreign Service Institute.

Frank E. Loy Award for Outstanding Environmental Diplomacy



Jeffrey Allen Miotke, chief of the economic section in the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, was recognized for his exceptional leadership, diplomatic accomplishments and unwavering dedication in the pursuit of U.S. policy goals during climate change negotiations. Mr. Miotke set the standard for environmental diplomacy

while serving as the director of the Office of Global Change in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

Thomas Morrison Information Management Award



Steven M. Derrick, an information management officer at the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa, earned this award for his demonstrated leadership and sound judgment during the USS *Cole* bombing. He displayed valor, calmness and strength during situations that were beyond his control. His leadership during this emergency

had a significant and positive impact on his colleagues and the Department of State family.

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Arnold L. Raphel Memorial Award



Maura A. Harty, special assistant to the Secretary and the executive secretary of the Department, was recognized for her exceptional dedication, strong leadership and boundless encouragement to both Civil Service and Foreign Service employees throughout her career, particularly focusing on junior officers and new employees. She demonstrated unwavering commitment to the professional development of her colleagues as a mentor, leader and friend.

Luther I. Replogle Award for Management Improvement



Warrington E. Brown, recently assigned as chief of the administrative section in the U.S. Mission in Geneva, earned this award for his extraordinary management foresight and ingenuity in obtaining diplomatic privileges for all personnel at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, achieving reforms to the standardized regulations and supervising a cost-effective and efficient administrative operation that resulted in significant savings to the U.S. taxpayer.

Herbert Salzman Award for Excellence in International Economic Performance



Kenneth J. Fairfax, chief of the economic section in the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, was recognized for his exceptional international economic performance in supporting U.S. business and in making important and lasting advances in economic reforms in Ukraine.

Civil Service Secretary of the Year Award



Mary Ann Fisher, secretary to the director of the Foreign Service Institute, earned this award for her outstanding professional competence in support of the mission of the Department of State and for her extraordinary dedication, organizational skills and professional achievements, reflecting the highest ideals and traditions of the Civil Service.

Office Management Specialist of the Year Award



Janice C. Green, office management specialist in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, was recognized for her tireless efforts in helping achieve critical mission and national goals in supporting the war on terrorism and for providing the advice, expertise and long hours necessary to ensure the success of the Vice President's visit to Oman. Her extraordinary dedication and professional achievements reflect the highest ideals and traditions of the Foreign Service.

Barbara M. Watson Award for Consular Excellence



William J. Martin earned the award for his outstanding service as acting consul general in Jakarta, where he successfully handled a dramatic increase in nonimmigrant visa applications, dealt with threats to American citizens throughout Indonesia, streamlined consular operations in Surabaya and established a warden system in war-ravaged East Timor. His exemplary performance set the standard for offering the finest consular services under the most extreme conditions.

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FSNs OF THE YEAR

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE KRECKE



Five FSNs of the Year—Bich Ha Nguyen, Anjela Begjanova, Mohammad Pervaiz Ansari, Kimberly Klassen and Qassem M. Abu Hadid—attend the awards ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room. Alli Allamin could not attend because he has been detained without charge by the Eritrean government.

Photo by Michael Gross

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"...his information and analysis help us find targets of opportunity in our ongoing attempts to find a way back to peace."

Qassem M. Abu Hadid, U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem

Qassem M. Abu Hadid, Foreign Service National Employee of the Year for 2002, is a security investigator at one of the most challenging U.S. diplomatic missions in the world, the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem. Investigators conduct background checks of prospective employees or visa applicants. Mr. Abu Hadid handles that responsibility superbly and much more.

Security has been the number one priority in Jerusalem for years. But since the beginning of the second *intifada* about 18 months ago, violence has escalated to an unprecedented level even by the standards of this troubled area. The nominating cable calls Mr. Abu Hadid's "...round-the-clock monitoring of the West Bank security situation ...essential to the U.S. government's understanding of what is actually happening on the ground...." More important, the cable says, "...his information and analysis

help us find targets of opportunity in our ongoing attempts to find a way back to peace."

In a striking example of Mr. Abu Hadid's contribution to peace in the region, the cable continues, "Beginning in May, Qassem played an essential role in trying to bring quiet to the area between Bethlehem and Jerusalem." When sporadic sniping disrupted the peace, Mr. Abu Hadid prevailed on Palestinian authorities to conduct credible searches for the snipers. At the same time, the defense attaché's office negotiated a commitment from the Israelis not to retaliate. "Step by step," the cable states, "the Qassem-DAO 'tag-team,' responding to each incident of gunfire, created a cease-fire which, while far from perfect, remains in place today."

Mr. Abu Hadid plays a leading role in ensuring the safety of U.S. VIPs visiting Palestinian leaders on the West Bank. Scores of these high-level officials visit the consulate each year, from the Secretary of State and key members of Congress, to presidential envoys and senior Department officials. Mr. Abu Hadid's solid, dependable contacts with the Palestinian side guarantee their safety. "These people trust me while they're closing their eyes," Mr. Abu Hadid said. "It's a lot of responsibility. But it's also very rewarding work."



Lynn Boone, FSN of the Year award coordinator in the Office of Overseas Employment, and Qassem Abu Hadid at the luncheon the office hosted for the FSNs of the Year.

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Photo courtesy of Qassem Abu Hadid



Qassem Abu Hadid atop the Mount of Olives with the old city of Jerusalem in the background.

Raised in a section of East Jerusalem beyond the old city's walls, the third child in a family of nine children, Mr. Abu Hadid seems to have been born to security work. His father headed the consulate's security and cleaning workforces in the early 1980s when the functions were handled under contract. When he graduated from school, Mr. Abu Hadid joined the consulate staff as a contract security guard himself in 1986. A year later, he became a direct hire employee and was promoted to shift leader. Later, he became a security investigator.

The consulate's security section is communally balanced: half of the FSNs are Israelis and half are Palestinians. Of the Palestinians, half are Muslim and the other half are Christian. As is the case with all of the consulate's sections, employees in the security section trust each other and work closely together in a fashion the population outside the consulate's walls could learn from.

Mr. Abu Hadid's wife Siham is a nurse. The couple has five children under the age of 11. He describes his relationships with the succession of regional security officers over the years as close. "They are truly my friends rather than supervisors," Mr. Abu Hadid says. "They have visited my home and I've visited theirs. They appreciate my work and make me feel like I'm part of the team. In turn, I am willing to put in long hours on the job and contribute to their safety."

Alli Alamin, the Bureau of African Affairs' FSN of the Year, was conspicuous by his absence from the September award ceremony. The economic and commercial assistant and another brave FSN colleague from the U.S. Embassy in Asmara have been "detained without charges" by the Eritrean government for more than a year. Their detention is a poignant reminder that associating with the U.S. government in some places carries serious risks.

Ironically, the cable nominating Mr. Alamin documents actions he took that increased the flow of valuable resources to the Eritrean economy and people. His quick responses to Washington's complex questions, for example, helped certify Eritrea for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.



Photo courtesy of Alli Alamin

"One of the embassy's longest-serving employees and a consistently outstanding performer."

Alli Alamin, U.S. Embassy in Asmara

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Describing Mr. Alamin as “one of the embassy’s longest-serving employees” and a “consistently outstanding performer,” the cable praises his understanding of the Eritrean economy and his wide-ranging contacts in both the government and private sectors.

His timely and “insightful analysis” and reports recorded the government’s moves to tighten foreign exchange controls, devalue the currency and revise the country’s tariff regime. On his own initiative, Mr. Alamin prepared incisive reports on investment opportunities, the communications and transportation sectors and energy policies.

A skilled communicator and a keen observer of Eritrea’s political scene, Mr. Alamin delivers excellent briefings to senior embassy staff and U.S. business representatives. He has worked closely with other embassy elements, including the public affairs section to nominate deserving Eritreans for International Visitor grants and design programs and identify audiences for visiting American speakers.

Mr. Alamin and the newly hired political assistant were arrested during a government crackdown on political dissenters in October 2001. The government claims their arrests and detention are unrelated to their embassy employment, but in the absence of charges, the embassy is skeptical. The U.S. Mission in Eritrea is deeply committed to seeking their release and continues to raise the issue at the highest levels of the Eritrean government.

Mohammad Pervaiz Ansari doesn’t wear a number on his back like Michael Jordan, so his number will never be retired like Jordan’s 23. But if anyone has earned a place in the FSN Hall of Fame when it’s built, it’s this quietly competent financial assistant from Islamabad. For the second time in three years, he has been chosen **FSN of the Year from the South Asian region**. In the 12 years since these awards have been given, only one other FSN, Nikola Bodi from Belgrade, has captured the honor more than once.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S. Mission in Pakistan has experienced two evacuations of U.S. dependents and nonemergency employees, one shortly after the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., and the other in the wake of the cowardly attack on the international church that took the lives of an embassy employee and her teenaged daughter. The nominating cable credits Mr. Ansari with playing a “...pivotal role by advising and



“[He has an] uncanny ability, strength and fortitude to get his job done gracefully and to operate effectively under tremendous pressure.”

Mohammad Pervaiz Ansari , U.S. Embassy in Islamabad

assisting the budget and management officer in expeditiously processing \$200,000 in evacuee travel advances and transportation and baggage payments, literally within hours of the first evacuation order.”

In the past year, the mission estimates more than 3,000 official visitors and temporary duty employees have traveled to Pakistan in connection with the war on terrorism, each requiring financial support. Not only did Mr. Ansari efficiently assume the burden of these visitors’ financial needs, he methodically designed a “transparent and equitable system that will become a model for charging ICASS costs for long-term temporary duty employees visiting posts around the world.”

Mr. Ansari oversees the budgetary challenges of a front-line post with annual disbursements of more than \$6.5 million, supervises an 18-person budget and management

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team, certifies 75 percent of the mission's 13,000 vouchers and monitors and manages 13 cashier operations throughout the mission. In addition, he and his team also handle the financial accounts and training of the staff at the new post in Kabul.

Like so many inspiring leaders, he is quick to share the credit for these amazing accomplishments with his financial management team. Before he left Islamabad, he told his colleagues, "I am getting this award because of you. The leader cannot be recognized without sharing the praise with the rest of the team as well." Mr. Ansari also credits his U.S. supervisors over the years for appreciating the team's efforts and for recognizing them with the award nominations.

Mr. Ansari looks far too young to be a grandfather. Only a slight graying at the temples betrays the fact that he and his wife Shahida have two daughters, a son and a young grandson. He admits it has been a tense year. "Al Qaeda has been watching Americans and FSNs too," he says. One might have expected Mr. Ansari to linger in the United States for a well-earned rest during awards week. But true to type, he shortened his all-expense-paid week in Washington, D.C., to two days and returned to Islamabad to assist in closing out the fiscal year.



During his whirlwind, two-day visit to Washington, Mohammad Ansari pauses for a photo in the courtyard of the Harry S Truman Building.



*"I love working with youth.
They are the only hope for my country."*

Anjela Begjanova, U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat

Affable **Anjela Begjanova**, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs' choice for FSN of the Year, could be a talk show host. She's such a poised conversationalist and so eager to make new friends.

In fact, before joining the public affairs section in the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat in 1995, she hosted eight sessions of a pilot show for Turkmenistan television called "Bridges of Friendship." She envisioned the program as an exercise in cultural outreach, helping the relatively isolated citizens of Turkmenistan understand other cultures through a program featuring a different nation in each session. While it was a huge success with the viewing public, her pilot program was not accepted by government television for bureaucratic reasons.

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Photo courtesy of Anjela Begjanova



*Anjela Begjanova shows the first issue of the post's cultural magazine, **Echo of America**, to visiting Ambassador William Taylor, coordinator for U.S. assistance to Europe and Eurasia.*

Turkmenistan's television viewers' loss was the U.S. Embassy's gain. Soon afterward, Ms. Begjanova was hired to handle Fulbright, International Visitor and speaker programs as the cultural affairs specialist. In those days, she was the cultural section. Now, seven years later, there are five FSNs and an American public affairs officer at the post.

The ambassador's nominating cable concentrates on Ms. Begjanova's accomplishments since Sept. 11. "She has been enormously effective in developing and managing a high-impact media and information campaign in support of U.S. policy in neighboring Afghanistan," the cable states. "Her efforts are key to the mission's long-term strategy for promoting change through the 'next generation' of Turkmen leaders."

The cable credits Ms. Begjanova with launching a War on Terrorism information center within the American Center, an important source of information in a frontline state with limited access to outside sources of international news. Getting the message through sparked a "groundswell of public sympathy" in support of the U.S. view.

Another significant event was the opening of the ambassador's cultural preservation project, the restoration of historic Annau Dragon Mosque. Ms. Begjanova worked with

a local historian to develop the project. The restored mosque, unveiled in a high-level ceremony after Sept. 11, offered tangible proof that the United States was at war with terrorism, not Islam.

Trained as an economist in Moscow, Ms. Begjanova soon discovered she was "better with people than with numbers." She returned home and married an architect. Aygul, the couple's 14-year-old daughter, accompanied her mother to the United States for the award ceremony and spoke about life in Turkmenistan to classes in two Washington, D.C.-area schools.

This was not Ms. Begjanova's first visit to the United States. She traveled to Albuquerque in 1994 as one of the founders of the Sister City relationship between the New Mexico city and Ashgabat, and she lived in the nation's capital for four months in 1997 as a fellow at Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies.

Summing up her view of her work, Anjela Begjanova says, "When I was a teacher, I taught one lesson at a time. Now, I'm where I want to be. In this work there are many aspects. I feel happy when I see a small amount of money go a long way toward democracy—a community center, a school—I get tears in my eyes. And I love working with youth. They are the only hope for my country."



Photo courtesy of Anjela Begjanova

Alumni of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs talk with Anjela Begjanova at the American Center in Ashgabat.

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Calgary, Alberta, is a long way from Ashgabat. It's even a long way from Ottawa. But **Kimberly Klassen, FSN of the Year from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs**, enjoys living only an hour from the Canadian Rockies and working as a political and economic assistant at the U.S. Consulate there. She's worked for the U.S. Mission to Canada, first in Winnipeg and then in Calgary, for 21 years.

In his cable nominating Ms. Klassen, Consul General Roy Chavera describes the consulate as a post with a small staff but a vast geographic and issues portfolio. U.S.-Canada bilateral trade amounts to a staggering \$1.4 billion per day, much of it in energy and agriculture centered in Canada's western provinces.



Photo courtesy of Kim Klassen

Kim Klassen with Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable Howard Cann in Banff, Alberta, a 70-minute drive from the Calgary consulate.



"A multitasked FSN who ensures the mission's success."

Kimberly Klassen, U.S. Consulate General in Calgary

He describes Ms. Klassen as a "multitasked FSN who ensures the mission's success." He praises her creativity and energy and characterizes her economic reporting as "stellar." But Mr. Chavera isn't the only Department official to recognize her reporting skills. Early in 2001, Alan Larson, then assistant secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, sent her a congratulatory message saying, in part, "Your reporting is helping to shape State's input into the administration's energy task force and North American energy initiative discussions with Canada and Mexico." The Department of Agriculture also recognized Ms. Klassen with its "excellence in reporting" award.

The consul general also notes Ms. Klassen's skill as a scheduler. On very short notice, she arranged appointments for a visiting assistant secretary in the Department of Energy that put the official in contact with all of Calgary's power representatives.

When the U.S. Mission decided to reestablish a presence in Winnipeg, Ms. Klassen's hometown, she was the mission's natural choice for coordinating arrangements for the American Presence Post there. Once everything was in place, she arranged introductory meetings for the new consul.

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"(She is) recognized for her tireless work in negotiating the bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam."

Thi Bich Ha Nguyen, U.S. Embassy in Hanoi

Kim Klassen clearly enjoys her work. She credits the consul general with giving her a lot of responsibility and the opportunity to explore the vast consular district for herself. "One of the advantages of a small post," she says, "is the collegial atmosphere. We have good working relationships in the consulate. The system isn't at all hierarchical."

Thi Bich Ha Nguyen, the economic assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, is the FSN of the Year from the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. An original member of the mission staff when it opened in 1995, Ms. Bich Ha is recognized for her tireless work in negotiating the bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. It is "the most complex and comprehensive bilateral trade agreement the United States has ever negotiat-

ed," according to the nominating cable. "Ms. Bich Ha's consistent efforts and informed counsel were key to the success throughout every step of the process..."

A succession of Foreign Service officers came and left Hanoi during the lengthy negotiations, but Ms. Bich Ha remained as the only person intimately involved in every development from 1996 to 2001, when the agreement was signed.

Despite the complications of the negotiations owing to the history between the United States and Vietnam, "...Ms. Bich Ha played an important role in creating an atmosphere of greater understanding and in helping the U.S. negotiators understand the domestic political and economic situations that formed the Vietnamese positions..."

"She researched, wrote, interpreted, translated, analyzed and proposed innovative solutions to problems at every turn of the negotiation....Ms. Bich Ha played a critical role in achieving the successful negotiation of that agreement and in helping improve the direction of U.S.-Vietnam relations...."



Thi Bich Ha Nguyen stands between James Kelly, assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Claire Pierangelo, economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, who flew back to Washington expressly to see Ms. Bich Ha receive her award.

Photo by Dave Krecke

Military Hospital Cures Frankfurt's Growing Pains

By David Farrar

As the Marine Corps color guard marched smartly toward the reviewing stand on the front lawn of what had been several days earlier a U.S. Air Force contingency hospital, the 4th of July crowd of 600 sensed that a new chapter in Frankfurt's consulate general history had begun. The color guard's motions foreshadowed a time in 2004 when a similar ceremony would see Old Glory hoisted above this same property to inaugurate its new, spacious home.

Since the first U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt opened in 1829, the offices had moved another 12 times in the intervening 173 years to accommodate an expanding diplomatic role. Today, the consulate's umbrella supports State and 16 other agencies and employs more than 300 direct hires and 400 Foreign Service National employees—currently scattered among seven buildings. Moving into this facility seemed the cure to the consulate's space woes and to increasing staff efficiency and security. As the Department's largest regional center, this new facility will be a prime example of regionalization and a model of interagency cooperation.

But this structure isn't just a big building—it comes with a history. In 1937, shortly after Hitler sent troops

into the Rhineland, the Luftwaffe ordered construction of a large hospital in Frankfurt. The complex was to house 300 beds during peacetime and expand to 600 beds in wartime without structural change. A private architect, Paul Bonatz, finished the plans in the spring of 1938. The 300-page plan passed through the hands of Air Marshal Hermann Goering onto Hitler's desk, who made sure the ration laws would not affect construction.

Bonatz designed the hospital with several innovations. A central block containing operating rooms, laboratories, pharmacy and morgue comprised the central work unit, with all other wings feeding into it. Another new concept was the use of steam pipes to serve as the hospital's heating system and reinforce the walls. The architect also

added such personal touches as entry columns, steep roofs with peaked windows, broad grassy areas and an inner courtyard.

In August 1939, the almost finished hospital received its first war casualties from the invasion of Poland. Construction continued into 1943, when the tides of war began to turn against the Axis. On March 29, 1945, the 385th Armored Battalion captured the hospital and by mid-April the hospital began operating as a U.S. Army hospital.

The Army expanded the hospital throughout the 1940s and 1950s. In 1982, the Army began a six-phase, 11-year, \$91.3 million renovation—the first in the hospital's history. Soon the



Edward O'Donnell, consul general, center left, accepts the ceremonial key to the future home of the consulate from Klaus-Peter Grommes, federal finance director. Also shown are Horst Hemzal, far left, Frankfurt city treasurer, and Bernd Abeln, state secretary from the Hesse ministry of finance.

renamed 97th General Army Hospital was the busiest in the European Command. With more than 30 specialty clinics, a veterinary detachment and preventive medicine facility, the hospital cared for more than 140,000 soldiers and civilians in a 5,500-square-mile area of Germany, plus specialized care for much of the U.S. Army in Europe.

The hospital witnessed some 100,000 births, the first open-heart surgery in Frankfurt and visits by Sgt. Elvis Presley and Gen. Colin Powell. Approximately 3,000 servicemen were treated there during the Persian Gulf War, and during the height of the Cold War, some 1,200 beds were occupied.

When the Cold War ended, however, the facility ceased to be a major medical center. In 1995, the Army transferred the hospital to the U.S. Air Force Europe, which renamed it the 469th contingency hospital with 500 beds and maintained it with a small caretaker staff.

By 2001, the Frankfurt Consulate General had long outgrown its infrastructure and was looking for solutions. At the same time, the Air Force was concentrating its assets around Ramstein Air Base near Kaiserslautern, about 100 miles southwest of Frankfurt, and determined the hospital wasn't needed. Acquiring the hospital site would solve the consulate's space crunch by folding all seven consulate work sites neatly into a single facility and improving security.

Last year the Department and the German Federal Finance Ministry signed an agreement to transfer the

hospital from the Air Force to the German government and then to the State Department. On April 29, 2002, in a press conference at the Amerika Haus Frankfurt, Consul General Edward O'Donnell and Federal Finance Director Klaus-Peter Grommes signed a purchase agreement. In June 2002, the U.S. Congress and the German Federal Council (Bundesrat) approved the purchase. The hospital became State Department property on July 1, just in time for the July 4th celebration.

Platoons of architects and space planners from Overseas Buildings Operations have visited the property and recognize it as one of their biggest challenges of the decade. With 23 acres of land and nearly 375,000 square feet of office space, the building is one of the largest U.S. government buildings overseas. It will secure Frankfurt's primacy as a regional diplomatic hub well into this century.

As Consul General O'Donnell noted, "This building and our presence here as the largest consulate in the world, larger than nearly all U.S. Embassies, will be a reflection and symbol of the U.S. commitment to Frankfurt, to Germany and to Europe for the future."

He should know. He was treated in the hospital as a young Army officer while stationed in Germany in the 1970s. ■

The author is the public affairs officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt.



A Marine Corps honor guard presents the colors at the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt.

Flying First Class to America

By Joann L. Wernig-Jesser

It was a hot July evening in Muscat, Oman, and my husband David was taking Phil, our Jack Russell, for his nightly walk. Suddenly, he came upon two abandoned puppies in a box beside the road. They were crying and hungry.

Twenty minutes later the pups, about five weeks old, were on our kitchen floor feasting on milk and canned cat food. Once fed, they soon began exploring their surroundings and playing tug-of-war with one of Phil's old chew toys. The next morning, they were sprawled on the tiled floor directly under the air conditioner, having abandoned a warm bed made for them the night before. For desert dogs, they never did get around to liking the heat very much!

At first, we had no intention of keeping our new wards, Grant and Lee, the names we gave them, for we had learned from previous tours that shipping animals is always a challenge. Before arriving in Muscat, we had completed a mountain of required import paperwork, only to be delayed upon arrival for three hours as customs officials played a maddening game of "let's make a regulation."

For us, two cats and one dog were enough—or so we thought.

As there are no animal shelters in Oman, the next day we posted "adoption" signs around the embassy community and took the pups for a checkup. A few days later, we were hooked and the signs came down. Lee would stay with us and Grant would soon find a home with my parents in Maryland. Their own dog had died the previous year and the time was right for a new puppy. They did not know anything about "Jebel" or "desert" dogs, but Grant needed a loving home and they had one to give.

Two months later we prepared to take our first R&R from Muscat. It had been a long year and we were looking forward to a break from that very demanding post.



First-class passenger Grant with the author shortly after his rescue.

Photo by David Jesser

We booked passage on KLM, but the week before we were to leave, my husband decided to cut his leave by a week to lessen the staffing gap. So, with Grant in tow, I made the flight alone.

After landing in Amsterdam, I was told that the baggage handlers were on strike and would not load any luggage onto connecting flights. This included Grant. The steward said the puppy would be shipped on the first available flight after the strike. I explained to the KLM flight supervisor why I would not leave without Grant, even if it meant taking a later flight. The Dutch take fantastic care of animals in transit and I knew he'd be all right, but I would not make the trip unless Grant was on the plane.

The KLM supervisor was sympathetic. He phoned the airport "animal hotel" and had the puppy brought to the tarmac. The supervisor personally carried Grant into the plane's cabin. Grant's kennel, however, was too big for a seat in economy class (where I was booked) or even business class. The kennel would fit safely only in a first-class seat.

The supervisor asked would I mind sitting beside the puppy and keeping an eye on him during the trip? Of course not, I said.

The flight to Dulles was great. Grant and I shared my beef burgundy dinner and omelet breakfast. He had come a long way. I wished the individual who left the puppies on the side of the road that scorching July night could have seen him now, sleeping peacefully and tucked away in a first-class seat en route to a new and charmed life in the United States.

When we arrived at Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C., Immigration quickly cleared Grant and America welcomed her newest canine immigrant. ■

The author is the wife of David P. Jesser, information program officer at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa.

MOVING:

A TEENAGER'S POINT OF VIEW

By Ryan Uyehara

Moving—what a bland word that is. At least to most people.

To teenagers whose parents are in the Foreign Service, moving serves up a vastly different range of emotions. To most people, moving means going from point A to point B. To me, moving means going from Point A to Point B and saying a lot of goodbyes at Point A and saying a bunch of hellos at Point B. Sort of like a politician.

Enter my world. Moving is so hard for a child. It's so hard for me. For teenagers who have spent their whole lives being shunted from one place to another, losing and remaking friends, smiling and crying, it means that we are constantly in an emotional limbo.

But, of course, we don't show it. Moving is such an integral part of State Department life. It's either every year or every two years or—if you're lucky—every three years. I've moved, I think, six times, all because of my parents' work. I'm not saying it's bad. But it sure is hard. I've lived in Yokohama, Tokyo, Fairfax City, Va., twice, Manila and, currently, in Jakarta.

Moving makes you resigned to the process, sort of tormented. You get used to the physical part of it. You know about watching the movers, making sure that they put the proper things in airfreight, trying to help your parents when they're trying to help the movers. That can annoy the movers.

But you don't ever get used to the emotional part. That part is so diverse. I remember when I was younger, in first grade, and I was in Yokohama and there wasn't much upheaval. I just cried the first day at school and that was it. I adjusted. It was the same a year later when I moved to Tokyo. In fact, I don't even remember if I was upset at all. It was just an experience for me. I was so resilient back then.

But in fourth grade, when I was moving to Northern Virginia, I remember it so clearly. My friends were seeing me off and they just followed the bus as we left, waving, smiling. It was the same with me. I was

so naïve I didn't realize I would long for them later. I still reminisce about Tokyo.

Then I stayed in Virginia for just a year. I thought and hoped we all might stay there for another year. It was about February or March when the people at Foggy Bottom were deciding where we would be going. I had just gotten used to my friends. I was happy. Of course, with my bad luck, they decided to send us off to Jakarta that summer.

I cried silently in my room for many afternoons and for many more days once we got to Jakarta that summer. My tear ducts were drained. I still find it hard to cry today, even on my saddest, most pathetic days. And I still reminisce about Fairfax.

What I'm getting at is: this is probably the norm among teenagers in State Department families. You don't really notice it. They just seem like happy teenagers on the surface. But, of course, that doesn't really tell you much.

There's a stark contrast between kids in the States and kids in State. I cling to things that connect me to the United States. Whether it's my patriotism or my belief that the Cleveland Indians will one day beat the Yankees in the playoffs, I'm anxious to prove my patriotism to my friends in the international community.

But I also see another disturbing trend among State children. Some don't even seem connected to the United States. Some have this teenager disconnectedness about their roots, as if they don't care. I'm not one to judge, but I find that disturbing.

Now, I lie in bed in the evenings wondering what my final days in Jakarta will be like. How will I say goodbye? Will I cry in front of people I will never see again? People and friends I will probably lose contact with after a year as I forge new contacts.

I lie in bed wondering why I have lost the spirit to fight, why I cannot cry and why my heart feels weighed down by a great sorrow.

And I know why.

I am moving, as I have done all my life.

I am moving and I am resigned to it. I know that deep beneath our visible bodies we are tormented, afraid to get too close or stray too far. We are conflicted and we are hurting. I speak from experience—my own—but I am sure others feel the same way. I am resigned to that fact. What can we do? I have learned to take life as it comes, to deal with the cards that life, or the government, has dealt.

In this case, I got a bad hand. ■

The author is the son of Michael Uyehara, desk officer for Belarus, and Margaret Uyehara, director of the Office of Allowances in the Bureau of Administration.



Jonathan Kiri/Stock Connection/PictureQuest

Moving involves more than heavy lifting, according to the author.

UNDERST

By Valeria Brunori

When electrical trenches were dug in the parking lot of the 19th century Twin Villas housing the consular and public affairs sections of the U.S. Embassy in Rome, ancient Roman marble funerary stele, brick walls, a second century lead pipe and an imperial bronze coin were uncovered, revealing more of the Eternal City's past.



Roman lead pipe bearing the stamp "Neronis Claudi Caes Aug."



Photos courtesy of the U.S. Embassy, Rome

A workman digs a drainage trench.

Rome is a "tell"—a mound of successive settlements. The grounds employees traverse every day are like a huge book. Understanding the book's meaning isn't easy and only after years of study is it possible to learn how to turn its pages. That job falls to the archaeologist.

The recent discoveries confirm that the U.S. Embassy in Rome is a chapter from this book.

During the earliest stages of the renovation, it was clear that the work might not be easy. Many painted plaster fragments, bones, pottery and ancient marble pieces from the Roman period soon began to emerge from earth removed and refilled many times. In Rome, excavations are normal and an archaeologist doesn't stop work but allows it to continue respectfully. The archaeologist documents significant structures, gathers artifacts, records context, suggests modifications, meticulously documents, observes and protects.

At the corner of the public affairs building, workers uncovered nine funerary marbles with inscriptions covering a water channel installed during the construction of

THE

A N D I N G

the villa more than 110 years ago. Not knowing what we had, the first marble was broken unintentionally. The reuse of such fragments at the end of the 1800s, when the value of ancient sculpture was fully recognized, is surprising. It is interesting that the 19th century workers turned the slabs face down—possibly to protect the inscriptions.

The inscriptions tell the story of freed slaves and are similar to others that have turned up elsewhere in the Horti Sallustiani, an ancient imperial residence that included famous gardens and a stadium. The inscriptions can be dated to before the end of the third century AD, when Marcus Aurelius built his wall around the city to protect Rome from invasions. Before that, burials were permitted only outside the walls.

As the excavation continued, an ancient brick wall was discovered. Its face had been destroyed, but an embedded lead pipe revealed its date. A stamp on the pipe reads: NERONIS CLAUDI CAES AUG—disclosing its first century origin. The embassy contacted the superintendent of archaeology and contracted with a respected archaeologist to monitor the excavation.

Several medieval, Renaissance and other Roman walls and an ancient marble threshold were found. A metal



A funeral marble slab lies face down in the treasure trench.



Roman coins before and after restoration.

detector uncovered a fine bronze coin with the head of Emperor Domitian (81–96 AD).

The embassy's small but exciting archaeological salvage demonstrates the uniqueness of all sites and the respect they deserve. There is no civilization without cultural consciousness. Civilization rests upon the knowledge of history and the preservation of its testimonies. ■

The author is curator at the U.S. Embassy in Rome.

P A S T

eMED Improves Patient Care

By Michael Pate

Providing medical assistance during disaster recovery or other medical emergencies requires immediate access to accurate medical records. After the tragic embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, many difficult medical questions were asked about the survivors. How many were injured and how badly? What were victims' medical histories and how quickly could this information be available?

No one was more concerned with the answers to these and many more questions than the Department's Office of Medical Services. Medical providers and other staff at the embassy sites faced daunting tasks in caring for the victims and assessing their injuries.

Last March, MED began piloting an innovative electronic medical records system called eMED. "eMED will enhance MED's ability to provide quality health care and immediate access to medical records. This system is part of our ongoing response to new global patient needs by expanding MED's infrastructure," according to Dr. Cedric E. Dumont, medical director for the Office of Medical Services.

eMED was constructed to ensure data security and privacy. Security measures meet federal guidelines, and no medical information is sent through the Internet. eMED is located behind the Department's electronic firewall and only authorized users in MED will have access to the system. To ensure privacy, authorized users are given access only to the information they "need to know." All information in eMED is backed up at multiple locations to ensure that patient information will not be lost when systems fail.

When deployed overseas, this new system will improve worldwide medical care for Department of State employees, their families and employees from more than 200 other federal agencies by providing immediate access to critical care information; enable clinicians to enter and share patient health care information using a secure, standardized electronic medical record; combine multiple paper records into a single, authoritative source; eliminate the need for patients to hand carry or fax their medical records from post to post; provide patients and staff with a more efficient medical clearance decision process; track each community's health care-related events with occupational health unit support; and provide ready access to medical records during disaster recovery.

In addition, eMED can calculate information about overall health trends. This information will allow MED to better plan for and respond to employees' health care needs. The system will enable MED to assess future needs for equipment and medications and to project staffing needs. Patients also benefit. eMED can tell physicians which patients need to receive an immunization reminder or which patients need to know that the Food and Drug Administration has recalled their medication.

eMED will enable authorized MED users to enter and retrieve patient information directly from eMED's database, including scanned images of past paper medical records, lab results and medical evacuations. MED's staff is scanning patients' paper charts into the system. Past information will include the patients' last two physicals and any other medical activities occurring between those dates.

Once the pilot phase is complete, MED expects to expand eMED to health care units overseas, providing new opportunities for collaboration among MED and field personnel. Ultimately, MED staff worldwide will be able to collaborate on patient care, giving the patient a virtual "second opinion." Other MED departments such as claims will also have access to eMED, speeding approvals for external consultations. eMED's success will depend on health units' ability to work globally with this tool for improving patient care. "When fully deployed, eMED will be an advantage to patients because it will make relevant medical information and data immediately available to clinicians responsible for their acute and ongoing care," observed Dr. Steven Feinstein, a psychiatrist in the Office of Mental Health Services.

eMED will be used primarily by MED staff. Patients may use the system, however, to enter basic information when they visit an eMED-equipped health unit. Many patients at the Washington, D.C., exam clinic will begin by completing a patient questionnaire in eMED. MED staff guides patients through their questionnaire at eMED computer kiosks. The completed questionnaire will be accessible to the physician during the patient's visit and the physician can enter observations and recommendations directly into the electronic record and, if needed, request a consultation with another specialist.

Dr. John Triplett, chief of the Washington, D.C., exam clinic, appreciates the eMED feature that permits multiple users to view patient information at the same time from different locations. MED has received positive responses from patients who have used eMED's kiosk to complete their patient questionnaires. Margaret Troje-Meade said she "found using the computer a better method than paper," and Michael Traje said, "I found using the electronic system easy and convenient."

For additional information, please visit the Department of State's Intranet site at <http://med.state.gov> or contact Michael Pate via e-mail at PateJM@state.gov. ■

The author is chief of informatics in the Office of Medical Services.

FSI Hosts Distance Learning Event

The right information at the right time, right at your desktop is the theme of a growing trend in training at the Foreign Service Institute. To spread the word about training available outside the classroom, FSI hosted the Department's first ever Distance Learning Showcase in July in the Exhibit Hall of the Harry S Truman Building.

Showcase attendance was steady throughout the day as Department employees previewed training programs available in such areas as language training, leadership and management, crisis management, budget and finance, information technology, security awareness and public affairs.

Attendees toured Greece with Greek Express, an on-line course that teaches basic Greek and Greek culture; experienced a virtual major crisis at a post with the crisis management simulation prototype; and learned the workings of a U.S. Embassy with the recently released CD-ROM, Welcome to a U.S. Mission. Off-the-shelf distance learning courses by Fastrac, SkillSoft, Netg and Smart Force were also demonstrated.

The highlight for visitors and many showcase staff came late in the afternoon when Secretary Powell visited various workstations and explored each of the distance learning programs being demonstrated. Other senior Department officials also stopped by.

Distance learning is becoming increasingly important as it provides access to a workforce in different time zones, on different continents without concern for time differences and travel expense. FSI continues to provide traditional classroom-based training and will continue to expand the use of distance learning technology to meet the needs of the Department.

As a result of the showcase, more than 200 employees have enrolled in distance learning courses. FSI plans to make the showcase an annual event.

For more information on distance learning opportunities, visit <http://fsiweb.fsi.state.gov/courses/distlearn.asp>. ■



Secretary Powell participates in a distance learning demonstration in the Exhibit Hall of the Harry S Truman Building.

408 Receive Student Loan Repayments

The Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Employee Relations received 590 requests under a pilot Student Loan Repayment Program—the largest in the federal government.

The requests came from Civil Service and Foreign Service employees. Of those seeking repayment of student loans, 408 established their eligibility for FY02. The incentive in FY02 was \$4,700—or the outstanding balance owed by an employee, whichever is less.

FY02 is the first year of the two-year pilot. Lessons learned should make the program go smoother in FY03. Next year, ER plans to announce the program earlier. Information gathered from case-by-case requests will help officials refine policy and procedures for the second pilot year.

For regular e-mail updates, either for this year or next, employees with OpenNet e-mail accounts may subscribe to the SLRP listserv. Send an unclassified e-mail to listserv@almsntsa.lmlist.state.gov and in the text of the mes-

sage type "Subscribe SLRP (Your name)." Unfortunately, only those with SBU OpenNet e-mail accounts are authorized to access this listserv.

HR/ER will continue to update the Intranet site with information about the program. Information is now available on both the SBU OpenNet and the ClassNet Intranets.

To receive a brief status report, send an unclassified message to SLRP@state.gov. An automatic response will be sent as a reply to OpenNet e-mail account holders by means of the Out-of-Office Assistant feature of Microsoft Outlook. This response cannot be sent automatically to e-mail addresses outside of the SBU OpenNet network. Instead, ER will forward the text of the message manually later. This method remains the best means of communicating information about the program to those who do not have SBU OpenNet e-mail accounts, including State Department unclassified network addresses, such as those ending with ms.state.gov or pd.state.gov.

Telling State's Story

Editor's Note: Submissions for this story project should be sent to mckary@state.gov and not State Magazine.

This past summer the Diplomatic Readiness Task Force created a new, innovative outreach tool when it launched the Story Project. The project uses true tales of State Department employees to tell potential recruits and their family members what their work "is really like."

In its first three months, the project collected more than 80 stories and profiles of Foreign Service officers, specialists, Civil Service employees, Foreign Service National employees, student interns and family members. The stories describe the excitement and challenges of living overseas and the dedication and patriotism of Department employees and their families. Authors wrote true tales of coups and evacuations and of helping Americans in trouble, making connections with oth-

er cultures and raising families overseas.

The stories and profiles have appeared on State's recruitment web site, www.careers.state.gov, in recruitment advertisements and in numerous regional newspapers. Because the stories are compelling to a general audience, several national publications are also considering story project submissions.

Since the story project was so popular with employees and successful at attracting both new recruits and positive media attention, the Diplomatic Readiness Task Force is continuing it. So, if you have a great story or a reflection on public service, now is the time to share it.

Stories must be true and should not exceed 1,200 words. Submissions will be edited. Contributors are encouraged to submit photos with their stories. Submit your stories by e-mail to Robert McKay at mckayr@state.gov or call 202-647-3110.

THE 'NEW' FOREIGN SERVICE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

By Katherine I. Lee

Want to know where to find a former mayor, contortionist or jazz bandleader? How about someone who has appeared on stage with Luciano Pavarotti, visited Timbuktu or kissed Robert Redford? Need advice on owning a farm, collecting stamps or caring for a baby? You need look no further than the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service, or BEX, part of the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment.

BEX members seldom talk about their multifaceted backgrounds, however, because they are too busy administering thousands of oral exams to Foreign Service generalist and specialist candidates and handling an array of ancillary duties.

Until recently, mentioning BEX conjured up images of burned-out senior (as in "citizen") Foreign Service officers counting the days until they could join the ranks of the retired. Fair or unfair, BEX's "corridor reputation" was right down there with a "Code Red" July day in Washington, D.C.

Times are changing. As BEX's profile in the Department rises, partly as a result of the initial successes of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative in reversing long-term staffing shortages, it's obvious that BEX is the best-kept secret in the Department.

Let me explain.

When I began my BEX assignment in September 2001, the first thing that struck me was the this-is-not-a-job-but-a-labor-of-love atmosphere that pervades the office. Whether administering oral exams or carrying out a host of other responsibilities, board members clearly are deeply committed to their work.

Their reward is knowing they are helping to select the next generation of State employees.

The work is far from easy. Take the generalist oral exam. During the rigorous, day-long assessment, examiners evaluate the performances of candidates in 13 "dimensions" identified as essential to doing Foreign Service work. Using their extensive experience as Foreign Service officers and their intensive one-week training in testing, examiners assign scores to the candidates for the dimensions observed. This awesome responsibility demands that examiners pay strict attention to candidates' performances and follow stringent testing guidelines to ensure their evaluations are accurate and fair.

While assessing thousands of generalist candidates is the most visible of the examiners' duties, it is not their only one. Aside from teaming up with specialist subject matter experts to test specialist applicants, BEXers review candidates' files to determine their suitability for the Foreign Service. The examiners also develop training materials and coordinate off-site testing in cities across the United States as part of their varied responsibilities.

Take the exam itself. Remember the "demarche" and the "in-box" exercises? They have been replaced by the "un-blind-folding" structured interview that lets examiners consider applicants' backgrounds in the evaluation process and the case management exercise that tests candidates' management and quantitative skills. Group exercises set in fictional countries still exist, but with new scenarios.

While a team of outside experts specializing in creating "reliable" tests manages exam changes, examiners themselves develop those parts of the exam that use Foreign Service-specific material.

"The creativity, hard work and dedication examiners bring to this task are

"IT'S SO
REFRESHING TO
SEE THESE
HIGHLY MOTIVATED
APPLICANTS
WANTING TO SERVE
THEIR COUNTRY."

truly remarkable," notes Art Salvaterra, staff director for examinations.

The unprecedented changes from the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative also have had a profound impact on the examiners' work. The Foreign Service written exam, for example, was offered twice this year, more than doubling the number of candidates advancing to the orals. The oral assessment cycle, normally spread over nine or ten months for the annual exam, was reduced to three or four for each of the semiannual exams. Off-site assessments, usually scheduled in three U.S. cities at the conclusion of orals in Washington, D.C., were administered simultaneously and in four additional locations. True, the office couldn't have handled the surge of candidates without the assistance of temporary extras, many of them retired former BEXers. But examiners managed to train and mentor the help and do their work without skipping a beat.

If labor-of-love hard work was the first thing I noticed upon arriving in BEX, a close second was the striking diversity of examiners, in every sense of the word. All five career tracks are represented and grades run from O2 to MC. There are differences in age, race, ethnicity and gender. Some examiners joined the Department right out of college (two are even Foreign Service "brats"), while others had successful careers elsewhere. And there is a wide range of Foreign Service experience in every geographic area. Despite their many differences, examiners collectively carry out their common mission and they do it in a unique, nonhierarchical environment. Senior and mid-level officers, for instance, assume team leadership responsibilities on a rotating basis when assessing candidates.

What motivates officers to seek BEX positions? The answers vary as much as the examiners. "It's exciting and

important work. Each day is different as we examine new candidates," remarked one examiner. "It's so refreshing to see these highly motivated applicants wanting to serve their country," said another. "I'm doing this for community service. I see lots of things wrong with the State Department and a good place to start fixing these things is with the people coming in," commented another.

One examiner made a special appeal: "I recommend a tour in BEX for mid-level officers, particularly those seeking a change from desk work and Main State. The assignment is interesting and rewarding and offers unique insight into the Department's testing, recruiting and hiring policies.

"BEX offers opportunities for recruiting, outreach and mentoring activities for which mid-level officers—because they are often closer in age and experience to many Foreign Service candidates—are ideally suited."

This brings us back to the question of "rewards." In the past, BEX positions were not "promotable." No one is arguing the work can compare with facing the risks and challenges of a high-threat post abroad. Yet, when you think about it, those promotable officers at those very posts would not be there if it were not for the wise judgment of the examiners who recognized their potential in the first place. The Department's new Foreign Service core precepts encourage employees to participate in activities that promote employee welfare and strengthen the Department as an institution.

What better way to do that than a tour with the Board of Examiners. ■

The author, a recently retired Foreign Service officer, is a former member of the Foreign Service Board of Examiners.

In the Event of Death

Questions concerning deaths in service should be directed to the Employee Services Center, the Department's contact office for all deaths in service: Harry S Truman Building, Room 1252, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-1252; (202) 647-3432; fax: (202) 647-1429; e-mail: EmployeeServicesCenter@state.gov.

Questions concerning the deaths of retired Foreign Service employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960, Retirement@state.gov.

Questions concerning the deaths of retired Civil Service employees should be directed to the Office of Personnel Management at (202) 606-0500, <http://www.opm.gov>.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Foreign Service Retirements

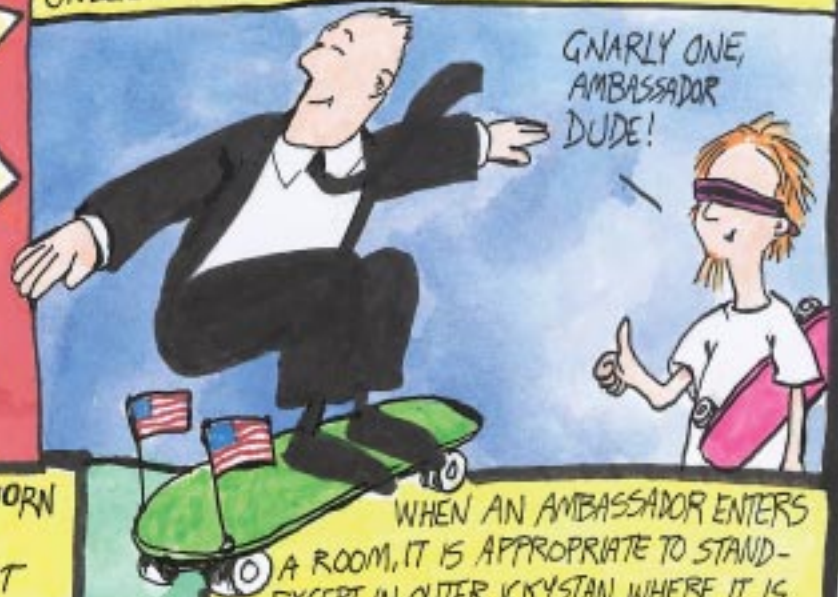
Bohnet, Dwight D.	Hazzard, David F.
Caessens, Charles B.	Huscilowitc, Walter M.
Chase, Charles R.	Keene, Douglas R.
Craig, John B.	Lahaie, Roger W.
Daley, Roger J.	McCauley, George
Franks, Robert J.	McCreary, Jack
Garon, Patricia A.	Ochiltree, Thomas Hunter
Garrity, Catheline A.	Singer, Darlene T.

Civil Service Retirements

Beard, Xavier L.	Hamilton, Alexander P.	Minor, Antionette S.
Bird, Mary M.	Higgins, Roy R.	Postorino, Yolanda F.
Blubaugh, James K.	Hunter, Douglas Randall	Sprague, Michael Arthur
Capies, Barbara J.	Ifft, Edward M.	Stockman, Anita M.
Curran, Marcia M.	Le Pree-Williams, Dianne	Taylor, Rosemarie
Depriest, Blanca Reinoso	Lyman, Helen C.	Wise, Sheila L.
Douglas, Ernest A.	Malkin, Bruce	

LITTLE KNOWN RULES OF PROTOCOL

AMBASSADORS MAY FLY THE FLAG FROM THEIR VEHICLES - UNLESS THE VEHICLE IS A SKATEBOARD...



WHEN AN AMBASSADOR ENTERS A ROOM, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO STAND - EXCEPT IN OUTER ICKYSTAN, WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO DO THE "HOKEY POKEY!"

A FORMAL MORNING COAT IS TRADITIONALLY WORN WITH A GRAY VEST, ASCOT TIE AND STRIPED PANTS - EXCEPT IN BORZASZTOSTAN, WHERE IT IS WORN WITH HOT PANTS.



A SOUP SPOON SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE SOUP PLATE WHEN FINISHED AND ONLY BALANCED ON THE NOSE WHEN ESTABLISHING ONE'S IDENTITY AS A WITLESS CRETIN.



AN AMBASSADOR PLENIPO TENTIARY AND EXTRAORDINARY OUTRANKS AN ADJUNCT ELVIS IMPERSONATOR - EXCEPT IN LAS VEGAS...

