

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

September 2003

State

Magazine

Mauritania:
*Trading on Its
Past and Future*

The Diplomatic Reception Room serves up food, beverages and ambience.

In Our Next Issue: Throwing a Party at State



Photo by Paul Koscak

State

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Photo by Kristen Hickman

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Sand and silhouettes of the Western Sahara in Mauritania.
Photo courtesy of ImageBank

FROM THE SECRETARY

SECRETARY COLIN L. POWELL



Ramping Up For Our Future

As we mark two highly successful years of our Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, we must recognize the far-reaching implications it holds not only for recruitment within the State Department, but for our ability to promote freedom, growth and security across the globe.

DRI has a simple but daunting goal: to attract, train and keep the best people that this nation has to offer. Just a few short years ago, the Department was understaffed, underfunded and, even at the best of times, unappreciated. Barely 8,000 people took the Foreign Service Exam in 2000—an all-time low. Those who passed the exam had the privilege of waiting two years for an offer. Advertising and recruiting budgets were nonexistent and our web site needed a makeover.

We launched DRI in September 2001. More than 20,000 Americans took the Foreign Service Exam last April, an all-time high. We have hired more junior officers in the past 18 months than we did between 1992 and 1997. We finished hiring for fiscal year 2003 in June. And our recruitment web site is getting tens of thousands of visits each month.

None of this would have happened without the determination of our people in Human Resources, Diplomatic Security, Medical Services and the Foreign Service Institute. They all came together to break down bureaucratic barriers and carry the water for DRI. I grin when I hear stories about how their good work has led talented people to choose careers at State over other professions.

April Wells, a Pickering Fellow who worked in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs this summer, is a good example. After graduating from Howard University last year, she passed up offers from Wall Street to enter the world of diplomacy. Why?

“The State Department had the most attractive offer to further my professional development and allow me to effect change in the international arena,” Ms. Wells said, “but I would have never known the true closeness of the fit had it not been for the men and women here acting as ambassadors for the Department, even as they acted as ambassadors for this country.”

For every April Wells we attract, for all the heavy lifting involved with getting DRI off the ground these past two years, we still have more work to do. Whether it is dealing with regional security issues or borderless threats like terrorism, weapons of mass destruction or trafficking in drugs and people, we need a world-class diplomatic force that is ready and able to answer the call.

Diplomacy will play a key role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq. Equally important is our “Secure Borders, Open Doors” initiative, tasking us to monitor who is coming into our country, while making sure America remains an open society.

Under President Bush’s Millennium Challenge Account, we will be charged with helping poor countries find ways to govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom. Going forward, we must help America lead on everything—from promoting peace in the Middle East to stemming infectious disease.

Indeed, DRI represents the largest expansion of the Department in decades. It is also about preparing State for future success in meeting the complex challenges of the 21st century. ■

Old State Revisited

I'm writing about your article in the June issue on "Old State." The piece does not mention that in the final weeks of the last Administration, the wing of the State Department constructed in 1939 was named in honor of former Secretary George C. Marshall.

This was a fitting gesture. It recognizes his many contributions to American diplomacy and acknowledges that the War Department originally had constructed the building for its use. For it was here that he devoted the largest share of his service to the country.

I would hope the Department would find the place appropriately to indicate publicly the name of the wing of the building.

Thomas R. Pickering
Retired FSO
Alexandria, Va.

New State Revisited

Al Toner's letter in the June issue errs in referring to the original building on 21st Street as New State. The "old" building originally housed the War Department, which moved in 1947 to what is now the Eisenhower Building—formerly the Old Executive Office Building—near the White House.



New State was, in fact, the expanded building (since named for Harry S Truman) that opened in 1961. I reported to duty in New State the follow-

ing year. The article on the next page, "The State of Old State," confirms this chronology.

Gil Sheinbaum
Retired FSO
Vienna, Va.

Thanks and Congratulations

Many thanks for forwarding those recent issues. After some five years, I am delighted to be back on your mailing list. I had assumed the Department had stopped sending the magazine to retirees.

I enjoyed going through those issues, even if there are too few names I recognized in the articles and too many in the obituaries.

The magazine is vastly different from the last time I saw it. It's much more "with it," easier to read and no longer drab. Congratulations.

Dennis Goodman
Retired FSO

Hanover Center, N.H.

(Editor's note: The writer is unrelated to the editor.)

Correction

In the Appointments section of the July/August issue, we incorrectly identified the wife of Ambassador Gregory W. Engle. Her name is Maureen.

From the Editor

If there can be any joy in Washington summers, it's working with interns. Here at the magazine, where deadlines can be drudgery and drills repetitive, their presence is rejuvenating. They accept assignments with enthusiasm and welcome feedback. When they receive well-earned bylines, they rejoice. The collective experience over several summers has been more enriching as their calls and e-mails arrive, sharing trials and triumphs. After all, it's what families do.

She's not an intern but a former television producer-turned State Department public affairs specialist on assignment in Iraq—armed only with lights and cameras and goodwill from American and British troops. Documenting reconstruction efforts in the war-torn country is no easy task, as readers will learn on page 16.

The sands of time have polished the stones and stories of Mauritania, this month's post. Breaking from the past, many villagers are moving to the city searching for an easier life than what the storied desert has to offer. For more, see page 8.

Driving diplomacy in the Washington, D.C., area is a team of motor pool employees that dispatches senior officials to meetings at the White House and on Capitol Hill and shuttles rank-and-file employees daily among the dozens of annexes in the District and Virginia. For details, see our Office of the Month on page 12.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

SA-32's stark framework is all that remains before fumigation begins.

Pouch Facility to Reopen Next Year

The cleanup continues at State Annex 32, the former mail facility in Northern Virginia contaminated by anthrax two years ago. Workers in protective suits have gutted the structure to its steel framework and will soon begin fumigating the building. Even the mail-handling equipment is being scrapped.

"Spores can hide in the equipment," said Janice Burke, a policy analyst in the Bureau of Administration. "And fumigation can damage equipment."

More than 400 tons of equipment and material considered "infectious waste" have been removed from the facility. In addition to the machinery, air-conditioning ducts, lighting, drywall and other furnishings were treated and destroyed. Before being discarded, the refuse was either steam sterilized, incinerated or cleaned with ethylene oxide and recycled.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, working with several federal agencies and an environmental committee, is fumigating the facility with vaporized hydrogen peroxide. The committee, which ensures quality control, will determine when the building is safe to reoccupy.

Ms. Burke stated that the decision is expected sometime in early 2004.

Tim Gouger, the Corps' project manager, marvels at how so much is being accomplished, considering the number of agencies involved and the scientific minds at work.

"It's highly collaborative," he said. "There are so many ideas. All the education taking place. It takes time. But it's amazing how so many people are coming together."

Air monitors within SA-32, outside the building and at nearby businesses will measure the hydrogen peroxide levels during the fumigation. The agent "naturally decomposes to water and oxygen," said Bill Eaton, assistant secretary of the Bureau of Administration. Surprisingly, the fumigation drew little neighborhood interest. Two town-hall-style public meetings, he said, "were sparsely attended, even through we sent invitations to over 480 households in the nearby community."

SA-32, an unclassified mail and pouch facility for both domestic and overseas deliveries, employed about 70 people.



BookFair 2003

Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide will hold their 43rd annual benefit fundraiser for community projects in Washington, D.C., and their scholarship fund. Used books, art, stamps, coins and collectibles will be for sale on the weekends of Oct. 18/19 and 25/26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Harry S Truman Building, which is accessible from the C Street entrance. Admission is free and books are half price on the last day. Visa and MasterCard accepted. For more information or to make a donation, please visit <http://www.aafsw.org/activities/bookroom.htm> or call (202) 223-5796.

Credit Union Awards Scholarships to 13

The State Department Federal Credit Union has announced the winners of its 27th annual scholarship competition. This year, \$20,000 in scholarships was divided among 13 recipients. They are:

Angelia Barnes
Strayer University

Laura Byrne
Catholic University School of Law

Marcus Caldwell
Virginia Union University

Tasha Campbell
Cornell University

Angela Curtis
College of Southern Maryland

Michelle Davis
University of Maryland University College

Tristan Engler
*University of California, Santa Barbara
Law and Society*

Heather Glenn
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Michelle Lee
Strayer University

Lori Pierson
Northern Virginia Community College

Maria Rivera
Trinity College

Cara Staley
The University of Akron School of Law

Sherry Wright
Bowie State University

The Credit Union has awarded more than \$140,000 in scholarships since 1976. To qualify, students must be Credit Union members who have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours at an accredited college or university. The competition is open to both graduates and undergraduates with a minimal grade point average of 2.5 and demonstrated financial need.

In February, scholarship applications are available by mail, online at www.sdfcu.org and at the Credit Union's five branches. All applications and transcripts are due by mid-April.



2003 KID VID Contest Winners Announced

The Overseas Briefing Center and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation have announced the winners of the 2003 KID VID Contest.

First-place winners were Philip "P.J." Nice and Micah Kagler for their lively production on Montevideo, Uruguay. Their engaging video captures an appealing view of life in the South American city.

Second-place winner was Britta Coley, 11, for her production of life in Frankfurt, Germany. Her innovative video highlights many of the special features of this European city.

Third-place winners were Iain Addleton, 12; Cameron Addleton, 10; and Parker Wilhelm, 10, for their entry from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Their enthusiastic narrative and footage portrayed an inviting life for young people in this faraway land.

Two additional entries received a special award and prize money. Ramon Taylor, 16, a winner in 2002, submitted the most technically sophisticated video. His footage of Dakar and its people offers a compelling view of Senegal.

Olivia Underwood, 10, and Owen Underwood, 8, of Seoul, Korea, submitted the most creative entry. Honorable mentions went to Jennifer Fedenish, 10,

Singapore; Scott A. Goodin, 11, Almaty; Sofie Mueller, 13, Minsk; Lorilee C. Navadel, 11, Antananarivo; Carolina Backer, Athens; Rebecca Moser, 10, and Daphne Martschenko, 10, Kiev; and Megan Murphy, 10, and Zachary Peterson, 10, Rabat.

This year the Foreign Service Youth Foundation donated \$1,000 to be divided among the top award winners and has also invited them to attend the annual FSYP Award Ceremony in August.

The contest is open to all family members, ages 10 to 18, who are assigned to an embassy or consulate. Contestants are asked to submit videos reflecting typical daily life for youths at their posts. Entries include information on the housing, schooling, shopping and recreation available from the youths' perspective. The videos can be group projects or single-person productions. All entries become a permanent addition to the Overseas Briefing Center's video library.

Details of the 2004 contest will be announced in the coming months. Students from ages 10 to 18 may work on their videos as early as this summer. To learn more about the contest and other youth awards, contact FSYP at fsyf@fsyf.org or the Overseas Briefing Center at JohnstonM5@state.gov.

Toward a Healthy Foreign Service

Editor's note: The Office of Medical Services provided this month's column.

We've all seen the thrilling scenes on television. The ambulance arrives with its lights flashing and siren wailing. Fifteen people are waiting at the door to bring the patient inside, initiate emergency treatment, deal with the emotional fallout and call in the appropriate specialists.

When was the last time you saw that sort of action in Ouagadougou? After all, this is the Foreign Service. While the setting is different, the mission is the same—keeping Foreign Service employees and their families healthy. The practices of the Office of Medical Services are adapted to this unique global environment.

MED wants to maintain a healthy work force before problems occur. It starts with the medical clearance process. Some find the process a laborious, bureaucratic procedure designed to keep people from exotic locations. Others consider it a response to a litigious culture. Some simply dislike the medical clearance process, and as we age and acquire medical ailments, the process seems even more onerous.

MED, however, views the clearance process as a way to keep its clients healthy and out of harm's way. We match people to posts with adequate facilities for their health care needs. The overall goal remains the same: keeping families healthy and safe while they serve abroad.

MED recently refocused its clearance process. Besides a post clearance, we also want to ensure that Foreign Service employees and their families receive appropriate preventive medical care. This includes mammograms, colonoscopies and cholesterol and blood pressure measurements. We also screen for irksome intestinal parasites. In addition, regional medical technologists routinely inspect embassy cafeterias and conduct classes on food safety.

While these preventive measures may not be made for television, they provide vitally important information about the health of our clients. Patients with problems that cannot be managed locally must be sent elsewhere for care. Last year, MED managed more than 1,400 medical evacuations worldwide.

Following the medical clearance, MED's attention shifts to preventive measures such as immunizations and malaria prophylaxis. The office provides 17 different immunizations, ranging from routine childhood

immunizations like polio and tetanus to the more esoteric like smallpox and Japanese encephalitis. Distributing vaccines worldwide and keeping them properly refrigerated is a major challenge.

There are 184 embassy medical units providing health care overseas. Direct-hire MED professionals staff many of these while locally hired nurses staff others. Our medical providers constantly assess local medical resources to determine which medical problems can be handled at post and what is available in an emergency.

MED's health providers must be prepared to handle a wide variety of medical problems—from ear infections to malaria—and handle them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Many medical problems are unique to the overseas environment. Needless to say, continuing medical education for health providers is a big part of MED's mission.

The threat of terrorism has greatly changed the medical landscape. We now stockpile at all posts antibiotics to treat anthrax, gas masks and chemical weapon antidote auto-injectors. Shortly before the Iraq war, seven teams of MED professionals—more than 45 percent of all the physicians and health practitioners in the entire Foreign Service—gave smallpox immunizations at 30 posts in Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East.

In early March, the SARS epidemic broke out in East Asia, putting at risk consular officers who deal with large numbers of visa applicants and families with children in international schools. MED established a SARS task force. Voluntary departure was recommended for posts in China, Vietnam, Singapore and Taiwan. Specially designed face masks and alcohol gel hand wash were provided to medical and consular personnel. The measures paid off. No U.S. Embassy staff were infected.

Meanwhile, routine business continues in the Office of Medical Services. New medical officers are hired, consultations continue with the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management on problems with pesticide exposure in South America and serious air pollution caused by peat fires in Russia, an incident of mushroom poisoning occurs in Central Asia and dengue fever breaks out in India.

Taking care of its clients is a unique experience for the 150 State Department physicians, health practitioners and medical technologists and the 350 locally hired health care staff around the world. We are proud of what we do. ■

*A weathered fisherman near
Nouakchott prepares his nets.*





Mauritania

By Dijana Vrban and Sara Stryker + Photos by Michelle Donnelly

Lawrence of Arabia would feel right at home here. The sand dunes and desert winds of Mauritania take you back a millennium to the era of the desert trade routes. The stars

are so bright and close in the desert sky that you want to reach out and touch them. Waves from the Atlantic crash against the shore. Between dun-colored streets and arched windowed mosques and shops are pink bougainvillea vines and blue Moroccan doors. Freshly baked baguettes and roasted lamb mingle with the smells of jasmine and frangipani.

Except for the scholar of rare Islamic manuscripts, fan of the Paris-Dakar road rally or adventurous tourist, Mauritania has only recently been discovered. In Mauritania's interior of untouched beauty, travelers explore ancient Islamic towns, oases, rock paintings and tall, shifting dunes. One historic town, Chinguetti, is the seventh holy city of Islam and a World Heritage site. Its mosque and other notable architecture date to the 13th century and its collection of Koranic and scientific manu-

scripts includes important Arab works from the 9th century.

The small capital, Nouakchott, has few paved roads. Cars get stuck easily in the

sand and fully loaded sports utility vehicles vie with donkey carts, free-ranging goats and the occasional camel. Cyber cafés and satellite dishes dot the city landscape, and new villas and restaurants are springing up everywhere.

In recent years, Mauritania has opened its economy to foreign trade and investment, offering opportunities for American business. With encouragement from the World Bank and other international institutions, the government has liberalized the foreign exchange system, launched bank reforms and privatized several state-owned industries, such as telecommunications and air transport. Foreign aid, however, continues to play a crucial role in development.

One of the first nations in Africa to be included in the initiative to forgive heavily indebted poor countries, Mauritania nevertheless has some of the

world's richest fishing grounds and substantial reserves of iron ore. The promise of offshore oil may provide a new source of revenue.

The country of goat herds and camel caravans has rapidly transformed as more and more people abandon the traditional nomadic lifestyle for towns. The younger generation clearly prefers the amenities of modern life. Persistent drought over the past three decades has caused much of this mass migration, sending about one-third of the population to the capital. City services have been unable to keep pace with the influx.

Despite their poverty, Mauritians are renowned for their generosity. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, local employees of the mission donated a day's pay to help the victims' families. Secretary Powell's thank-you letter is displayed proudly in the embassy cafeteria. The employees show similar consideration to their colleagues in times of need.

Known for their bountiful hospitality, Mauritians dine on dates with cream, salads, couscous, chicken and meshoui (roasted goat). The food is placed on a white cloth spread over the carpet under the ancestral tent. The tent may be pitched in the garden or on the rooftop. To entertain and relax, residents retreat to their ancestral villages.

An Islamic lifestyle is visible. Alcohol is off limits. While women tend to dress modestly and traditionally in a headscarf or colorful moulafa, they work, drive cars and are increasingly active in politics and business. While allowed by law and widespread, polygamy is becoming less popular among the younger generation, as are other tradi-

tional practices. Divorced women have become brides of choice within the Beidane community.

For centuries, Mauritania's economy consisted of a trading system among nomadic tribes herding camels, sheep and goats, but also relied on the slave trade. The rigid caste system still haunts Mauritanian society. Slavery was officially abolished in 1980, but residual dependency still exists between former masters and slaves.

In the 19th century, Mauritania came under the sphere of French colonial influence and was subsumed in French West Africa. It remained a colony until 1960.

Since independence, Mauritania has twice been involved in cross-border conflicts. From 1975 to 1978, the country fought to control part of the Western Sahara, a conflict that remains unsettled despite the efforts of U.N. mediators. In 1989, tensions between Moor and African populations in Mauritania and Senegal displaced tens of thousands of people and ruptured relations between the two countries until 1992. Social and political tensions linger from that conflict.

The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott dates from 1961—one year after Mauritania declared independence from French colonial rule. The embassy's American staff is small but has almost doubled in the past two years. A multi-ethnic local staff of 180 supports them.

The mission has an active Peace Corps program. Four American staff members coordinate the efforts of 60 to 90 volunteers in a number of sectors—from agro-forestry and the environment to small-enterprise development, education and health. Most volunteers live in rural areas with few



Top Left: Management Officer Sara Stryker, left, with assistant Angela Thandrayen, seated, and receptionist Yamouso Sylla. Top Right: Anna Fall, left, payroll supervisor, with assistant Aliou Sy. Bottom: Chauffeur Djibril Ousmane digs a vehicle out of the sand.

amenities. A record number of volunteers, however, have elected to extend.

Mauritania supports the United States in its war against terrorism and U.S. efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. The country maintains full relations with Israel and has had an ambassador in Tel Aviv since 1999. In West Africa, Mauritania is involved in the Pan-Sahel Initiative to strengthen border controls and regional cooperation. The embassy assists the government with counterterrorism training and actively promotes human rights, democracy, good governance and the protection of ancient Islamic manuscripts and sites.

Other areas of cooperation include HIV/AIDS prevention and education, especially for young women, and construction of schools, health clinics and wells. Mauritania looks to offshore oil production, expected to start in 2005, to hasten its development.

In the north, demining operations are under way to reduce injuries to civilians from landmines left over from the Western Sahara conflict. The U.S. Coast Guard has trained Mauritanian marine surveillance teams to protect the country's rich fishing resources. Two Fulbright scholars meanwhile are studying traditions of the clans, social cohesion and music of Mauritania.

Beautiful, unspoiled beaches are within easy reach of downtown for swimming, running, walking or even horseback riding. Children can enjoy amusements at the Racing Club, ride or skate at the Chinese stadium or play volleyball or swim at the embassy compound. Also within the compound is the small American school, with just over 40 students. While international in character, the school follows a typical U.S. curriculum from pre-K to grade eight.

Along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean to the north is the Banc d'Arguin, a national park with one the world's largest varieties of migratory birds, sea turtles, dolphins and various species of fish. Attractive silver-encrusted chests, jewelry, camel saddles and colorfully decorated tents are readily available.

Mauritania is redolent with the scent of mint tea, the contrast of sun and shadow through arched windows and the serenity of a desert evening. ■

Ms. Vrban was the community liaison officer and Ms. Stryker was the management officer.

AT A GLANCE



Country name: Mauritania

Government type: Republic

Capital: Nouakchott

Independence: Nov. 28, 1960
(from France)

Constitution: July 12, 1991

Population: 2.8 million

Religion: Islam

Land mass: approximately 400,000
square miles, mostly desert

Approximate size: New Mexico
and Texas combined

Languages: Arabic and French
are official languages

Currency: ouguiya (MRO)

Education: Illiteracy runs 57 percent
and is highest among women

Per capita income: \$1,800

Natural resources: Rich fishing
grounds, substantial reserves of
iron ore and potential offshore oil

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook 2002

OFFICE OF THE MONTH

Driver Vincent Jackson with a 2003 Cadillac DeVille, used primarily by the Deputy Secretary.



car & driver

Motor Pool Keeps the Wheels of Diplomacy Turning

Story and Photos by Paul Koscak

It starts with a call and ends with a car and driver.

That about sums up what the Bureau of Administration's motor pool does each day to make diplomacy happen throughout the Washington area.

Among its 21 employees are 10 executive drivers and four drivers assigned to the State's top leadership. There are three dispatchers and two shuttle operators. Each day, the motor pool's executive service makes up to 70 trips in the Washington area. They're mostly short but frequent 15-minute jaunts shuttling ranking employees—deputy assistant secretaries or higher—to meetings, events, the airport or just about any official destination.

"We mostly drop off and pick up," said Vincent Jackson, a 19-year veteran driver who was preparing to bring Paula Dobriansky, under secretary for Global Affairs, and a few staff to the White House.



Above: Shuttle Supervisor Eric Bryant once drove a Greyhound bus. Right: Dispatcher John Davis, left, checks the schedule with Motor Pool Supervisor Chantay Newman.



Mr. Jackson checked the vehicle's paperwork and then stepped just outside his office into the Harry S Truman Building's basement parking garage. He located the assigned car—a shiny black Crown Victoria—and maneuvered it from its parking space next to the revolving glass security door. He wasn't the only driver waiting for passengers. His vehicle led a four-car line, all with drivers ready to go.

It's a scenario repeated throughout the day.

The motor pool is about as "behind the scenes" as it gets. Its offices are nearly hidden. Inside, there's a dispatch area, more like a communications center where transportation requests arrive by phone and dispatchers match the request with vehicles and drivers, posting the matches on an overhead board. For ambiance, framed photographs of 1960s-era muscle cars—Pontiac GTOs, Chevelle Super Sports, Chrysler Road Runners—festoon the walls.

There's a driver's lounge in the next room and a small office for Chantay Newman, who supervises the whole operation.

"The 10 sedans are Ford Crown Victorias and Mercury Grand Marquis," she said. "We also have a 13-passenger van, a two-ton pickup and an SUV. The two Cadillacs are for the Secretary, deputy secretary and U.S. ambassador to the U.N."

The service isn't free. The motor pool charges \$35 per hour for a car and driver, \$45 per hour with overtime, Ms. Newman said.

While the executive service caters to the brass, that doesn't mean your average working stiff at the State Department or Agency for International Development is without wheels if official business requires a cross-town trip. That's where the UDI program—You Drive It—comes in. Just call ahead, preferably a day, and a vehicle will be provided. Best of all, there's no charge, Ms. Newman explained.

The executive service sedans are just part of the Department's 60 vehicles that support State activities; of these, 70 percent are fueled by natural gas. All are leased through either a local dealer or the General Services Administration, Ms. Newman said. Maintenance is also contracted with local dealers and monitored by the drivers. The arrangement allows a turnover every two years, keeping the fleet new and updated. Drivers must also ensure that vehicles are clean inside and out.

The pool's cadre of drivers has exceptional experience. Most have been professional drivers for decades. Theodore Brown has the record—44 years.



44

The pool's cadre of drivers has exceptional experience. Most have been professional drivers for decades. Theodore Brown has the record—44 years.

But it takes more than longevity to drive for the State Department. Drivers need to guard against the unexpected. They take a four-day defensive driving course—the same instruction provided to law enforcement officers—every three years. They learn to observe the suspicious and evade danger. They learn how to detect bombs and devise escape routes.

“The survival rate is just 13 percent if someone wants to take you out,” said 10-year veteran driver Kenny Clark.

Leroy Parham is assigned to U.N. Ambassador John Negroponte. When the ambassador isn't in New York, Mr. Parham is whisking him to the expected Washington locations—the White House, Capitol Hill or the requisite lunch meetings. But what the 13-year veteran driver remembers most about his career is his assignment to former Secretary Madeleine Albright.

Mr. Parham would pick up the workaholic former Secretary at her Georgetown residence at 7:30 a.m. and bring her back usually around 10:30 p.m. Once he recalled returning her at 1:30 a.m. Throughout the day, he shuttled Ms. Albright as needed. “About 50 percent of the job was waiting,” he said.

Below: Shuttle service to Virginia is just part of motor pool operations. Right: Dispatchers Charles Hawkins, foreground, and Herman Wilder process transportation requests.



The most visible part of the motor pool is the fleet of 15 shuttle buses linking the State annexes. Unlike the executive service drivers, the Department contracts its shuttle operations, which operate from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Most routes are less than 30 minutes. The longest, to the Warrenton, Va., computer center, takes an hour.

Eric Bryant, who supervises the shuttle drivers, once drove for Greyhound. Now he's doing the Rosslyn, Va.,

loop. The constant circuit can be a challenge, but he said it beats driving the public.

“Here you're dealing with people who have something in common, as opposed to driving anyone who can simply pay the fare,” said Mr. Bryant, who's been driving professionally for 12 years, one year with the State Department. “I've seen everything.”

The combined executive and shuttle service operations keep the motor pool busy. Last year they moved 817,295 passengers on 39,132 trips.

Aside from passenger services, the motor pool provides nearly 500 vehicles in the Washington region. Most are attached to specific activities such as security. There are two vehicles in New York City and 14 in Miami, according to Barry Shipil, the new fleet management division chief. ■



GRAFFITI

SPEAK TO THE COMMON CITIZEN

Story and Photos by Valeria Brunori

Down through the ages, common citizens have scribbled graffiti in common and uncommon places—even on ancient frescoes. The graffiti, unfiltered by literary or official conventions, represent the free expression of ideas, wishes and opinions.

Inscribed on the frescoes of the Roman cryptoporticus, beneath the U.S. Embassy in Rome, are graffiti spanning centuries. Considering that the graffiti were never the object of specific research, the embassy's Fine Arts Office invited the Swedish Institute for Classical Studies of Rome to study and analyze the graffiti.

By May 2002, the documentation was under way by Anna Blennow, a doctoral student in Latin at the University of Gothenburg. Photographs and drawings revealed images, single words, letters and symbols. She divided the graffiti into three different periods, based on estimated dates of the frescoes.

The earliest graffiti date from the 3rd century. A monogrammic cross, the Chi-Rho symbol, with a connected word above it and the name Aureus belong to this period. These graffiti date to approximately the 4th century. Also a menorah, the Hebrew candelabra, might possibly be dated to the late antique period.

The second period corresponds to the medieval and early renaissance reuse of the cryptoporticus. The most impressive graffito from this period is apparently a large incised representation of a ship dated to the 12th or 13th century. Several figures, some with long swords, are standing upon it. Representations of ships were very common in ancient and medieval times as symbols of prosperity or of life after death.

The third phase was based more on the nature of the graffiti than on the identification of a different period. This group of graffiti consists mainly of names and signatures of visitors, dated to approximately the 16th or 17th centuries. The names are often accompanied by the date of the visit, introduced using the typical formula "A di" ("on the day of...").

The research on the graffiti suggests previously unknown aspects about the use of the cryptoporticus during various centuries and the persons who worked and lived in this vicinity.

In the late antique period, the Gardens of Sallust were still in use. Cairus Sallustius Crispus purchased the property in 44 B.C. after Julius Caesar's assassination. At

that time, persons adhering to different religions peacefully coexisted on the site. It is likely the domestic staff of the huge residence, which was returned to imperial ownership in 14 A.D., used the cryptoporticus as an underground passageway, where they could freely express their religious opinions and feelings.

After the Visigothic invasion of 410 A.D., this monument suffered some kind of damage, causing the floor level to rise and possibly the windows to be sealed. At that time, the cryptoporticus probably was known and explored, as were many Roman monuments. The area was accessible by common persons who left signs and drawings.

Gradually, the cryptoporticus became a storage room for broken statuary, an attractive grotto full of abandoned treasures. It was located underneath a small building visible in several maps from the 17th and 18th centuries. This building was used since the 17th century as a gallery for statues, and at the beginning of the 19th century, became the so-called Museum of Statues.

During this period, only a few cultivated visitors were allowed to visit the museum displaying remarkable pieces from the famous Ludovisi collection. The underground storage room was usually included in the visit as well. By then, the frescoes had faded and visitors used the surfaces as a bulletin board to inscribe their names or scribble writings.

The study generated scholarly interest and prompted a rare meeting on graffiti last March in Rome—a forum organized and funded by the Swedish Institute for Classical Studies and the U.S. Embassy. The study of graffiti is shedding light on the culture of the past. ■

The author is fine arts curator for the U.S. Embassy in Rome.



*Top: A menorah.
Above: A monogrammic cross.*

With No Weapons or Maps,
Just Lights and Cameras

On Assignment in Iraq



Our vehicle was flagrantly Western.

The shiny new Suburban in glossy desert taupe had metallic duct tape affixed to each panel of glass in the sideways V that designated coalition forces. But we had reason to worry. I had asked our military contacts for road maps. None were to be had. Same for flak jackets, helmets and gas masks.

We were lucky to have a four-wheel drive. The rental agencies in Kuwait City had already leased their trucks to hordes of journalists. After numerous phone calls and hallway negotiations, I received a set of keys. I located some flak jackets and helmets through a trail of phone calls dubbed “drug deals.” The cargo hold filled up quickly with sleeping bags, fresh fruit, bottled water and Meals-Ready-to-Eat. I also found some large plastic jerry cans for the extra fuel we would require as a safety measure.

Just getting inside Iraq was half the battle. The State Department sent me to videotape projects ranging from food aid and bridge building to water treatment plants. Two freelance videographers joined me. Although the war had been declared officially over May 1, reports of sporadic attacks continued. We had no weapons and no maps. We did have a satellite phone and a few numbers on speed dial. We would have preferred our own military convoy, but none was available. One British officer wished us well and labeled our mission “Operation Certain Death.”

Story and photos
by Kristen Hickman

I realized then that the friendships forged during war mix humor with a good dose of concern. I got to know nearly all the public affairs officers among the U.S. and British forces at the coalition press information center in Kuwait City. They were a good-humored lot and naturally protective.

Luckily for us, a British colonel offered to let us follow his Land Rover back to Basra. He assured us that southern Iraq was much safer than we imagined and that we would have no problems navigating city to city. I left my freelance photographers in the cool cabin of the Suburban and joined the colonel, his driver and media



The author with children and teens on outskirts of Nasiriyah.

adviser. The only air-conditioning for the next couple of hours would be wind with sand and dirt.

The roadside was a graveyard of abandoned cars and dead animals. Near Basra, we left the highway and drove through mounds of garbage. The stench was inescapable. Soon, Basra International Airport was in sight. British forces had lined up a row of destroyed Iraqi tanks as trophies. The British had set up a canteen. It looked like we just missed a buffet. The lunch crew was emptying the trash bins and wiping down the counters. The chefs offered some Spam and doughy white rolls with a pear on the side. We were also offered some watery fruit drinks and coffee. Even the Brits later admitted how awful it was.

For the fighting forces, the war had two names. Americans rallied behind Operation Iraqi Freedom—a name that declared the mission to liberate the Iraqi people. The Brits fought the same war under Operation TELIC. The computer-generated name came with no obvious meaning until someone cleverly said it was an acronym for “Tell Everyone Leave Is Cancelled.” The amount of postwar work meant several regiments would be staying to ensure security within the cities, provide medical care for the injured and restore power and water.

We were in luck. We arrived just as electricity was restored to Basra. Two civilian engineers recruited by

the British military came over to work with local engineers. We joined them for a trip to the power plant to see how things were going. Soon we were looking over blueprints and listening to plans to restore power to neighboring cities. Our tour through the plant created quite a bit of excitement. Within half an hour, some two dozen co-workers appeared in the control room where we were filming. A young Iraqi engineer approached me to explain how the turbines worked and the capacity of the plant. The station manager proudly explained that the power plant was the only public facility spared from looting, thanks to loyal employees.



A burned out vehicle on the road from Talil Air Base to Nasiriyah.

As day shifted to twilight, the engineers and their military escort prepared to leave us for the airport. We asked for directions to reach our campground for the night. One soldier pointed to a paved road next to a damaged wall and told us to keep going straight even through the roundabouts and eventually we’d get there. I hoped he was right. We had no advance booking. We had no interpreter. We had no clear sense of where we were. We had only one objective: to find Saddam’s Palace.

The drive took longer than expected. With no distinctive landmarks, no signposts and no maps, we relied on the limited directions the British provided. We were told to keep going straight past several roundabouts and we would find Saddam’s Palace. We weren’t so sure. Each roundabout presented multiple routes to explore. Motorists ignored traffic lights. Most of them didn’t work anyway.

We all knew the importance of reaching the palace before dark. Despite the night patrols by British forces, Westerners without weapons had little protection. Even the Iraqis admitted the Baathists owned the night. Eventually, we came upon a serpentine barrier of concrete leading up to an imposing gothic stone entrance. It looked presidential, but it appeared abandoned. Dark green fabric stretched across the iron gates. No one was in sight. I approached the gate with my official badge.

A more cautious person would have put on a flak jacket and helmet first. As I got closer, I saw a soldier peering out through a gap in the green cloth. It was Saddam's Palace all right, but we had the wrong entrance.

Armed with additional directions, we backtracked and took a turn down the first road that gave us a view of the river. At the river, another right turn gave us a view of a stone entrance identical to the one we saw before. We were relieved to know that we would be safe for the night. We just had to get through the gate. I noticed men and women strolling along the promenade bordering the river. I was struck by how relaxed they seemed.

We slowed down as we approached the gates to allow the sea of people to part. The guard asked to see our credentials and then motioned us inside. Once inside the gates, we felt a certain sense of triumph. It was short-lived. The guards wanted confirmation that we were cleared to stay for the night. The British colonel had assured me that a State Department credential would open doors. He just didn't say how far I'd get. Now it seemed we needed a reservation.

Luckily, a British crew hired by the Defense Department recognized us as they entered the palace grounds. They offered to find the public affairs officer and bring him back to the gate to help us. When they returned, I recognized the young man who emerged from the Land Rover. We had met earlier in Kuwait City. Within minutes, we were on a quick tour of the grounds and taken to the building where we would be staying.

Our lodging for the night was the building set aside for journalists. It also doubled as the mess hall for the Desert Rats—the name earned by the British Army's 7th Armored Brigade during World War II. While the Desert Rats lined up for dinner, we scouted out potential sleep space. Many of the larger news organizations had taken entire rooms and posted their logos to ward off intruders. Other rooms seemed fair game. Additional stairs led to various anterooms and rooftop balconies. After minimal reconnaissance, the choice became very clear: marble or concrete, fresh air or stifling heat. Either way, it was unlikely we would get much sleep.

About midnight, I found sleeping on the rooftop terrace futile. I hadn't anticipated the periodic mortar fire. I counted at least seven blasts. None close. All was not calm. By then, the breeze that had enticed me to the roof was strong enough to keep me awake. Back inside, I found a window on the second floor and made another attempt at sleep. It was no use.

By 6:30 a.m., I was loading my gear back into the Suburban and looking around for my colleagues. Saddam's Palace camp had already come to life. The joggers ran the loop around the compound. The smell of frying bacon filled the air. A soldier shaved at an outdoors wash stand.

I had planned to leave Basra and drive west to Nasiriyah to check on repairs to the water treatment facilities. I was told the highway between the two cities

was safe and well patrolled by both British and American troops. Still, without a military escort and no maps, I was looking for a safer alternative than going alone. I spotted an employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development. It turned out that his convoy was going to Nasiriyah. It took several hours before the convoy was ready to leave. Despite the delay, we still counted ourselves lucky to have an escort.

Near Nasiriyah, we broke away from the convoy and drove into town determined to get some footage before sundown forced our return to camp.

When the war began, clean drinking water became a big concern. The danger of disease, particularly cholera, made clean drinking water a priority. The lack of electricity made it impossible to maintain water pressure. Homes had no running water. People had resorted to digging holes in the ground to break into water pipes. The resulting damage made repairs an ongoing challenge.

The daylight hours left for filming limited the distance we could explore. We had basic directions to the closest water project site. We made it there after a few wrong turns and some backtracking. What we discovered was a water distribution point rather than a water treatment facility. A couple of soldiers with water hoses helped young children fill tin cans and buckets. Despite our best efforts, the day had turned into an exploratory field trip rather than a filming opportunity. Filming would have to wait until the next day. We had to find our way to the American base and a place to sleep for the night.

Talil Air Base houses all branches of the U.S. military. I felt confident that American hospitality would easily surpass the British. First though, I needed to find the Air Force. I barged into a tent asking for help. I quickly learned that I was in the Army sector. The officer I cornered for help guided us to the Air Force sector. We were one step closer to a place to sleep for the night. I negotiated for some hot tea and cookies while the soldiers on duty tried to track down the public affairs officer.

My British co-workers were prepared to renounce their citizenship based on the hospitality we received in Basra. In addition to delays getting inside Saddam's Palace the night before, the British quartermaster told us that we couldn't eat at the soldiers' mess. We dined instead on MREs I had brought as emergency rations. The scenario puzzled us. We represented the U.S. government. Why didn't the British want to feed us?

At Talil, I felt sure they would have treated us to dinner if they had had a cook at camp. Instead, we were on our own with another round of MREs. The covert comparison of military hospitality appeared to be a toss-up until our escort took us to tent city. That's when the competition clearly had a front-runner. The Americans rallied with comfortable camp cots, private tents and the option to shower.

The advantage to waking up at first light is the privilege of having the shower tent all to yourself. The downside is the lack of warm water. I filled up two liter bot-

tles of water from a metal drum and walked to the back of the three-stall shower tent. Several minutes later I emerged feeling refreshed and triumphant over the desert dirt and humidity.

All the while, my crew slept. What none of us realized was that the time zone in Nasiriyah was different from Basra. Our military escort was waiting. We were already an hour late for a very busy day. I burst into the men's tent to wake them, then huddled with the military officer outside to get a readout on what was ahead. Our day would focus on water issues.

Iraqi dinars for U.S. dollars. Others had head scarves, medals, coins, cigarettes and even toothpaste for sale. I asked one teenager if he studied English. He pulled out a book with phrases in Arabic and English to show what he had learned. He taught me a few phrases too.

We left the friendly crowd behind and joined a convoy to Nasiriyah's municipal building. The municipal building serves as a gathering point for community leaders, U.S. forces and nongovernmental organizations. Electricity, water, medicine, cooking fuel, sewage and much more provide plenty of challenges for the post-



Left: A woman shops at a market in Umm Qasr. Above: A Basrah butcher and his helpers.

Our first stop was a military installation in the town of Nasiriyah where U.S. forces had converted a community college into an operations center. The public affairs officer and I left the crew behind with the car and ventured into the compound. A few soldiers lounged in the salvaged desks scattered near the front entrance. We walked through the courtyard into a dim hallway. Already the camp was in action. Officers with access to computers had systems up and running. Different company commanders were briefing their soldiers.

Once we sorted out the departure time for our convoy, we headed back to the entrance with cups of tea for our British crew. In the war zone, the smallest of gestures requires some ingenuity and strategy. In our reconnaissance of the compound, we salvaged several plastic water bottles and fashioned makeshift mugs by cutting off their tops. Then we guarded the kettle from other users to make sure no one depleted our hot water supply. The Brits rewarded our efforts with hardy thanks and eagerly accepted the tea as a wake-up gift.

By then, the novelty of the American car had drawn a crowd. About 15 to 20 men and boys gathered. Most of them had something to sell. Many wanted to exchange

war community. Various groups huddled in the offices off the courtyard discussing the immediate needs and sources available to meet the needs.

Colored construction paper tacked above doors denoted each room's purpose. Inside the water and sewage room, we found Maj. Robert Carr talking with local Iraqi leaders about detecting pipeline breaks. His role includes overseeing the repair of the water pipes and the proper chlorination of the water at the water treatment facility.

We followed him from there to the main water treatment facility for Nasiriyah. The 20-minute drive gave us a better sense of the size of the city. The closer we got to the remote location, the more children we saw on the side of the roads waving and cheering.

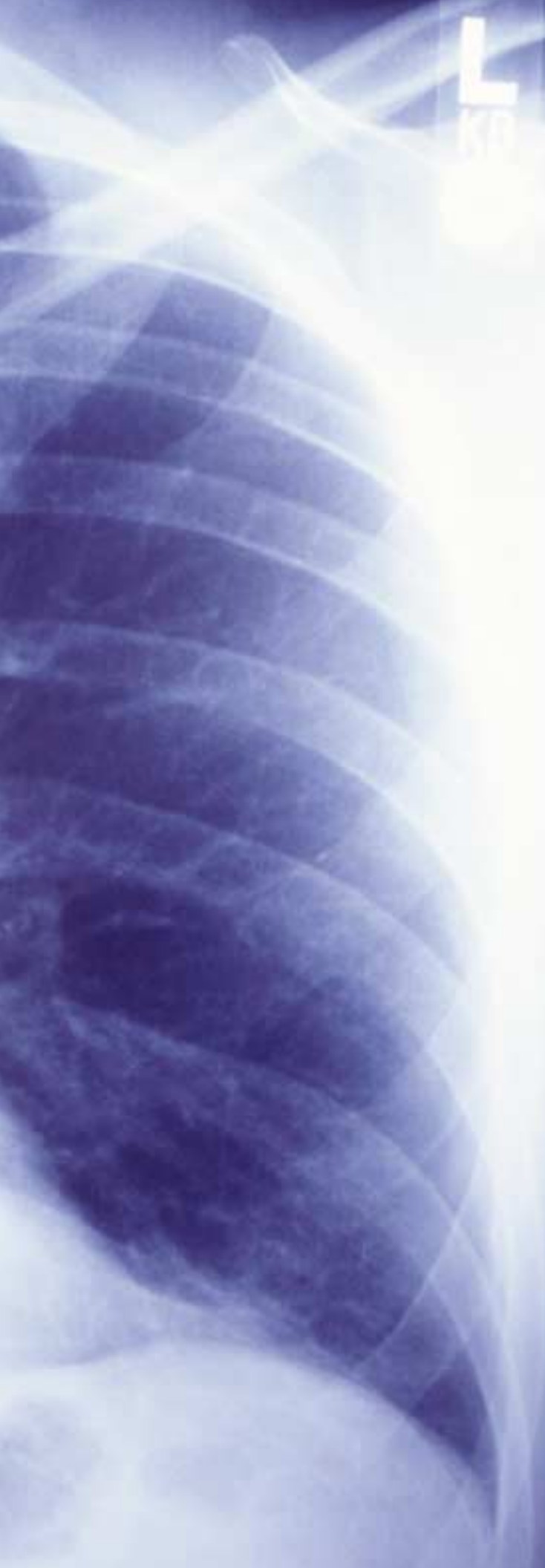
The local staff had managed to restore service to 90 percent capacity.

The major described the impact of their work: "Water is life. Without a safe water source, people will resort to unsuitable sources such as open ditches." ■

The author, a former television producer, is a public affairs specialist in the Bureau of Public Affairs.

SARS

An Uninvited Visitor



By Dr. John E. Hall

As a first-tour regional medical officer in Beijing, I was enjoying a rewarding medical experience for about 20 months. Living in a fascinating part of the world, I was providing medical care and consultations to our mission and to the many official visitors we entertain in China. Then severe acute respiratory syndrome, also known as SARS, paid an unexpected and unwelcome visit.

I went to work on a Monday in late January, expecting my usual busy day but with no idea of the flood of e-mail messages, phone calls and consultations waiting for me. Reports of a mysterious “atypical pneumonia” had hit the newspapers in Guangzhou in southern China’s Guangdong province. There were 306 cases reported and 6 to 10 deaths. The disease was spreading like wildfire. I tried to gather as much information as possible about this deadly flu-like threat.

For two days I issued warnings and suggestions to the official U.S. community, recommending that people avoid crowds, eat, exercise, stay healthy and go to the local health unit if they became ill.

Chinese newspapers reported a run on white vinegar—rumored to be an effective antidote to SARS when drunk after boiling. There were other reports, such as breathing in the fumes of soy sauce poured over hot rocks would stave off the disease. The inevitable price gouging, as much as a ten-fold rise in the prices of these otherwise cheap commodities, followed.

Three days later, all was quiet. For a time, I thought maybe SARS was a small blip on the medical radar screen and whatever it was had disappeared. After all, it was flu season and the Asian flu starts here.

Business continued as usual. Then in mid-March, a new outbreak hit Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Hanoi, Germany and Toronto. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization issued warnings. Then SARS hit really big. We were near the epicenter and learned about the numbers of health care workers infected. We began to hear of deaths and respiratory distress. Amoy Garden, an apartment complex in Hong Kong, suffered 267 cases, reportedly spread by leaky sewer pipes. Yet, there were no reports of the incidence of the disease from the major Chinese population centers of Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu or Shenyang. Why? Who knew? Flights within China and a Singapore Airlines flight were suspected of spreading SARS. Did flight crews spread the disease?

Travel bans were announced. Then warnings. An authorized departure was issued from the U.S. Mission in Hanoi.

UPDATE

The World Health Organization lifted its travel advisory on Hong Kong June 23 and on Beijing June 24.

Hong Kong and Guangzhou issued authorized departures as well. Town meetings were held at all posts in the U.S. Mission to China. A SARS task force convened and met daily. Rumor control was one of the committee's prime concerns.

A few days later the ambassador asked if he should order authorized departures for the entire mission. I supported the move. We didn't know how widespread the disease was, its mode of transmission or an effective treatment. Where would we hospitalize people who

Clorox. Whole neighborhoods reeked of bleach. Everyone wore masks.

Beijing, a city of 15 million, became a ghost town. Streets were empty. The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, bars, restaurants, the city's health clubs and swimming pools closed. Large groups of workers and laborers disappeared into the countryside, defying government orders. Hotel occupancy fell to three or four percent. Huge numbers of flights were cancelled.

The SARS task force worked diligently to be open and informative. It stalked rumors and issued administrative notices. The committee met with groups large and small, with FSNs and Americans alike. We knew SARS was all around us, but how could we avoid it?

Basic questions remained unanswered. What was the origin of SARS? How was it spread? What was the best treatment? Many diseases have been with us since biblical times—leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox and others. Yet this was a new, never before described disease. Available information was spotty and not firmly grounded in scientific evidence. No one could say whether this was a seasonal or a year-round disease. Scientists suspected SARS was spread by droplets from contagious carriers, but they couldn't identify a symptomatic carrier state. WHO and CDC sent many experts to Chinese cities and to the countryside to gather case information and other epidemiological data. They issued daily reports and we waited each day

and hoped for a medical breakthrough.

With most diseases, tests determine the diagnosis. So far, there is no quick, definitive test for SARS. Diagnosis is based on the presence of a cluster of symptoms and signs but mostly on the physician's judgment. Some tests were developed, but they take 10 to 30 days. What is needed is a test that will indicate whether the patient has SARS as soon as the person enters the medical facility. Not knowing is often the worst part.

Six months after this emerging disease first hit China, SARS has spread worldwide. Members of the U.S. Mission in China have learned to live in its midst and, so far, no one in the American community has contracted the disease. We have modified our behavior. The medical unit is geared to evaluate fever patients differently and we think we know how to protect ourselves in the clinic if we have a likely exposure.

Nevertheless, SARS, an unwelcome and unwanted visitor, may be here to stay. It has certainly changed our lives in Beijing. ■

The author is the regional medical officer for China and Mongolia.



A masked fortune teller cautiously waits for customers at the height of the SARS scare.

became ill? Could we medevac them? Where would we send them? What treatment would they receive?

News from China was anything but transparent. Despite local reports that hundreds in Beijing had contracted SARS, official word admitted to only 20 cases in the city. Other cities, including UlaanBataar in Mongolia, reported new cases. When WHO pressured the Chinese government to release accurate data on the number of cases, Chinese officials promised to respond in a month.

Then, suddenly, everything changed. High-level officials in the Ministry of Health were fired for covering up news of the epidemic. New statistics were released indicating 370 cases in Beijing, a figure that grew to 3,000 in a few weeks and to 5,000 soon afterward. Deaths began to be reported and mortality rates were variously reported as 3.5 percent, then 6 percent and later as high as 15 percent for some age groups.

China is a Communist country. The government has the power to enforce rules and to quarantine or isolate large groups—in this case, 30,000 or more. Cities and towns barricaded themselves against outsiders. Before entering housing compounds, cars were doused with



Photo by Paul Morse, The White House

Former Intern Draws White House Beat

By Alicia Langley Edwards

When I made the decision to move to Washington to begin work on a master's degree in international affairs at George Washington University, I wondered what opportunities there would be for me to use my interest in foreign policy, my bachelor's degree in journalism and public relations and my three years of experience working as a writer, editor and web site manager at an ABC television affiliate.

I had taken the written portion of the Foreign Service Exam shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, and became deeply interested in public diplomacy. I decided to apply for a State Department internship. I was hired as an intern in the spring of 2003 to work in the Bureau of International Information Programs. I was assigned to the White House as a correspondent for the *Washington File*, which publishes policy statements, official texts and byline articles prepared by IIP to the U.S. government, embassies and consulates.

I had never been inside the White House, so learning that I would have a desk and a phone in the press basement was pretty exciting. It was certainly a thrill to tell former co-workers at WFTS and my family in Newton Falls, Ohio, that I was going to be a member of the White House press corps, and they might even catch a glimpse of the back of my head on television during Ari Fleischer's midday briefings.

My job was to attend the informal morning gaggle and then the briefing, the "lights, camera, action" version the cable networks broadcast. I would return to my

laptop and file a White House report on newsworthy foreign policy statements for my boss to edit. On big news days, especially during the weeks leading up to the war in Iraq, I would write bylined articles for the *File*. My stories appeared translated online in Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

I learned how important it is to prepare official texts and statements carefully and how little room there is for interpretation or editorial comments. Although *Washington File* writers are journalists, they rely heavily on exact quotations from government officials and have little use for speculation or unconfirmed leaks. I never asked a question at the White House briefings because I was not there to challenge the Administration as the other reporters were expected to do. My job was to report what was said.

Although my internship ended last May, I began work in August as a co-op in Public Affairs while I complete my graduate studies at George Washington University. In the meantime, I passed the Foreign Service oral assessment and plan to begin my career as a public diplomacy officer after receiving my master's degree in the spring of 2004. ■



Photo by Wendy Ross

Author at the White House podium.

The author works in the Bureau of Public Affairs Office of Press Outreach.



Despatch Agents Continue Centuries-Old Tradition

Story by Sally Freeman Gadsden

Photos by Paul Koscak



Top: Sidney Roche sees that hazardous materials comply with shipping regulations. Above: Carmella Joyner handles air cargo.

They're the small army of U.S. and locally employed staff who literally move the Foreign Service from port to port and from post to post.

For those who spend a career lugging household goods from one corner of the world to the next, the Department's despatchers are an experienced cadre of professionals. But the majority of employees, whose travel consists mainly of riding the Metro each day, may be surprised to learn that moving everything from coffee tables, to cars, to fine art is done by State transportation managers. They even handle the mail. In fact, the Department has been in the moving business more than two centuries.

In 1794, the State Department—then just a few desks in a small Manhattan house—asked the Collectors of Ports in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore for advice on sending the Department's mail to foreign ports.

Then in 1830, the Department started its own despatch agency in New York City and hired William Taylor for \$500 a year as its first despatch agent. The New York hub, now in Iselin, N.J., is State's oldest transportation office. The early agents usually worked for the Post Office or shipping companies, viewing despatch as a collateral job. Interestingly, the title despatch agent wasn't used until 1842, even though these first cargo haulers were performing despatch work.

Today's network of transportation offices, staffed by nearly 250 employees, evolved more recently.

A Baltimore office opened in the late 1950s to handle an increase in household goods and cars. Miami opened in 1969 to service Western Hemisphere posts. In 1975,



the European Logistical Support Office began in a hotel in Antwerp, Belgium, to support moves to Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Today, the office occupies the 12th floor of a building overlooking the second largest port in Europe.

In 1990, the Seattle office opened to move supplies and household goods to East Asian and Pacific posts. Last year, a logistics center was opened in Brownsville, Texas, by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to manage pouch and freight shipments to Mexico and Cuba. Last year the despatch agencies moved 51,302 tons of freight.

But not all shipments are household goods. Despatch is evolving. It's as much an organization of suppliers as shippers, one poised to support contingencies and deployments.

When the U.S. Embassy reopened in Kabul, heavy equipment, medical supplies and generators were shipped quickly in a Russian-leased aircraft. Despatch even stores tents, office and medical equipment, tools and vehicles in Frankfurt and Antwerp for emergencies worldwide.

Sebastian "Sibby" Roca is the New York despatch office's liaison at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Moving into the electronic age, the warehouse merchandise is offered through an online catalog. Post procurement officers can shop for packing paper, vacuum cleaners, freezers or—the latest feature—a full line of American beer, wine and liquor.

Aside from bedroom sets and washing machines, despatch stocks such specialty items as tires for armored BMWs. It also contracts through the military commissary system to ship food to designated posts.

Despatch is now working to improve operations by bringing service closer to the customer. South Africa, for example, will soon have a despatch agent on staff at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, and cities such as Riga and Bremen will have their own mini hubs. Even the organization is evolving. Some despatch operations are now managed by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs rather than the Bureau of Administration. ■

The author is a logistics management specialist.



New York Agency Is Department's Office Depot

Story and Photos by Paul Koscak



Carmella Martino processes receipts to pay vendors.

Perhaps the first thing you'll notice about the New York Despatch Agency—the Department's oldest—is that it's not in New York.

The agency thrives in a quiet, tree-lined suburban office park in Iselin, N.J., an upscale town 30 minutes west of Staten Island. But it's still the New York office.

"We were in Manhattan until 1980," Robert Caggiano, the office's export chief, recalled. "It was difficult to get people to work there. Now we're closer to the New Jersey ports—Port Elizabeth and Port Newark."

Without a loading dock or seaport in sight, this office of 16 people moves 80 percent of the Department's supplies, according to Despatch Agent Lewis Wolkofsky. Pens, furniture, computers, paint, roofing—everything it takes to keep an embassy productive most likely was shipped through the New York office.

It's staffed by logistics specialists who oversee every part of a shipment. They prepare freight rates, bills of lading to clear customs or authorize special handling for such hazardous materials as aerosols and paints. They expedite, plan and keep things moving. The actual hands-on stuff—loading, unloading, packaging and delivery—is done by a legion of contractors, most at a large warehouse in nearby Linden, N.J., which contracts with its own office and furniture suppliers.

The agency also negotiates for the best sea and air shipping rates. Contracts are renegotiated every three to five years so the Department is charged competitively. That's an easy task right now because the shipping industry has been stagnant for nearly a decade. Shipping rates are actually down compared to 10 years ago, Mr. Wolkofsky said. "Ships are going out half empty. It's a buyer's market."

Despatching not only means moving cargo, but moving it economically. It's all in the timing and developing



Robert Gomes ensures that overseas shipping documents are in order.

a sense for traffic flow, Mr. Caggiano claims. Since overseas shipments are packed in containers, for example, knowing what shipments can be set aside while more pressing cargo is prepared means shipping more tonnage at once. Understanding the supply cycles of an embassy allows shipments to be grouped together. That saves money, too, he added.

Encouraging customers to avoid shipments during the fall and winter, the office's busiest time, is another money-saving measure. The office aims to consolidate all containers in 20 days or less. Maintaining the 20-day guideline ensures goods arrive in a reasonable time. "Sometimes the actual shipment can take up to 30 days, not counting our 20-day consolidation policy," Mr. Caggiano said.

For unique shipments, particularly valuables, arrivals requiring protocol or special handling, there's Sebastian "Sibby" Roca. He's the Department's liaison officer at John F. Kennedy International Airport, the New York agency's one-man office poised for anything, anytime. While the office maintains a regular business day, Mr. Roca said he's "always on call."

The job, he explained, is simply to ensure that shipments smoothly move through one of the busiest airports in the nation. With 37 years of experience, he's

become a fixture at JFK with trusted contacts throughout the airport.

Every day, Mr. Roca stops by the airline cargo offices to check for New York bound shipments. He processed two paintings worth nearly \$2 million destined for an ambassador's residence. One arrival of assorted artworks addressed to the National Gallery of Art, he said, was worth about \$25 million.

"I'll stand by the plane or the warehouse to ensure the shipment isn't lost," he said.

Another time, he processed exotic animals destined for Washington's National Zoo as well as bald eagles, a gift to President Reagan. Mr. Roca ensured that all the documents and permits were in order before the animals were carefully checked by the Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Agriculture

"I enjoy working with other government agencies," he said.

He helped organize a news conference for Terry Anderson, the AP reporter held hostage seven years in Lebanon by Hezbollah terrorists. Mr. Roca found a secure site at JFK and completed all the security clearances needed for the conference.

Even the dead receive Mr. Roca's special attention.

"I handle human remains," he said. "When a body comes through JFK I make arrangements [for inspection] with customs, agriculture and health officials. I'll make arrangements with the funeral home for pickup."

But Mr. Roca goes beyond cold logistics. He books a lounge in the terminal for the arriving family to ensure they're comfortable.

When a Diplomatic Security agent died of a heart attack in South America, Mr. Roca arranged for a police escort to the funeral home and a private ceremony next to the airplane when the body arrived.

Mr. Roca also handles huge equipment, such as generators or electrostatic machines used by the Department of Energy.

It all adds up. In fact, since 2000, Mr. Roca has handled almost 1,000 shipments each year. ■

During his career, Mr. Roca has shared his expertise with his counterparts, working details in Rome, Antwerp and Tel Aviv.



Photo by Mark Stewart

Preparing for the Worst

By Kathryn M. Shippe

State Department officials continue to plan for terrorist attacks by talking through possible scenarios. What looks like just another group of people sitting around a table in a conference room is actually a brainstorming session where the Department's top management is searching for answers to some pretty grim scenarios.

William A. "Bill" Eaton, assistant secretary for the Administration, hosted the tabletop exercises, as they're called, to give expected key players an opportunity to resolve any number of crises resulting from a terrorist attack.

Participants at the semiannual exercise included Grant Green, under secretary for Management; Francis X. Taylor, assistant secretary for Diplomatic Security; Ruth A. Davis, then director general of the Foreign Service and director of Human Resources; and Bruce Morrison, acting chief information officer. Other senior officials also participated.

While terrorism isn't something we like to think about, senior managers acknowledge that employees are concerned for their safety. To protect them, they must plan for the worst.

Here's an example of the sort of mayhem faced during the last exercise.

One scenario involved reports of multiple explosions in Washington, D.C. Smoke was seen coming from the underground parking garage at the Department of Justice. An unconfirmed explosion on the Constitution Avenue side of the Justice Department was reported. Then, reports were received of an explosion near the Department of Transportation's Metro entrance.

Then, more attacks.

An explosion rocks the Harry S Truman Building, followed by a small plane crash into a building on 23rd Street. Another explosion in the underground parking garage ignites gas tanks. And if that's not enough for an evening newscast, a suicide bomber detonates a bomb at the D Street pedestrian entrance to State.

The tabletop managers get busy. Responders must make split-second decisions, while trying to discern fact from fiction. Focusing on specific events helps managers become more adept at sorting out facts and devising solutions. There are never any right or wrong answers. But discussing possible responses can reduce confusion, panic and injury.

Getting information to employees begins immediately—telling them what's known, what they should do, where they should go and what steps are being taken to secure Main State and the annexes. Participants discussed ways to secure the building and options for staying in place or evacuating. They also discussed ways to work closely with local authorities.

The group devised plans for moving employees to safer areas within Main State and eventually from the building. They established a medical triage, a command center for emergency responders and their vehicles, a press section and an area for evacuated employees.

The tabletop exercise complements what is already being done by other sections of the Department. Bureaus and offices have been updating emergency action and contingency plans, and the Department established an Emergency Action Committee, chaired by the under secretary for Management. ■

The author is an emergency planner in the Bureau of Administration.

MANILA MEETS WITH MUSLIM LEADERS

By Ralph W. Falzone and Stephen I. Ruken

The U.S. Embassy in Manila hosted a group of Filipino Muslim leaders for a breakfast meeting and consultation in the Muslim community tradition.

The leaders were in Manila last April attending the Philippines' first Muslim Summit on Unity, Peace and Development. While there, they mingled with embassy officials over coffee in the renovated courtyard of the chancery. Later, Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone met with the 24 political and opinion leaders in the embassy's new executive conference room.

The forum focused on the needs and concerns of the people of the southern region of the Philippines, especially Moro the Filipino Muslims. The Moro community is a major partner in U.S. economic development programs. Philippine Muslims number approximately five to six million, or about 7 percent of the country's population. The majority live in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Participants included elected officials and individuals from the national administration, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, local governments, the Moro National Liberation Front, civil society and academia.

Ambassador Ricciardone recounted his own experiences in Muslim countries and highlighted the shared values inherent in both Western and Islamic countries. Officers from the U.S. Agency for International Development briefed the group on U.S. projects to improve livelihood, infrastructure, education, health and renewable energy in the conflict-affected areas of the region. The region receives more than half of the \$78 million USAID provides to the Philippines. Community leaders discussed their concerns with the ambassador and other mission officers during an open forum. Some expressed appreciation for U.S. contributions and urged renewed U.S. engagement in education. Others questioned U.S. plans for joint military exercises in Mindanao with the armed forces of the Philippines. Although some called for the United States to "right historical wrongs" toward the Moro people in Mindanao,

most welcomed the U.S. role in promoting stability and development in Mindanao.

Held soon after the end of major hostilities in Iraq, the meeting reflected divisions and misinformation within Filipino society about the historical and contemporary U.S. role in Muslim affairs. The open forum demonstrated the embassy's commitment to hosting communities outside Manila. The event followed an Iftar dinner during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, at the ambassador's residence.

In addition, seven young Muslim leaders from Mindanao participated in the International Visitors

Programs this year. Discussions focused on the role of religion in the United States, leadership development, foreign policy and human rights. A Muslim interfaith dialogue leader, Taha Basman, who received the distinguished 2003 Aquino Fellowship for Public Service, will travel to the United States soon on an individual IVP. The embassy's small grants program also funds the Philippines Alumni Foundation's



Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone, back center, meets with Muslim leaders.

Photo by Ben Baguio

peace dialogues in four cities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to Washington last May boosted U.S. engagement in the Muslim south. President Bush pledged diplomatic and financial support to a renewed peace process between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an insurgent group in Mindanao. The President announced \$30 million in supplemental funding for the region. Meanwhile, Secretary Powell and Philippine Foreign Secretary Blas Ople signed a letter of agreement to support law enforcement training for police and prosecutors in the Autonomous Region with \$1 million from the United States. In addition, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios and Secretary Ople signed a memorandum of intent to provide up to \$33 million to complete and sustain ongoing assistance to former combatants and their communities. ■

The authors work in the political section of the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

Marines Help Students Celebrate

English Victory

Story and photo by Gillian Grant

At the American Center in Burma last April, a motivated group of American teachers and I decided on an old-fashioned field day for some 400 Burmese students to celebrate completing their English classes. While we were unsure whether high school graduates and working adults could appreciate a day of relay races and recreation, it turned out to be a home run.

There were a few obstacles to handle, such as finding a place to hold the event. The current military government's ban against public gatherings of more than five people complicated our search. So when the American Club offered its grounds, we were thrilled.

We organized 15 activities, including jump rope, a three-legged race, freeze tag, an egg-carrying relay and games involving a giant parachute.

We then summoned up all the charm we could muster and enticed adult American volunteers, including our public affairs officer, to guide each station. Five Marines also came to our rescue.

The weather in South East Asia goes from being hot and wet to hotter and dry. As April is the hottest month of the year, we decided to hold the event at 7 a.m. to avoid heat casualties.

Once our energetic Burmese students had been prepped on the field day's rules, nearly all managed to find shorts or pants for the day, a variation from the sarong, called a longyi, that Burmese women and men wear daily.

When the big day commenced, our classes rotated from activity to activity each time the whistle blew. Our field day carried on in the intense heat with high energy, smiles and plenty of sweat.

We finished with lots of water and fresh fruit, resting in the shade of the giant trees that grace this city. The Marines seemed like movie stars as the students, particularly impressed that one Marine was female, lined up for photographs. The event was a true success. ■

Students walked away with real images of how Americans can be playful and good-natured, even muscular Marines.

The author is an English teaching fellow for the U.S. State Department.





Photo courtesy of Corbis, Inc.

It's Hollywood Squares and Secure

The Department's new Secret-High (Secure) Video and Data Collaboration system sounds like another complicated IT system, but the only hard part is the name itself. Let's just refer to it as secure videoconferencing or SVDC for short.

How can this new system make your work easier and more productive? It can help you hold a last-minute classified or unclassified meeting with colleagues in different locations. It will let you make a presentation to an overseas post when your travel money is limited. And it can help if you are crashing on a presentation or next year's budget and need to interact with co-workers in different locations.

This new system—incorporating interactive video, audio and data sharing—makes it feel like everyone is in the same room. The technology also allows several participants to be viewed on the screen at once. There are many viewing modes available, including one voice-activated image, two side-by-side images and multiple images—Hollywood Squares style.

The video conferencing equipment uses the Department's ClassNet network to connect users. The system also allows you to hold videoconferences with select Defense Department sites. Encrypted phone lines are also planned. The system can currently connect up to 12 participants at once in approved conference rooms at



Secretary Powell, top right, checks out secure system.

domestic and overseas sites. A list of approved conference rooms is at http://t.state.sgov.gov/video/ht/how-to_class.html.

To request a secure conference facility, call (202) 647-8889 or send an e-mail to securevnc@state.gov on OpenNet or securevnc@state.sgov.gov on ClassNet.

The operators are available around the clock to assist you. For further information about the secure system, contact Charles Irons at (202) 647-7876 or by e-mail at ironscr@state.gov.



Safe Driving Is a Skill, Not an Art

By Daniel L. Harman

There's the sickening crunch of metal—followed by devastation and guilt.

It's not uncommon for drivers of vehicle accidents, especially those that kill or maim, to experience a range of emotions—feelings that last long after the accident.

The Department operates a motor vehicle fleet of approximately 5,400 vehicles. Without it, State's ability to function would be severely impaired. This fleet operates in conditions of tremendous variability, from driving conditions similar to those in the United States to almost nonexistent roadways. This variability demands that drivers of the Department's government-owned vehicles, including American and locally employed staff, practice safe driving techniques.

Historically, the Department's motor vehicle fatality rate has been about five times the U.S. rate. Throughout the 1990s, State averaged 4.2 fatalities per year. Since fiscal year 2001, however, the number of fatalities has nearly tripled to an average of 11.3 fatalities per year.

What is contributing to the excessive number of fatalities? While there is much we do not know, what we do know is that nearly two-thirds of the fatalities since FY01 involved incidental operators. These are employees who drive motor pool vehicles, but not as their pri-

mary duty. They include runners, mail clerks, guards, maintenance and warehouse staff, and Foreign Service personnel. Frequently, they do not have the same level of training and experience as professional drivers. Many posts fail to realize that all drivers of government-owned vehicles require the same level of training and formal evaluation of driving skills as the professionals.

Who are the victims of the Department's motor vehicle operations? Pedestrians and unrestrained vehicle occupants. Pedestrians account for nearly 50 percent of all fatalities involving State vehicles. Poor lighting, dark clothing, pedestrian lack of road hazard awareness and driver failure to adjust driving to account for pedestrians are the main factors for increased pedestrian deaths. Failure to use seat belts in department vehicles accounts for more than 90 percent of fatalities. The obvious way to prevent occupant fatality or serious injury is to comply with the Department's mandatory seat belt use.

Identifying the causes and types of motor vehicle accidents involving Department vehicles is a crucial step in reducing accident frequency and severity. The primary causes of accidents are excessive speed, poor decision making, inattention to hazardous situations, failure to scan the roadway ahead and fatigue. By understanding the causes and types of accidents, driver training can focus on the primary problems.

The Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Safety is working on several initiatives to reduce excessive fatality and injury rate. In 2002, for example, SHEM began a Defensive Driving Train-The-Trainer program. To date, 65 employees have completed the course and are now initiating driver-training programs at post. When SHEM conducts training overseas, it encourages posts to train all drivers.

Two publications, *Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program and Overseas Driving*, are excellent resources for motor vehicle safety information. They are available at <http://obo.state.gov/opssaf-shem/index.html>. Hard copies are also available upon request. Please contact SHEM directly at (703) 516-1934 if you have specific questions. ■

Historically, the Department's motor vehicle fatality rate has been about **five times** the U.S. rate.

The author is an industrial hygienist in the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management.

Education & Training

The Department's Mandatory Leadership and Management Training Requirements

The Secretary of State has mandated leadership training from mid through senior grade levels for Foreign Service officers and Civil Service employees to ensure that they have the necessary preparation for increasing levels of responsibility. FSI's Leadership and Management School offers the required courses to meet these mandatory training requirements, and other courses for all FS and GS employees.

Mandatory Courses

- FS 3/GS 13: Basic Leadership Skills (PK245)
- FS 2/GS 14: Intermediate Leadership Skills (PT207)
- FS 1/GS 15: Advanced Leadership Skills (PT210)
- Newly promoted FS-OC/SES: Senior Executive Threshold Seminar (PT133)
- EEO Diversity Awareness for Managers and Supervisors (PT107)

Some Nonmandatory Recommendations for all FS and GS employees:

- Employee Relations Seminar (PK246)
- Managing People Problems (PT121)
- Teambuilding (PT129)
- Performance Management Seminar (PT205)
- Creative Problem Solving Workshop (PT212)
- Managing Conflict Productively (PT214)
- Influence by Design (PT224)
- Valuing Diversity in the Workplace (PT225)
- Productively Managing Stress (PT251)
- Managing Up (PT252)

For more information, contact FSI's Leadership and Management School (703) 302-6743, FSILMS InfoBox @state.gov or <http://fsiweb.fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/default.asp>

Transition Center	Oct	Nov	Length
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Dates for FSI Transition Center Courses are shown below. For information on all the courses available at FSI, visit the FSI Schedule of Courses on the Department of State's OpenNet at <http://fsiweb.fsi.state.gov>. FY03/04 dates are now available in the online catalog. See Department Notices for announcements of new courses and new course dates and periodic announcements of external training opportunities sponsored by FSI.

Security

SOS: Security Overseas Seminar (MQ911)	14,27	3,17	2 D
ASOS: Advanced Security Overseas Seminar (MQ912)	21	25	1 D
TDY SOS: Security Overseas Seminar (MQ913)	14,27	3,17	1 D

Foreign Service Life Skills

Regulations, Allowances & Finances (MQ104)	27		3 D
English Teaching Seminar (MQ107)		24	2 D
Making Presentations: Design to Delivery (MQ111)		18	3 D
Protocol & U.S. Representation Abroad (MQ116)	25	22	1 D
Transition to Washington for Foreign-Born Spouses (MQ302)	18		0.5D
Post Options for Employment and Training (MQ703)	30		1 D
Targeting the Job Market (MQ704)		12	3 D
Long Distance Relationships (MQ801)		15	0.5D
Communicating Across Cultures (MQ802)		21	1 D
Realities of Foreign Service Life (MQ803)		1	1 D
Raising the Bilingual Child (MQ851)		5	2.5H
Emergency Medical Care and Trauma Workshop (MQ915)	8	1 D	

Transition Center	Oct	Nov	Length
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Career Transition Center

Job Search Program (RV102)	6		8 W
Financial and Estate Planning (RV103)	2		1 D
Annuities & Benefits and Social Security (RV104)	1		1 D

School of Language Studies

Increased language enrollments due to the Secretary's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative have required FSI's School of Language Studies to change class schedules. Classes are being run in double sessions. The morning session may begin as early as 7:30 a.m. and the afternoon session may end as late as 5:30 p.m.

FasTrac Distance Learning Program, Learn at Your Own Pace, When and Where You Want

FSI is accepting applications for the FasTrac distance learning program. All State Department employees, LES and EFMs are eligible. FasTrac offers more than 3,000 courses on numerous topics. Training is conducted online through the Internet and the Department's Open Net. Students may complete courses for inclusion on their official FSI transcript or take a course module they need to "get the job done." Course lengths vary from two to eight hours and knowledge pre-assessments may shorten learning plans. To view the complete FasTrac catalog, visit the FasTrac web site at <http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac>. For additional information, please contact the Distance Learning Coordinator at the Office of the Registrar, (703) 302-7497.

Length: H = Hours, D = Days, W = Weeks

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Registrar at (703) 302-7144.

People Like You



SLEUTH ON THE TRAIL OF THE FLAWED STAMP

By Carl Goodman

John Hotchner will tell you, ever so modestly, that he has been collecting stamps since he was five—a hobby he inherited from his father, a founding staff member of the Voice of America. Unlike his father, however, he has not been content just to collect. He searches for those priceless treasures like the stamp with the color running or a fly imprinted on it (see example above).

The soft-spoken Mr. Hotchner, a former member of the Foreign Service himself before converting to the Civil Service, is also busy writing a weekly column for *Linn's Stamp News*, editing two philatelic periodicals, and exhibiting and judging national and international philatelic exhibits.

The senior Bureau of Consular Affairs employee is also a member of the Council of Philatelists that advises



Photo by Carl Goodman

"Sleuth" John Hotchner

the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum and the Postmaster General's Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee—whose 15 members choose subjects and develop and approve the art for U.S. stamps from among approximately 50,000 entries annually from the American public. The panel is not just stamp collectors, he stresses, but also includes a cast of folks—like actor Karl Malden and sports broadcaster "Digger" Phelps.

He is past president of the American Philatelic Society—a 50,000-member umbrella organization covering stamp-collecting activities domestically.

The native New Yorker, who began his career as a passport adjudicator, estimates his stamp collection in the "tens of thousands." His special interests include collecting stamp production mistakes from the United States and other countries and mail that has been delayed in the postal system. ■

STAND AND DELIVER

By Leslie Holland

Public speaking is an art—and most people avoid it like the plague. Employees' ability to demonstrate solid communication skills, however, is vital to their success and their organization's.

It's easy to admire public speakers like Secretary Powell or marvel at an adept meeting facilitator. You just assume their skills come naturally. They don't. You can rest assured that they have worked hard over many years to develop and refine their skills.

Employees interested in polishing their public speaking skills may wish to join an organization such as Toastmasters, which is well known for its formula of developing speech skills in an inviting, enlightened and supportive atmosphere.

Two Toastmaster clubs are currently active in the Department. The Overseas Buildings Operations Esprit de Corps Toastmasters Club, which recently received its charter, meets every Thursday at noon in SA-6, in the 10th floor conference room. The State of Speaking Toastmasters Club meets every

Wednesday at noon in SA-15, Room 3201. If you're interested in starting a club, contact Kelly Griffith, vice president of membership, OBO Esprit de Corps, at GriffithK2@state.gov.



Photo by Ann Thomas

Charles E. Williams, center foreground, director of Overseas Buildings Operations, presented the OBO Esprit de Corps Toastmasters Club with its charter last March.

>>> Going the Distance By Janette Corsbie



Sandra Ross

Sometimes, going the distance isn't easy. Just ask Sandra Ross.

The administrative assistant at the Foreign Service Institute recently earned her master certification in the Microsoft Master Office Certification program through the School of Applied Information Technology's distance learning program.

She completed seven exams to earn certification that's recognized globally as a standard for validating expertise with the suite of Microsoft Office business productivity programs.

Ms. Ross, the first Civil Service office management specialist to complete the course through the school's distance learning program, said she would never have been able to take the time off from work to attend the classes necessary to earn her certification.

She said the school's distance learning program was "invaluable" and offered her the same "high-quality training" she would have received in the classroom.

The distance learning courses cover materials for both the information technology professional and end-user. They are available to all Department employees without charge. More than 500 course titles covering 21 different information technology professional certifications are available. An online registration form and list of courses is available at <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sait/dl.asp>.

Students can have the courses on all or any combination of media types. The school highly recommends the Internet courses because they are interactive and have hyperlinks to additional course materials as well as discussion groups and chat rooms. The initial online tour gives you the option of a mentor who is available around the clock.

For more information about the distance learning program, check the Intranet site above or or send an e-mail to the Opennet Mailbox: SAIT Distance Learning.

STATE OF THE ARTS

AT THE KEYBOARD, AGE DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER

By John Bentel

The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and the State of the Arts Cultural Series recently presented a variety of outstanding performances by pianists young and old. The annual recital of students from the State Department and Georgetown University included performers ranging in age from 8 to 84.

Callan Yanoff, 8, opened the concert with *Rainbow Colors* and *Mumbo-Jumbo* and was followed by her brother Logan, 10, who performed *Hide and Seek* and *Ginger Snaps*. This is the third consecutive year they have participated in the recital.

John Griffen, a consultant and beginning student, offered a well-constructed Bach *Minuet in G* as well as a Mozart selection. Jonathan J. Rhodes, a Senate aide, performed Eckstein's *Once Upon a Midnight* while former Senator Charles H. Percy included among his three selections the ever-popular *America*, to which the audience sang along.

On a more intermediate level, pianist Raquel Ware, a mental health counselor, played Beethoven's *Bagatelle*. Stacey Tsai performed Mozart's *Rondo*. Jo Lozovina, a

State Department employee, gave a musical interpretation of Bach's *Prelude, C Major*. Juliet Jarvis, from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, performed Handel's *Passacaglia*.

Carol Ann Johnson, a tax attorney, played challenging compositions by Mompou and Mignone. Stanli Montgomery, a senior at Georgetown University, offered selections by Bach, Satire and Nazareth. Kinisha Latoya Forbes, sociology major, performed technically difficult works by Gibbons, Nazareth and Scriabine.

Louise Wong, Georgetown freshman, performed a range of pieces from Bach to Moskowski. Her rendition of the *Fugue* by Joa Yu Yen was especially well received.

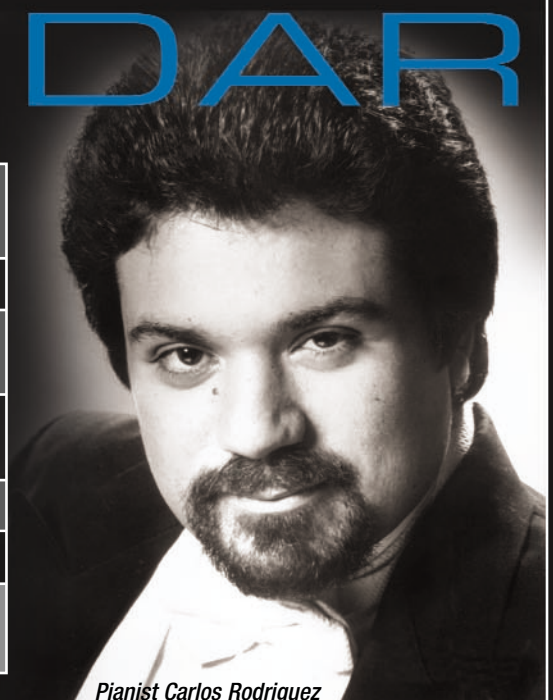
Wayne Dorsey, a State employee and regular on the recital circuit, performed several popular pieces. The audience also enjoyed the talents of pianist Li-Ly Chang, violinist Zino Bogachek and cellist Timothy Butler. The trio played with Antonin Dvorak's *Trio in E minor, op.90* (*Dumky*) for violin, cello and piano as their centerpiece.

Pianists made room for the New York Guitar Quartet—combining the talents of Leon Bernardino, J. Andrew Dickenson, J. Scott Maverick and Paul Martin Wu. The quartet's selections included Renaissance music, Cuban rhythms, as well as Billy Joel's *A New York State of Mind*. The group often arranges pieces to suit their individual talents. ■

The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.

CALENDAR

Sept. 24	Dancer Debra Joy performing tango, ballroom and Latin dances; Exhibit Hall
Oct. 8	Pianist Carlos Rodriguez
Oct. 22	Ragtime Bob Darch Memorial Concert with Sue Keller and Alan Mandel
Nov. 5	Cellist Nathaniel Chaitkin and Pianist Marie-France Lefebvre
Nov. 19	Concert Pianist Hyo-Sook Lee
Dec. 17	Christmas program with Venus d Minor
Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium.	



Pianist Carlos Rodriguez

APPOINTMENTS



U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. Steven A. Browning of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. He was Diplomat in Residence at the University of Southern California and the University of California at Davis

for the 2002/2003 academic year and dean of the Foreign Service Institute's School of Professional and Area Studies from 1998 to 2002. Mr. Browning was executive director of the Bureau of African Affairs from 1996 to 1998 and deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam from 1993 to 1996. He has also served in the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Egypt and Sri Lanka. He and his wife Susan, former community liaison officer in Kenya and publications coordinator in the Family Liaison Office, have two children.



U.S. Ambassador to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Roland W. Bullen of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. He was deputy executive director of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere

Affairs from 2001 to 2003 and deputy chief of mission in Bridgetown from 1998 to 2001. Born in Grenada, West Indies, Mr. Bullen joined the Foreign Service in 1977 and served in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Liberia, Belize, Costa Rica and Venezuela. He is married to Hilda Cox-Bullen and has two sons from a previous marriage.



U.S. Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Richard W. Erdman of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. He served as senior Middle East

adviser to the U.S. Delegation to the 2002 United Nations General Assembly. From 2000 to 2002, he directed the Office of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He was special envoy and head of the U.S. Delegation to the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group, an ambassadorial-

level position involving negotiations among Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Mr. Erdman headed the political section at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv from 1995 to 1998 and was deputy head of the International Border Monitoring Mission in Serbia and deputy director for Eastern Europe from 1993 to 1994. He was deputy director for Northern Europe from 1991 to 1993. Mr. Erdman has also served in Lisbon, Belgrade, Nicosia and Izmir. From 1967 to 1969, he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Turkey. He and his wife Sibyl have two children.



U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. James B. Foley of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. He was the deputy permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations and other international organizations

in Geneva from 2000 to 2003 and deputy spokesman of the Department and principal deputy assistant secretary for Public Affairs from 1997 to 2000. As a Pearson Fellow, Mr. Foley was a special assistant to U.S. Senator Paul D. Coverdell of Georgia from 1996 to 1997. He was deputy director of the Private Office at NATO in Brussels from 1993 to 1996 and special assistant to the deputy secretary of State from 1989 to 1993. He also served abroad in Algiers and Manila. He is married to Kate Suryan.



U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and concurrently to the Republic of Maldives. Jeffrey Lunstead of the District of Columbia, a career member of the senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri

Lanka and concurrently to the Republic of Maldives. He headed the political sections of the U.S. Embassies in Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur and also served in Madras and Lahore. Mr. Lunstead directed the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Affairs from 1999 to 2001 and the Office of Environmental Policy from 2002 to 2003. After Sept. 11, he was Afghanistan coordinator in the Bureau of South Asian Affairs. Earlier, he was chief of the South Asia division in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Sudan desk officer. He and his wife Deborah have two daughters.

APPOINTMENTS



U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia. Pamela J.H. Slutz of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia. She was deputy director of the American Institute in Taiwan from 2001 to 2003 and headed the political section of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta from 1999 to 2001. Ms. Slutz directed the Office of Regional and Security Policy in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 1997 to 1999 and was deputy director of the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs from 1995 to 1997. She has also served in Shanghai, in an earlier assignment to Jakarta and in Kinshasa. Ms. Slutz is married to Ronald J. Deutch, a recently retired Foreign Service officer.



U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Harry K. Thomas Jr. of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. He was a member of the 45th Senior Seminar from 2002 to 2003 and director for South Asia at the National Security Council from 2001 to 2002. Before that, he was a senior watch officer, deputy director and director of the Operations Center. Mr. Thomas was a special assistant to the under secretary for Political Affairs and staff assistant to the assistant secretary for African Affairs. He has served in New Delhi, Harare, Kaduna and Lima. He and his wife Ericka have one daughter.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Foreign Service Retirements

Ben-Aida, Suzanne	Johnson, Cassius C.	Parkerson, Phillip T.
Bielinski Jr., Stanley	Johnson, Judith Rodes	Robinson, Susan A.
Bristol, George F.	Kahn, Rosalie B.	Robinson, Yolanda Maria Mar
Carroll-Klinger, Lin	Keller, Richele	Salazar, Maximiliano A.
Chumley, Lana C.	Kenny, Mary T.	Seibold, Robert H.
Cuadrado III, Joseph F.	Klein, Jacques Paul	Selbin, Susan M.
Davidow, Jeffrey	Larson, Dale H.	Siekert, Paul Richard
Dollar, Carolyn J.	Leach, Steven G.	Smith, Thomas
Gaskill, William G.L.	Lebl, Leslie S.	Steinhoff, Lena R.
Gelner, Michael	Mason, Robert A.	Stevens, Mark
Haddock, Richard D.	McCaffrey, Michael T.	Stevenson, Lloyd C.
Harmon, William R.	Menyhert, Louis S.	Taylor, Betty C.
Hoffmann, Doris C.	Miller, John R.	Toner, William Edward
Huff, Barbara L.	Nagy Jr., Tibor P.	Veler, Annette L.
Huseman Jr., Charles P.	Newell, Roberta Lynn	Voorhees, Jacqueline V.
	Nuernberger, Robert J.	

Civil Service Retirements

Aikin, Barry J.	Golovskoy, Val S.
Andersen, Walter Korfitz	Hoffmann, H. Jochen
Anderson, Charlotte E.	Jones, Carol A.
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Burke, Michael L.	Mandley Jr., Thomas E.
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Carrera, Nicholas J.	Ratcliff, Ralph Orman
Case, Nancy C.	Ross, Genie M.
Cruce, John A.	Sapountzis, Panagiotis S.
Dickey, Judith A.	Segars, Elizabeth Nan
Dixon, Ira Bruce	Senn, Josephine
Eisenhart, Larry J.	Smith, Josephine R.
Firehock, Raymond B.	Telkins, Patricia Weaver
Fuller, Harrell Kennan	Vecellio, Karen D.
Galloway, Gerald E.	Warner, Pamela D.
Gibson, Hope Elliotte	Welch, Jan L.
Goldring, Lenora M.	

O B I T U A R I E S



Earl W. Bellinger, 76, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 5 in Taradeau, France. He served in Africa and Europe. He retired in 1988 after serving at the U.S. Embassy in Brussels.



Robert O. Blucker, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died of throat cancer April 3 in Little Rock, Ark. Mr. Blucker, a chemical engineer, served as a consular and economic officer in Buenos Aires, Lagos, Tripoli, Bonn, East Berlin and three times in West Berlin, the last as consul general. In 1979, Mr. Blucker was transferred to Tehran.

Six days after he arrived, he was taken hostage when radicals stormed the embassy. Mr. Blucker retired to San Antonio, Texas, in 1984 and later moved to Little Rock.

James Grant Burke, 60, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 8 in Washington, D.C. Mr. Burke served in Australia, Bermuda, India and West Africa. While in Washington, D.C., he worked for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Taskforce on Cyprus and President Nixon's Commission on the United Nations. After retiring in 1996, Mr. Burke continued to serve in the Office of Legislative Affairs.

William J. Calkins, 50, a former member of the Foreign Service and Civil Service, died June 1 in Alexandria, Va., from injuries received in a car accident in June 2002. Mr. Calkins served in East Africa and then transferred to the Civil Service after suffering a gunshot wound to the head. He worked as a Diplomatic Security field officer in Philadelphia.

Betty Lou Smiley Daymont, 82, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died March 31 in Bowie, Md. Ms. Daymont joined the Foreign Service in 1945 and served in Cairo, Panama, Manila, Rome, Frankfurt, Milan, Brussels, Taipei, Conakry, Douala and Paris. She also served as the secretary for the U.S. Diplomatic Courier Association for many years.

William J. Fox, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 28 in Carbondale, Ill. Mr. Fox served during World War II in the European theater and was a prisoner of war in Germany. After the war, he joined the Foreign Service and spent 40 years with assignments in Paris, Brussels, New Delhi, Tel Aviv, Bangkok, Frankfurt and Rome.



Carolyn Hillier, 66, a Civil Service employee, died May 25 at Inova Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, Va., from complications related to a hip fracture. An expert in survey research, she joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1968 as an analyst in the office of research. In the late 1970s, Ms. Hillier shifted to the agency's office of technology, where she developed strategies for applying information technology to advance U.S. public diplomacy abroad. From 1994 to 1998, she was an adviser to the agency's senior technology steering committee. When USIA merged with the Department of State in 1999, she became a senior architect in the Bureau of Information Resource Management, a position she held until her death.



Richard O. Lankford, 55, a career Foreign Service officer, died suddenly April 18 in Paris. At the time of his death, he was the spokesperson and director of press and information at the U.S. Embassy. He joined the Foreign Service in 1984. His public affairs assignments took him to Kinshasa, Algiers, Maseru, Tel Aviv, Quito, Almaty, Bratislava and Paris. His wife Barbara, a Foreign Service specialist, is deputy human resources officer at the embassy.



Everett Kinne Melby, 88, died March 30 in Brooklyn, N.Y., from congestive heart failure. He joined the Foreign Service in 1942 and served in Bern, Athens, Georgetown, Frankfurt, Port-au-Prince and Quebec. In Washington, D.C., he worked in the Bureaus of European and Eurasian Affairs and Intelligence and Research. He retired in 1974.

O B I T U A R I E S



John W. Mowinckel, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 7 in West Palm Beach, Fla. After serving with the Office of Strategic Services (now the Central Intelligence Agency) during World War II, he entered the Foreign Service. He served in Rome, Kinshasa and Vienna.



Mary Ann Schenk, 72, a retired Foreign Service nurse, died May 11. She joined the State Department in 1976 after her husband's death and served for 14 years in Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Thailand and Washington, D.C. She retired in 1991.

Harold M. Muroaka, 74, a retired Foreign Service communications specialist, died May 3 in Coconut Creek, Fla. He served in East and West Germany, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Brazil, France, Ecuador, Kuwait, Thailand, Egypt and Belgium. Mr. Muroaka retired in 1994.



Bernard F. Piatek, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 11 of pneumonia in Myrtle Beach, S.C. After serving in the Army during World War II, he worked in the War Department in Paris. Mr. Piatek joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Paris, Tel Aviv, Madrid, Phnom Penh, Tegulcigalpa, New Delhi,

Pretoria, Liberia, Ottawa and Washington, D.C. He retired in 1976.



George A. Smith, 61, a retired Foreign Service communications specialist, died of cancer June 12 in Missoula, Mont. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy, then the Department and served in Morocco, Pakistan, Zaire, Greece, Thailand, USNATO in Brussels, Greece for a second tour, Iraq, Nepal and Chad. Mr. Smith

retired in 1993 to his ranch in Montana.

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, or through their website at <http://www.opm.gov>.

LYING IN STATE: TASKERS, TASKERS, TASKERS

OKAY, I'VE GOT A MEETING AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY - BIGGLES, YOU DRAFT MY TALKING POINTS!



OKAY.

CHERYL, YOU DRAFT A MEMO TO THE AMBASSADOR TELLING HER I'M GOING TO HAVE THIS MEETING - USE THE TALKING POINTS FROM BIGGLES.



ALL RIGHTY.

BOYD, YOU TAKE NOTES IN THE MEETING AND DRAFT THE REPORTING CABLE EMPHASIZING MY PERSONAL INITIATIVE. USE WHAT BIGGLES AND CHERYL WRITE.



YOU BET.

AND BIGGLES, YOU DRAFT MY NOMINATION FOR AN AWARD FOR SUPERLATIVE SERVICE - USE WHAT YOU, CHERYL, AND BOYD WROTE.



OKAY.

HOO-EE! COO-AH! GO, ME, GO ME, GOOOO ME!



HE GOES TO DANCE HIS JOY...



BOYD! COME DANCE FOR ME!

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