

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APRIL 2005

State

MAGAZINE

Post of the Month:

Curaçao



Ambassador John F. Maisto, front row, third from right, and the staff of the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States.



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: USOAS: Advancing U.S. Policy in the Hemisphere

State

MAGAZINE

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CONTENTS APRIL 2005



Former New York City mayor Edward Koch, head of the U.S. delegation to the Berlin conference on anti-Semitism, left, with Ambassador Edward O'Donnell.

16

SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HOLOCAUST ISSUES

NUMBER 489

- 10 POST OF THE MONTH: CURAÇAO**
Beyond the golden beaches, this post has a serious mission.
- 16 OFFICE OF THE MONTH: SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HOLOCAUST ISSUES**
They seek a measure of justice for Holocaust survivors.
- 18 EMBASSY PARENTS START AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM**
Kids say the program's cool.
- 19 CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS**
To close the deal, learn the culture.
- 20 FSI DEVELOPS LANGUAGE LEARNING PLAN**
This plan aims for fluency throughout employees' careers.
- 22 STATELY HOMES: A DEPARTMENT ON THE MOVE**
Consolidation in one building has eluded the Department over most of its years.
- 24 HOMESCHOOLING IS AN OPTION OVERSEAS**
Families that school their children can qualify for help.
- 26 WHEN IT RAINS, THEY STORE**
The embassy in New Delhi saves rain for sunny days.
- 27 PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS**
A stream of high achievers flows into the Department.
- 30 ART IN EMBASSIES IN CUBA**
The art in the principal officer's residence cries out for Cuban freedom.

- 2** Direct from the D.G.
- 3** Letters to the Editor
- 4** In the News
- 28** Medical Report
- 31** Education and Training
- 32** People Like You
- 34** State of the Arts
- 35** Personnel Actions
- 35** Obituaries

ON THE COVER

A boatman navigates the tranquil coastal waters off Curaçao. *Photo by Corbis.*

DIRECT FROM THE D.G.

AMBASSADOR W. ROBERT PEARSON



RNet Aims to Keep Retirees Connected

To recognize the contributions our retired colleagues continue to make to our country and to the Department, Human Resources will launch a major interactive retirement network known as RNet. The site, which should be completed in about a year, will be available starting May 6, this year's Foreign Affairs Day.

RNet has 42,935 members—23,115 annuitants and 19,820 employees—and promises to offer service in the best tradition of an alumni network. The philosophy behind RNet is simple: recognize the lifetime relationship between annuitants and the Department. Like any good university alumni system, the Department and our nation's foreign policy can only benefit from a strong and engaged retiree network.

Ambitious and unprecedented in the federal government, RNet will offer password protected accounts for every annuitant where all information is kept current in a single location. In collaboration with the Bureau of Resource Management, Foreign Service annuitants will now be able to access their pay statements in RNet through OPM's Employee Express. Civil Service retirees already have this service through OPM's Services Online. All retirees, however, can take advantage of RNet's inter-active services such as on-line transactions, form retrieval, reporting and suggestions for staying engaged in the work we do around the globe.

RNet will also be the source for developing, maintaining and documenting skills, compiling a global WAE database and identifying the retiree component of the new operational readiness reserve. Employees preparing to retire and retirees will access special sections of Employee Profile Plus to update their personal profiles.

I recently have had the pleasure of speaking to two of the 20 Foreign Service retiree associations that represent our profession so well throughout the country. In speaking with the members of the Foreign Service Association of Northern California and the Carolina Friends of the Foreign Service in North Carolina about new directions for our diplomacy, I was impressed to learn how the dedication to our profession continues. I've been in touch with other groups as well, including Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida and look forward to being able to meet with others in the months ahead.

I'm especially pleased that the Foreign Affairs Association of Southern and Central California and the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida have been able to conduct outreach through their newsletters and that The Carolina Friends of the Foreign Service is actively contributing to American diplomacy, through a free online publication.

While the average employee's career spans 27 years, the relationship with the Department can last a lifetime—and longer for surviving spouses and children. Someone retiring this year, for example, may enjoy an annuity outlasting the time they were employed and the survivor annuity may extend the pension to 50 years. That's a potential lifetime Department relationship of nearly 80 years. RNet is about this ongoing relationship and underscores what's always said about the Department's business—it's not just a career; it's a life.

For more information and to join the retiree list, go to RNet@state.gov. Access to the RNet at www.RetirementNetwork.State.gov will be available May 6. ■



Memories of Muscat

The January Post of the Month story on Muscat brought back good memories of my TDY travels there. On my latter visits, the new embassy was my project. The design of the windows in the original plans was not approved by the Omani government. When I came back with a model of the redesigned windows, described in your article as Moorish arches, the royal architect approved the project. Too bad the article did not have a photo of the new embassy, as I believe it is the only U.S. embassy in the world surrounded by a moat—a dry moat.

At the time of our team's travel to Muscat, entry by foreigners was very

controlled. Unless personally sponsored by an Omani or local organization, foreigners were not allowed in the country. I found the Omanis to be very friendly and the country quite progressive. Having been in other countries in the area, I was amazed to see Omani women driving their children to school. The city was exceptionally clean and modern.

Jerry Lujan
Retired FSO
Tucson, AZ

English Language Fellows

Thank you for your article in the January issue, "Time Is Right to

Engage Algerians—in English." It provided a nice testimonial to the value of English language programs in the conduct of public diplomacy and further evidence of the growing demand for English language instruction throughout the world, particularly the Middle East.

One of the Department's key initiatives in satisfying this demand is the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' English Language Fellow program. Fellows, who have advanced degrees in Applied Linguistics or Teaching English as a Foreign Language, work with embassies and host country institutions on projects to improve the institutional capacity for English language teaching, provide insights into American culture and enhance mutual understanding.

John Connerley
*Office of English Language Programs
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs*

Corrections

Michael Gross took the photograph of Secretary Rice that appeared on the cover of the February issue of *State Magazine*.

FROM THE EDITOR

Sixty years after World War II, compensating Holocaust survivors is an ongoing task. But when the lawsuits, international treaties and insurance claims that drive much of the effort create hardship and headaches for survivors and their families, the special envoy for Holocaust issues gets involved.

Thanks to the Internet and prepackaged curricula, employees can continue their children's education no matter where their careers take them. Many of these programs even give homeschooling parents the tools and the confidence they need to be great teachers—and the Department stands ready to help. Here's how one parent handled the challenge.

What started as a project to save and replenish water in sun-parched New Delhi soon became a full-blown quest

to trim the embassy's energy bill. In the process, these building engineers discovered that some of the best and easiest ways to cut costs are very low tech.

Not everybody wants to get down to business before doing business. Outside the United States, no-nonsense, direct negotiating tactics can quickly turn off potential clients. Sometimes silence or body language offers the best clues to closing the deal, as this researcher learned.

The American DREAM

Appeal to American Values Was Key to Civil Rights Struggle

Extolling the values of faith, family and education and crediting them with helping her to become the first female African-American secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice celebrated African-American History Month Feb. 18 in a packed Dean Acheson Auditorium.

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis served as master of ceremonies and introduced two prominent civil rights activists—Bernard LaFayette Jr. and Dorothy Height—and Cleveland Browns head football coach Romeo Crennel. The Morgan State University choir also performed. In addition to Department employees, members of Congress, African diplomats, elementary school children and others attended.

Secretary Rice told the story of her “Granddaddy Rice,” a poor sharecropper’s son who got it in his head to get book learning and paid for a year of college with cotton. When the cotton ran out, he found out he could get a scholarship if he studied to be a Presbyterian minister. “And my family has been Presbyterian and college-educated ever since,” she said to laughter and applause.

In addition to faith, family and education, she added, African-Americans drew strength during hostile times from “a belief in America and its values and principles—even when America didn’t believe in us.” She noted that civil rights leaders like Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Height appealed to America to be true to its

values. “The important thing that the Founders left to us,” she said, “was not a perfect America by any means, but an America that had principles that allowed impatient patriots to appeal to those principles and tell America to be true to itself.”

She said the principles of human dignity, liberty and freedom are cited now by patriots in other countries to challenge their leaders.

Mr. Lafayette, a leader of the Freedom Riders, the Selma Movement, the Alabama voter registration project and the Poor People’s Campaign, said that because of America many



Secretary Rice speaks of the values that sustained her family and other African-Americans.

nations enjoy democracy. But he added that our challenge remains to make a more perfect nation here at home.

He paid a moving tribute to Ms. Height, noting that her organization, the National Council of Negro Women, gave scholarships to him and other members of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee who had dropped out of school to participate in the Freedom Rides. “You had our back,” he said.

BUDDHIST MONKS LEARN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Thousands of miles from the United States, in a remote corner of Siberia, young Buddhist monks are using State Department materials to learn English.

The monks, who are studying at the Ivolginsky Buddhist Monastery outside of Ulan-Ude, are using the World English series of books developed by the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The students take more than two years of English during their freshman, sophomore and junior years.

Their goal is to become fluent so that they can translate Buddhist texts into English and discuss their religion with international audiences. This agenda is already a success: Since taking part in the program, a number of students have used their English skills to continue their studies in India.

For further information, visit the English Language Office Moscow web site at www.usembassy.ru/english.

A Buddhist monk studies his World English text.



NO MORE 'FOLLOW, WATCH AND DO'

On-the-job training tends to be hit or miss. While many workers report no problems learning and adjusting, many others are not so happy with the experience.

Here's what usually happens: The newcomer arrives and meets his new supervisor. The supervisor tells him to follow another worker around for a week, do as she does and, at the



end of the week, says, "You will do the job." No attempt is made to measure the newcomer's skill level, no development plan is created and no thorough attempt is made to determine if the training was actually successful.

So the School of Applied Information Technology at the Foreign Service Institute has developed a structured, formal OJT program.

From Oct. 5 to 7, the school conducted a seminar for six information resource managers from four overseas posts selected from a pool of 19 submissions. These posts agreed to pilot a structured OJT program for six months. The seminar introduced structured OJT methods. Participants began to assemble training plans for information management specialists and brainstormed on how to use them. All attendees—from Brussels, Bangkok, Muscat and Vientiane—were enthusiastic about improving the training for newcomers at post.

Contact Mike Haftel at haftelmk@state.gov for more information. Also, look for updates on the program on the school's web site.

Kevin Rubesh, information management officer in Muscat, trains Timothy Hinman on post systems.

HR FAIR DRAWS LUNCHTIME CROWD

Hundreds of visitors crowded the aisles of the Human Resources fair in the exhibit hall of the Harry S Truman building Feb. 17. They searched for training, evaluated programs and shopped for new jobs. Others just shopped, their hands clutching as many free pencils, pens, pads, mugs, candy, crackers, raisins and refrigerator magnets as possible.

The annual event gives the bureau an opportunity to showcase its services in an informal yet personal venue where employees can network and directly connect with providers.

“We pushed HR Online, Employee Profile and Employee Profile Plus,” said June Daniels, special assistant to the executive director of Human Resources, describing the bureau’s new computerized record-keeping programs. Mentoring and leadership training were other heavily touted activities, she said.

Lorrell Doughty from Information Resource Management had both hands so full of giveaways she could hardly visit more tables without dropping something. “I’m looking for a job,” she said. Her less encumbered col-

league, Tawanna Hughes, said she was seeking “information on training.”

Wayne Dorsey from the Bureau of South Asian Affairs played piano and longtime Associated Press correspondent George Gedda described his career covering the Department since 1968.



Daniel Webber from the Office of Retirement, seated, views a personnel program as Gabriel Naugher, left, Heath Kindle, Bill Griffin and Eric Recknor from the Human Resources help desk assist. At right, Jim Cannon, a consultant with the Bureau of Human Resources, observes.

Brasília Opens Refurbished Consular Section

The U.S. Embassy in Brasília inaugurated its newly refurbished consular section in a Sept. 10 ceremony. Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Ambassador Maura Harty, together with U.S. Ambassador to Brazil John J. Danilovich, cut the ribbon to mark the formal opening of the new facility.

The renovation consolidates all consular employees and functions into one well-configured space. The facility includes seven interview windows, an enlarged and covered outside waiting area and other features that bring the section into compliance with current requirements.

“This new section will greatly help us to serve Brazilians and Americans who seek our visa and other consular services,” stated Assistant Secretary Harty. She went on to note that the renovation in Brasília followed the opening earlier this year of a new \$80-million Consulate General in São Paulo, which resulted in much-improved consular operations at the busiest consular section in Brazil.



Brasília Consul General Simon Henshaw, Assistant Secretary Maura Harty and Ambassador to Brazil John Danilovich prepare to cut the ribbon.

'War for Talent' Update to Assess Changes, Seek Ideas

The Department has entered into a contract with McKinsey & Company to update its 1999 "War for Talent" report. The study, funded by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, should be completed by June.

McKinsey is conducting the work in three phases. First, after reviewing previous employee surveys and studies, McKinsey representatives interviewed Department policy-makers. Next, in early March, they met with employee focus groups made up of Foreign Service generalists and specialists and Civil Service employees to generate more grassroots input and ideas. There were two focus groups in each of the following areas: leadership and values; recruiting and career development; retention, including spouse employment; and performance and evaluation. In the

final phase, McKinsey will prepare recommendations in the above areas.

The McKinsey update offers a valuable way to assess the human resource changes made since 1999, to determine whether improvements have been sufficiently institutionalized, and to seek ideas on what more can be done.

The company will seek an overseas perspective through phone interviews and a possible embassy visit. McKinsey welcomes input, ideas and suggestions from all Department employees. Comments can be sent, until May 1, directly to McKinsey staffer Julia Kiechel at julia_kiechel@mckinsey.com.

You Read It Here First

For more information on the work of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, see the December 2004 issue of *State Magazine*.



Arabs and Jews Welcome American Corner in Galilee

An area set aside in the municipal library in Karmiel, Israel, is expected to become a center to strengthen ties between the United States and the Galilee region. Called an American Corner, it is a trove of information about the United States and a venue for American speakers as well as for meetings with teachers of American studies and English.

Public Affairs Officer Helena Kane Finn and Mayor Adi Eldar opened the American Corner Jan. 18 with a large group of Jewish and Arab local government officials as well as Ministry of Education officials, cultural leaders and community activists. Ms. Finn noted the embassy's close relationship with Karmiel, a city respected for integrating its different communities—Arab, Russian, Ethiopian and Israeli.

Mayor Eldar said he hopes the American Corner becomes a one-stop center for developing ties between the people of Karmiel and the United States.



Helena Kane Finn, public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, and Adi Eldar, mayor of Karmiel, unveil the sign for the new American Corner.



The Preziosis at the Valletta 2004 Marine birthday ball. From left: Gunnery Sgt. Keith Marine, Margaret Preziosi, Cpl. Benjamin Feibleman, Cpl. Ramon Wells, Dr. Victor Preziosi, Sgt. Christina Morehead, Cpl. Marcos Santiago, 1st Sgt. Randy Warren.

Extraordinary Maltese Gesture of Friendship

On Oct. 19, during a ceremony at the American Embassy, a Maltese couple donated 25,000 Maltese liri, or just over \$72,400, to the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation to fund a scholarship. Dr. Victor and Margaret Preziosi have made several significant donations to the foundation since 2003 in support for the U.S. servicemen and women in harm's way in Iraq and elsewhere. Their donations total more than \$100,000.

"We want people in the United States to know that there are many of us throughout the world, including here in Malta, who appreciate what the United States has done and continues to do to defend freedom," said Dr. Preziosi, a retired ophthalmologist. "This scholarship is our small way of showing that appreciation and helping the families of brave American men and women who have fallen in combat." He and his wife said it would also remind future generations of the friendship enjoyed by the Maltese and American people.

Dr. Preziosi lived and worked in Washington and New York and met and married Margaret, a retired nurse, in Washington. They say their fondness for Americans has not diminished in the decades since they last visited.

The foundation will invest the funds and use the interest each year to help the child of a fallen member of the U.S. Marine Corps or U.S. Navy through the Dr. Victor and Margaret Preziosi Malta GC Friendship Scholarship. The letters GC stand for George Cross, an award given by the King of England to the Maltese people for their bravery during World War II. The George Cross appears on the Maltese flag.

"During my time in Malta, I have not met two individuals more supportive of our military than Margaret and Victor," said Ambassador Anthony H. Gioia in accepting the donation. "I have been touched by their heartfelt generosity and know that it will give comfort and real assistance to many American families for years to come."

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers met with the Preziosis during his official visit to Malta in November. Two days later, they were the Ambassador's honored guests at the 229th Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

For more information on the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation and its charitable activities, visit www.mc-lef.org.

RETIREMENT OFFICE SET FOR ONLINE SERVICES THIS YEAR

More than 32,000 retirement folders are being converted into electronic files as part of a year-long project to provide online service anywhere in the world to employees and retirees. When all the scanning is complete, the folders will be available on RNet, the Department's new Internet retirement network and on HR Online, the Human Resources link found on the Department's Intranet website. The upgraded system will allow employees to complete the entire retirement process using a computer.

A key RNet link will be the Retirement Knowledge Center where employees and retirees can use an interactive database to answer questions as well as plan and manage their retirement.

RNet will also post the Department's Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund's annual report. At \$15 billion, the solvent fund is the Department's largest financial



Contractors Brandon Birks, left, and Kelvin Henderson scan documents for online service.

asset and supports two pensions. Reflecting employee and retiree demographics, it took in \$993 million and paid out \$646 million last year.

Charity Paintball in Manila



On March 5, the neighborhood of Merville, Manila was awakened by rapid-firing paintball players. The 70 players organized into 12 teams battled until dark. The event was designed to build teamwork between the embassy's American and local employees. Most importantly, it generated funds through a raffle to buy a generator that will provide electricity to the Children of Naswak Elementary School in Benguet Province.

Color-coded paintball teams are ready for action.

Paraders march down one of Curaçao's main streets during carnival in February.



POST OF THE MONTH



Curaçao

U.S. Expands Presence
in Strategic Islands

By Jean Akers and Christopher Degnan

The Queen Emma bridge connects the two parts of Curaçao, Punda and Otrobanda. It was built in 1888 by a U.S. Consul and consists of boats supported by 16 floating pontoons.



Word of an assignment to Curaçao usually leads to rolled eyes, a wistful gaze and a statement like, “Gee, that’s a real hardship post. Enjoy your piña coladas!”

Hardship? Definitely not. The sun, the sand, the turquoise blue of the Caribbean and waving palm trees provide an endlessly pleasant environment. But the U.S. Mission to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is a surprisingly complex place to serve, due to the intricate dance that plays out daily between the governments of the United States, the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

The two autonomous countries covered by the mission consist of six islands spread over 500 miles. Three Foreign Service officers at the Consulate General in Curaçao coordinate the activities of several agencies and provide the diplomatic platform for securing our borders, thwarting terrorism, fighting international crime and providing consular

services to more than 2 million American visitors and 6,000 residents.

The Department of Homeland Security preclearance facility in Aruba is part of the mission, as is a Drug Enforcement Agency office in Curaçao. The Air Force operates two forward operating locations in Aruba and Curaçao

Revelers at Karnaval (in the Papiamentu spelling) march with a large, colorful puppet.



as part of our counter-narcotics efforts. U.S. military liaison officers work at the Consulate General and the Dutch base in Curaçao, along with a representative of the Defense Attaché's Office in The Hague. The Coast Guard officer seconded to the U.N.'s International Maritime Organization in Curaçao rounds out the American family.

The United States' diplomatic presence in the former Dutch West Indies began in 1793 and the Consulate General has occupied its current location overlooking historic Willemstad since 1950. The local government donated the property, including a then-new office building and a house, as a token of gratitude for the defense of the islands by U.S. forces during World War II. Local refineries were vital in providing oil to the Allied war effort. The house, constructed in the style of a traditional Curaçao plantation house, was christened Roosevelt House and has served as the official residence ever since.

The relationship between the Antilles and the U.S. goes back to the earliest days of the Republic. During the Revolutionary War, Governor Johannes de Graff of tiny St. Eustatius initiated the first-ever salute to an American military vessel, the *Andrew Doria*, entering the harbor. The British, angered by this apparent Dutch recognition of American sovereignty, plundered the island. To this day, residents of St. Eustatius celebrate Statia-America Day on Nov. 16 in commemoration of the first salute.

Although the Consulate General nearly closed during the mid-1990s, the U.S. presence has ramped up over the past decade to provide a platform for multiple civilian and military agencies, most of which are involved in the fight against drug trafficking, illegal immigration, money laundering and narco-terrorism. A glance at a map shows the strategic importance of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba to South American narcotics smuggling operations targeting the United States and Europe.

The DHS Immigration/Customs and Border Protection preclearance facility at Reina Beatrix Airport in Aruba processes several thousand passengers a day on their way to the United States. Arrests of foreign and American drug mules is a common occurrence; many are detained for several months prior to extradition to the United States.

DEA agents share information and provide technical assistance to local law enforcement officials, especially in Curaçao, St. Maarten and Aruba. This coordination has led to numerous prosecutions and extraditions of drug traffickers and other organized crime figures operating in the region.

The Air Force forward operating locations provide aerial detection and surveillance on the high seas. They differ from military bases in that they exist solely to provide logistical support to multinational counter-narcotics air operations. Aircrews rotate in for a few weeks or months, minimizing the U.S. military footprint in the region. U.S. aircraft transmit information to Dutch and other nations' coast guard and navy vessels so they can intercept traffickers traveling on high-speed motorboats carrying 500–800 kilos of cocaine or heroin.

AT A GLANCE



Country name: Netherlands Antilles

Capital: Willemstad

Geography: The Netherlands Antilles includes the islands of Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Bonaire and Curaçao

Government: Parliamentary

Population: 218,000

Languages: Dutch, Papiamentu, English and Spanish

Total area: 960 square kilometers

Approximate size: More than five times the size of Washington, DC

Currency: Netherlands Antillean guilder (ANG)

Per capita income: \$11,400

Literacy rate: 96.7%

Chief export: petroleum products

Export partners: United States (21.3%), Venezuela (16%) and the Bahamas (7.6%)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook 2004

The Handelskade, or trading quay, lies on the Punda side of Curaçao. The unique architecture and red-tiled roofs call Amsterdam to mind.



The first sight most visitors to Curaçao notice is the building fronts of Willemstad, a UNESCO World Heritage Site resembling an assemblage of pastel-colored Amsterdam canal houses.

One of the primary duties of the Consulate General remains the provision of consular services. While the Consulate doesn't process visas in Curaçao, the part-time vice consul and consular assistant keep busy meeting the consular needs of American tourists and residents. One challenge the post faces is that the vast majority of U.S. tourists to the Dutch Caribbean visit either Aruba—80 miles away—or St. Maarten—500 miles away, which are reachable from Curaçao only by air. Deaths among cruise ship passengers and imprisonment of drug mules, as well as more typical welfare/whereabouts cases, repatriations and medical evacuations, are all regular events. Consular visits to American prisoners in Aruba and St. Maarten have evolved into a consular lifeline for the thousands of

American citizens resident on those islands, as have less frequent visits to the smaller islands of St. Eustatius, Saba and Bonaire.

These islands are excellent sites for U.S. investment and business. In addition to the strong U.S. presence in airlines, airport operations and cruise ship services, U.S. firms are active in providing financial and business services in a wide range of areas. A U.S. company owns a major oil refinery on Aruba in which \$675 million has been invested over the past five years.

But back to the palm trees, beaches and piña colodas. They're all there, just as they have been since the native Arawaks inhabited the island, long before the Carib Indians, Spanish and Dutch colonists and slave traders arrived.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE AND OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM): LOLLY GONZALEZ; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP): SASKIA ROZIER



Above left: Authors Jean Akers and Christopher Degnan pause in the middle of a busy workday. Above right: Armino Huerta, sitting, is the post's cashier and maintenance supervisor. Docco Engels is a Foreign Service National investigator. Below: The front entrance of the U.S. Consulate General in Curaçao.



The first sight most visitors to Curaçao notice is the building fronts of Willemstad, a UNESCO World Heritage Site resembling an assemblage of pastel-colored Amsterdam canal houses. Curaçao was the seat of the Dutch West Indies and continues to be the capital of the Netherlands Antilles. One of the finest museums on the slave trade can be found in the Kúra Hulanda hotel compound in the center of Willemstad. Curaçao is also home to the oldest continuing synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, Mikve Israel, and a small museum showing the Jewish community's many contributions to Curaçao's development.

History can be heard just walking down the street: At any given moment one can hear Spanish, Dutch, English or Papiamentu, a creole patois comprised of Portuguese, vari-

ous African dialects, Dutch, Spanish and even the occasional Arawak word.

The people of the Antilles and Aruba frequently choose to study or work in the Netherlands or the United States. While many left over the past 20 years, some are now returning to work, invest and participate in the islands' future. While the future of the Netherlands Antilles as a country remains unclear, prospects for long-term growth are strong. The productive partnership between the United States and these islands, a real part of our "third border," is continuing to grow and deepen in importance. ■

The authors are vice consuls at the U.S. Consulate General in Curaçao.



Why does the State Department have an office devoted to Holocaust issues 60 years after the end of World War II?

The simple answer is that there are still about 700,000 Holocaust survivors around the world hoping to receive a measure of justice for the crimes committed against them and their families. The Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues helps those victims by implementing Holocaust claims agreements with Germany, Austria and France and with European insurance companies. Because of these agreements, an estimated two million people have received more than \$6 billion in payments.

The office also works to return to its rightful owners artwork and other private property confiscated by the Nazis and Communists. Since the end of the Cold War, many countries are coming to terms with their responsibility to return such property. Claimants and their congressional representatives, frustrated by delays and bureaucracy, frequently ask the office to intervene.

“Unfortunately, many of the victims have passed away, but with the agreements that have been negotiated, their heirs can also make claims for the deceased,” said retired Foreign Service officer John P. Becker, who works on this issue for the office.

Jessica Blanche-Lanos and Lynne Kalodimos manage the office’s daily operations. Jessica speaks French and Lynne speaks Hebrew and Greek, which helps them deal with visitors and Holocaust survivors who contact the office.

The office isn’t just about the past; it educates future generations about the Holocaust, not only to maintain an awareness of this horrific event but also to guard against contemporary discrimination and intolerance. This is an important role, given the current ethnic-based violence in the Darfur region of Sudan. Last year, Ambassador O’Donnell participated in the U.S. delegation to the Stockholm International Forum on Preventing Genocide.

From February 2003 to February 2004, the United States chaired the Task Force for International Cooperation on

Special Envoy Seeks Restitution for Holocaust Victims and Combats Anti-Semitism

By Ben Schwartz



Above left: Panelists at the anti-Semitism conference in Berlin answer questions. Above right: Holocaust affairs staff from top left: Ambassador Edward O'Donnell, office director; Don Braum, deputy director; and Jessica Blanche-Lanos, assistant. Seated from left: Benjamin Schwartz, intern; Lynne Kalodimos, assistant; and Steven Cupic, intern. Below: Steven Cupic, standing, and Don Braum review reports.

Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, an international body consisting of 20 nations supporting educational programs to develop Holocaust curricula and train teachers throughout Europe and South America.

“Educational programs are key to preventing future tragedies like the Holocaust,” said international relations officer Steven Cupic. “Through the task force, we are able to work closely with foreign counterparts to raise awareness, while encouraging participating governments to re-examine their own policies toward minority groups.”

With its emphasis on the past, present and future, the office is fast-paced. Founded in 1998 as a successor office to the Representative to the Washington Conference on

Holocaust Era Assets, it merged with the Office of Nazi Assets and Restitution and has steadily grown within the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

One of its major concerns is the increase in anti-Semitism in the past few years. Ambassador Edward B. O’Donnell, who heads the office, speaks frequently on the issue before Congress and at meetings and seminars in Europe and the United States. Experts with the Holocaust office also helped plan and participated in U.S. delegations to anti-Semitism conferences in Vienna and Berlin.

“Anti-Semitism is the canary in the coal mine,” said Donald Braum, the office’s deputy director. “It indicates that there are larger problems within a country when Jews are attacked, as it is usually the Jews first, and then the other minority groups.”

President Bush signed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act calling for a special anti-Semitism envoy and the Secretary recently created an office in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to monitor and combat anti-Semitism.

When the Office of Holocaust Issues was established, many saw it as a temporary way to monitor international agreements related to Holocaust restitution issues. But encouraging Holocaust education and combating the growing dangers of anti-Semitism and intolerance will keep this unique office busy for the foreseeable future. ■

Ben Schwartz was an intern with the Office of Holocaust Issues during the fall.



Parents Start American Studies Program

By Dave Wise

Embassy parents in Vientiane have their kids taking extra classes after school and so far they—the kids—actually seem to like it!

With the generous assistance of the Department's Office of Allowances and the cooperation of the Vientiane International School, a group of parents established an American Studies program. Begun in September 2004, it consists of two classes a week—one each for primary and secondary students. While VIS is a fine school, it follows an international curriculum. Thus, parents identified U.S. history and geography as much-needed subjects for the new program.

We were lucky to find an experienced social studies teacher newly arrived in Vientiane, Robbi Birch, who was more than happy to take on the difficult task of selling American studies as an after-school activity (on a Friday, no less!) to a group of 10 embassy youngsters, ranging in age from 8 to 13. Robbi has done a great job in creating a colorful and fun classroom and bringing the subject to life.

Early topics have included some basic North American geography; early explorations and settlements by the English, French and Spanish; and the founding of the original 13 colonies. The next topics will include the French and Indian War (quick, how many of us can remember what that war was about?), the American Revolution and westward expansion. We're not sure how far we'll progress, but it's likely the classes will get at least as far as the Civil War before Robbi has home leave in April and May.

The November U.S. presidential election offered an excellent framework for some living history. Robbi provided materials and explanations to the kids on the election process, including the history and mechanics of the Electoral College. When the public affairs section organized

an election event at the Ambassador's residence, embassy children helped keep the election tally on a big board and colored their U.S. maps blue and red.

Getting the program off the ground represented a total mission effort. Ambassador Patricia Haslach and Deputy Chief of Mission Kristen Bauer gave front office support and encouragement. Management Officer Marilyn Mattke explained the program to parents and processed the paperwork. General Services Officer Erin Sawyer and Public Affairs Officer Jim Warren helped order books and other materials. Others contributed ideas for topics and course structure.

Reaction from our children has been surprisingly positive. Reportedly, one of the kids came home from school and described the class as "cool," not a word we parents normally



A colorful classroom is the setting for primary students studying American history.

hear when we ask, "So, how was school today?" Attendance and attentiveness have been good, according to Robbi.

While the program is only in its first year, the early returns are encouraging. The quality supplemental instruction for our children will surely prove beneficial when they re-enter the U.S. educational system. ■

The author is Narcotics Affairs Section Director at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane.

To Close the Deal, Learn the Culture

By Bill Palmer

Who will stand closer to you, a Mexican or a Japanese? Which one avoids saying “no”?

Many well-traveled State Department employees know the answers (the Mexican, typically, will stand closer; both avoid directly saying “no”), but probably not many could tell you who uses Cartesian logic (the French), who prefers inductive reasoning (Americans) and who prefers deductive reasoning (the Mexicans again).

Gary Lachman, a realty specialist in Overseas Buildings Operations, could answer all of these questions. As a leader of several multidisciplinary teams that select sites for new U.S. embassies and consulates, he has extensive contact with foreign officials as he negotiates myriad real estate sales and leases for the Department.

Mr. Lachman, who is also a professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Professional Studies, says international negotiators need to take a close look at the culture and language of their counterparts in an upcoming negotiation. While you can't build your strategy entirely around your counterparts' reasoning process, you should take it into account. You should look at religious and political attitudes and read the local papers for clues about how people think.

Sometimes cross-cultural “noise” can threaten an entire negotiation. The noise can be gestures, behavior, clothes or surroundings that seem inappropriate to one side or the other, he says. Americans, for example, can create lots of noise through their natural tendency toward informality. Chewing gum, slouching, using first names too soon, speaking too loudly or being too egalitarian toward those of lesser rank can create dissonance.

What kind of cultural noise most unnerves Americans? Silence. The Japanese consider long pauses normal, while Americans and Europeans abhor a communications vacuum and often say the wrong thing at such times. The Japanese are uncomfortable giving too much feedback and hate to say “no” too emphatically. They may think Americans lack self-control and can't be trusted because of their directness or displays of emotion.

Can one be too sensitive to cultural nuances? After all, the other side knows you're an American and will have certain preconceived notions and expectations. If you studiously avoid acting like an American or try too hard to be in tune with the other side, he says, you may come across as disingenuous or even appear to be mocking your counterparts.

Another tricky issue for negotiators, Mr. Lachman says, is translation. It's better to speak in short “sound bites” rather than long monologues that invite paraphrasing and creative editing by an interpreter.

Too often, negotiators treat translation as a mechanical task: one language goes in here and another language pops out there. Not so, he says. Often, technical terms have no

equivalent in a foreign language and even standard business or legal terms can be hard to translate. For this reason, he adds, it's important to talk to interpreters before the negotiation to make sure they fully comprehend all the key words and concepts. Always be prepared to say something several different ways to make sure the point is understood.

When the translation is flowing the other way, you often won't even know when you're receiving an inexact or incomplete translation, he says. There isn't much you can do except question anything you don't fully understand. Don't worry about appearing stupid—being underestimated can be a powerful weapon in your arsenal.



Gary Lachman at the negotiating table.

Many foreigners like to carry on a conversation without an interpreter because the ability to speak English may carry a degree of prestige. But they often get in over their head. Your listener may appear to be agreeing with you when he doesn't really have a clue about what you just said.

Spending time acquainting yourself with the culture and personalities of the people on the other side of the table will raise your awareness of how to approach a negotiation, he concludes. A little sensitivity and discretion will go a long way.

Mr. Lachman has compiled a primer on cross-cultural negotiation to aid some of his newer colleagues. Contact him at lachmangs@state.gov for a copy. ■

The author is a writer/editor at State Magazine.



FSI Develops Strategic Language Learning Plan

BY ILDIKO COSSICH AND CHRISTINA HOFFMAN

More than ever, the effectiveness of our work is tied to the ability to use a foreign language to carry out U.S. foreign policy. Our ability to use advanced foreign language skills will increase the likelihood that America can better understand others and communicate our own perspectives more cogently and persuasively. So FSI developed the Language Continuum in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, the regional bureaus and other divisions of the Department.

The program was unveiled Jan. 26 by Director Katherine Peterson and Language School Dean Michael Lemmon and presented to Under Secretary Grant Green at the Shultz Center. The document is available on the OpenNet at <http://fsi.state.gov/courses/continua>.

The Language Continuum is not just about formal training; rather, it's a strategic plan designed to help Foreign Service officers, specialists and eligible family members plan a career-long integrated approach to language learning and use. The Continuum describes the opportunities and options available for training, self-development and assignments geared toward acquiring, maintaining and improving language skills.

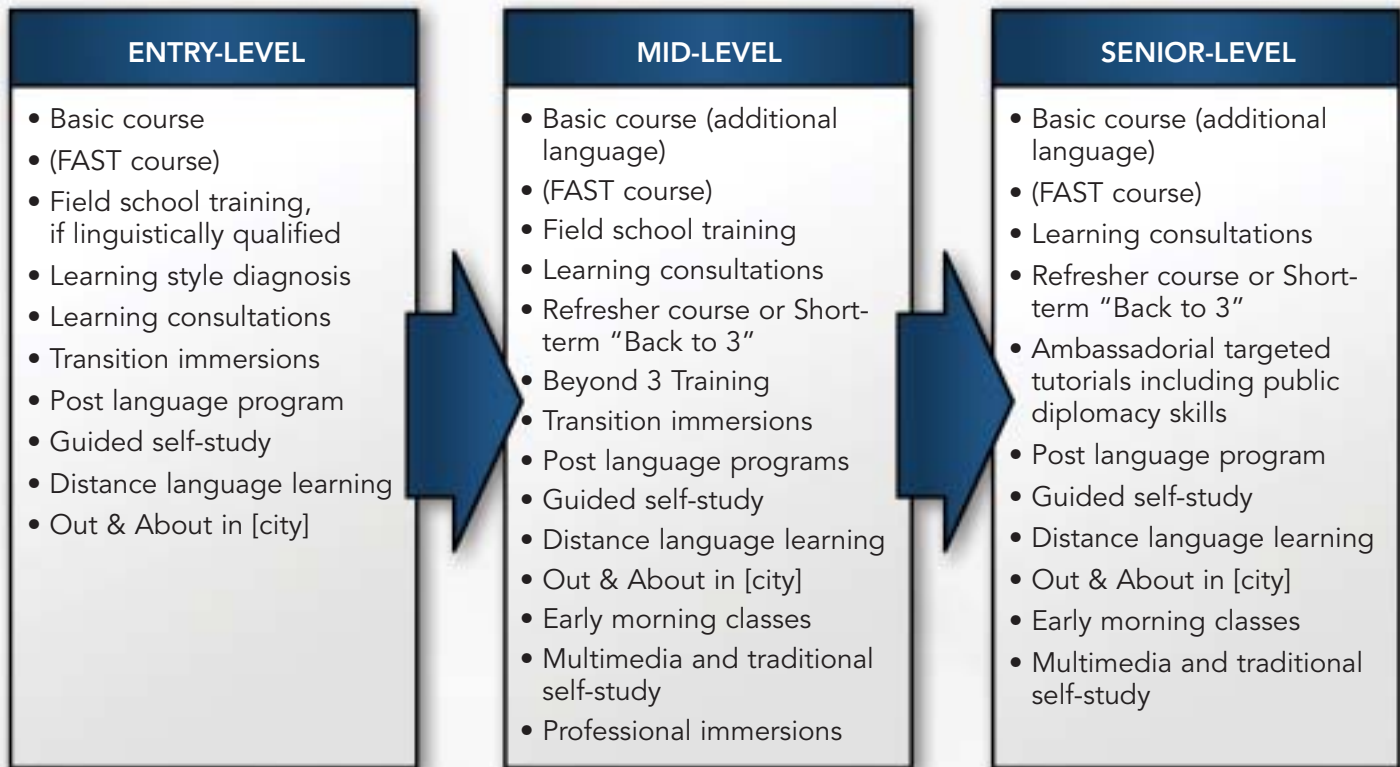
Some of these options include a new approach to post language programs, innovative distance learning programs and expanded use of overseas field schools for the most difficult

languages. In partnership with regional bureaus, posts and the Bureau of Human Resources, FSI is working to increase "Beyond 3" immersion training at institutions overseas and make available targeted media skills training, beginning with a very successful pilot program at FSI/Tunis that will help us provide an American perspective in Arabic-language media.

The following chart depicts potential training opportunities for employees at the entry, mid and senior levels and for eligible family members as well. Some of the courses appear under all three levels since employees may start learning a new language at any stage of their career. However, some training opportunities are typically tied to a certain career level.

ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS

- Basic course
- (FAST course)
- Regional immersions
- Field school training
- Learning style diagnosis
- Learning consultations
- Post language program
- Guided self-study
- Distance language learning
- Out & About in [city]
- Multimedia and traditional self-study



Here's a sample career path from entry through senior level for an officer seeking to achieve advanced proficiency (level 4) in a very hard language such as Arabic:

- Up to 44 weeks of basic Arabic at FSI/Washington (or FSI/Tunis for those who already have 2-level Arabic) after completing A-100 orientation and tradecraft training.
- Consular or rotational assignment at an Arabic-speaking post.
- Posting elsewhere in the world (or occasionally in Washington) to provide broader geographic and/or functional experience.
- Ongoing language study via distance learning, post language programs or language immersion offerings.
- Bid on an Arabic 3/3 assignment leading to 44 weeks of training at the FSI field school in Tunis or another regional education institution.
- More advanced language immersion training to the "Beyond 3" level may be considered for up to a year at appropriate institutions in the region, tied to an assignment to a language-designated position.

The Language Continuum takes advantage of new ways to develop advanced language skills. ■

Ildiko Cossich is a post language program coordinator and Christina Hoffman is continuing training and testing manager at FSI's School of Language Studies.

USEFUL LINKS

School of Language Studies web site
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls>

Language Departments
http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/Language_Dept_Page/index.htm

Continuing Training and Testing
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/ctt.htm>

Language Skill Level Descriptions
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/ltu/ilr.asp?page=ilr>

Distance Language Learning
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/plp/distance.asp?page=online>

Out & About in [city] series
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/plp/content.asp?page=outabout>

Research, Evaluation and Development
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/Re&d/default.htm>

Post Language Program Talk online discussion forum
<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sls/plp/plotalk.htm>

The Old Executive Office Building, formerly the State, War and Navy Building, was the Department's home from 1875 to 1947.



STATELY Homes

A DEPARTMENT ON THE MOVE **BY BILL PALMER**

PHOTOGRAPHS: BILL PALMER



Above: The Octagon House on New York Avenue was a Department annex during World War II. Below: The George C. Marshall wing of Main State was once known as New State. Surrounded by a construction fence, it is under renovation.

Fifty years ago this year, Congress approved a long-dreamed-of plan to consolidate the State Department in one building. The plan would add a million square feet to the “New State Building” on 21st Street. Finally, the department locations scattered throughout the city—as many as 47 in the 1940s—could be gathered under one roof.

It didn't quite work out that way. Even when the extension—four times larger than the original building—was completed in 1961, the Department, which was much smaller than it is today, still required five annexes.

But 1961 might have been a high point for consolidation and improved space, even though some employees hated the new building's modernist architecture. In the years that followed, the Department continued to grow but Main State did not.



Today, one of the most important documents in any office is the shuttle bus schedule. When they're not out of breath from racing to catch the shuttle to SA-44 or FSI, employees grumble constantly about endless renovations and shrinking work and storage spaces.

But none of this is new. Even when the Department was young and very small, employees had to endure constant moves, cramped conditions and controversial architecture.

A publication produced by the Office of the Historian, *Homes of the Department of State 1774-1976*, describes the Department's headquarters over the years—all 24. Moving trucks were always

backing up to the door, it seemed.

Many of those 24 buildings, which early on included a couple of taverns, didn't get everyone under one roof either, even though the Department had only 55 employees as late as 1875. In that year, it moved from the cramped Washington City Orphan Asylum Building, a severe firetrap, to the State, War, and Navy Building (now the Old Executive Office Building), next to the White House. The new space was called the finest office building in the world, though its Victorian architecture—porticoes and pillars, mansards and peaks—was more admired then than it is now. State would remain there until 1947, its longest tenure anywhere.

However, the Department's space in the building was, as early as 1884, “so cramped for room as to seriously interfere with good executive management,” according to *Homes*. Eventually, the Navy and War departments moved elsewhere, freeing up space, but State still needed more room. Various offices were squeezed out to other buildings around town. During the next 100 years, the Department used more than 130 annexes. Among them were familiar Washington landmarks such as the Octagon House at 1735 New York Avenue (1941–47) and the Old Post Office Building at 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue (1951–61).

When the National Museum of American Diplomacy opens in 2007 in the George C. Marshall Wing—formerly “New State”—of the Harry S Truman Building (after yet another renovation), employees and visitors will be able to see images of some of these earlier sites of American diplomacy. What a wandering band we've been—even those of us who never left Washington. ■

The author is a writer/editor at State Magazine.

HOMESCHOOLING GIVES STABILITY TO CHILD'S EDUCATION



I'm a Foreign Service spouse who homeschooled my young daughter. It was a positive experience, so I'd like to share it with other families assigned abroad with young children entering school before or at kindergarten.

The Baltimore-based Calvert School was recommended by Foreign Service colleagues who homeschooled all nine of their children. We started our oldest child in Calvert homeschooling when she turned three. This was not her first exposure to school-like activities. She enjoyed the alphabet and numbers early on as well as

BY SONIA EVANS

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT); CORBIS; (OPPOSITE PAGE); TAMMIE GANDY

coloring, drawing and looking at pictures. She was already successful on the computer using an online early reading program that taught her to use a mouse and introduced her to phonics.

I ordered pre-K materials from Calvert for \$200. Each day consisted of two hours of academics interspersed with snacks, breaks and a nap. When my daughter was four, I ordered kindergarten materials for \$800. It didn't occur to me

that by traditional standards she was too young to start kindergarten, since she found the material easy and loved it.

After nine months in Washington, we were off to Buenos Aires, our first post. Now our daughter was five and in first grade, so I purchased Calvert's advisory teaching service, which includes testing by mail. It also offered help from an education professional, who evaluated my daughter's progress and my ability as a teacher. This is useful in overcoming the "I'm not a teacher" fear that comes with homeschooling.

Still, I know my child better than anyone and I know how to communicate with her. That makes for a good teacher. It helped, too, that we hired an English-speaking nanny to assist when I took a part-time job at post. The first-grade program was a little longer, but with a full year to finish the program, it was possible to spread one lesson out over two days.

I never expected to homeschool past the first grade. I just needed an alternative to moving our youngster in and out of preschools and kindergarten until we were settled for at least a year. I also enrolled her in an Argentine school for three

hours each morning to give her the social exposure that's missing in a homeschool environment and where she had the opportunity to become fluent in Spanish. She flourished, even with the language barrier.

Now that we're at our second post, Santo Domingo, we have successfully integrated our first-grader into the tradi-

OF THE MORE THAN 11,000 FOREIGN SERVICE CHILDREN ABROAD, **UP TO 3 PERCENT** ARE BEING HOMESCHOOLED.

tional setting of an embassy-associated school. Though she finished home-school first grade, we put her into first grade here because we arrived three months into the school year and felt second grade was too much of a stretch. She's performing very well.

I would recommend homeschooling as an alternative for young children. For those of us who country-hop for a living, it can add more stability to our children's education.

Visit www.calvertschool.org for information on the Calvert School. Visit www.Headsprout.com for information about its online early reading program.

For more information on homeschooling, e-mail me at sonia@talesmag.com. ■

The author is a Foreign Service spouse living with her family in Santo Domingo.

Editor's note: This story is offered only as one example of a home school experience, not as an endorsement of the Calvert School or any other educational program.

RESOURCES ON HOMESCHOOLING

Of the more than 11,000 Foreign Service children abroad, up to 3 percent are being homeschooled. Using feedback from homeschooling parents, the Family Liaison Office helped revise the homeschooling section of the education allowance regulations in 2002 to allow for more flexibility and benefits. Not only have the provisions for allowable expenses been greatly expanded, but there's a greater choice of programs.

FLO has information to help parents under "Homeschooling and Distance Learning Options for High School Students" at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19290.htm. The site offers resources and ideas as well as links to the Office of Allowances, which has added a detailed "frequently asked questions" section to help clarify the regulations.

E-mail floaskeducation@state.gov to relate your experiences with homeschooling.



A homeschooled special-needs student, left, enjoys a science experiment.

EMBASSY DIGS IN FOR SAVINGS

By Jai Nair

Starting with improving its water supply, the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is implementing an energy-slashing program that is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars.

With drought afflicting much of northern India, water outages are common in New Delhi for much of the year. Usually, the embassy uses its wells to supplement city water. Off-compound residences use cisterns that are topped off by embassy trucks when their water system is dry. But this arrangement has a drawback: The reservoir supplying the embassy has been dropping from year to year.

To ease this crisis, the embassy recently completed the first phase of a rainwater-harvesting project, part of an effort to reduce energy and water consumption. Pits are being dug throughout the embassy compound and filled with rocks and gravel to capture the rain from storm drains and gutters that were previously connected to the city storm drains. Now the runoff filling these catch pits flows through deep boreholes to recharge the subterranean aquifers.

The water runoff project will take up almost half of the compound's nearly 700,000 square feet. Early results show that about 50,000 gallons of rainwater were recovered and returned to the water table from just two pits. A study by the Central Ground Water Board estimated that the completed system will provide approximately 2.4 million gallons of water per year, which represents about 40 days of the embassy's water consumption.

Rainwater recovery may be unique within the Department, but the embassy is also using more conventional methods to save money and energy.

After an audit in 1995, the embassy started identifying ways to cut energy use, starting with the easiest tasks. Incandescent bulbs were replaced with long-

life fluorescents and old fluorescent ballasts were upgraded to electronic ballasts while electric water heaters were replaced by solar.

Replacing outdated thermostats with a building management system also helped, as did a new digital control network that allows building temperatures to be programmed. Now, instead of running constantly, the air conditioning runs about 10 hours per day, five days a week. In addition, motion sensors switch off office lights when rooms are empty. In 2001, the improvements saved \$240,000.

Some measures were low-tech but effective. Windows were caulked and weather-stripped to keep rooms cooler, and the glass was covered with Mylar to reflect 65 percent of the sunlight. Watering of the embassy grounds was rescheduled using sprinklers timed for dusk and dawn—when evaporation losses are lowest.

The next measure was replacing electricity with other energy sources. Because New Delhi experiences frequent power cuts, the embassy began switching to gas-fired equipment, becoming the first customer in the diplomatic community to install a natural gas pipeline. The electrically powered air-conditioning chillers were converted to gas and compound stoves were also switched from electricity to natural gas.

In the first four years of improvements, the mission's electrical demand dropped 18 percent. After switching to gas systems, more than 690,000 kilowatt hours were saved from the embassy's yearly consumption of about 3 million kilowatt hours.

Noting New Delhi's success, other missions are starting their own rainwater-harvesting projects and energy-saving measures—diplomacy with down-to-earth results. ■



Workers dig a water collection pit on the embassy compound.

The author is a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.



Fellows Program Is Rich Source of New Talent

By Mark S. DesNoyer

Within the Department works a unique group known as Presidential Management Fellows. They're selected competitively and represent a wide variety of experience, culture and education.

The program, which came to the Department shortly after it started in 1977, attracts outstanding graduate students from a wide variety of academic disciplines to federal service. Originally called the Presidential Management Intern Program, it was revamped and expanded in 2003, becoming the Presidential Management Fellows' Program. It has two tiers: Presidential Management Fellows and Senior Presidential Management Fellows. Next year will be the first year for the senior program.

Graduate schools nominate students for the regular program. The applicants, who are in their final year, must demonstrate leadership, management skills and expertise in their discipline. From more than 5,000 applicants, the Office of Personnel Management selects up to 500 finalists to come



Fellows stay connected by meeting periodically with other PMF's throughout their careers. Meeting together, from left, are Courtney Dunn, Mark DesNoyer, Lona Stoll, Alex Tiersky, Carmella Peoples and Sharon Tsu.

to Washington in the spring for a job fair and an opportunity to sell themselves to the federal agencies staffing the booths. Hiring can be done on the spot. Last year, 403 fellows were hired and 48 were selected by State for two-year appointments.

State's fellows attend orientation, Washington tradecraft, language and other courses covering consular, management, political, public diplomacy and area studies topics. They also get considerable mentoring and peer support.

What really sets them apart, though, are their rotational assignments, designed to provide a deeper understanding of government. Assignments can be to overseas posts, other bureaus or agencies, the Senate and House and even non-governmental organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Those looking for real chal-

lenges can find them: One fellow traveled to Chad last summer to conduct refugee interviews.

The Department's program—regarded as one of the best-run in government—is managed by the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment in the Bureau of Human Resources. Program coordinator Danita Hickson called it “wonderfully successful.”

At the end of the two-year internship, agencies often offer successful fellows a career position. Fellows are appointed at the GS-9 level and are eligible for promotion to GS-11 after one year and GS-12 upon conversion to career status. Some opt to take the Foreign Service exam.

One survey shows that about one in 12 fellows will become top managers in the Senior Executive Service or Senior Foreign Service, compared with one in 100 in statistically comparable groups. Sean O'Keefe, former secretary of the Navy and administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is thought to be the highest-ranking former fellow in government. As they move up the ladder, fellows become a great networking asset for each other.

Jason Jeffreys, a graduate of the University of Tennessee Law School, is a 2004 fellow working in Diplomatic Security's intelligence and threat analysis office. “I know of no other program that offers this type of experience, opportunity and responsibility right out of law school,” he said.

Lona Stoll works in the Bureau of Verification and Compliance's Office of Strategic and Missile Affairs. She speaks French and will soon start studying Russian. “I love the people I work with,” she said. “Most have literally decades of experience in treaty compliance and verification issues as well as significant on-the-ground experience in the former Soviet states.”

A draw for many fellows is the opportunity to positively affect the lives of both Americans and foreign visitors. Says Deepa Ghosh, “Working at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is great because there is no typical day. One day I may be helping a post issue visas for exchange students and another day I may be visiting the school hosting those students.”

Some fellows are enticed by the Department's generous student loan repayment program. “That was very attractive,” said Jonathan Howard. “They paid off my loans.”

The Senior Presidential Management Fellows' Program is expected to begin in the near future, allowing agencies to recruit mid-career professionals from GS-13 to GS-15. It will be smaller, tailored and driven by agency demand. The Department as of now has not yet projected demand for the senior program. ■

The author is a Presidential Management Fellow in the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

A close-up photograph of a child's hand holding a pink daisy flower. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant, with the fingers wrapped around the green stem. The flower is in the upper left quadrant, with its yellow center and pink petals clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By Stan Piotroski

The Employee Consultation Service helps Foreign Service employees with children who have special educational and psychiatric needs find the best possible education for their children in communities abroad. The service works with parents to evaluate their children's needs and ensure that the appropriate resources are available at their posts.

Programs for special needs children are limited or non-existent in many remote posts, and even in more developed countries these programs are constantly changing. The ECS staff gather information about posts and determine whether the special needs allowance can be considered and whether a child should be medically cleared for that assignment.

The process begins when parents submit a letter to ECS from a teacher describing the difficulties their child is experiencing in school and the services the child requires. If an evaluation is required, a qualified person should evaluate the child. Parents should document their child's condition with report cards, individual education plans, previous evaluations or medical reports that describe learning problems the child is having or has experienced.

Families overseas should discuss the child's difficulties with the post's nurse or health practitioner or they should contact the regional psychiatrist or regional medical officer. In the United States, ECS can answer questions from employees—both Foreign Service and Civil Service—and guide them to the appropriate resources.

Foreign Service parents should send the information to the Employee Consultation Service. The staff will review the reports and will contact the parents to discuss the assistance their child needs. The office will notify the post to confirm the child's eligibility for the special needs allowance and will assist in arranging evaluations.

Children are eligible for the allowance if they have been recently evaluated by a mental health professional, speech pathologist, occupational therapist or pediatric neurologist and found to have a disorder that has a significant impact on their learning.

Parents with special needs children should forward their final bid lists to ECS to determine whether those posts have the resources their child requires. A call to a post's health care unit or local school can yield valuable preliminary information. The Office of Overseas Schools also maintains a list of schools with special education programs. Parents should contact the schools directly because circumstances change quickly. Some schools may require approval for admission. It is best to check carefully before bidding on a location.

Parents should keep their career development officers informed of their progress in the approval process. CDOs can help them frame a suitable bid list. Lengthy lists of posts that have not been reviewed can slow the ECS search and prevent the staff from providing timely assistance.

Working together, parents and ECS staff need to determine the current level of resource support at a given location. Once they have collected and studied a child's school and medical reports, reviewed the bid list with the parents and assessed the available resources, ECS can recommend approval of the special needs allowance and the assignment for the family. The staff forwards those recommendations to the medical clearances section and to the post for final approval.

The Employee Consultation Service is located in Room H-246, SA-1, 2401 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20520; (202) 663-1815; fax: (202) 663-1456. ■

The author is the director of the Employee Consultation Service.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do Foreign Service parents know they have a child with special needs who will need a medical clearance and post approval?

School officials can be helpful in identifying special needs of students and communicating this information to parents. A child who has been evaluated and determined to have a learning disability, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, a psychiatric disorder or a physical disability requiring special academic accommodation may be considered a child with special educational needs. An Employee Consultation Service staff member can discuss parents' questions concerning special needs that require a medical clearance and post approval.

When should a parent contact ECS for assistance with the special needs allowance, a medical clearance and post approval?

The sooner the better. Parents should contact ECS when they believe their child may have a special educational need. If they are unsure, ECS can assist in arranging an evaluation of their child to determine if there is problem. Parents should also contact ECS when they will be bidding soon.

Will the child's clearance change if a determination of special needs is made?

Yes, the child will usually receive a Class 2, limited medical clearance once the child is considered to have a special need. That clearance can change with new medical, school or psycho-educational assessment information.

Do parents have to contact ECS every time they develop a new bid list?

Yes, each time they develop a new bid list and their child continues to have special needs, ECS will assist in determining which posts meet the needs of their child. They should forward the final bid list they have determined with their CDO is the most realistic for the child's special needs.



Puffy, 2002, Ernesto Pujol, Chromogenic print, 40 in. x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Ramis Barquet, New York, N.Y.

ART in Embassies Reaches Out

ART SPEAKS ELOQUENTLY TO THE CUBAN PEOPLE **BY ELIZABETH ASH**

Before venturing out to their posts, chiefs of mission sit down with the curatorial staff of the ART in Embassies Program to discuss themes for the art exhibitions that will be displayed in their residences during their tenures. Staff members propose artists and specific works for each exhibition. For many ambassadors, the works stimulate discussions with their guests and help them connect with citizens of the host countries.

James Cason, chief of mission at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, and his wife Carmen say of their selections: “In preparing to come to Cuba, we decided to cast aside any trepidation and confront the pivotal issues of freedom of expression and human rights head-on—through the vehicle of deceptively pleasing imagery that, upon closer examination, tells a different story to those with eyes to see. Birds and fish as well as flora and fauna have been used by the artists as metaphors applicable to the life of the Cuban people.”

The Casons continue, “In Cuba, there is beauty throughout, but there is struggle everywhere. There are plentiful

resources, but not all are completely accessible. The power of these images, created by artists who enjoy a true freedom of expression, reminds us that we should not lose faith, but instead must continue to press forward, seeking liberty while appreciating the beauty around each and every one of us.”

Established by the Department in 1964, the ART in Embassies Program is a global museum that exhibits original works of art by U.S. citizens in the public rooms of approximately 180 American diplomatic residences worldwide. These exhibitions, with art loaned from galleries, museums, individual artists and corporate and private collections, play an important role in our nation’s public diplomacy. They provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope and diversity of American art and culture through the accomplishments of some of our most important citizens, our artists. ■

The author is a program officer in the ART in Embassies office.

education & training

Mandatory Leadership Training

Leadership training is mandatory for Foreign Service and Civil Service employees at the FS-03/GS-13 levels and above 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 leadership courses for all FS and GS employees.

Mandatory Courses

- FS 3/GS 13** PK245 Basic Leadership Skills
- FS 2/GS 14** PT207 Intermediate Leadership Skills
- FS 1/GS 15** PT210 Advanced Leadership Skills

Managers and Supervisors

- PT107 EEO Diversity Awareness for Managers and Supervisors

Newly promoted FS-OC/SES

- PT133 Senior Executive Threshold Seminar

Senior Policy Seminars

FSI's Leadership and Management School offers professional development and policy seminars for senior-level executives of the Department and the foreign affairs/national security community:

- PT300 Leader as Facilitator
- PT301 Appearing Effective in the Media
- PT302 Testifying Before Congress
- PT303 Crisis Leadership
- PT304 Executive as Coach and Mentor
- PT305 Deputy Assistant Secretary as Leader

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

Dates for FSI Transition Center Courses are shown at right. For information on all the courses available at FSI, visit the FSI Schedule of Courses on the Department of State's OpenNet at <http://fsi.state.gov>. See Department Notices for announcements of new courses and new course dates and periodic announcements of external training opportunities sponsored by FSI.

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

All State Department employees, FSNs and EFM's are eligible. With your FasTrac password, you may access the entire FasTrac catalog of over 3,000 courses, from home or office. Courses cover numerous topics, such as project management, computer skills, and grammar and writing skills, as well as soft skills such as leadership training. To view the complete FasTrac catalog, visit the FasTrac web site at <http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac>.

FSI Distance Learning Program

An extensive menu of FSI-developed distance learning courses is also available to eligible participants on the FSI learning management system. See (U) State 009772 dated January 14, 2005, or the FSI web page (Distance Learning) for information.

Security	MAY	JUNE	Length
MQ911 SOS: Security Overseas Seminar	2, 16	6, 20	2 D
MQ912 ASOS: Advanced Security Overseas Seminar	10, 24	14	1 D
MQ914 YSOS Youth Security Overseas Seminar		7, 21	1 D

Foreign Service Life Skills	MAY	JUNE	Length
MQ104 Regulations, Allowances & Finances		22	3 D
MQ111 Making Presentations: Design to Delivery	18		2 D
MQ115 Explaining America	7		1 D
MQ116 Protocol and U.S. Representation Abroad	21	25	1 D
MQ200 Going Overseas for Singles and Couples without Children	14		2.5 H
MQ210 Going Overseas for Families	14		2.5 H
MQ220 Going Overseas Logistics for Adults	14		2.5 H
MQ230 Going Overseas Logistics for Children	14		2.5 H
MQ250 Young Diplomats Day		20	1 D
MQ703 Post Options for Employment and Training		2	1 D
MQ704 Targeting the Job Market		7	1 D
MQ801 Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships		11	2.5 H
MQ802 Communicating Across Cultures	27		1 D
MQ803 Realities of Foreign Service Life		3	1 D
MQ854 Legal Considerations in the Foreign Service	25		2.5 H
MQ915 Emergency Medical Care and Trauma Workshop	11	29	1 D

Career Transition Center	MAY	JUNE	Length
RV101 Retirement Planning Seminar		14	4 D
RV103 Financial Management and Estate Planning		16	1 D
RV104 Annuities & Benefits and Social Security		15	1 D

Length: H = Hours, D = Days

PEOPLE LIKE YOU

Through the Grapevine

NAPA TRIP HATCHES DREAM FOR BUDDING VINTNER **BY PAUL KOSCAK**



Dan O'Donoghue spends his winter weekends pruning some of his 19,000 grape vines.

After a day of managing the Department's stateside real estate portfolio for Overseas Buildings Operations, Dan O'Donoghue goes home and continues managing. But instead of an urban office piled with leases and contracts, his setting is more pastoral: 85 acres of rolling hills and 19,000 labor-intensive grapevines. For the past two years Mr. O'Donoghue has been working to convert a family farm his father purchased almost 50 years ago as a retreat from the city into Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard, where the aspiring vintner hopes to produce "the best wine Maryland has to offer."



Until recently, the land that he, two sisters and a brother inherited after his father died was headed for sale and most likely destined to become yet another subdivision in Montgomery County's booming housing market. About half an hour northwest of Washington, D.C., just off I-270 near the base of Sugarloaf Mountain, the prized parcel would have been broken up quickly.

But all that changed after the family traveled to California for the wedding of Mr. O'Donoghue's son and a side trip to Napa Valley, home to some of the world's best vineyards. "Over a glass of wine on a porch," Dan said, "the idea came to us—Why don't we try a winery?"

But that goal hinged on testing the soil and evaluating the climate to ensure the grapes needed for the Bordeaux-style wines they envisioned could thrive on the former cattle and wheat farm. Luck was on their side. The property's loam, gravel, clay and slate soil and the sheltered microclimate created by the nearby mountain proved just right.

So in 2004, without any cultivating or wine-making experience, Mr. O'Donoghue, his siblings and their extended families started preparing the land, while the vines—certified French clones of the five Bordeaux grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdox) and two white varieties (Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio)—were being nurtured in California.

There were fences to install, irrigation systems to engineer and trellises to build to secure the growing vines. Finally, the vines were planted by an experienced crew and a vineyard manager was hired. As the vines flourished, pruning the offshoots gave the family plenty of work, especially during the winter. "They grow like crazy," said Mr. O'Donoghue, a former real estate agent and developer of commercial and residential properties.

Start-up costs for a commercial vineyard, he admitted, can be substantial. Excluding the land, it's at least \$100,000. "I wouldn't have been able to do it on my own," he said. And that's not counting the buildings on the property needed for the winery and store.

While his labor won't bear fruit for at least another year (it takes at least two years to produce grapes for wine), Mr. O'Donoghue stays focused on the two- to three-week fall harvest when the ripe grapes are picked and turned into wine. It's a short window when all the investment and sweat equity must pay off.

"We expect to produce 6,000 cases per year," he said. So what's next? Another 19,000 vines are planned for 2006. ■

The author is a writer/editor at State Magazine.

Noontime Concerts Run from Classical to Jazz Funk

By John Bentel

Recent noontime concert performers hosted by the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and the State of the Arts Cultural Series included a harpist, a pianist and a jazz ensemble.

The harp is a lovely-sounding instrument, especially in the hands of the remarkable Nora Gardner. Nora, a native of Houston, Texas, and a sophomore at American University's School of International Service, has played the harp for eight years and performs in the American University orchestra. Her program included compositions by Handel, Debussy, Dussek, Prokofiev and Pierne and was met with a shower of applause.

Concert pianist Irina Yurkovskaya is a native of Belarus and graduated from a music academy in Minsk with degrees in piano and voice. Irina's extraordinary technique and velocity were well-suited to her selections, especially two Rachmaninoff preludes. Her exquisite rubato and well-balanced melodic line earned her prolonged applause and an encore.



Nora Gardner makes beautiful music on her harp.

In celebration of Black History Month, Phaze II played its self-described contemporary jazz funk fusion. David Prince (vocals, bass guitar), Adrian Norton (vocals, bass guitar), Steve Perkins (vocals, percussion), Ron Palmore (saxophone), Yvonne Johnson (keyboards) and William "JR" Truss (drums) formed the group in 1995 after extensive musical training. They exhibited wonderful chemistry together and had some of the enthusiastic audience up and dancing. ■

The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.

CALENDAR

April 13	Anastasia Ivanova and Irina Kasukova, pianists
April 20	Wayne Dorsey, piano. All Gershwin program
May 4	State Department and Georgetown University piano students of Caryl Traten Fisher
May 18	Jarrood Smerk, classical guitar
June 8	Trio featuring Steve Gerber, composer/pianist, and Emil Chudnovsky, violin

Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium.



PHOTOGRAPH: (ABOVE) JOHN BENTEL

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREMENTS

Fuselier Jr., Burley P.
Gough, Carolyn
Hafstad, Robert
Huddleston, Vicki J.
Joseph, Stanley J.
Messner, Curtiss W.
Miller, Thomas Joel

Polley Jr., William E.
Pratt, Susan Neal
Streeter Jr., Alvin Henry
Van Laanen, Peter G.
Vazquez, Nereida Maria
Watts, Richard J.

CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENTS

Afshartous, Malak
Alicea, Patricia
Barnes, Gracie L.
Bechtold, Peter K.
Butterworth, Bruce
Dantsker, Bella
Durham, Sylvia M.
Dyer, Alice M.
Elliott-Kimmel, Elizabeth
Ferguson, Diane A.

Garner-Middleton, Aida
Johnson, Theresa A.
Kelly, James A.
King, Alan M.
Lee, Gloria J.
Middleton, Maria Di Sante
Pluchinsky, Dennis A.
Robertson, Yolanda W.
Russell, Darlene
Serafini, Bartolo

Sikes, Suzanne F.
Smith, William A.
Stapleton-Fludd, Pearl
Toney, Tuula
Vigneault, William A.
Wolff, Hervy D.
Young, Lee E.
Zweiben, Beverly

O B I T U A R I E S



Lillian G. Alger, 76, a retired Foreign Service employee, died Dec. 4 in Washington, D.C. She served in the Navy during the Korean Conflict. She joined the Department in 1972 and served overseas in Shenyang, Chengdu, Karachi, Manila, New Delhi and Saigon. After retiring in 1984, she worked many years for the Department in diplomatic security.

Her last posting was as a retired annuitant to Moscow.



Robert South Barrett, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 24 in Washington, D.C., following a long illness. He served in the Navy and Army before joining the Department in 1954. His overseas postings included Isfahan, Teheran, Phnom Penh, Paris, Martinique, Saigon, Antananarivo, Beirut and Djibouti, where he was ambassador from 1988 to 1991. He

retired in 1992.

Thomas A. DeHart, 78, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Jan. 30 in Bend, Ore., from complications of lung cancer. He served in the Marine Corps during World War II and joined the Department in 1952. His overseas postings

included Munich, Hong Kong, Taipei, Adelaide, Santo Domingo and Tijuana. In 1976, he retired to Oregon, where he enjoyed playing golf.



Lady Ruth Smith Ellis, wife of retired Foreign Service officer John R. "Jim" Ellis, died April 10, 2004, in Winston-Salem, N.C., after an extended illness. She worked for the International Monetary Fund in Washington before joining her husband on overseas postings to Caracas, New Delhi, Mexico City, Manila, Hong Kong and Panama. She was widely known for

her gourmet cooking.



John Edwin Fobes, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Jan. 20 in Asheville, N.C. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and helped administer the Marshall Plan after the war. His overseas postings included Paris and New Delhi. After retiring in 1964, he joined the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, where he rose to

deputy director-general. He co-founded the Association for the Promotion of Humor in International Affairs.

O B I T U A R I E S



John Victor "Jack" Hagee, 65, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Sept. 11 of cancer in Arlington, Va. He served in the Army before joining the Department. His overseas postings included Paris, Damascus, India, Africa and Taiwan. After retirement in 1992, he enjoyed fishing.



William A. Mucci, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 7 in Watkins Glen, N.Y. He served with the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1946. His overseas postings included Germany, Africa, Austria, Hong Kong, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Great Britain and Jordan. He retired in 1974 and divided his time between New York and Arizona.



Dennis P. Murphy, 65, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 11, 2004, in Yakima, Wash., of lung cancer. He joined the Department in 1966 and his overseas postings included Bangkok, Calcutta, New Delhi, Jeddah, Kathmandu and Bogotá. He retired in 1990.

Richard C. "Rick" Plotz, 56, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Jan. 22 in Fairfax, Va., of a brain aneurysm. He served in the Navy before joining the Department in 1978. His overseas postings included Kenya, the Philippines and Australia. He retired in 1998.



Thomas J. Warren, 74, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Dec. 31 of cardiac arrest in Dumfries, Va. He served in the Army before joining the Department. His overseas postings included Rome, Moscow, Geneva, Quito, Teheran and Madrid. After retiring in 1985, he became a consultant to the departments of State and Defense. He enjoyed the beach, fishing and boating.



Kevin Frank West, 52, a Civil Service employee, died of cancer Jan. 9 in Dunkirk, Md. He worked for the Department nearly 30 years, most recently in the computer field. He enjoyed boating and fishing.

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 its web site at www.opm.gov.

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