

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# STATE

MAGAZINE

## *Geneva Europe's Harmonic Heart*



JANUARY 2009



# JAN 2009

STATE MAGAZINE | ISSUE 530



Cai Guo-Qiang's *Eagle Landing on a Pine Branch* highlights connections between China and the United States. This gunpowder polyptych alludes to Chinese scholar paintings while obliterating the paper through the ignition of gunpowder, an allusion to the eighth-century Chinese alchemists who invented it. The eagle and pine trees were chosen for their symbolic value in both China and the United States, representing friendship and cooperation.

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### ON THE COVER

Geneva, long considered to be the center of international negotiations, is home to the United States' largest overseas multilateral mission.

*Photograph by Getty Images*

## Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment— New Year/New Inroads



I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and successful 2009. In this new year, I would like to let you know about the outstanding work being done by Luis Arreaga and his team in the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment.

In July of 2008, Mr. Arreaga came to us from Panama, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission. Prior to that, he served as the Principal Officer in Vancouver. Now, Mr. Arreaga leads the office that is responsible for recruiting and hiring the Department's Civil Service employees, Foreign Service generalists and specialists and interns, as well as managing Department-wide student programs.

The HR/REE team has made great inroads over the past year:

- In September, the Department launched the Internship Fellows Program to identify talented students from colleges and universities throughout the United States that have not traditionally been the focus of State

Department Civil Service and Foreign Service recruitment efforts, e.g., Boise State University, Hiram College and the University of South Dakota. The program provides a paid internship, either domestic or abroad, that will be awarded to applicants, vetted by Diplomats in Residence, who exhibit potential and an interest in a career in the Department. This new program is in addition to other ongoing programs directed toward undergraduate and graduate students, such as the Rangel and Pickering Fellows programs, which are open to all Americans.

- For the third year in a row, the Department has placed among the top five ideal employers in an annual poll of undergraduates reported by *BusinessWeek*. The Department is the highest ranking federal agency. In addition, out of hundreds of employers, including write-ins, the Department ranked first as an ideal employer for liberal arts undergraduates.

- The Department also ranked high as an ideal employer in the annual poll of minority undergraduates. Out of the top 100 employers, the Department has ranked third as an ideal employer for African-American undergraduates. Moreover, in 2008, the *Black Collegian* ranked the Department a top recruiter of college graduates. It was the only federal agency listed in the top 100.

- We have an improved Foreign Service officer selection process, which includes an online written test and review by a Qualification Review Panel of candidate test scores and application materials to determine which candidates should be invited to the daylong oral assessment. The Qualification Evaluation Panel process allows us to consider the "total candidate," including such things as candidate work and study experience, leadership and foreign language

skills. The entire hiring process, which previously took more than a year to complete, has been streamlined. As a result, we are getting people into the Foreign Service faster. For example, some candidates who took the September 2007 written test entered A-100 in July 2008.

In my visits to high schools, colleges and professional organizations around the country, I always emphasize that the Department needs men and women with diverse backgrounds, vast intellectual interests, a strong work ethic and an interest in serving our country. We need folks who understand how U.S. interests interact with the rest of the world, whether the subject is science and the environment or combating international narcotics trafficking.

As I've said before, all members of the State Department family are potential recruiters. We are gratified that more than 600 of our colleagues have answered the call to help with recruitment, and I know many more of you volunteer on your own. Your stories inspire future candidates to become our colleagues. I encourage you to direct young people to our award-winning Web site ([www.careers.state.gov](http://www.careers.state.gov)). If you are planning a visit to your alma mater or your professional organization, or as a hometown diplomat, please contact [volrecruiter@state.gov](mailto:volrecruiter@state.gov) to request support materials. We have updated the Intranet resources for you, and we have full-time talent scouts around the country serving as Diplomats in Residence who can provide follow-up to candidates you meet. We have great opportunities for Americans who want to make a positive difference in the world, and it is up to all of us to share that information.

If you have any general comments or suggestions, please feel free to send them to me via unclassified e-mail at DG Direct. ■



# news

## NBA Star Employs Slam-Dunk Diplomacy

In July, the U.S. Mission in Indonesia combined two American cultural phenomena—basketball and hip-hop music—for a slam-dunk in public diplomacy. For the National Basketball Association's first foray into Indonesia, the U.S. Consulate in Surabaya and the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta worked with the Foreign Commercial Service on community outreach that combined sports diplomacy and commercial advocacy for the NBA.

Ambassador Cameron R. Hume laid the groundwork by meeting with the NBA leadership in New York. FCS officer Lawrence Johnson said it was not an easy sell.

"You have to think creatively as you craft your presentation. Typically, the NBA does not look to the U.S. government as a primary

contact—they see us as bureaucrats," he said. "We needed to clearly show our value and understanding of their goals."

When Indiana Pacers star Danny Granger was invited by an Indonesian basketball league, the NBA signed on, and its participation attracted other sponsors who provided sports gear and support.

In Surabaya, Granger participated in a major high-school championship tournament, an orphanage visit and a basketball clinic for high-school boys and girls.

"Despite being used to fan adulation and large crowds, Granger was unsure how this majority-Muslim society would receive an American," Public Affairs Officer John Taylor said. "Thousands of cheering fans

attending the events and inundating Granger with their warm and positive response soon dispelled these doubts."

In Jakarta, Granger attended a reception at Ambassador Hume's residence, where a crowd of Indonesians—including young athletes, entrepreneurs, basketball fans and media moguls—danced to live hip-hop performances by popular Indonesian musicians and snacked on basketball-themed donuts. The event culminated in a free-throw contest.

The next day, the embassy hosted a basketball clinic where Granger taught lay-ups and defense to children from local orphanages. Indonesian girls and boys played enthusiastically, and these images were transmitted worldwide by the media as a symbol of U.S. outreach to the Muslim world through sports.



## FARA Celebrates 30 Years

The Foreign Affairs Recreational Association celebrated its 30th anniversary in November with a bazaar at Main State featuring many of the merchants who sell their wares in FARA's Foggy Bottom shops. FARA also operates a fitness center in Main State that held an open house the same day.

Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy cut the birthday cake at FARA's celebration, saying he had come to celebrate the Department's "great symbiotic relationship with FARA—we provide space and you provide services."



Gathered at the FARA celebration were, from left, Brigitta Drewes, the Department's liaison to FARA's board; board member Irene Lucas; Under Secretary Patrick Kennedy; board member William Amoroso; FARA General Manager Clement Jackson and board member Hudson Byrd.

A private nonprofit organization, FARA provides recreational, educational, social, wellness and convenience services for its members, who may be Foreign Service or Civil Service employees. For instance, it offers discounts on housing, movies, museums, sports events and theme parks in the Washington, D.C., area. More information on FARA is at [www.recgov.org/state](http://www.recgov.org/state).

## HR Expands Roster of Automated Services

The Bureau of Human Resources has expanded its suite of online self-service applications with automated versions of the DS-1707, Leave, Travel and Consultation Status form, and the OF-126, Foreign Service Residence and Dependency report.

Foreign Service employees moving from overseas to domestic assignments or between domestic assignments can now complete and submit their DS-1707 and revise their OF-126 through the HR Online system, which has a link under "Employee Self-Service" to the automated DS-1707. The electronic form will include assignment notification and departure information, requiring employees to add only the data to confirm their leave status and its time frame. Once completed and validated by the employee, the form is submitted electronically to the Employee Services Center,

eliminating the need to visit the ESC.

Once approved, the form goes to the Global Employment Management System to generate an electronic SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action. The approved DS-1707 is also automatically placed in the employee's electronic Travel Folder in electronic Official Personnel File. The folder is accessible only to employees who have Permanent Change of Station travel orders and authorized users.

The automated OF-126, also available in HR Online, allows Foreign Service and Civil Service employees converting to limited non-career Foreign Service appointments to update multiple addresses such as home leave, separation and legal addresses. Changes to an employee's official payroll address, however, must still be processed through Global Financial Services in Charleston, S.C. The automated OF-126

report also lets employees update their emergency contacts and eligible family member information.

Automation of the OF-126 and DS-1707 reduces the delays and costs associated with paper forms. Future self-service initiatives include implementing ePerformance for the Civil Service, Foreign Service and Senior Executive Service, and automation of several Travel Message cables.

HR's Executive Office is seeking representatives from Department bureaus to become "Champions for Change" who will provide guidance in designing training for self-service applications, participate in system testing and encourage bilateral communication with HR and other stakeholders. Those interested in becoming a Champion for Change should contact [GEMSChangeManagement@state.gov](mailto:GEMSChangeManagement@state.gov).





Army Lt. Colonel Thomas Goodfellow, left, gets voting assistance at a café in what was Saddam Hussein's presidential palace.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Americans in Iraq were just as excited as their compatriots at home, and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad helped ensure that eligible citizens were

able to cast their votes.

Beginning in early September, the embassy's consular section rendered voting assistance to more than 300 Americans by answering telephone, e-mail and

## Embassy Baghdad Helps American Voters

walk-in inquiries and conducting weekly outreach events in a café within Saddam Hussein's former presidential palace. The section also reached out to Americans living outside the Green Zone with warden messages alerting voters to election deadlines and referring them to the Federal Voter Assistance Program Web site.

The embassy's consular officers also distributed voter registration forms and federal "back-up ballots" and called local election authorities throughout the United States to

aid voters in confirming their registration and ballot requests.

"For many overseas voters, each national election is a bit of a refresher course in American democracy," said Embassy Voting Assistance Officer Steven Gillen.

"It's hard to promote democracy if you don't practice it," agreed Master Sergeant Patrick McDonald, an Army reservist monitoring Iraq's provincial elections. "It's the responsibility of American soldiers and diplomats to practice what they preach by participating in our electoral process."

## Department Urged to Hire the Disabled

Although the federal government had 28,000 disabled employees in 1997 and has regulations that encourage hiring of the disabled, it has 4,000 fewer disabled employees today, said the speaker at the Department's National Disability Month event at Main State in October.

"We have a long way to go," said Beth Bienvenu of the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

To increase federal hiring of individuals with disabilities, she pointed to managers' ability to hire in the Civil Service through the noncompetitive appointment of individuals with severe disabilities under Schedule A of the regulation 5 CFR 213.3102(u). This, she said, allows a manager to hire eligible employees with severe disabilities without posting the job and waiting for a list of qualified applications. The practice cuts to three weeks or less what can be a two- to six-month process, she said.

She advised employees with disabilities to point this out to their managers when a job opening at a higher-paid grade becomes available but has not been posted. The disabled person can be appointed via Schedule A hiring authority provided he or she meets the requirements of the position and has been medically certified as disabled, Bienvenu said.

Managers can also seek out qualified disabled employees themselves through the DOL's online job bank, [www.earnworks.com](http://www.earnworks.com), and the Web site of the Workforce Recruitment Program, <https://www.wrp.gov>, which includes disabled students seeking internships. State agencies for the disabled and organizations of the disabled are also good sources of candidates, she said.

Federal employees with disabilities have a right under federal law to workplace accommodations, such as a computer



In the foreground, Pam Collins, an interpreter with Sign Language Associates, does signing, while in the background Beth Bienvenu answers a question.

monitor or keyboard they can use. Bienvenu said DOL's research across the federal government found 46 percent of such accommodations involve no cost, and the rest have an average one-time cost of \$500. Among the free accommodations for most federal employees are the computer-related ones offered

to all federal employers under the Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program run by the Department of Defense.

Employees can request accommodations from their supervisor or the Bureau of Human Resources, Work/Life Programs, on the Intranet at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/er/worklife/wl.cfm>.

# IRM Consolidates IT Operations



At the ribbon-cutting are, from left, BIMC Division Chief John Cabral, Customer Service Office Director Kay Gotoh, Under Secretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy (with scissors), Chief Information Officer Susan Swart, Deputy CIO Charlie Wisecarver and Teresa Scott from IRM's Technical Controls Office.

In November, the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Information Technology Operations Center opened at the Department's Beltsville, Md., Information Management Center. The IT center allows IRM to consolidate its Tier 1 and Tier 2 support organizations from its IT Service Center, the Enterprise Network Management Operations Center and the Combined Technical Operations Center. The IT center will provide domestic and overseas operations support around the clock.

Having these functions in one location enhances customer service and spotlights IRM's progress in creating a consolidated IT support model for the Department, the bureau said.

The Beltsville IMC opened in 1987 and provides command and control communications to overseas posts and other federal agencies. In 1991, it gained IRM's Enterprise Server Operations Center.

## 'Trunk-or-Treat' Halloween in Bucharest

Since most countries don't celebrate Halloween and mission housing can be spread throughout a city where security requirements may limit trick-or-treating, it can be a challenge to give American children exposure to this unique American experience while overseas.

At the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, the community liaison office organizes a chance for the post's children to enjoy Halloween together. Every year, the children assemble at the American International School parking lot, which becomes a small "neighborhood" that provides a safe and friendly arena for trick-or-treating. The children first do a costume parade around the lot and then go from car to car to load up on goodies.

The past Halloween was the embassy's largest and best, with 28 families decorating their cars and trunks. A Boy Scout troop provided cookies and hot chocolate for the crowd and awarded three prizes for the spookiest-looking cars.



A trick or treater at the latest "trunk or treat" prepares to seek out Halloween goodies.



# Department Adds 15 Colleges To Internship Program

The State Department already recruits at more than 50 colleges and universities around the country, but “we want to reach out to colleges we don’t usually reach out to,” said Luis Arreaga, director of the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment.

To that end, REE has created a new Internship Fellows Program, initially targeting 15 institutions, many of them small ones. This pilot program will put the interns to work in the Department this summer and fall in paid positions domestically and worldwide.

The list of colleges includes Valdosta State in Georgia, Wiley College in Texas, the University of South Dakota, Bowie State in Maryland and the University of Maryland–Baltimore Campus. The

list was recommended by Director General for Human Resources Harry K. Thomas and approved by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It is another way to increase the Department’s diversity, Arreaga said.

Because each school may nominate up to four students, allocating them to either the summer or fall or spreading them over both periods, the program could bring the Department as many as 60 new interns this year. The Department employed almost 1,400 interns in summer 2008.

The outreach is being done by REE and the Department’s Diplomats in Residence, 16 Senior Foreign Service officers who are based at a college or university and cover wide recruiting regions nationally.

Deborah Graze, REE’s DIR coordinator and Outreach Branch chief, said recruiting Foreign Service officers from colleges that are too small to specialize in foreign affairs could enrich the FSO ranks.

“Good talent comes from all over, and we need to keep up that talent pipeline,” she said.

The interns will be paid and may receive travel allowances. They are nominated by their colleges in consultation with their regional DIR, and REE reviews the application to ensure that it qualifies. Applications for the program were due in November, and selected students have been placed in the bureaus.

Top officials of several institutions participating in the Internship Fellows Program stand with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, center.



## Airline Industry Trainers Aid Fiji Antifraud Effort

Two representatives of the airline industry’s Carrier Liaison Program and members of the U.S. Embassy in Suva team fighting visa fraud conducted a weeklong antifraud training session in Fiji in September.

The training team visited communities on Viti Levu, Fiji’s largest island. More than 150 people attended the sessions, including representatives from the New Zealand High Commission and the French Embassy.

The training focused on visa and travel-document fraud prevention. Heather Coble, vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Suva, said attendees learned to examine passports and visas for the security features that ensure the documents are real. For instance, they learned to use black lights, loupes and “the five senses approach,” which involves such actions as feeling the passport’s

binding for signs of tampering. They also learned to sniff the visa or passport to see if a chemical wash was used to remove information to change the biometric data.

“The consular sections are the first line of defense [on travel document fraud], and

every bit of knowledge helps in detecting fraudulent activity,” Coble said.

The CLP, which last sent trainers to Fiji in 2000, trains airline employees and others who help board passengers. In Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati, officials from the departments of immigration, customs and police assist with passenger loading and off-loading.

They also do much of the final boarding check at smaller airports. A week prior to the training, one Fiji immigration officer stopped an imposter at the boarding gate of a flight destined for the United States. The training included passenger assessment and imposter identification.



Among those attending the training were, from left, Christopher Mendoza, a U.S. immigration officer; Joe Ravatudei, a Fiji immigration officer; Heather Coble, vice consul at the embassy; and Richard Campbell, a U.S. immigration officer.



## TV's Nanny Visits Embassy Bucharest

In September, TV star Fran Drescher, a uterine cancer survivor and author of the best-selling book *Cancer Schmancer*, visited the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, in her new role as Public Diplomacy Envoy for Women's Health Issues. Drescher is best known as the star of *The Nanny*, a TV series of the 1990s.

The embassy health unit, community liaison office and public diplomacy section sponsored the event to mark the end of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Drescher spoke about her odyssey through the medical system, which finally led to her diagnosis of uterine cancer. Her survival inspired her to start a nonprofit organization—also named Cancer Schmancer—and to begin speaking out about the importance of prevention and early diagnosis of gynecologic cancers.

With her trademark Queens accent and distinctive voice, she spoke about the importance of women taking charge of their health.

While in Bucharest, Drescher worked with Renasterea, a Romanian women's health organization, to kick off Breast Cancer Awareness Month by lighting Bucharest's Arcul de Triumf monument with the color of breast cancer awareness, pink. She also appeared on a popular Romanian talk show and met with local celebrity cancer survivors to promote women's cancer awareness and early detection.

Romania was the first stop on her Eastern European tour, which included Kosovo, Poland and Hungary.

# STATE

MAGAZINE

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### Deadlines

The submission deadline for the March issue is January 15. The deadline for the April issue is February 15.

### Environmental Notes

*State Magazine* is printed in the USA on recycled paper that contains 10% post-consumer waste and is SFI-certified.





## The Business Case for Diversity



In last month's article, I defined diversity and discussed my role as Chief Diversity Officer. This month, I'd like to expand on that definition and introduce the well-developed construct known as the business case for diversity.

The Department of State is committed to a heterogeneous and inclusive workforce that reflects the diversity of the United States. Diversity is one of the core values of the Department's Strategic Plan; not just a worthy cause, it is a business necessity. Workforce diversity is a competitive advantage, a hallmark of democratic ideals and an opportunity for the Department to advance.

Diversity brings innovative ideas and intellectual capital to the workforce. Diversity is about recognizing, respecting and valuing differences based on ethnicity, gender, color, age, race, religion, disability, national origin and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of unique individual characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, educational background, geographic location, income level, military experience, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives.

While valuing diversity may be an intrinsic belief for many people, the business case describes how diversity contributes to the effectiveness and productivity of the Department. It's about leveraging the most vital workplace asset—employees. All employees need to be fully engaged and all of their talents fully utilized for the Department to be as successful as possible. The Department's commitment to the business case for diversity positively affects the following areas:

### **Diplomacy**

The Department's workforce forges and maintains vital relationships with a multitude of nations, organizations and customers. A diverse workforce that includes individuals with thorough knowledge of various cultural norms, language competencies and diverse perspectives will advance global diplomatic efforts.

### **Democratic Ideals**

Pursuant to the Strategic Plan, the Department has a goal to promote and strengthen effective democracies. A workforce that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives demonstrates to the global community that inclusion is critical to the pursuit of a more democratic, secure and prosperous world.

### **Innovation**

The influx of a diverse array of employees, as well as full utilization of current employees, can bring an infusion of fresh ideas, suggestions and methods that have not been previously considered. Leveraging the innovation and creativity of employees will aid the Department in addressing and solving complex issues in a challenging and ever-changing global society.

### **Succession Planning**

Approximately one-third of federal government employees will be eligible to retire by 2012. More than ever, employees are looking for an environment that provides equal opportunity, work-life balance and potential for advancement. During this critical transition, the Department must attract, retain, motivate and develop human capital from a diverse array of backgrounds and perspectives.

The Department must continue to advance the diversity that makes America the epicenter of fairness, equity and inclusion. The process has begun, and it is up to all Department employees to continue to promote diversity as a core value and business necessity. ■

# West Meets East

ART INSPIRED BY NATURE GRACES NEW BEIJING EMBASSY **BY VIRGINIA SHORE**

In October, the ART in Embassies Program's New Embassies and Compounds division completed the third and final installation of the new permanent art collection for the new embassy compound of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing.

The collection of 48 contemporary works of art by 29 American, Chinese and Chinese-American artists graces the compound's interior and exterior spaces. The breadth of media includes paint, ceramic, photography,

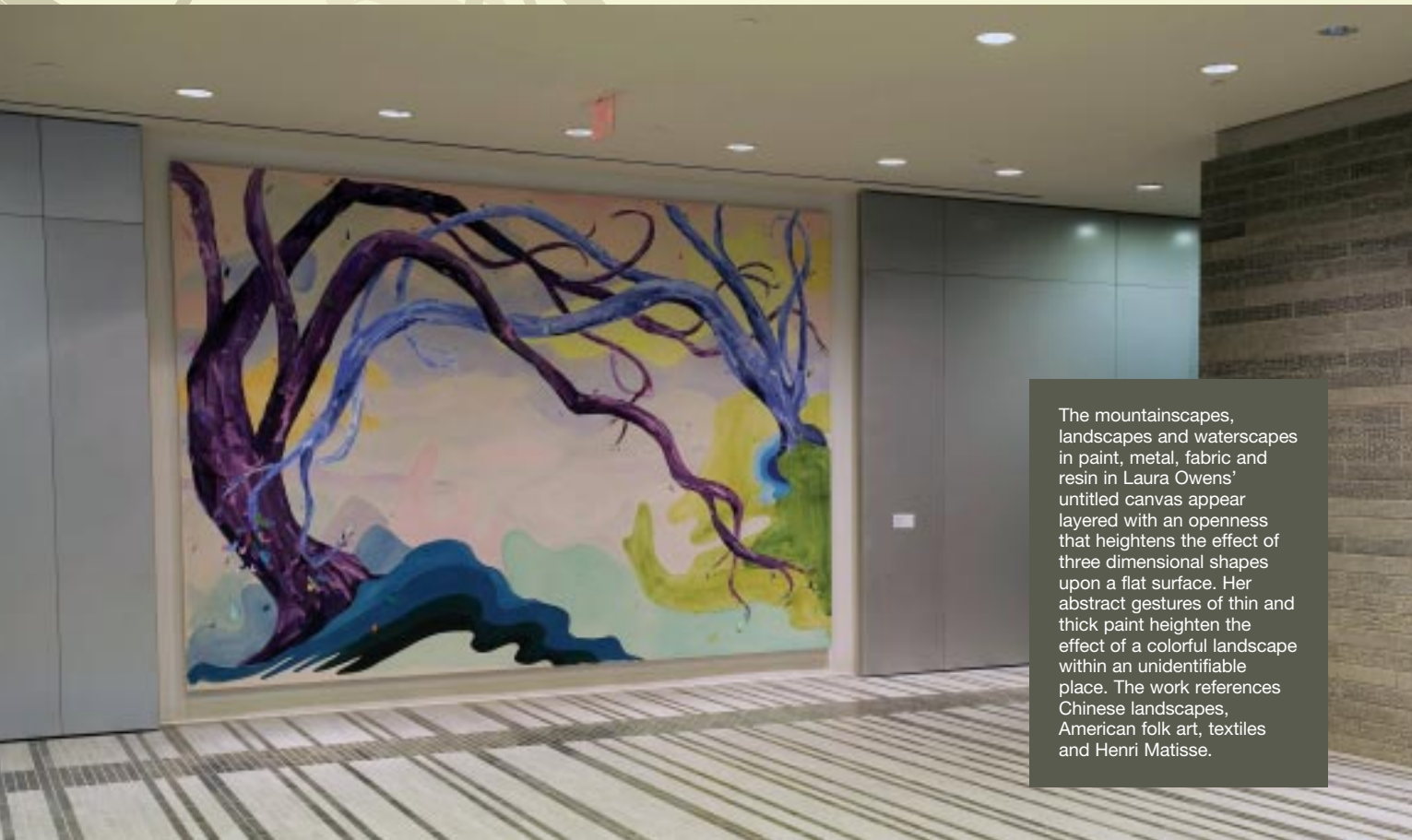
stainless steel, paper, collage, pins, gunpowder, porcelain, resin, textiles, watercolor, gouache and lacquered wood. Each work relates culturally, despite the vast range of materials and techniques, thus forming a collection reflecting the beauty, power and inspiration of nature.

With nature as muse, Chinese landscape painting emerged among the flourishing arts and literature of the Tang, Sung and Ming dynasties. The Chinese landscape painters

imbued their personal visions with a higher experience only attainable in nature, but they exceeded the realism of nature by permeating their media with atmosphere and emotion. With nature as subject matter and the Buddhist and Taoist concept of nature as the basis for man's inner harmony, the Chinese landscape painters generated a body of work that would inspire the artists, poets and writers of centuries, nations and cultures to come.

Celebrating this "landscape

of the mind" and the power of nature to enlighten, the permanent collection of the new U.S. Embassy in Beijing brings together artists who use nature to ponder universality. Through stylistic, literary, metaphorical and philosophical allusions, the artists contemplate the history of nature in the context of Chinese cultural history. The collection reminds viewers of nature's transformative potential and underscores the beauty of a pursuit that has connected American and Chinese cultures.



The mountainscapes, landscapes and waterscapes in paint, metal, fabric and resin in Laura Owens' untitled canvas appear layered with an openness that heightens the effect of three dimensional shapes upon a flat surface. Her abstract gestures of thin and thick paint heighten the effect of a colorful landscape within an unidentifiable place. The work references Chinese landscapes, American folk art, textiles and Henri Matisse.





**Above:** In the main public space of the new embassy compound's atrium, the viewer experiences Chinese landscape paintings as exemplified in Russell Crotty's *Landscapes of the Mind*. The work's three globes refer to the cosmos as well as our planet, a spherical template that conveys subtle visions of nature via ballpoint-pen ink on paper. Scrolls of land and sky are transferred to Lucite spheres suspended from the ceiling, reflecting nature as sketched in his notebooks.

**Left:** *Four Mountain Views*, vertical landscapes by Anne Chu, dominate the vista in the atrium and are reminiscent of Southeast Asian prayer banners. The dramatic, colored-resin bases of the works amass the weight of the "mountain" while the peak is composed of fabric attached to a metal core.



**Above:** Jeff Koons' monumental *Tulip* weighs more than 7,000 pounds and floats in the NEC's lotus pond. Symbolizing good luck to the Chinese, tulips originated thousands of years ago along the latitude between Northern China and Southern Europe. **Left:** Xu Bing's *Monkeys Grasping the Moon* recalls the dynamism and expressive possibilities of calligraphy and identifies "monkeys" in more than 20 languages. Referencing a popular Chinese folktale with philosophical undertones, the work involves the pursuit of a common goal that cannot be realized. **Below:** From left, Peter Lee, structural engineer; artist Xu Bing; Virginia Shore, Claire D'Alba and Imtiaz Hafiz of the ART in Embassies Program, gather in the Consular Building to install the artist's work.



PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. EMBASSY IN BEIJING





As of March 2008, China and the United States are two of the world's top three art markets. The new contemporary art of China and the United States approaches, modifies and revitalizes long-standing traditions. Like so many of their predecessors, the American artists in the embassy's collection are inspired by China's philosophy, calligraphy, ceramics, ornamentation, architecture, religion and culture. In past decades, beginning after the Cultural Revolution, China has similarly been stimulated by the art of the West. As environmental issues abound and awareness heightens, nature continues to serve as fodder and muse, as it did in ancient China.

By pondering the universality in classical

Asian and Western forms, conceptual modes of painting often produce hybrids that can be stronger and more beautiful than their individual parts. The representational and abstract works featured in the exhibit embody the emotions triggered by landscapes. Transcending time, place, culture and philosophy, each of these artists successfully achieves communion with nature. This collection highlights the fusion of West meeting the East in extraordinary and breathtaking ways.

The catalog of the collection can be viewed on the Web site of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. ■

*The author is curator of the exhibit.*

**Left:** Betty Woodman's *Chinese Pleasure* is a 24-foot work melding ceramic, paint, canvas and wood and spans three moments in Chinese history: abstracted Shichuan bronze "money trees," Tang Dynasty ceramics and colorful still lifes referencing pop-imagery from firecracker labels. **Below:** Arlene Shechet transforms porcelain into objects of beauty referencing historic Chinese ceramics and stupa architecture. Shechet's *Building/Beijing* includes approximately 30 separate elements that form a single installation.



# Winning Vote

ELECTION USED TO TEACH U.S. DEMOCRACY **BY INMI PATTERSON**

When it first became clear that Senator Barack Obama would win the U.S. presidential election early on November 5, all of Kenya seemed to erupt with shouts of joy. Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki immediately congratulated the President-elect and, to give Kenyans a chance to celebrate the victory of a man they consider a native son, declared November 6 a national holiday.

After a year of turmoil following Kenya's own elections and their violent aftermath,

Kenyans were seemingly reunited by an outsider they had come to believe represented them all.

The extraordinary level of interest in the U.S. election gave the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi an opportunity to reach out to all corners of the country across regional, religious and tribal boundaries with a lesson in peaceful political transition. Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger and a dozen mission officers visited more than 30 secondary schools, universities and Islamic

academies in advance of Election Day to explain the U.S. electoral system and election cycle and the foundations of American democracy, including respect for the rule of law.

## Basic Lesson

Responding to the students' questions, which reflected Kenya's own difficult electoral experience, the mission's speakers outlined the basics of what it takes to maintain a functioning democracy. Their



Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai, surrounded by Kenya's next generation of voters, was among the first to vote in the mock election.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT: NAIROBI STAR; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP): GILBERT OTIENO; (BOTTOM): PETER GICHINGA





**Above:** Ambassador Ranneberger raises a toast to the U.S. President-elect. **Left:** Public Affairs Officer T.J. Dowling speaks with the students of the Nairobi Muslim Academy as part of the pre-election outreach program.



Kenyan national media, including six television and several radio stations, broadcast live segments at the event. Among them was FM Pamoja, a radio station operating in a low income area that has received technical assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development. The ambassador gave 20 impromptu interviews.

### Crowd Roars

The announcement of Senator Obama's victory just after 7 a.m. local time brought a roar from the crowd, which shouted, jumped and danced. An embassy-sponsored mock vote had already elected Senator Obama by an overwhelming margin.

The ambassador addressed the crowd shortly afterward and noted the rigor of the U.S. electoral process, the diversity of the electorate and the peaceful transfer of power. Five secondary-school students read prize-winning letters they had written to senators McCain and Obama on their hopes for a new U.S. president.

The embassy will continue the outreach program on peaceful political transition through the January 20 inauguration and beyond. ■

message: Regardless of who won, the rule of law had to prevail. Senator John McCain's concession speech reflected this crucial lesson.

In addition to the embassy's election outreach, Ambassador Ranneberger gave more than 35 media interviews between early September and Election Day, offering Kenyans insights into the U.S. process. He emphasized the principles of democracy to young people, who would be voting in Kenya's next presidential election in 2012.

The embassy's efforts climaxed with an event at the ambassador's residence, where more than 2,000 Kenyans witnessed the election returns. There, beginning in the

pre-dawn darkness on November 5, hundreds of Kenyan officials and friends of the embassy—including Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai—joined American citizens and 1,000 students from the secondary schools and universities visited in the outreach effort.

Beneath six large tents, big television monitors allowed guests to track the results, while Web-chat and Web-casting programs gave students an opportunity to pose questions to experts in the United States and Paris. These technologies and the presence of so many embassy officers ready to answer any questions turned the residence grounds into an outdoor classroom.

*The author is a press officer at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.*



Ellen Brager gathers with children attending the Traveling Notes program.



# Helping Hands

VOLUNTEERS HONORED FOR CHARITABLE WORK **BY ED WARNER**

One volunteer organized a 10-day music festival for children in the Dominican Republic. Another established a program that provides lunch five days a week for refugees in Turkey.

These volunteers were among the six members of the Department of State family who in December received the Secretary of State's Award for outstanding volunteerism abroad. Chosen from 27 nominees, the

SOSA winners each represent a geographic region covered by a Department bureau. Over the 18 years since the SOSA awards were established, 375 volunteer efforts worldwide have been nominated, said the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, which picks the winners.

One of the 2008 winners, Bridget Guerrero, a family member stationed in Ankara, Turkey, said training she received from a

group of nuns while in Romania helped her in her effort to aid refugees. The nuns, she said, told her that small efforts can change the lives of many and that one shouldn't see the short time posted in a particular nation as hindering the ability to make a difference.

"Life is a matter of perspective," she said. "A person can try to do as much as he or she can in a short period of time at a post





**Clockwise from above:** Burmese families walk over a bamboo bridge, carrying food donated by a relief effort in which Amy Robinson was involved; Sherilynn Tounger works with children served by the preschool she helped establish; like all of the award winners, Susan Mattes took a few minutes to tell attendees about the activity for which she was honored.

or decide not to act, thinking they don't have enough time to make a difference.

"The award recipients are all people who choose to act."

### Feeding Refugees

The Ankara Refugee Support Group she formed provides food and clothing to refugees and asylum seekers, mainly women and children from Iraq, Iran and Somalia.

The volunteer honored for creating the Traveling Notes music festival in Santo Domingo, family member Ellen Brager, said she sees music as a bridge across cultures. The festival, which also traveled to Peru, brings American classical musicians together with local young people for lessons and concerts. Brager gained scholarships for the children, organized performances in hospitals and orphanages, and said that, in doing so, she "discovered a new passion of my own."

In the developing nation of Burkina Faso, family member Sherilynn Tounger identified a poor village's need for a preschool. Tounger, a former educator, then

did the design and fundraising, and created the Chasing Lions organization to keep the \$60,000 project on track. The group is on the Web at <http://web.mac.com/alekoshher/iWeb/Chasing%20Lions>.

The project, she said, made her aware of the kindness and gentle nature of Burkina Faso's people.

Another family member who volunteered in a developing nation, Amy Robinson, organized a relief effort for seven Burmese villages devastated by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008. AAFSW said she risked her safety to transport food, clothing and building supplies to the victims. Her grass-roots fundraising will help establish a school to educate 145 children, AAFSW said.

### Better Posts

Two other SOSA winners undertook efforts to make life at post more bearable. Calvin McQueen, a Foreign Service officer in Karachi, Pakistan, revived the consulate's employee association by, among other actions, getting the cooks trained by a local hotelier and creating opportunities for the

post's staff to purchase local crafts.

"We got our people to come back" to the association, he said.

At the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Susan Mattes, a "Section 3161 employee," was honored for taking the nascent employee association quarters and making it a place where employees could hang out and relax. This American Club now has 20 volunteers and will soon move into the new embassy. Section 3161 employees are full-time, U.S. direct-hire staff in Washington, D.C., and Iraq on one-year, renewable, noncareer appointments.

Mattes, who has served in Baghdad for a year and a half, "is a good example of the ways in which our 3161 employees contribute to the success and well-being of our embassy community, just as our Foreign Service and Civil Service colleagues have always done while abroad," said embassy Human Resources Officer Darian Arky. ■

*The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.*



Kerry Hyre, a graduate of the A-100 class for new FSOs, and Under Secretary Patrick Kennedy attend a recent Flag Day at the A-100 course.

# Generalists Approaching

HR READIES FOR FOREIGN SERVICE NEW HIRES **BY EARL IRVING**

Late last year, Congress gave the State Department an appropriation to hire an additional 179 Foreign Service generalists. This was welcome news for the Department, because for years the Office of Career Development and Assignments has had to paper over staffing gaps. In the summer 2009 assignment cycle, hiring was frozen for more than 200 mid-level positions, and at least 100 positions beyond those frozen will also go unfilled.

Once these new officers enter the Foreign Service, the Bureau of Human Resource's Entry-Level division and the orientation staff of the Foreign Service Institute take the lead in these employees' career development and early assignments. In 2008, the Department graduated six classes of the A-100 introductory Foreign Service officer course.

Each course contained an average of 30 more students than in previous years.

Cathy Hurst, who heads the generalist entry-level division, said she has recruited an additional career development officer to cope with the new FSOs.

## Understanding Needed

Hurst said she wants her A-100 students to understand the work of a CDO. She teaches them to think of their first two tours as a whole, one that gives them the knowledge and experience to become tenured and go on to a successful career. CDOs serve entry-level officers by acting as position managers, controlling an FSO's positions and direct assignments for his or her first two tours. To secure





Clockwise from above: Cathy Hurst, left, head of HR's Entry-Level Generalist Unit, confers with Helen Recinos, the mid-level career development officer responsible for FS-03 and FS-04 economic officers; HR/CDA Director Scott DeLisi reviews his notes prior to the start of the interdivisional panel's weekly meeting. Seated next to him is Continuity Counselor Bernadette Cole Byrd; From left, NEA assignments officer Nancy Stafford, foreground, reviews cases with Senior-level career development officer Susan Alexander and Assignments Division Chief Joyce Currie, right.

buy-in from the students, she asks each to think about his or her career goals and preferences and rank each available position “high,” “medium” or “low.”

Depending on where they serve their first tour, officers earn “equity” for their second assignment. This is calculated using the sum of the hardship and danger differentials of their first tour.

“Equity works well because it is fair and transparent,” Hurst said.

She reported that roughly half of the first-tour officers bidding for their next tour get their number-one bid and 90 percent get one of their top five choices.

The EL division handles specialist assignments slightly differently, but its specialist CDOs strive for the same transparency and fairness in placing new specialists, aiming to ensure their opportunities for growth and advancement.

### Smooth Season

CDA's Mid-level and Senior-level Career Development divisions work closely with the Assignments Division to ensure a smooth assignments season, particularly for the heavy summer 2009 cycle. Thanks to the redesigned assignment calendar, the 329 Iraq and 134 Afghanistan bidders received their assignments first, and those bidding on Iraq had expanded opportunities to link to an onward assignment upon completion of their tours. Overall, officers and specialists looking at assignments in those countries had better information, quicker turn-around in the vetting process and more incentive options than ever.

Returning from a trip to the Middle East in October that

included stops in Baghdad and visits with several provincial reconstruction teams, CDA Director Scott DeLisi commended the work of the four CDA divisions and said clients in the field are well satisfied with their career development and assignments officers. Before the assignment season ends, about 5,000 generalists and specialists will be processed through the panels.

At the beginning of the current assignment cycle, the Director General called on CDA to staff Iraq and Afghanistan vacancies first and conclude most of the remaining assignments by the end of the year. At year's end, CDA appeared to be well on its way to meeting that goal. More important, its clients have found the 2009 summer assignment cycle to be more transparent and timely.

The 179 new FS generalists will not solve the Department's staffing shortage, however. According to HR, the Department needs funding to hire roughly 1,500 additional Foreign Service employees to fill available positions and ensure opportunities for training. Staffing shortages and the growth in foreign language training, combined with the need to fill an increasing number of one-year unaccompanied postings overseas, pose HR's greatest challenge in the next four years. ■

*The author is a career development officer in the Senior-level division of CDA.*

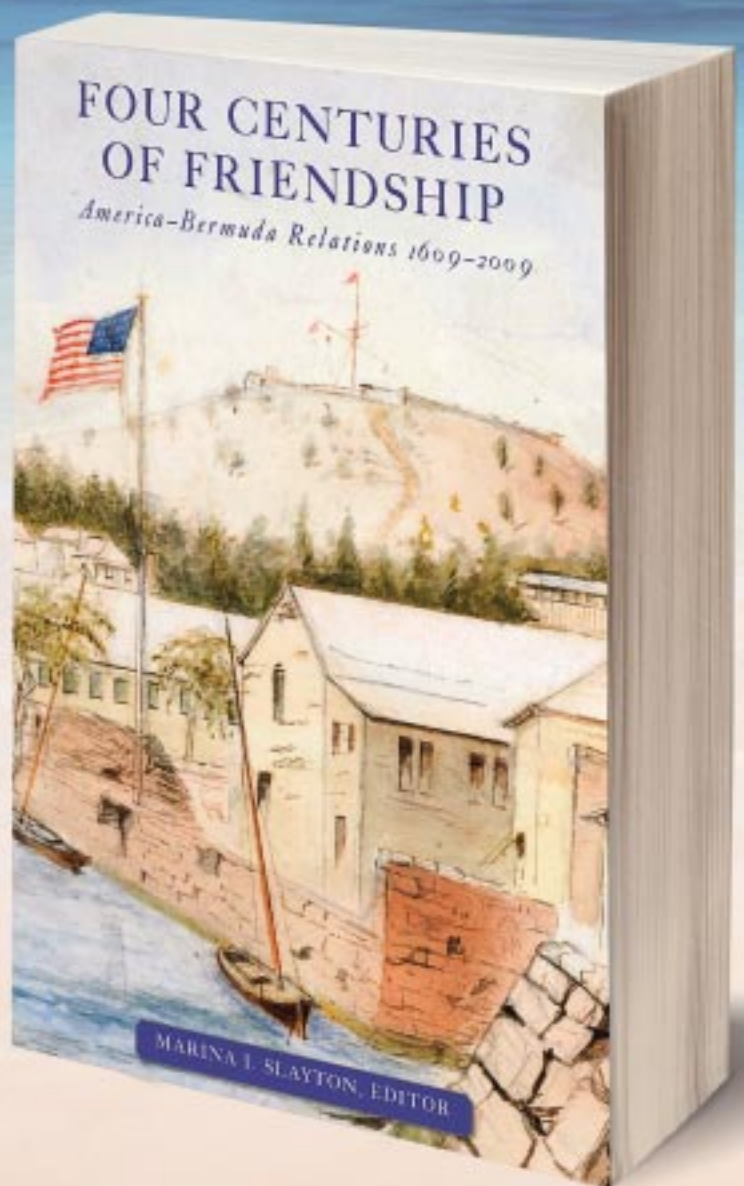
# Birthday Book

CONSULATE GENERAL HELPS BERMUDA CELEBRATE 400TH ANNIVERSARY  
BY **ASTRID BLACK AND MATTHEW JOHNSON**

The first European settlers arrived in Bermuda 400 years ago, castaways who had been on their way to Jamestown, Va. This milestone in the island's history will be celebrated this year, and the United States—Bermuda's friend for most of its 400 years—is doing its part.

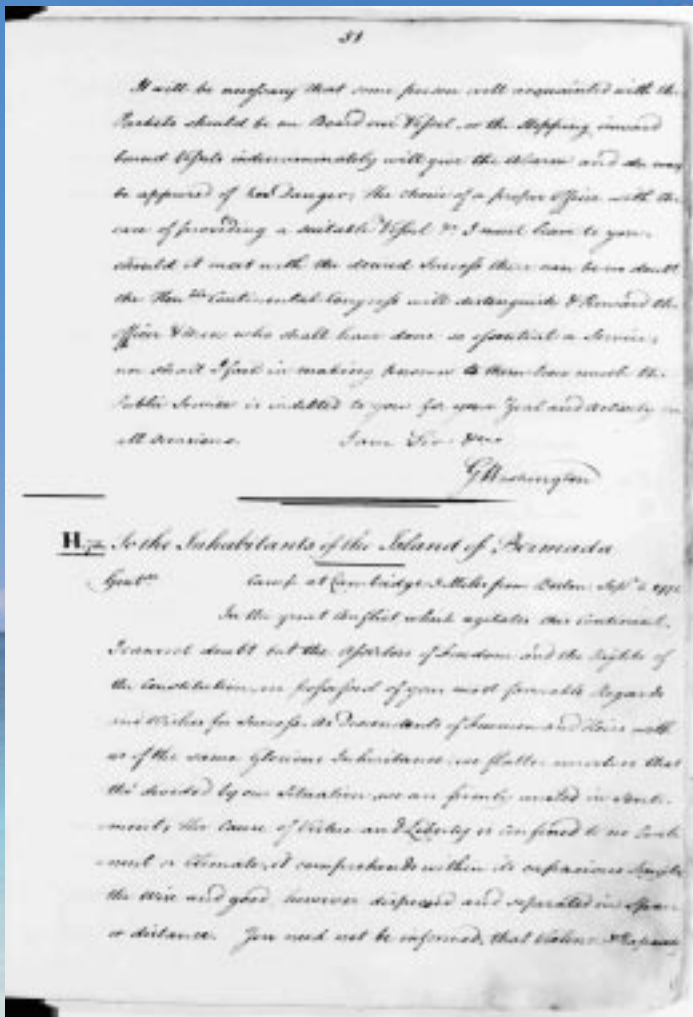
The U.S. Consulate General in Hamilton will participate in a number of special events in 2009, including the publication of a book by Consul General and Mrs. Gregory Slayton on U.S.-Bermuda relations from the American perspective. The consulate will also erect a permanent "400 Years of Friendship Wall" in its waiting room and has arranged for a port visit by a U.S. Coast Guard cutter. The post's huge July 4 and Thanksgiving events will also celebrate the 400th anniversary.

The U.S.-Bermuda relationship was close from the start. A relief ship from Bermuda helped the Jamestown colony survive. In the Revolutionary War, Bermudans provided gunpowder to the Americans. During the Civil War, Bermuda provided supplies and armaments to the Confederacy, even as black Bermudans enlisted for the Union. During World War II, the United States built two naval air stations on the island.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (BACKGROUND); FOTOLIA; (OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT); THE ROYAL GAZETTE





**Left:** Image of a letter George Washington sent to Bermuda in 1775 seeking to advise American revolutionaries of a cache of gunpowder stored there. **Above:** Marina Slayton and Consul General Gregory Slayton.

## American Interests

The consulate general is the sole representative of American interests in Bermuda and the estimated 9,000 Americans and dual-nationality citizens there. Bermuda's thriving economy is based on financial services and tourism, and Americans now account for 85 percent of all visitors and approximately 75 percent of the financial capital at work in Bermuda. The island's world-class reinsurance industry provides coverage for approximately 40 percent of U.S. catastrophic events.

A self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom, Bermuda will focus its festivities in 2009 on the theme "Celebrating Bermuda and Her People." That celebration's planning committee, which included Consul General Slayton's wife Marina, has organized such events as the arrival into Hamilton Harbor of a fleet of tall sailing ships from around the world. One of them will be the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Eagle*, which will be in port for four days in June, underscoring the strong seagoing tradition of the two nations.

A more enduring record of the 400 years of history—and a look into the future—is the book conceived and edited by Consul General and Mrs. Slayton. Titled *Four Centuries of Friendship: America-Bermuda Relations 1609-2009*, the 150-some-page hardcover, due out this spring, involved numerous sources, including many of the island's most prominent historians and the State Department's Office of the Historian. According to the Library of

Congress, it will be the first account of the U.S.-Bermuda partnership from an American perspective. The book aims to contribute to a better understanding of the U.S.-Bermuda alliance and help lay a foundation for closer relations.

## Friendship Wall

As a further reminder of the nations' shared past, the Slaytons are overseeing the design—and helping to finance—a "400 Years of Friendship Wall." This three-dimensional montage of images portraying aspects of the U.S.-Bermuda alliance will cover a wall in the consulate waiting room and be seen by the consulate's thousands of annual visitors. At center stage on the wall will be a wooden eagle believed by local historians to have been taken by British forces during the sack of Washington, D.C., during the War of 1812. The eagle had been bequeathed to the Bermuda Historical Society by the wife of former U.S. Consul Clay Merrell and was subsequently donated to the Slaytons, who have made it a permanent donation to the exhibit.

During the summer, the consulate has for several years partnered with the American Society of Bermuda to host a huge July 4 celebration. The event brings together 7,000 Americans and Bermudans and has raised more than \$100,000 for Bermudan charities. Last year's celebration is thought by some to have been the largest July 4 dinner held outside the United States. This year's July 4 event and the post's annual Thanksgiving celebration will celebrate the U.S.-Bermuda friendship.

That relationship is one of this nation's oldest. Since consular agent William Higinbotham was posted there in 1818, more than 40 American diplomats have represented the United States in Bermuda. In this historic year, the consulate general is doing everything it can to help its Bermudan friends know that America cares about Bermuda and its 400th anniversary. ■

*Astrid Black is the public diplomacy/political assistant and Matthew Johnson is the deputy principal officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Hamilton.*

# Working With ‘Ops’

OPERATIONS CENTER OFFERS TIPS FOR MEETING NEEDS  
**BY JASON MCINERNEY AND DANNY STOIAN**

The Operations Center is the Department’s 24-hour alerting, briefing, communications and crisis management center. The center, located within the Executive Secretariat in Room 7516, consists of the Watch, Crisis Management Support, a military advisor, Diplomatic Security agents and a front office. Its four primary roles are:

- **Alerting:** Ops provides alerts based on breaking media events, telegrams or telephone calls from post. Alerts are disseminated via classified e-mail, BlackBerry devices or telephone calls.
- **Briefing:** Ops prepares several written products for Department principals, such as the Overnight and Afternoon Briefs available on the Department’s classified network and Crisis Hot Spots, a synopsis of potential crisis points.
- **Communications:** Ops facilitates telephone-based diplomacy between Department principals and world leaders, processes information from around the world and interacts with other ops centers. Ops also assists posts with clearing warden messages after hours, and advises and coordinates formal requests with the Department

of Defense and the National Security Council for military support.

- **Crisis Management:** The center’s Crisis Management Support arm monitors crises worldwide, promotes contingency planning and emergency preparedness, sets up and manages task forces, conducts task force training and supports interagency evacuation planning and implementation. CMS also facilitates foreign policy aspects of domestic emergencies, such as handling foreign offers of assistance after hurricanes hit the United States.

There are several ways employees are likely to interact with the Operations Center. One way is when Ops calls posts for comment on breaking news stories. Multiple posts might be asked for perspective on breaking stories; it is extremely useful when a post can provide a meaningful comment on short notice. This is a post’s chance to help policymakers understand what’s going on.

Another instance is when an employee calls in with a warden message, an advisory to Americans abroad. During Washington office hours, posts with a warden message should contact their American Citizens Services desk officer in the Office of Overseas







Citizen Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. However, those with after-hours warden messages should call Ops to clear the message with OCS, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and regional bureau duty officers. Remember to copy Ops at SES-O@state.gov when releasing the final message.

A third instance is when breaking events occur at post. Then, the employee should call Ops at (202) 647-1512 with a heads-up advisory. Ops can alert Department officials and the interagency

community, providing the post's value-added comments to reports. Ops can also convene a conference call to mobilize Washington offices for a faster response to urgent requests for guidance and resources. Examples include natural disasters, civil unrest, military incidents, changes in government or policy, arrests or releases of opposition leaders, terror incidents and election results.

Ops also interacts with employees regarding establishing phone connections,

since it provides communications support to Department principals and is the Department's central after-hours duty office. Principals will often connect through the Watch to colleagues—especially desk, staff and duty officers—for information after hours.

Finally, employees may interact with Ops if the Secretary of State visits a post. Ops is a bridge between the Secretary's party, advance teams and principals in Washington, D.C. All information to and from the Secretary during a trip will go via the Executive Secretariat, primarily through Ops.

Here's how to help the Operations Center help you:

- Crises can occur at any post at any time, so desk officers should provide Ops with accurate after-hours telephone numbers. Ops will not release private telephone numbers to anyone, even other Department employees.

- For the Watch to keep a bureau in the loop, bureau duty roster points of contact should verify weekly the name and telephone numbers of the duty officer. Duty officers should verify their correct name and contact information with the bureau's duty roster POC—there is no need to call Ops directly. When the Watch needs to contact a bureau duty officer, the bureau duty telephone is the first call. Additional contact information is only for backup purposes. Inability to reach the duty officer results in a call up the duty officer's chain of command.

- When requesting DOD or other interagency support, including airlifts for American or foreign personnel on DOD aircraft, humanitarian assistance or disaster relief and personnel support, start with the Ops Center's military advisor at (202) 647-6097. The CMS staff can also provide assistance, particularly with non-DOD support requests.

The Operations Center can be contacted at (202) 647-1512 or by e-mail at SES-O@state.gov. More information about Ops is at [http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Operations\\_Center\\_Portal](http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Operations_Center_Portal), and information on crisis planning resources is at <http://ses.state.gov/seso/crisis/resources.asp>. The crisis portal on the Intranet is <http://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Category:Crisis>. To request a group tour of the Operations Center, call (202) 647-2522. ■



Watch officers track information from the media and posts abroad to keep Department principals informed. **Above:** The Ops Center team circa 1968.

*Jason McInerney is a watch officer and Danny Stoian is the innovation/facilitation officer with the Operations Center.*

The famed Château de Chillon near Montreaux overlooks Lake Geneva.





*post of the month*

# *Geneva*

The U.S. Mission to the World  
By Anna Chambers



American diplomats work in beautiful

# Geneva, Switzerland,

but their efforts touch every remote corner of the world.

In a city built on Woodrow Wilson's dream for international cooperation, America's largest overseas multilateral mission advances U.S. interests across the spectrum of global events and issues.

Geneva has long been synonymous with international negotiations, and U.S. negotiators have been coming here for decades. In 1919, the League of Nations chose Geneva for its seat. In 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt led the successful negotiation in Geneva that produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the cornerstone of the international human rights framework and the world's best-known, most-often-cited human rights document.

More recently, Geneva hosted landmark negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Strategic Arms Reduction Talks between President

Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the Doha Development Round of trade talks.

In 2008 alone, Geneva hosted—and the U.S. Mission in Geneva engaged in—talks with Iran, nuclear weapons negotiations with North Korea, U.S.-Russia talks on conventional forces and conversations about security and displaced persons in Georgia.

Although New York boasts the political headquarters of the United Nations, by far the largest amount of practical U.N. work gets done in Geneva. Geneva now hosts more than 40 international organizations, staffed by some 35,000 international bureaucrats—8,500 of whom form the largest concentration of U.N. staff in the world. These organizations address

numerous American interests, and the United States provides more than \$2 billion to these important partners annually.

U.S. Mission officers cover such diverse topics as humanitarian response, human rights, refugees, health, climate change and intellectual property. With nearly every officer in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and



**Clockwise from above:** Ambassador and Mrs. Warren Tichenor pose with members of the award-winning Marine Security Detachment at the 2008 Marine Corps Ball; Information Management Specialist Chris Tejjarian hikes at La Dole, one of the highest points in the Jura Mountains outside Geneva; yellow signs along walking paths point the way through towns and forests. This one marks a junction in St. Cergue.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) CHRIS TEJJARIAN; ERIC BRIDGERS; AND CHRIS TEJJARIAN; (OPPOSITE PAGE); DAVID GILMOUR



A Swiss flag dominates this view from the Chateau de Gruyères, in the village where the famous cheese originated.







Colette File, an office management specialist with the U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament office, commutes to work on a summer morning from her home in the village of Bourdigny. The Jura Mountains are in the background. **Below:** The author, left, and Deputy Legal Advisor Anna Morawiec Mansfield represent the United States at a U.N. meeting on climate change and human rights at the Palais des Nations.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE); FRED FILE; (LEFT); ERIC BRIDERS; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP); DAVE GILMOUR; (BOTTOM); BOB HANNI





**Top:** An alpenhorn choir at a festival in the village of St. Cergue celebrates the autumn movement of milk cows down from their high summer pasture. **Above:** Peg Hanni, wife of Regional Security Officer Bob Hanni, and her son Jacob stand at the top of the Jura Mountains overlooking Geneva.

International Organizations covering a different organization, the level of individual initiative is high and rewarding.

“I know that our day-to-day work in the halls of the Red Cross or the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has a direct impact in providing protection to vulnerable Iraqi refugees or conflict victims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” said Nicholas Hilgert of the refugee and migration affairs section.

Even entry-level officers find themselves taking the floor in U.N. plenary sessions to speak on behalf of the United States.

Chief of Mission Ambassador Warren W. Tichenor has personally engaged in all of the key issues for the mission, including human rights and U.N. reform. He and mission staff over the past two years have focused on improving leadership effectiveness at the

World Intellectual Property Organization and the International Organization for Migration.

The U.S. Mission to the World Trade Organization is headed by Ambassador Peter F. Allgeier and represents the United States in negotiations, dispute settlement and all other WTO matters. The mission’s two dozen-plus staff members come from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the departments of Agriculture and Commerce.

The U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, headed by Ambassador Christine Rocca, represents the United States in the one global arms control negotiating body that seeks to develop disarmament and nonproliferation instruments on nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional arms and for space.

Unique among American diplomatic missions, the U.S.

## Specialists Join World-level Talks

By Douglas W. Wells

Because the U.S. Embassy in Geneva has relationships with scores of international organizations, much of its work is done outside the mission. Foreign Service officers attend the offsite meetings of the United Nations, World Trade Organization and other organizations. This means the mission's Foreign Service specialists rarely see the work they are supporting, work that is often substantial.

This situation caused David Salazar, an economic and science affairs section officer, to come up with an original idea: When there was an event whose subject might be of interest to his specialist colleagues, why not bring them along?

His first opportunity came recently when the International Telecommunications Union held a workshop on the looming shortage of Internet addresses. With all kinds of new devices



connecting to the Internet, the ITU is trying to speed up deployment of a new scheme to prevent a shortage of addresses.

Salazar recognized that this topic might interest his colleagues from the Bureau of Information Resource Management, and he invited the IRM staff at post to join him as delegates to the ITU workshop. As a result, systems analyst Mohammed Zahid, a Locally Employed staff member, and information systems security officer Douglas Wells saw presentations by Cisco Systems, the ITU Telecommunications Standardization Bureau, the governments of China and Bulgaria and two Internet regulators, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority. They participated in discussions of information technology policy at the world level, contributing the technical, end-user view—all because of a timely invitation.

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*The author is the information systems security officer at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.*



The public affairs staff enjoys lunch at the PAO's home.

Mission in Geneva welcomes nearly 6,000 visitors a year in support of its busy negotiating calendar. The Conference Services staff oversees a conference center that has five conference rooms, a full-service kitchen, computer work space and hotel liaison service.

Environment, science and technology issues are of growing importance for the mission. Geneva is the home of the European Center for Nuclear Research, which includes the world's largest particle physics laboratory and the recently christened Large Hadron Collider. Geneva also hosts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 with former Vice President Al Gore.

The U.S. Mission in Geneva engages in its own scientific innovations and belongs to the League of Green Embassies. Its award-winning solar power system supplies more than 30 percent of its energy needs, producing enough energy to power 37 households annually and decreasing the mission's carbon footprint by 800 pounds per day. Since its installation in 2005, the solar project has produced 320,200 kilowatt-hours of energy. The upcoming installation of a magnetic levitation chiller for the air conditioning system will further lower the mission's energy bill and carbon footprint, making it arguably the greenest U.S. overseas facility.

Geneva rates high on quality of living. Located in the middle of the beautiful Swiss landscape, Geneva was rated in

2008 among the 10 most livable cities by the *Economist* and Mercer's Quality of Living Survey. Around Lake Geneva, one can walk in the footsteps of Voltaire, John Calvin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The ski slopes of Switzerland, France and Italy are all within easy driving distance, and in summer provide gorgeous hiking paths and stunning views.

Mission employees sample the Swiss traditions of alpenhorns, cows, wine and cheese at festivals throughout the year in surrounding villages. Each August, the Fête de Genève concludes with the world's largest musical fireworks show, performed over Lake Geneva for 45 minutes. Each December, Genevans celebrate their 1602 defeat of the Savoy army in predictably Swiss style: They smash chocolate cauldrons to commemorate the legendary role played by a housewife who defended the city by pouring a pot of hot soup on the attackers' heads.

Most of Switzerland's beautiful nooks and crannies can be reached by train, bus or cable car. Geneva's international airport is no more than a two-hour flight from a dozen European capitals. The city itself is home to people from every nation on earth, and the languages on city trams and the variety of local restaurants reflect that diversity.

Whatever one's interests, an assignment to the U.S. Mission in Geneva provides a wealth of professional and personal opportunities. ■

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*The author is a political officer with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.*





The Jet d'Eau is reflected in Lake Geneva at night.

## At a Glance



**Country** Swiss Confederation

**Capital** Bern

**Total area** 41,290 sq km

**Approximate size** Nearly twice the size of New Jersey

**Government type** Formally a confederation but similar in structure to a federal republic

**Language** German, French, Italian, Romansch (all official), Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Portuguese, Spanish and English

**Population** 7.6 million

**Currency** Swiss franc (CHF)

**Per capita income** \$40,100

**Unemployment rate** 2.8 percent

**Import partners** Germany (32.6 percent), Italy (10.8 percent) and France (9.5 percent)

**Export partners** Germany (20.3 percent), United States (9.7 percent) and Italy (8.7 percent)

**Internet country code** .ch

# Dare to Share

SHARED SERVICES INITIATIVE AIMS TO TRANSFORM HUMAN RESOURCES  
**BY CALLI FULLER**

Gathered with the Shared Services team are, from left in front, HR Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Tagliatela, team director Melissa Lytell, Steve Hutton and Natalie Schafer. At rear are, from left, Jennifer Zhorne, Ted Williams and Jeff Lee, the deputy director.



The Bureau of Human Resources is streamlining, automating and improving HR service delivery through implementation of the HR shared services initiative. HR and its HR Shared Services team are working with HR professionals across the Department to reform HR services using the private-sector-proven shared services model, which is based on the best practices in the HR field.

In 2007, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced several major management reforms, including strengthening and integrating HR services across the Department. The goals of this HR reform are better service to employees, enhanced support to managers and more efficient use of increasingly scarce HR resources.

In May 2008, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy approved the HRSS plan, which focuses on four related tiers of service: online self-help services (see related story), an HR Service Center, bureau-level HR service providers and the HR bureau's work on policy, design and oversight.

## Online Initiatives

On the automation side, HR's Executive Office is leading the Department's shift from manual, paper-based processes to HR services that can be initiated by the employee and approved elec-



tronically. Examples include self-service access to an employee's Telework agreements or travel documentation.

At the HRSC, customer service representatives review and respond to a range of HR inquiries in a clear, timely and consistent manner, referring complex questions to experts throughout the Department.

HR consultants in the bureaus' HR service providers offer in-depth, personalized analysis and support for employees' strategic or difficult requests, such as those associated with an office's reorganization or recruiting for a highly specialized position.

The HR service providers in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security were the first to join the shared services model. By partnering with the HRSS team, DS HR professionals took responsibility for contributing to the success of HRSS.

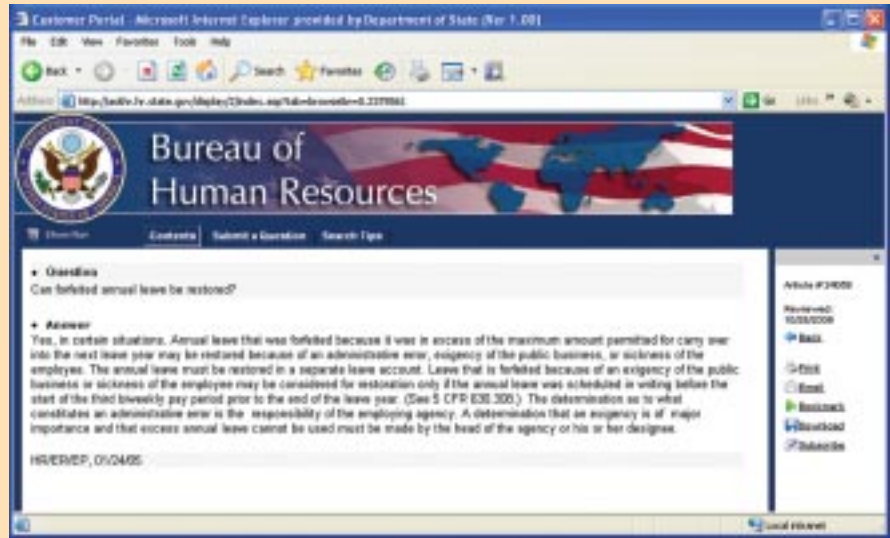
### Pilot Program

"We are honored that we were selected to be the pilot bureau for HRSS," said DS Assistant Secretary Eric Boswell. "What we do together with HR will have a profound effect on how all of you deal with HR and on the way business is done in the Department."

Meanwhile, in Charleston, S.C., the HRSC opened in November to serve DS. DS domestic employees now can make HR service requests through one Web site, e-mail address and telephone number. This is critical to testing and refining HRSS. Staffed by trained professionals and equipped with the latest tools and technology, the HRSC provides quick and concise responses, tracks customer inquiries and reports data on HR issues.

The HRSS launch is just the beginning. The HRSS team, operating under the guidance of HR Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Tagliatela, is bringing today's best practices in HR service delivery to employees and will incorporate new services and additional bureaus until every employee benefits. The HRSS staff and its partners, a contracted team of IBM professionals, have brought significant changes to HR service delivery—with more improvements to come. If you have comments, submit them to [HRSharedServices@state.gov](mailto:HRSharedServices@state.gov). ■

*The author is a human resources specialist in HR.*



## HR Provides Employees With Online Options

By Shannon Galey-Crist

In the spirit of sharing HR services, the HR bureau is giving employees online access to and control over many of their personnel matters, from managing their federal benefits to applying for work-life programs. The shift to self-service maximizes efficiency, reduces cost and improves HR processes.

"We all have to accept that resources are scarce, and I am not sure we will ever get the full resources we need," said HR Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Tagliatela. "We have to work smarter, quicker and better to provide the customer service employees deserve."

HR's automated tools are available to employees around the clock through the OpenNet network. One tool is HR Online, a single sign-on portal through which employees can access applications that allow viewing of recent personnel actions or earnings and leave statements. Employees can also access tools to change their deductions for the Thrift Savings Plan or to apply for the Student Loan Repayment Program.

The HR Executive Office has more than 20 projects underway to promote greater online access to HR services and automate Permanent Change of Station travel processes. Recent automation projects include the OF-126 Foreign Service Residence and Dependency Report and the DS-1707 Domestic Arrival Form. By the end of 2009, all employees should be able to track and complete their performance evaluation through the ePerformance system.

Another service, AskHR, launched in November. It answers more than 1,000 HR questions through a searchable online database. It also lets employees submit questions via e-mail, routing them to the appropriate Department expert. Employees get a personal response and help identify new questions and answers for addition to AskHR.

Also coming soon to the HR Online suite of automated resources is an electronic position management application, the Automated Classification and Recruitment System. This system allows managers and HR specialists to search, create, edit and classify position descriptions and provides the ability to create and fill positions in the Global Employment Management System. The system captures the recruitment information needed to support these processes and will provide data associating a position description with a career ladder.

*The author is a communications adviser to HR's Executive Office.*



Gathered in the POLAD office are, from left, Deputy Director David Pozorski, intern Maegan Rees, Director Jonita Whitaker and office management specialist Darcia Stewart

# Diplomatic Liaisons

The POLAD Program Office in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs is one of the smallest units within the Department of State. But it punches above its weight, supporting dozens of foreign policy advisors—or POLADs—worldwide. POLADs provide senior U.S. military leaders such as the chiefs of the military services and regional combat commanders with advice and policy support on the diplomatic and foreign policy aspects of the commanders' military responsibilities.

POLADs also:

- Provide expertise on international relations and diplomacy,
- Identify political developments affecting their area of responsibility,
- Accompany senior command staff on international travel,
- Draft information papers and briefings, and
- Research and analyze foreign policy matters.

With the POLAD program expanding, the bureau is seeking

OFFICE'S ADVISORS ARE AMBASSADORS TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**BY JONITA WHITAKER**



bidders for newly established positions offering opportunities to serve in these nontraditional interagency assignments.

The POLAD office also supports State-Defense Exchange program participants at the Pentagon and at Joint Interagency Coordinating Groups at select military commands.

### Small Office

The POLAD Office has four employees: Director Jonita Whitaker, Deputy Director David Pozorski, Office Management Specialist Darcia Stewart and intern Maegan Rees.

It is “a small office doing big things,” Rees said.

According to Pozorski, “The creation of a separate office in support of POLADs and State-Defense Exchange officers in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs in 1999 provided a focus to recruit for these positions and a base of support for those serving at the Pentagon and in the field.”

The designation of a POLAD director position in 2006 gave the office a degree of permanence, he added.

The office stays in contact with POLADs through e-mails, by telephone and via the

online POLAD community in which POLADs and others interested in political-military matters share insights about the rapidly expanding relationship between the departments of State and Defense. The office also has a monthly newsletter, *The Peripatetic POLAD*, which has a “POLAD of the Month” feature and offers views of military leaders on the POLAD program.

### Fast Growth

Although exchange programs between State and Defense date to 1960, there was no POLAD program until 2000, when 15 POLADs were assigned. Between 2006 and 2008, this total grew to 31, and recruitment should expand it to 41 by mid-2009.

Prospects for future growth are bright due to the departments’ mutual interests in bolstering interagency cooperation and coordination, a reflection of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s Transformational Diplomacy initiative. Recently, the office received more than 30 requests from Defense to place POLADs with commands at all levels.

“Wherever I visit, requests for POLADs are high,” Whitaker said. “Military commands are hungry for POLADs due to

# At a Glance

## Office name

Office of the Foreign Policy Advisor Program

## Symbol

PM/POLAD

## Staff size

4

## Office location

Main State, Room 2420

## Web site

<http://state.gov/t/pm/polad>



At the headquarters of U.S. Special Operations Command, are, from left, Deputy POLAD Phil Lawlor, POLAD Program Office Director Jonita Whitaker and JIACG POLAD James Bond, from U.S. Central Command.

Maegan Rees is an intern in the POLAD office.



the increasing need to respond to today's complex conflicts."

The office promotes this growth, considering it vital to supporting strengthened national security. According to PM Deputy Assistant Secretary Greg Delawie, "the Bureau of Political Military Affairs stands behind its foreign policy advisors, who are front-line diplomat-warriors."

"A typical day in the POLAD office is filled with positive energy," said its management assistant, Darcia Stewart. "Since I've been in this position, I have seen firsthand the continuous growth of the POLAD program and the cohesive partnership between Director Whitaker, the staff and the POLADs."

### Annual Activities

The office supports POLADs year-round. In the winter, it prepares for the annual POLAD conference, which in 2009 will gather all POLADs worldwide at the National Defense University at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. This event, which usually coincides with the semi-annual Combatant and Service Chief Conference, focuses on developing the diplomatic-Defense relationship, and offers

an overview of U.S. political-military priorities, an update from senior military commanders and POLADs' lessons learned and best practices.

In the spring, POLAD office staff members visit the commands hosting POLADs to learn first-hand how POLADs are doing and how their commands are benefiting, and gain support from commands for acquiring new POLADs. In summer, the office debriefs POLADs returning from their tours and provides orientation for outgoing officers. For the past three years, POLADs have participated in a two-day training program at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

In the fall, the office does outreach to generate bidders for POLAD positions, which exist at the FE-MC, FE-OC, FS-01 and FS-02 grade levels. Bidders should have military exposure and political-military experience and must have self-motivation, strong verbal and written communication skills and superior interpersonal abilities.

The POLAD Office's outreach included an October event at the Loy Henderson Auditorium where four-star General Victor Renuart Jr., the commander of the

North American Aerospace Defense Command and the United States Northern Command, spoke on the value of POLADs and what he seeks in a POLAD (see sidebar). A panel of POLADs described their roles and responsibilities. The event helped generate several bidders for each of the office's 2009 vacancies.

One reason why more than 110 Foreign Service officers and two Civil Service employees have served as POLADs is that they recognize the importance of working in a key interagency relationship.

"Each POLAD creates his or her position anew," Deputy Director Pozorski said. "The key is the relationship with the commander, and the challenge is to determine what the POLAD can offer that the myriad other resources at the commander's disposal cannot."

The work of POLADs is transformational in that they assist military commanders as "force multipliers," strengthening the commanders' ability to adapt and respond to the multifaceted challenges of the 21st century. ■

*Jonita Whitaker is the Office of the Foreign Policy Advisor Program Director*



# Advisor provides insight to Defense commander

By Ed Warner

When a top U.S. military commander needs to know the political situation in a nation or how the State Department would view a planned action, the commander can often turn to his or her “POLAD,” a foreign policy advisor assigned by the Department to the commander’s management team.

In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, for instance, a POLAD helped shape thinking and set up meetings between General Tommy Franks, then leader of the U.S. military’s Central Command, and foreign leaders. Speaking at a recent briefing at Main State on the role of POLADs, Air Force four-star General Victor Renuart Jr. said Franks sought the meetings to gain the United States unprecedented base-access rights in remote locations for the invasion of Afghanistan.



Above: Gen. Renuart makes a point during his speech. Left: On a panel at the POLAD open house were, from left, Kathy Johnson-Casares of the U.S. Transportation Command, Donald Bishop of the U.S. Air Force and Jerry Lanier of the U.S. Africa Command.

“Political advisors are put into a hot seat” and have great opportunity to make an impact, said Renuart, commander of the bi-national North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. military’s Northern Command. USNORTHCOM, one of seven major Department of Defense combatant commands, was set up after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and focuses on warning and defense of North America and

support for civil authorities in a disaster. This mission touches on such issues as Russian bomber flights, missile defense, narcotics-related violence in Mexico, counterterrorism and Arctic development.

POLADs are typically experienced Foreign Service officers who must be able to advise on the political context worldwide. Renuart said he turns to his POLAD, George Glass, for advice on political

issues—for example, matters regarding Pakistan or Canada, which has also provided Renuart with a Canadian POLAD. Though distant from his command’s territory, Pakistan is important, he explained, because Pakistani terrorism threats can sometimes lead back to possible activity in the United States.

As commander of the U.S. missile defense system, Renuart said he also needs to have a sense, for example, of North Korea’s or Iran’s intentions, another question he often poses to Glass.

The other role of a POLAD, Renuart said, is to provide “a window into the State Department.” When DOD contemplates an action, Renuart said, a POLAD will point out “if there’s a gap” between the plan and the views of the Department, and provide an independent assessment of the command’s ideas.

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*The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.*



Twelve years ago, my wife and I were proudly photographed with our new daughter Sarah in front of the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, China. Like thousands of other Americans, we had come to China to adopt a child. Our experience was so positive that we returned four years later to adopt another girl, our daughter Anna.

Our visits left us fascinated by China's culture and people, but I never imagined that a few years later I would join the Foreign Service and serve as the adoption officer in Guangzhou, assisting other Americans through the lengthy but emotionally rewarding adoption process.

Since international adoptions were first permitted in the early 1990s, more than 70,000 Chinese children have found new homes in the United States. All immigrant visas for China, including adopted child visas, are processed at the U.S. Consulate

General in Guangzhou. As a result, thousands of American families and children come through Guangzhou each year and have a chance to get to know one another, just as my wife and I did with our children. In 2005, after many years in a cramped facility, the consular section moved to new and spacious facilities where it can provide much better service.

### Final Step

A visa interview at the consulate is the final step in the adoption journey, and for most families the last stop on their two-to-three-week trip through China. About 30 adopting families come to the consulate every day, including the grandparents and older children of adopting families who come to be part of the adoption experience and see China. The high point of the ceremony is the taking of the oath, after which the room erupts into a loud cheer as

the families celebrate their new addition.

Some of the families endure waits as long as three years. However, at a recent ceremony, Mary and Stephen Marler of Houston held their one-year-old adopted child as Mary Marler said, "The wait was emotional, even excruciating, but it was worth all of it."

It is no surprise that consulate visitors—from U.S. Ambassador to China Clark Randt to former world champion figure skater Michelle Kwan—make a special point of attending the adoption ceremony. There is no more compelling picture of the open and generous spirit of the American people than the Guangzhou adoption waiting room. Today, one-third of adopted children from China are older or have a special need. Many parents adopt special needs children, in part because the wait can be as short as six months.

The children come from across China,

Consulate Handles All American Adoptions in China...*By Mark Carlson*

# Perfect Match



and many adoptive families return to China to adopt again. One family recently returned for its fifth adoption, all of them special needs children.

A variety of Americans come to China to adopt, including sisters from Los Angeles and Manhattan who came together. Sometimes, identical twins are adopted. One set recently went to the Twin Cities area of Minnesota—wearing Minnesota Twins caps. Some adoptions involve Foreign Service families posted in China. In another case, the father was deployed in Iraq while his wife adopted their daughter.

## Some Challenges

There are also difficult situations. Because many adopted children have special needs, families may require medical care while in Guangzhou or need expedited processing to get home for treatment. In rare cases, a child's needs may be far more severe than the family knew, and the family must face the emotional decision of whether to proceed with the adoption.

The adoptive parents say their experience makes them culturally aware. Like many adopting parents, Jason and Tracey Gorbett of Castle Rock, Colo., also want their two-year-old daughter, Gabriella Yi Li, to keep a connection with Chinese culture after getting home.

"It would be a discredit not to give her that part of her history," Jason Gorbett said.

"Plus, there is a huge support network in Denver and lots of Chinese cultural events for adopting families," Mary Gorbett added.

Dave and Deborah Jacob, from Columbia City, Ore., adopted an older child and took Cantonese lessons before coming, since their child was already fluent in the language. They said they want her to keep up with her Chinese instruction after she returns to the United States, and they gave a computer to the child's orphanage so she can communicate with her friends there via e-mail and a Webcam.

Parents adopting through Guangzhou maintain lifelong friendships and even return as a group together for "heritage trips" that let their children experience their cultural legacy. Adopting parents have also published accounts of their experiences, deepening an understanding in the United States of the difficult circumstances that have given rise to the large number of orphaned children.

In Guangdong Province, where both our daughters were born, my family attracts curious looks, and even a few stares,



The author, right, and his wife with one of their newly adopted children, in October 2000. At left is John Norris, at the time U.S. consul general in Guangzhou. **Opposite page:** The swearing-in occurs during a recent adoption ceremony at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou.

especially when walking down the street accompanied by our blonde, blue-eyed son, all three children chattering in English. But many Chinese have come to appreciate that such mixed adoptive families are a significant piece of America's multicultural fabric. And whenever adopted Chinese children celebrate their roots, they strengthen the bridge of friendship between their adopted homeland and the nation of their birth. ■

*The author is a consular officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou.*



## Steps in a Long Journey

Long before an adopting family travels to China, the adoption process involves multiple steps and a series of applications and government approvals. Here is a snapshot:

- The family selects an adoption agency to shepherd the process, out of the nearly 100 U.S.-based agencies facilitating China adoptions. The agency must be approved by the State Department as meeting Hague Convention standards.
- A social worker conducts a home study and reviews factors such as the family history and financial background.
- The family files an immigrant visa petition for the adopted child with the Department of Homeland Security.
- The adoption agency forwards the documents to China for translation and then onward to the Chinese

government adoption office in Beijing.

- The Beijing adoption office matches the family to a waiting child and sends the child's photos and information to the parents, requesting confirmation. Except when adopting a special needs child, parents do not select their adopted child in advance, although they can request an age range and gender.
- The family travels to China about six weeks after the match, first to the child's home province to adopt their child and then to Guangzhou for their visa interview. With increasing numbers of applications and fewer orphans available for foreign adoption, the wait for a healthy infant now stretches to three or more years.

For more information on intercountry adoption, go to <http://adoptions.state.gov>.



Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli (middle) poses with employees of the moving company hired for the relocation.

# Major Move

NEW COMPOUND BOOSTS POST'S OFFICE SPACE AND SECURITY  
**BY DEBBIE A. CAMPBELL**

January marks the one-year anniversary of the inauguration of the new U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. The embassy's move from its facility of 34 years to a new embassy compound offering greater security and space involved a major effort over several days in November 2007. It culminated in a 2008 inauguration event highlighted by speeches by Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli and Joseph W. Toussaint, managing director of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.

Noting that the new facility is one of the largest buildings in Nicaragua and arguably the most modern, Ambassador Trivelli told the inaugural event, "Our new building is as

large as it needs to be to honor the commitment to the Nicaraguan people."

Nicaraguans were well aware of the post's planned transition to a new compound due to a public diplomacy campaign conducted over the three years of the new embassy's construction. Press outreach began with the announcement of construction and included a preview tour and the inauguration ceremony.

The publicity work involved collaboration between the public affairs section and the regional security office. For instance, the PAS took photos and video of locations within the new building, and the RSO approved them for release,

leading to favorable coverage of the new compound and the mission.

## Previews

The consular section also previewed its spacious new facilities to the press. Major television and print media outlets recorded the last visa interviews at the former site and noted the upgrades at the new site, including more pleasant waiting areas. On the day the new compound opened, Consul General Marc Meznar appeared on Nicaragua's premier morning news show to take calls from the public. The first visa issued at the new site was to a teenager who would be receiving free medical treatment

in the United States for an aggressive form of leukemia.

The new facilities provide space to integrate the offices of several previously off-site U.S. agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, and brought the post into compliance with security standards.

Before the move, some employees wondered if they would miss their former facility, which included a prefabricated chancery building that had been designed as a temporary structure after the nation's 1972 earthquake.

On the other hand, one employee said she felt like she was "moving from a closet into a luxury condo," because the



new compound's cubicles are spacious and comfortable.

Employees now say the advantages of the move outweigh the disadvantages. For instance, the new compound has a gym that is open to all of the post's 501 Locally Employed staff and 92 American employees.

Employees then packed and labeled their boxes and filled out inventory sheets. A moving company packed extremely heavy and fragile items and moved the boxes to the NEC.

## Up and Running

The transition started Nov. 14, 2007, with the moving of heavy items. Through extensive planning and coordination, the information management staff minimized downtime of the post's critical command and control communications systems during the move. The communications and computer systems were up and running at the new compound within hours after being deactivated at the old embassy.

By the end of the third moving day, all embassy offices had relocated and were in operation. USAID also moved that day, leaving offices located approximately four-and-a-half miles away.

On Nov. 19, the most adventurous part of the move began, that of the offices at Casa Grande, a 63-acre property on the new

compound that had been owned by the U.S. government since 1938. A structure there had once been the ambassador's residence and later became offices. It will be restored as the ambassador's residence beginning this year. Many items in this historic building were too heavy for the structure's old staircase and were moved the same way they had come in—by crane.

The embassy was formally inaugurated on Jan. 24, 2008, before a crowd that included the vice president of Nicaragua, the chief executive officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the minister of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, USAID's assistant administrator for Latin America and a host of other Nicaraguan government and civil society leaders.

One day earlier, the moving company had moved the last piece of equipment into the new compound, marking the last of 107 trips by the moving van.

Though sparkling new, the embassy has in its atrium the last flag that flew over the old embassy compound and a collage of more than 1,200 embassy-related photos, reflections of the long U.S.-Nicaraguan relationship. ■

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*The author is an administrative assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Managua and was the transition coordinator for the move to the NEC.*

# Moving Tips

These ideas were helpful to the relocation effort:

- Establish a "listserv," an e-mail communications list, and encourage staff to use it to ask for advice.
- Consider using color-coded shipping labels and symbols to identify boxes destined for individuals and sections. Giving each employee's material a unique-symbol sticker makes the move fast and smooth because all boxes with the same-color labels will go in the same direction.
- Use unique numbers on the inventory sheets prepared by the post's transition coordinator, ensuring that no numbers are repeated. This lets the inventory controllers quickly check the boxes.
- Use color-coded vests for the move's mobile and stationary escorts, inventory controllers and truck escorts.



Forty-four pictures of previous U.S. ambassadors to Nicaragua hang in the Information Resource Center.

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CLAIMS SECTION PROCESSES PAYMENTS FOR MEDICAL SERVICES  
BY MICHAEL GONZALEZ

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# PAYBACK

**T**he Medical Claims section of the Office of Medical Services processes medical claims for Foreign Service employees and their eligible family members and for other government agency employees participating in International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.

Medical Claims is mainly responsible for processing payments for authorized medical services provided and received in the United States. These include authorized physical examinations (in-service and separation examinations), specialist evaluations and authorized domestic inpatient and outpatient treatment. Under certain conditions, the office also processes reimbursements to patients for pre-employment physicals provided overseas.

## The Claims Process

Medical Claims is the secondary payer for all medical billings and covers the allowable amount not paid by the individual's primary insurer. Bills related to authorized physicals or treatment must first be submitted to the employee's health insurance carrier, either by the healthcare provider or the patient. Bills for remaining balances not covered by insurance should be forwarded to Medical Claims with a copy of the Department's authorization form, all itemized provider bills and the insurance company's explanation of benefits.

In addition to authorized physical exams, the Department provides supplemental payment for authorized inpatient care and related outpatient treatment of an illness, injury or medical condition that requires hospitalization. The illness, injury or condition must have been incurred while serving overseas to qualify. The Department's liability is limited to the balance of the primary payer's approved amount.

Payment for medically necessary outpatient care directly related to an approved hospitalization is limited to a maximum of 12 months from the date an expense was incurred by the government, unless a MED grants a waiver. Medical coverage is not provided for illness or injury occurring in the United States, even if the employee is on home leave or rest-and-recreation orders. Therefore, all employees should purchase private health insurance.

Processing medical claims requires a thorough knowledge of how insurance reimbursements work, a good knowledge of the Global Financial Management System and a clear understanding of the medical claims regulations. Medical Claims has four full-time and two contract staff members to ensure the work is done in a timely manner.

Because the skills are specialized, recruiting and maintaining the required number of employees to do the work is a challenge. Medical Claims receives up to 1,500 claims a month from Department employees, other ICASS participating-agency employees and outside providers. The office's standard is that a medical claim must be processed within five work days after receipt.

Medical Claims is working to improve productivity. It recruits and trains new contract staff and scans and forwards medical-claims vouchers to the Office of Finance in Charleston, S.C., instead of mailing them. It also is looking into ways to pay medical claims using a government purchase card.

## Problems

Medical Claims' challenges arise from incomplete paperwork and the misconception that it processes overseas claims. Incomplete paperwork can add weeks to the process, delaying payment as claims processors wait for the proper documentation. Thus, anyone filing a claim must pay attention to detail and call or e-mail the staff if questions arise.

The section gets numerous calls about claims filed overseas from employees expecting to get reimbursed. The section only handles claims filed in the United States. If overseas employees require reimbursement of a claim, they must contact their parent agency and request a fund-site transfer to their designated post, which will reimburse them. Medical Claims has no role in this process.

The section recommends sending claims via e-mail or fax. If those options are unavailable, mail is acceptable. Questions or concerns regarding the claims process can be directed to (703) 875-4842 or [medclaims@state.gov](mailto:medclaims@state.gov). ■

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*The author is chief of Medical Claims.*



Medical







## FSI Web Page

Find everything you need to know about FSI and its training opportunities at <http://fsi.state.gov>. This site is constantly updated to give you just-in-time information on services such as:

- Online Catalog: Up-to-the-minute course schedules and offerings, from live classroom training to distance learning.
- Online Registration System: Submit your training application for classroom, distance learning and even External Training, using the online registration link found on virtually every course description or the External Training Web page.
- Training Continua: Road maps to help you effectively plan your training for the year or beyond.
- About FSI: Get a snapshot view of FSI's history and enrollment statistics.
- Links to training resources: View information on specific countries, language learning and testing, and a myriad helpful reference materials.

## Student Records Online

Located on the FSI Web page, Student Records Online is a secure, password-protected site that provides access to all FSI training information. Features include:

- Reviewing and printing your training schedule.
- Reviewing and printing your student transcript.
- Tracking the status of your training request.
- Canceling an already-scheduled FSI course.
- Requesting changes or canceling an external training registration.
- Creating and submitting your Individual Development Plan/ Work and Development Plan for Locally Employed Staff.
- Retrieving your FasTrac password.

For more information and to establish your logon, visit the Web site at <https://fsiapps.fsi.state.gov/fsirecs/Login.aspx>.

## 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 more than 2,500 courses from home or office. To view the complete FasTrac catalog, visit the FasTrac Web site at <http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac>.

For more information on all distance learning opportunities, visit the FSI Web site at <http://fsi.state.gov> and click on "Distance Learning."

## PT401 No FEAR Act Training

Students will learn about the No FEAR Act (Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002), which prohibits discrimination and retaliation in the workplace. They will learn what avenues of recourse are available to employees who suspect they are the victims of illegal discrimination or retaliation. This course fulfills the No FEAR Act requirement to train government employees regarding their

Dates for FSI Transition Center Courses are shown below. For information on all the courses available at FSI, visit the Schedule of Courses on 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. For additional information, please contact the Office of the Registrar at (703) 302-7144/7137.

Security		Feb	Mar	Length
MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar	2,9	2,9,23	2D
Foreign Service Life Skills		Feb	Mar	Length
MQ104	Regulations Allowances and Finances in the FS Context	26		2D
MQ107	English Teaching Seminar		12	2D
MQ115	Explaining America	28		1D
MQ116	Protocol and the U.S. Representation Abroad	21		1D
MQ117	Tax Seminar	18		4H
MQ200	Going Overseas Without Children		7	4H
MQ210	Going Overseas for Families		7	4H
MQ220	Going Overseas – Logistics for Adults	25	7	4H
MQ230	Going Overseas – Logistics for Children		7	4H
MQ500	Encouraging Resilience in the FS Child		11	4H
MQ703	Post Options for Employment and Training		26	1D
MQ801	Long Distance Relationships		21	4H
MQ803	Realities of the Foreign Service Life	5		1D
MQ950	High Stress Assignment Outbriefing Program			2H
Career Transition Center		Feb	Mar	Length
RV101	Retirement Planning Workshop	24		4D
RV102	Job Search Program		2	8W
RV103	Financial Management and Estate Planning	26		1D
RV104	Annuities and Benefits and Social Security	25		1D

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

rights and remedies under federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws. For more information, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg/default.asp?EventID=PT401>.

## Ask FSI

Looking for information on a specific course, training location or distance learning? Experiencing a problem with registration, accessing a course or technical issue? "Ask FSI" is your answer. Found on the home page of FSI (<http://fsi.state.gov>), Ask FSI allows you to review frequently asked questions or submit your own inquiry. Questions are routed quickly for prompt response. ■



# Appointments



## U.S. Ambassador to Libya

Gene Allan Cretz of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Libya. Until recently, he was a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He has served in posts throughout the Middle East and Asia, including Tel Aviv, Damascus, Cairo, Islamabad, New Delhi and Beijing.



## U.S. Representative to the African Union

John A. Simon of Maryland, a high-level government official, is the new U.S. Representative to the African Union, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was executive vice president of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Before that, he was senior director for Relief, Stabilization and Development for the National Security Council. He has also been a deputy assistant administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development.



## U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia

Carol Ann Rodley of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. Previously, she was a faculty advisor at the Foreign Service Institute after returning from assignment in Kabul. Before that, she was acting assistant secretary and principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Her other overseas postings include Germany, South Africa, the Dominican Republic and Pakistan.



## U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti

James Christopher Swan of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs. Before that, he was director of analysis for Africa in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He was deputy chief of mission in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. Other postings include Nairobi, Yaounde, Port-au-Prince and Managua.

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## *retirements*

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### FOREIGN SERVICE

Coffey, Steven James  
Couch, John P.  
Gaseor, Kathleen M.  
Giacolone, John Nicholas  
Hermanson, Lynne D.

Hinson, Jill D.  
O'Brien, Penelope R.  
Ordway, John Malcolm  
Schuman, Steven S.

### CIVIL SERVICE

De Sanctis, Nicole  
Fleming-Simpson,  
Gwendolyn A.  
Geiger, James J.  
Green, Eric A.  
Hayes, Betty J.  
Imperati, Edward William

Montgomery, Evangeline J.  
Quick, Barbara Jenkins  
Schroeder, Marshall John  
Sulzynsky, Wolodymyr R.  
Thomas-Jackson, Tijuana J.  
Urman, Sheila E.  
Weldinger, Joseph C.



# Obituaries



**Kevin E. Carroll**, 72, a retired member of the Senior Executive Service, died Oct. 6 of lung cancer at his home in Silver Spring, Md. He served with the U.S. Army in Germany and joined the Department in 1961. He worked as an administrative and management analysis officer before joining the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, where he became a director. He retired in 1993.

**Marguerita “Maggie” Loomer**, 80, a retired Foreign Service secretary and widow of Foreign Service officer Walter Loomer, died Oct. 17 in London, England. She married Loomer in Tunisia and accompanied him on postings to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Ethiopia, Kenya, Poland, Bolivia and Costa Rica. After joining the Foreign Service in 1975, she served with her husband in Nigeria, the Soviet Union and Greece. After he retired, she served in Montreal and her native London before retiring there in 1993. She volunteered for the Red Cross and Oxfam.

**Ferrell Lavon Cooper**, 73, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 9 at his home in Evanston, Ill. He served in the Air Force and joined the Department in 1962. He spent more than 30 years abroad, including postings to Helsinki, Canberra, Lomé, Beirut, Tehran, Nicosia, Abidjan, Antananarivo, Cairo, Rabat, Brussels and Paris.

**Thomas Lucas Jr.**, 69, a former Foreign Service medical officer, died Oct. 6 of multiple myeloma. He lived in Charleston, S.C. He joined the Department in 1987 and served overseas in Mali, Zambia, Nepal and Russia before returning to the United States to practice at various Veterans Administration clinics. He volunteered with free clinics overseas and received the Department’s highest award for volunteerism. He enjoyed writing poetry and children’s stories.



**Kathryn Lewman**, 57, a project controls engineer with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and wife of Raymond Lewman of the U.S. Agency for International Development, died recently in Arlington, Va. She was an architect but spent much of her time volunteering on projects such as Habitat for Humanity and building schools and orphanages while living overseas with her family.



**Helen Parrish Nabti**, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 6 in Waterford, Va. After joining the Department, her assignments included the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and first United Nations conference in San Francisco. She later joined the Foreign Service and was posted to the Philippines, Japan and Lebanon. She retired in 1972.





**James D. "Dan" Phillips**, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 6 from complications of microscopic polyangiitis in Washington, D.C. He served in the Army and joined the Department in 1962. He served overseas in Paris, Zaire, Luxembourg and as chief of mission in The Gambia.

After a tour in Casablanca, he became ambassador to Burundi and then ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After retiring in 1994, he headed the Central Africa Foundation. He enjoyed skiing, golf, cooking, bridge, poker and writing poetry.

**John W. Simms**, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at his home in McLean, Va., on Oct. 31 of complications from Alzheimer's. He served in the Army in World War II. He joined the Department in 1950 and during his 31-year career was posted to Germany, Japan, the Belgian Congo, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Haiti, Paraguay, Barbados, Colombia and Mexico. He was on the drafting committee for the Panama Canal Treaty in 1977. After retirement, he was a consultant to the Department's Crises Management Program for 10 years.



**Norma Louise Rathner**, 77, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Herbert Rathner, died Sept. 29 of pancreatic cancer at her home in Fairfax, Va. She accompanied her husband on postings to France, Germany, Sierra Leone, Korea,

Bolivia, Switzerland and Jamaica. She loved to read, garden, study the Bible, create travel scrapbooks and make quilts, many of which she donated to charities.

**Gwendolene "Marky" Weigley**, a retired employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development, died Oct. 22 in Alpine, Calif. She served in Greece, Spain, Uganda, Nigeria, Yemen, Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, India and Nepal.



**Barbara J. Simmons**, 69, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Nov. 2 in Houston, Texas. She joined the Department in 1991 and served in Manila, Kuwait, Damascus, Chengdu and Beijing. She retired in 2004 and lived in Carmine,

Texas. She collected art and antiques, and enjoyed gardening and gourmet cooking.



**Colin F. Wheeler**, 66, a long-time Foreign Service National employee at the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, died Sept. 14 of natural causes. He worked in the public affairs section. In his youth, he was a renowned Australian-rules football

player and, in his later years, an avid and skilled gardener.

## Election Offers Outreach Opportunity



Good diplomacy sometimes boils down to recognizing an opportunity and seizing it, as our colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi did with the U.S. presidential election in November. Interest in this election ran especially hot in Kenya, which had recently emerged from a year of turmoil following its own elections and which could claim a personal stake because one of the U.S. presidential candidates had a Kenyan father.

Embassy professionals including the

ambassador grabbed that unique opportunity to reach out across regional, religious and tribal boundaries with the message of peaceful political transition. The personal attraction by many Kenyans opened the door to a basic lesson in U.S. civics, including the wisdom behind the Electoral College system, the election cycle and the foundations of American democracy, including the all-important respect for the rule of law. The intense outreach effort culminated in an election night vigil at the ambassador's home.

In an era that requires more and more coordination between major government agencies, the Office of the Foreign Policy Advisor Program has seen its stock rise significantly. Small in numbers—just four fulltime employees—this office supports dozens of foreign policy advisors posted throughout the world, from the Pentagon to Iraq and Afghanistan. These advisors, or POLADs in acronym land, advise and support senior U.S. military leaders on the diplomatic and foreign policy aspects of the commanders' military responsibilities. Initiated in 2000, the POLAD program has grown from 15 advisors to 31.

Office Director Jonita Whitaker expects that growth to continue. "Military commands are hungry for POLADs," she

says. "Wherever I visit, requests for POLADs are high."

Meanwhile, colleagues in Human Resources are hard at work preparing for the additional 179 Foreign Service generalists recently approved by Congress. Once the newcomers enter the Foreign Service, HR's Entry-Level division and the orientation staff at the Foreign Service Institute take the lead in developing the new employees' careers and early assignments. The division's career development officers act as position managers, controlling positions and direct assignments for the entry-level officers' first two tours. The goal is always to promote opportunities for growth and advancement.

Last but not never least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Kevin E. Carroll; Farrell Lavon Cooper; Kathryn Lewman; Marguerita "Maggie" Loomer; Thomas Lucas Jr.; Helen Parrish Nabti; James D. "Dan" Phillips; Norma Louise Rathner; Barbara J. Simmons; John W. Simms; Gwendolene "Marky" Weigley; and Colin F. Wheeler.* ■

*Rob Wiley*

Rob Wiley  
Editor-in-Chief

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