U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE

MAGAZINE

Eliminating the Tools of War

NOVEMBER 2006

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Photo by Corbis

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An International Partnership with Iraq

In late September, I attended the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly. One of my most important engagements was the launch of the International Compact for Iraq, an Iraqi-government-led initiative designed to transform Iraq's economy and strengthen Iraq's relationship with the international community.

For the past three and a half years, the world has watched the people of Iraq begin to move beyond three decades of tyranny. They have risked their lives by the millions to make their voices heard. They have written and ratified a new constitution. They have formed a government of national unity. And despite the extremist designs of violent enemies, Iraq's new government is making real progress.

Yet, as Iraqi leaders point out, Iraq has real needs, stemming from decades of neglect. The government's increasing security and reconstruction responsibilities create the demand for more, not less, international support. So in September, the international community launched the International Compact for Iraq.

The idea of the Compact is compelling: As Iraq implements tough reforms that will change its political economy, the international community will step forward to help. This is a contract, a partnership, and each party has important responsibilities.

The Iraqi government has a strategy of economic reform that can set the country on a path to self-sufficiency. Iraq's new government is proposing fiscal reforms to create a transparent and comprehensive budget. The government has also pledged to undertake measures, like an investment law and banking reform, to attract investment and revitalize Iraq's private sector.

Finally, on hydrocarbons, Iraq's new government has pledged to sort out the revenue distribution between its regional and national governments. This will enable the elected leaders of Iraq to devote their country's vast natural resources to the benefit of their rightful owners: the Iraqi people.

This is a bold agenda of reform. And it must be pursued vigorously. Yet, for this Compact to be truly effective, Iraqis must still do more. First, Iraqis must implement their National Reconciliation Plan. The success of an International Compact rests on Iraq's ability to secure a National Compact, which can dramatically reduce civil strife.

Second, as Iraqis work to build transparent, accountable and effective democratic institutions, the government must deal with its unspent budgetary funds. These funds are essential to addressing the Iraqi people's most urgent needs, and the Iraqi government must use this money, quickly and responsibly, to help its citizens. Finally, Iraqis must do everything in their power to combat corruption at all levels of government and to tackle the urgent need to reform their ministries.

As Iraq meets these goals, the international community must live up to its side of the bargain. The success of Iraq's reforms depends on the full support of the international community—from debt reduction and technical assistance to new investment and budget or project support. The Iraqis have presented their goals and reforms to the community of nations; now the community of nations is proposing to the Iraqis how it intends to support them. Much work will have to be done, but by the end of November, we look to gather again to present our proposals and to seal the Compact with Iraq.

> "As Iraq implements tough reforms that will change its political economy, the international community will step forward to help."

The Iraqi people face enormous challenges on their path to a better life. But through their perseverance and their many daily sacrifices, we see a people whose capacity and desire to prosper in freedom are greater than every challenge they face. Iraq's greatest resource is the industry and creativity of its citizens, and with the full support of the international community, we can be confident that Iraqis can, and will, succeed. ■

Mumbai's 'Miss Kitty'

The article on "dog soldiers" in the September issue reminds us that not only humans serve the Department. Those who served in Mumbai (Bombay), India, from the early 1990s through 2004 should remember the cat "Miss Kitty," who did her part in protecting the Consulate. For example, she ensured that duty staff stayed alert during the night by tapping on the door to the Consulate lobby at unannounced times to ask for food. Because crows would eat anything left outdoors, Miss Kitty's dish of kibble was kept inside on the corner of the receptionist's desk. (On at least one occasion, a visitor was seen helping himself to a handful of Meow Mix, assuming it was a special American snack.)

I brought Miss Kitty to the U.S. in early 2004. She easily qualified for a Special Immigrant Visa, given her lengthy service—the equivalent of well over 50 human years. She enjoyed two years of retirement before succumbing to illness.

One of the Indian staff of the consulate told me Miss Kitty was rumored to be the reincarnated spirit of a princess who previously lived in the building, originally constructed as the palace of a rajah. If that is true, her life of devoted duty to the U.S. Government has surely earned her a promotion in a future life.

Frederick Polasky
Retired Foreign Service Officer
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Remembering Peggy Woosley

It was with great sadness and many joyful memories that I read Peggy Woosley's obituary (September issue). We were duplex neighbors in West Berlin 1978–80. She, daughter Susan and Cairn terrier Laddie lived downstairs while my husband Ed, our dachshund Edgar and I occupied the upstairs apartment. You could not ask for a better friend, neighbor or coworker.

Her last assignment before Berlin had been Tehran. When the Shah left Iran, she opened her apartment to her Persian friends and our duplex became a temporary sanctuary for Iranian refugees. It was a great blessing that these visitors found a safe harbor on their way to new lives.

After our Edgar died in Karachi, I called her and she found a wonderful little dachshund for us. We lost track of each other, but there's never been a time when I didn't think of her and wish we could sit down and share our adventures over one of her martinis.

Mona Poe
Tyler, Texas

Head Scarves in Iraq

Some of my State Department colleagues have made comments to me about Sheila Faulkner's letter to the editor that ran in the July/August issue, which expressed reservations about my wearing a head scarf during a soccer ball charity event in Basrah. I wanted to provide some clarification for *State Magazine* readers.

Most readers were probably not aware that the charity event was held inside the grounds of a large mosque in Basrah. The imam of the mosque graciously invited all of us to attend, but politely reminded us that women should wear head covers while inside the property. For me to show up without a head cover would not only have been shocking to the Iraqis present, but also incredibly inconsiderate and religiously inappropriate.

I don't want to convey the impression that the decision whether or not to wear a head scarf while in Basrah was always as easy as it was the day of that soccer event. By showing up at provincial government meetings with my head covered, the issue of my appearance was taken off the table and the meetings could center on the important topics of security, elections and economic development.

But I was aware that the social environment in southern Iraq was becoming increasingly fundamentalist and that all women were pressured to adhere to strict dress codes and wear head covers. Some of the Iraqi Christian women who worked in our office told me they were being threatened for not wearing head scarves, but that they refused to wear them because they were not Muslim—even though it may cost them their lives. I frequently felt torn about my own decision to cover my head to have effective meetings.

I thank Ms. Faulkner for drawing attention to how much the environment in Iraq has changed in the past few years and to the difficulties that State Department employees face working in that environment.

Rachel Schneller
Office of Multilateral
Trade Affairs

Mentoring Is for Everyone

At a Town Hall meeting in the Department in May, I launched a newly invigorated Department-wide mentoring program. My goal is to ensure that any employee, in any place, at any time can get the mentoring that he or she needs. There is no timeline on when mentoring should happen in one's career. I hope everyone will want a mentor and want to be a mentor. To achieve this outcome, our programs must be open to all constituencies, be as flexible as possible and be available to any employee, in any place, at any time. We want to broaden our existing programs as well as create new ones.

Why mentoring? Mentoring opens up opportunities for all of us. Mentors can help us make connections—as colleagues, as public servants and as people. The mentee gets the advice, know-how and "deep understanding of the culture" from a more experienced employee. The mentor can gain fresh ideas, approaches and the wisdom of other organizational cultures.

Mentoring can allow us to create new ways to approach the world and new ways to use our experiences. Fully a third of our workforce has joined us since 2000. One-third or more of our workforce is ready for retirement. We need to benefit from one another's experiences.

This year we added a well-received "situational mentoring" program for Civil and Foreign Service colleagues who want advice on a short-term basis, or on a particular topic. Situational mentors can provide additional support for those in mentoring programs or provide options for those who want mentoring without structure. Situational mentors are the right help at the right time and are usually available to help solve a quick problem, uncover a hidden talent or learn a new skill or behavior. Situational mentors can lend their assistance for as little time as it takes to discuss an idea over coffee or an e-mail or as long as it takes to complete a long-term project. To learn more about situational mentoring and other mentoring programs at State, go to "Mentoring" under "Key Programs" on the Department I-Net home page.

Up to now, our mentoring programs have captured segments of our Department family. More than 900 employees in Washington and throughout the U.S. have been successfully paired in our structured one-year program for the Civil Service. All new Foreign Service employees have been given the opportunity to have an individual mentor as part of their orientation program, and, in fiscal year 2006, 92 percent of all new Foreign Service generalists and specialists were paired. Those who did not have mentors at the outset of their career and have moved up through the mid-level ranks of the Foreign Service are now encouraged to request a mentor. Anyone in the Foreign Service—including entry-level mentees—may change mentors if they wish by sending an e-mail to mentorinitiative@state.gov.

> "Mentoring opens up opportunities for all of us."

Mentoring of and by our Locally Employed staff offers a new set of opportunities. We began to explore these possibilities in June during the annual FSN conference. We are also encouraging programs for Foreign Service family members. If you are a spouse or member of a household who would like a mentor or if you are eager to share your hard-won knowledge about the way things REALLY work overseas, you can do so via the Family Liaison Office.

During FY 2007, we want to see continued growth of the Civil Service, Foreign Service Officer, Foreign Service Specialist, Foreign Service National and Foreign Service family member mentoring relationships. We are encouraging colleagues at all posts and domestically to participate in situational mentoring, as both mentors and mentees. We are working with regional bureaus and posts to create new and expanded opportunities for Local Employees overseas.

A new Mentoring Coordination group under the guidance of a Senior Advisor for Mentoring, Ambassador Sylvia Stanfield, will continue to investigate best practices in mentoring and meet with other agencies, starting with our sister agency, USAID, to share information and ideas. We are also looking at enhanced mentoring partnerships within embassy communities. Our vision is that every employee—Civil Service, Foreign Service or Foreign Service National—who wishes a mentor be paired with one soon after he/she joins the Department.

The success of all these mentoring initiatives depends on all our people in the Department volunteering and joining. Mentoring can benefit both individuals and the Department as a whole. I urge you to get informed about what role mentoring can play in your professional life. Be sure to check out the Department's new combined Civil and Foreign Service mentoring web site, http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/mentoring. So…make a new friend—mentoring is for everyone. ■

(NEWS)

EMBASSY CYCLIST WINS MEDALS AND SEES ICELAND

U.S. Embassy Reykjavik Political Officer Brad Evans took home a pair of silver medals from the Icelandic National Road Cycling Championships in August.

In the 30-kilometer time trial event, he finished 10th overall and second in the 30–39 age group. In the 90-kilometer road race championship—three laps on a hilly 30-kilometer course—he pressed on for an eighth place finish, again taking second in the 30–39 age group.

Mr. Evans, who began cycling in his teens, commented afterward on the impact of the strong North Atlantic winds: "These guys have no problem racing in the face of a howling wind—it's pretty impressive."

He said he looks forward to riding and racing as much a possible during his assignment in Reykjavik, as "cycling is a great excuse to get out and see a lot of the country."

Brad Evans gives it his all in the time trial event.

PLUS>>> VOLUNTEER SPIRIT INFUSES JULY 4 IN DAMASCUS + U.S.–BRAZIL SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION + DHAKA IS READY FOR EMERGENCIES + YOUTH AWARD WINNERS HONORED + INCENTIVE PROGRAM HELPS STATE RETAIN IT WORKERS + SINGAPORE SHARES PASSPORT DATA

VOLUNTEER SPIRIT INFUSES JULY 4 IN DAMASCUS

Adopting a different approach to the annual celebration of America's Independence Day, the U.S. Embassy in Damascus canceled its traditional Fourth of July reception for the second year in a row and instead organized a volunteer event to benefit a local nongovernmental organization serving handicapped children and their families.

The embassy wanted to emphasize that the United States does not consider it appropriate to host festive, celebratory occasions in Syria at a time when profound policy differences have severely strained bilateral relations. In addition, by demonstrating America's commitment to volunteerism and community service, the embassy wanted to show publicly its support for Syria's embattled civil-society activists, many of whom have been imprisoned for their efforts to encourage a more open political process.

Chargé d'Affaires Stephen Seche explained the embassy's intentions in a letter sent to the hundreds of Syrian and diplomatic contacts on the Fourth of July guest list:

"We have decided once again this year to forego the traditional reception and observe our Independence Day by participating in a volunteer event to benefit a local organization that serves underprivileged children."

The letter also described the tradition and extent of volunteerism in America.

"On the anniversary of our nation's independence, the American Embassy community in Damascus would like to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism that is one of the hallmarks of our democratic way of life," the letter said. "In addition, we wish to honor our Syrian friends who believe as we do that individuals joining together in support of the common good strengthen every society and every nation. We look forward to celebrating together on another occasion."

On July 7, the embassy hosted 60 children between the ages of 4 and 10, accompanied by their mothers, for an afternoon of games, crafts, food and a clown show on the spacious grounds of the American School in Damascus.

American and local employees of the embassy and others from the American community turned out in great number to paint faces, dance, play soccer, toss water balloons, make handcrafts and eat traditional Syrian shawarma. Our young guests seemed to enjoy every minute. The pleasures of the day weren't limited to the children: Their mothers also took part enthusiastically, dancing and participating in other activities.

The spirit of volunteerism that is a hallmark of the American way of life was on full display in the smiling faces of our Syrian guests. And everyone agreed it was a lot more fun than a reception.

Meeting Highlights U.S.–Brazil Scientific Cooperation

In July, the first-ever U.S.-Brazil Ministerial Level Joint Commission Meeting on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was held in Washington at the National Academy of Sciences and by all accounts was very successful.

Cooperation between the United States and Brazil has advanced understanding of the earth's climate, improved weather forecasting, enhanced coordination to address infectious diseases and contributed to basic scientific research in a range of fields.

White House Science Adviser John H. Marburger III headed the 48-member U.S. delegation, which was cochaired by Claudia A. McMurray, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Agency heads and senior officials from Commerce, Energy, Interior, Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and others participated.

The 27-member Brazilian delegation was led by Dr. Luis Manuel Rebelo Fernandes, the deputy minister of Science and Technology, with Ambassador to the United States Roberto Abdenur serving as cochair.

Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky gave a keynote address on the social benefits of science and technology and international cooperation. She highlighted benefits of U.S.-Brazil cooperation in S&T, including environmental benefits of renewable fuels; joint biotechnology programs in agriculture; earth observation technologies, such as the Global Earth Observing System of Systems and Landsat imagery; global positioning systems that benefit transportation sectors; and broadband and wireless communication technologies used to connect rural residents to knowledge, skills and education.

Two implementing agreements were renewed under the 1984 U.S.-Brazil S&T framework agreement in a signing ceremony at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History: the NASA Large-Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia, which is an international, multidisciplinary cooperative research program; and the Biological Determinants of Forest Fragments Program, which is the world's largest and longest-running study of habitat fragmentation in the central Amazon. These collaborations on earth sciences and forest fragmentation are centerpieces of conservation biology and are fundamental to stewardship of the Amazon forest.

Attending the meeting at the National Academy of Sciences were, from left, U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford Sobel, White House Science Adviser John H. Marburger III, Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky, National Academy of Sciences President Ralph J. Cicerone, Deputy Minister of Science and Technology Luis Manuel Rebelo Fernandes and Brazil's Ambassador to the U.S. Roberto Abdenur.

Dhaka Embassy Is Ready for Emergencies

Emergency preparedness is a very important issue at the U.S. Mission in Dhaka. In addition to the threat of monsoon-related flooding, Bangladesh faces the threat of cyclones from the Bay of Bengal as well as earthquakes resulting from its location on a major geological fault line.

This year, the mission began to establish response teams that could quickly intervene in the event of an emergency. The staff responded to the call for volunteers, the Dhaka Fire Department provided training and General Services Office mechanics outfitted several official vehicles with basic emergency equipment, including sirens and fire hoses.

On August 15, Ambassador Patricia A. Butenis joined a celebration of the volunteers' graduation from the fire service course and the official establishment of the response teams. Some 28 dedicated Locally Employed Staff are divided into four teams—two for emergency response and two for fire response.

The response teams pose at their graduation ceremony with Ambassador Butenis, center rear.

2006 YOUTH AWARD WINNERS HONORED

The 2006 Youth Awards ceremony, held July 19 in the Benjamin Franklin Room, honored winners in three categories: the Foreign Service Youth Foundation's Community Service Awards, the American Foreign Service Association's National High School Essay Contest and the Foreign Service Institute Transition Center's KidVid Awards. Director General George M. Staples delivered the keynote address.

The awards program and ceremony was a joint endeavor of the award sponsors, the Family Liaison Office and the Office of Overseas Schools.

"The individuals behind the scenes at FLO and the volunteers at FSYF ultimately make each year's ceremony successful," said FSYF President Blanca Ruebensaal.

Foreign Service Youth Foundation Community Service Awards

The Community Service Awards recognize Foreign Service teenagers who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in international community service or in service to their peers. Through their selfless acts, this year's winners demonstrated the power of the individual to improve the lives of others less fortunate than themselves.

First Place: There were two winners: John Alsace of Barcelona, Spain, and Jessica Himelfarb of Harare, Zimbabwe. John spearheaded a project to provide food to 80 impoverished families at a local children's center. Jessica led a project to paint and remodel a one-room school building used to educate more than 60 children, raised money for school uniforms for more than 50 orphans and served as the point person to receive and distribute donated clothes.

Highly Commendable: Nelson Patterson of Harare, Zimbabwe, dedicated a year of his life to work in an HIV/AIDS hospice and orphanage in Zimbabwe, work on the orphan outreach team, visit the poorest communities in Zimbabwe and serve as a big brother to hundreds of orphans.

Clements International Insurance sponsored the $3,000 U.S. Government Savings Bond awarded to the first-place winners.

AFSA National Essay Contest

AFSA established the contest seven years ago to encourage American high school students to learn more about the Foreign Service, the craft of diplomacy and America's role in the world. Of this year's 300 submissions, three essays were recognized for having an exemplary command of research, style and English usage.

First Place: Eva Lam of Milwaukee, Wis., for her essay on empowering women in Afghanistan. Eva received an award of $2,500.

Second Place: Kimberly Hayward of Oak Lawn, Ill., for her essay on the role of Foreign Service officers in bridging the education gender gap in Africa.

Third Place: Karina Legradi of Tampa, Fla., for her essay on the role of the Foreign Service in the war on drug trafficking in Colombia and Afghanistan.

The essay contest was sponsored by the AFSA Fund for American Diplomacy and the Nelson B. Delevan Foundation.

KidVid Awards

The KidVid Awards honor Foreign Service youth between the ages of 10 and 18 for their videos depicting life at post for young people. All KidVids become permanent additions to the Overseas Briefing Center library.

First Place: Christian and Patrick Lisko for their video of Valetta, Malta.

Second Place: Annamaria Ward for her video of Quito, Ecuador.

Third Place: Tie between Sean Patrick Kelly for his video of Vilnius, Lithuania, and Anthony Oman and Thomas Litchfield for their video of Helsinki, Finland.

Oakwood Worldwide Corporate Housing sponsored the prize money.

A cable and Department announcement calling for nominations for the 2007 Youth Awards will go out in February.

INCENTIVE PROGRAM HELPS STATE RETAIN IT WORKERS

For information technology professionals at the State Department, SIP could mean more money.

The Skills Incentive Program began in 1999 as a pilot program. Qualifying IT professionals were entitled to incentive pay based on certain certification requirements. The pay increase could be 5, 10 or 15 percent. In 2005, SIP became a formal program and the 5 percent category was discontinued.

The program has been successful in retaining highly skilled technology workers. In fact, 50 percent of the Department's IT work force participates in SIP. The total incentive pay awarded is approximately $8.3 million per year.

Annually, the SIP management team will review and revise the qualifying certifications, percentages and continuing education requirements necessary to qualify. The program is currently limited to FS-01s and GS-15s and below who meet all of the eligibility requirements.

Two separate panels handle policy and certification recommendations. The IT Professional Skills Panel votes on individual cases and also provides policy recommendations to a Senior Advisory Panel consisting of the chief information officer, dean of the School of Applied Information Technology and a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources. The Senior Advisory Panel makes decisions on the changes recommended by the IT Skills Panel.

For questions regarding SIP, the program has an e-mail box named IT Professional Skills Panel. The IT Skills Program administrators are located at the Foreign Service Institute. The new SIP Intranet website is http://sip.state.gov.

Singapore Shares Passport Data

The U.S. Embassy in Singapore's Consular Chief, Julie Kavanagh, and Fraud Prevention Manager Susan Wong received the first delivery of lost and stolen passport records from representatives of Singapore's Immigration and Checkpoints Authority on July 21.

The delivery of more than 39,000 records inaugurated an information-sharing process that will reduce U.S. vulnerability to fraudulent use of Singapore's passport. The initiative marks an important step in U.S.-Singapore cooperation to enhance the security of international travel.

From left, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority officials Ng Jyh Pyng,Tam Chek Fran and Ong Choon Beng; U.S. Consular Chief Julie Kavanagh; U.S. Vice Consul Susan Wong.

STATE MAGAZINE

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The submission deadline for the January 2007 issue is November 15. The deadline for the February 2007 issue is December 15.

Tapping Civil Service Talent

At the Department of State, we have one mission: to create a more secure, democratic and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community. Each employee brings a different contributing element to this mission.

More than 8,000 Civil Service employees support our foreign policy mission in Washington, D.C., at passport agencies and field offices across the nation, at consulates in Mexico and in other posts around the world. They have served well and honorably abroad, and provide a vital service in the U.S. We will continue to look at how we might best use their services overseas when the need arises.

While much of the Bureau of Human Resources' recent work has, of necessity, focused on the Foreign Service, I also want to tap into the experience and talents of our Civil Service. Whenever and wherever possible, I am committed to enhancing development opportunities for our Civil Service employees.

I would like to create career development programs for Civil Service and Locally Employed staff, much as we did for the Foreign Service. This will not be easy, and HR cannot do it alone, but the need to develop our employees' skills is universal.

In August, we implemented a pilot Civil Service Mid-Level Rotation Program that is designed to provide developmental assignments for Foreign Affairs officers and those in equivalent positions at the GS-12 and GS-13 grade levels to broaden their knowledge, skills and abilities. We developed this program in close coordination with the Foggy Bottom Society. I hope to expand this program, both domestically and overseas.

The MLRP fosters a shared understanding of our agency and its mission, vision and objectives. The philosophy is to develop a diverse group of highly qualified visionary and strategic-thinking individuals as future Department of State leaders; the future leaders must be adaptable, capable of leading change and ready to manage a multicultural workforce while being results driven.

The program is designed to provide a "replacement" for each candidate selected to participate. Once the pilot participants are identified, each of their home bureaus will have the opportunity to fill the newly created temporary vacancy with one of the other pilot participants. I anticipate all of the rotational assignments beginning during January 2007.

Bureau training officers can provide Civil Service employees with detailed information about short- and longer-term training opportunities, both at the Foreign Service Institute and externally. They can also provide guidance on how to create Individual Development Plans. The FSI-prepared Civil Service training continuum and the leadership and management continuum also provide information that can be used by employees and their training officers when developing Individual Development Plans. Continuing education, training and professional development should be the cornerstone of everybody's career planning.

In HR, we also have a Career Development Resource Center where employees can consult with professional counselors and job coaches, take advantage of computer-based and other resources that help them identify their strengths and areas for growth and check out their extensive library of books and videos on professional development.

I encourage all Civil Service employees to consider signing up for our Civil Service Mentoring Program. The program challenges participants to prepare an action plan for a full year of sustained focus on career development with opportunities to meet and learn from mentors throughout the Department.

It is important that Americans understand what we do. Therefore, I would like to see our Civil Service colleagues be active participants in our public outreach efforts. Community outreach activities, such as those that are sponsored by YPRO, are critically important.

> "Whenever and wherever possible, I am committed to enhancing development opportunities for our Civil Service employees."

We must ensure that Civil Service employees are well trained and that their skills are properly utilized. Only by working together as a team will we be able to achieve our common goals.

If you have suggestions or comments, please send them via unclassified e-mail to "DG Direct." ■

OCA Director Kendall Montgomery, standing, conducts a training session for a crisis support team.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROB WILEY

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE DEALS WITH DEATH, INJURY AND ILLNESS

BY KENDALL MONTGOMERY

OCA Director Kendall Montgomery, standing, conducts a training session for a crisis support team.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROB WILEY

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE DEALS WITH DEATH, INJURY AND ILLNESS

BY KENDALL MONTGOMERY

The Little Office That Cares

With just three staff members, the Office of Casualty Assistance may be the smallest in the Department. And yet, following the death of an employee, whether Foreign or Civil Service, it becomes the connection to the Department for a grieving family.

"What do I do now?" Those are often among the first words family members say when contacted by the office. Their relief is palpable when they find that there is an office to help with administrative concerns. From that moment, they know they have a place where every question is important and every concern will be heard. The office's toll-free phone number facilitates communication.

The office provides guidance on benefits for which a family may be eligible and supplies the necessary forms. But that is only the beginning. Just as each death is unique, so are the needs of each family member. While a spouse may ask about having household effects delivered or gaining access to Social Security benefits, a parent may seek guidance on assisting a child struggling with grief or information about staying at post for the remainder of the school year. These questions may cease after a few months or continue for several years. The office is available for as long as support is needed.

The small size of the office is an advantage for clients during normal times. Each family's issues and concerns are known and can be addressed by whoever answers the phone. But the small size makes it difficult to respond to all families' needs in the aftermath of a mass casualty.

Crisis support teams, made up of 70 volunteers from the Bureau of Human Resources, are trained and ready to provide surge capacity should the need arise. Only once in their six years of existence were they asked to respond to families, but on that occasion they proved invaluable—meeting family members at airports and serving as their escorts, providing a point of contact for unforeseen issues and offering support at emotionally difficult moments.

Although responding to the needs of families following the death of an employee or family member accompanying an employee overseas is the major work of the office, helping injured or ill employees is equally important. These employees also need an advocate in the Department to hear their concerns and work to identify solutions.

Any employee or family member who experiences such a crisis and wants a single point of contact and advocate in the Department may contact the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302 or by e-mail at oca@state.gov. In addition, employees can visit the office's Intranet site at http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/oca/Index.html for information on contingency planning, the stages of grief, death benefits and more. ■

The author is the director of the Office of Casualty Assistance.

Thinking Green

The U.S. Embassy in London covers a quarter million square feet and, relatively speaking, is old. Built in 1959 from a prize-winning design by architect Eero Saarinen, the building is out of step with 21st century security and environmentally friendly energy requirements.

New embassies are being built with these requirements in mind, but retrofitting an "old" Embassy to be green is a huge challenge. The embassy's management section took on that challenge, and the solutions they found could serve as models and prototypes for other projects in London, including the massive construction required to host the 2012 Olympic Games. Green projects of this nature are the responsibility of each embassy and every employee. Energy-saving projects are reviewed by Overseas Buildings Operations and worthy projects (having a payback of less than 10 years) are approved and funded by the OBO Energy Program, run by the Mechanical Engineering Branch.

Because of its size and number of staff, the U.S. Embassy in London consumes much energy. As part of the management section's new long-term strategic plan, facility manager Jerry Pifer and his staff searched for ways to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions to preserve the environment while also cutting costs. Their "green" initiatives, some fairly common and familiar and others much more innovative, have already resulted in water and energy savings, and the program could also save thousands of dollars each year.

In addition to conservation awareness and budget savings, the management section also saw the "greening initiative" as a great outreach activity, a positive way to demonstrate to the people and government of the United Kingdom that the U.S. Embassy in London was striving to be a good guest. In the process, the mission also set an example for other institutions in London, including foreign missions, international schools and even private businesses.

Following ISO 14001 environmental management systems guidelines, Mr. Pifer and his staff secured a commit-

PHOTOGRAPHS ARCHIVE, COURTESY OF EMBASSY LONDON

ment from management to support environment management training programs. They also established goals and objectives that should result in measurable progress, such as reducing by 50 percent the amount of rubbish going to the landfill. They weeded out impractical and costly options, considering only those that would save money after the initial outlay or at least be cost-neutral.

Earth Day Kickoff

Enlisting the help of the community liaison officer, the public affairs office, the general services officer, the science officer and other management section units, the staff hosted an Earth Day celebration on April 20 to officially kick off the project. Following remarks from Deputy Chief of Mission David Johnson and speakers from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Trust, guests and embassy personnel were free to wander among displays that covered a wide range of energy conservation topics. Guests were invited to access a computer application that estimated the amount of carbon emissions their households create annually and were given suggestions for reducing the amount. U.S. embassy employees were given electricity consumption statistics for their homes and invited to sign pledges to reduce emissions by any percentage they chose as a target.

One of the first ideas initiated was installing **52 waterless urinals**

One of the first ground-breaking ideas initiated was installing 52 waterless urinals, resulting in cost and water savings in a country that is facing a drought for the first time in many years. These devices use scented olive oil to neutralize odors, and they're easier to maintain than ordinary urinals.

The chancery's new condensing boilers will replace older models throughout the embassy and reduce energy consumption by about 30 percent. While the embassy's basement conference rooms were remodeled, the staff selected new lights that reduce energy usage from six kilowatts to two. The embassy also sponsored a lightbulb exchange that allowed staff to trade their incandescent bulbs for energy-efficient, compact fluorescent bulbs that use up to 75 percent less electricity.

Turbine Power

As early as August 2004, the embassy had contacted a company that manufactures wind turbine generators suitable for use on the roof of an average dwelling. The turbine blades are 1.75 meters across and are mounted on a two-meter-high pole. The turbine produces up to one kilowatt of electricity, enough to power a television, DVD player, computer, refrigerator or freezer (European appliances), as well as several types of lights, such as fluorescent lights.

This particular unit simply plugs into any power socket in the house, via an inverter/conditioning unit. An average household could reduce its electricity bill by 30 percent, and the unit could pay for itself within five years if it is in a nonelectric home where gas cooking is in place.

The embassy purchased the Windsave turbine, and it was installed on the roof of the embassy warehouse in midsummer. Both units are in the experimental phase.

One of the embassy's residential apartment buildings is benefiting from London's first fuel cell, which uses natural gas to produce electricity and heat. This experimental fuel cell's output is small and risks failure from contaminants in the natural gas. However, it is important for the Department to participate in green programs so its design, maintenance and operations staff can learn.

As funds permit, the embassy motor pool will be converted from regular gasoline to LP gas, a more environment-friendly fuel. The conversion may or may not pay for itself, but is justified and being done for environmental stewardship and emissions reduction. And this summer the embassy plans to create several "green roofs" to insulate the building.

These are some of the steps the mission has taken, with many more plans on the drawing board for conservation, better waste recycling and a number of other environment-friendly measures.

"Our hope is to make this the greenest old U.S. embassy in the world," said DCM Johnson. ■

The author is an assistant community liaison officer at the U.S. Embassy in London.

Whiffaway representative James McLean explains to some Embassy guests how the waterless urinals work.

Wind turbines such as this one, although still in the experimental stage, could eventually reduce electricity costs.

David T. Johnson, deputy chief of mission, U.S. Embassy, London offers the welcoming remarks. Seated, from left, Liz Thompson, head of external relations, British Environmental Agency; Tim Curtis, director of operations, Energy Saving Trust of Britain; Trevor Evans, ECON/EST Officer, U.S. Embassy, London.

BEIRUT'S BRIDGE

EMBASSY BEIRUT HELPS 15,000 AMERICANS DEPART LEBANON **BY JULIET WURR**

The summer of 2006 was to showcase Lebanon's triumph over instability and adversity as record-breaking numbers of Arab tourists and the Lebanese diaspora arrived to enjoy the country's beautiful hotels and resorts, exciting nightlife and the cool temperatures of quaint mountain villages. Then, on July 12, Hezbollah commandoes crossed south from Lebanon into Israeli territory, kidnapping two Israeli soldiers and killing others.

The next morning, a deep, thundering boom jolted me awake. Turning on CNN, I learned that in retaliation, Israel had bombed the runways of Rafik Hariri International Airport, rendering it inoperable. My staff looked worried and uneasy as they arrived at the office two hours later. Instead of fighting traffic to reach the embassy compound 15 miles north of downtown Beirut, they encountered empty roads and an eerie calm. No one knew what would happen next.

In the two days that followed, a torrent of Israeli aerial bombing and artillery fire rained on southern Lebanon and the Dahiye district of Beirut. The response stunned Lebanese and Americans alike. Our telephones kept ringing…and ringing…and ringing with Americans seeking help to depart Lebanon as quickly as possible.

QUICKLY AND SAFELY

But how many Americans were in Lebanon? And how many would need our assistance? Our American Citizens Services counted 8,000 Americans registered, but recognized that the number of Americans, including dual nationals, in Lebanon could exceed 23,000. We needed to get Americans out as quickly as possibly but also safely, and we needed to inform the community of our plans. We set up a phone bank, and embassy volunteers—American and Lebanese—answered more than 500 phone calls an hour, round the clock, for 10 long days.

Panic in the American community increased as the bombing intensified. Embassy resources were enhanced with Department of Defense expertise, security assets, vessels and helicopters. We quickly adopted their unfamiliar acronyms as our own and worked side by side to carry out the Non-Combat Evacuation Order we had organized together. We gratefully welcomed two platoons of Marines who arrived with energy, enthusiasm and enormous appetites, which our tiny Embassy snack bar struggled to feed. They unrolled their sleeping bags on the ground, turned our air-conditioned multipurpose room and gym into barracks and got down to work.

In a poignant link with the embassy's past, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which had come to our rescue, was the same unit that suffered the tragic attack against the Marine Barracks at the Beirut Airport on Oct. 3, 1983. In addition to providing protection at the embassy compound and nearby departure processing center, the Marines and embassy staff compiled manifests for departing vessels. They also organized people for transit to the port of Beirut to board commercial ships, or directly from the shore to U.S. Navy ships by amphibious landing craft.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALI DIMISKIEH

Opposite page: Many of the helicopter passengers were families with small children, all provided with appropriate earplugs. Above: Embassy personnel gave priority to those with special medical or humanitarian needs. Below: The United States facilitated the safe return to Lebanon of the Maronite Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, left.

We all became accustomed to the metronome of helicopter landings and departures. A helopad—which the Beirut Air Bridge used from October 1984 to July 1998 to sustain our Embassy—once again became a hub of activity. Four days after the bombing of the airport, the first two CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters arrived with emergency supplies and additional security assets. They left carrying our first departing customers—47 Americans, including children with medical needs.

DOUBLE STAMINA

Americans quickly began arriving at our evacuation processing center. We predicted we could move 1,000 Americans a day, considering the tasks of verifying nationality, ensuring security, managing distraught families and transporting them to the vessel. In a sheer test of stamina, consular officers and Marines hit their target on the first day.

The Department asked us to aim for 2,000 departures the next day. We nailed it, and on day three, we moved an astonishing 4,000 Americans as the processing center operated from 6:00 a.m. until well past midnight.

Although most Americans departed Lebanon on either contracted commercial vessels or U.S. Navy ships, Department of Defense helicopters carried the neediest Americans more quickly to safety and medical care. The helicopters also brought in boxes of water, Meals Ready to Eat and

even a generous care package—lots of chocolate and coffee—from our colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia (see October 2006 issue). VIP visitors, including Secretary of State Rice and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs C. David Welch, came in on the choppers, as well as our first delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The U.S. Embassy in Beirut is nestled on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea half a mile away. The 17-acre compound on which 50 Americans live and work is a cobbled-together collection of buildings transformed into an embassy when terrorists destroyed the downtown building in 1983. Once again, its location far from the fighting but near the shore made it a secure and convenient operational base during the conflict. From the embassy compound, we observed chimneys of smoke rising after bombs fell on Beirut's southern suburbs. And although the buzz of aircraft overhead and the thunder of bombs interrupted our sleep, the fiercest fighting took place many miles away.

The war came much closer to our Lebanese staff and their families. Many returned to homes without electricity to spend sweltering nights listening to earsplitting explosions. But their commitment to the embassy never wavered. The expertise, experience and loyalty of our Lebanese colleagues contributed significantly to the embassy's ability to assist more than 15,000 Americans in departing Lebanon safely.

When the departures ended nine days later, the hundreds of American and foreign journalists who came to cover the story packed up and left. But for those of us who remain at the embassy, and particularly for the Lebanese people, the greatest challenge lies ahead— to rebuild a prosperous, peaceful and stable Lebanon offering hope for a better life for all of its citizens. ■

The author is the public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.

DOING GOOD WORK

GOOD DEEDS IN HAIFA **BY RICHARD C. BEER**

Imagine getting ready to go back to work the first day after a vacation. You get into your car, but before you can drive away you hear the wail of air raid sirens. Moments later a Katyusha rocket plunges into a train depot a few miles away, explodes and kills eight workers.

That was the situation Jonathan Friedland, U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv's consular agent in Haifa, Israel, faced on July 16. As the deadly rain of rockets fired by Hezbollah forces from across the border in Lebanon continued on an almost daily basis, Mr. Friedland, a New Jersey native who has lived in Israel since the early 1970s, kept the consular agency open.

An attorney with a private practice specializing in admiralty law, Mr. Friedland runs the consular agency out of his law office. Aided by office assistants Margalit Boyangiu and Meirav Shoham, Mr. Friedland continued to accept passport applications, notarize documents and answer countless questions from anxious American citizens throughout war-scarred northern Israel. An estimated 25,000 American citizens live in Haifa and the northern Israel region that was under rocket attack.

Seeing television images of American citizens departing Lebanon, they asked what to do about leaving northern Israel.

"That was pretty easy," he said. "We told them to go to Tel Aviv or Beersheva," Israeli cities outside the zone of rocket attacks.

Eventually, he said, most of the consular work became phone work as more people chose not to come in. Mr. Freidland and his staff settled into a routine; each time the sirens sounded, they left their desks, got away from the windows and gathered at the most protected interior location in the small office building that houses the agency.

They listened for a rapid succession of thumping sounds from rocket impacts before leaving their "safe" areas. The closest impact took out an abandoned house two blocks away.

Haifa emptied out as the rocket attacks continued, and the agency's business slowed to a trickle. "The city essentially became a ghost town, a ghost town with people, but nobody was outside," Mr. Friedland recalled.

However, there was one important piece of wartime business to handle. Officials of

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHARD C. BEER

Opposite page: Hezbollah rockets struck this building about two blocks from the agency. Above: Tel Aviv consular officer Doni Phillips, center front, poses with the children after their return from a U.S. summer camp. Right: Consular agent Jonathan Friedland with assistants Margalit Boyangiu, left, and Meirav Shoham, kept the Haifa consular agency up and running.

a Long Island, N.Y., Jewish day camp desperately wanted to bring a group of teenage children, mostly recent immigrants from Ethiopia, out of their low-income neighborhood of war-torn Haifa to the summer camp for a much needed respite.

They needed passports at a time when most Israeli government offices in the region were closed, and then they needed U.S. visas during the peak summer season at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, where the wait time for an interview appointment was more than two months. The Israelis opened their office and quickly issued passports to the children. Mr. Friedland then contacted Embassy Tel Aviv Consul Doni Phillips, who jumped the children to the head of the line and ensured that they received visas the same day they applied.

They were soon on the airplane and off to New York. Once the children settled into the camp, their host families took them to the Empire State Building and a Yankees baseball game and on a boat cruise on Long Island Sound.

After returning to Haifa, the children and their parents showed their appreciation by hosting a party for embassy officers at their neighborhood community center. Speaking on their behalf, Mr. Friedland told the embassy officers, "You have performed a true mitzvah (good deed)." ■

The author is consul general at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv.

THE ULTIMATE CLASSROOM

FINAL EXAM—LEBANON CRISIS **BY WILLIAM D. SWANEY**

Aside from the angst-ridden examinations held in the language testing unit, the Foreign Service Institute does not often subject students to rigorous testing. And although the luckless country of Z has inspired countless role plays, we are not aware of any course offering a practical test of skills acquired in the style of "The Apprentice."

Given this tradition, the 25 students of the PC-532—Advanced Consular Course were surprised when they returned from lunch halfway through the three-week course to find an announcement on the board that 13 of them had won a free trip to Turkey.

Although every member of the group was in transition of some kind and could miss out on important family events—including a birth—all 13 jumped at the chance to get back to what consular officers do best and do every day—make a difference in the lives of real people. Within hours, the group had packed, acquired hundreds of blank passports and emergency food supplies, including candy for the children, and could cite chapter and verse on departure procedures. The first tranche was bound for Turkey within 24 hours.

The practical exam began when the *U.S.S. Trenton*, loaded with 1,705 real people who were fleeing the chaos in Lebanon, landed near Adana, Turkey. Consular officers from the Advanced Consular Course joined the smoothly operating team of staff from Adana, Istanbul and Ankara to help meet those citizens, bring them to nearby Incirlik Air Base and complete in-processing.

In the consular equivalent of triage medical care, the departing citizens were sorted into three groups: those with valid passports and visas; those with minor documentary problems, such as expired passports; and those with major problems, such as no documentation. After the whole group had passed through, they were taken to "Patriot Village," where they enjoyed dormitory style housing, complete with air-conditioning.

After helping the citizens settle in for the few hours of night remaining, consular teams of Locally Employed staff and Foreign Service officers from around the world were formed to provide a 24-hour presence. They had three basic tasks:

PHOTOGRAPHS: BENJAMIN S. BALL

Opposite page: Officers from the U.S. Mission in Turkey, military colleagues from Incirlik Air Base and temporary duty employees from around the world help unload the USS Trenton *at the Port of Mersin. Above: Adana Locally Employed staffer Hamza assists with the children arriving on the* USS Trenton.

provide information and assistance to the citizens, resolve the citizens' minor or major documentary problems, and help manage the boarding procedures for departure flights to prevent unauthorized departures and to generate an accurate manifest to send to the Department of Homeland Security.

For the next week, the group applied coursework lessons on dealing with people under stress, working in the interagency community, information technology in crisis situations, consular interviewing and more. As the days wore on, the difficulty of getting airplanes to transport the denizens of Patriot Village challenged the team's patience, stamina and creativity. Meanwhile, the group had plenty of time to compare notes, adjust tactics and learn from each other. The team began to resemble an extended family, and it was hard to get in the taxi and leave my colleagues at work on the overnight shift, preparing the final flight for boarding.

On the trip to the airport, I reflected on how we had spent the second half of our course. We may not get academic credit for the practical exam, but a consular officer could ask for no better training than our week in Adana.

After a brief stay in the Adana airport, I was settled in my seat for the 5 a.m. flight to Istanbul, facing the tough choice of whether to take the traditional pre-takeoff champagne or stick with orange juice. Actually unwinding for the first time in a week, I chatted and compared notes with my seatmate, a Canadian Foreign Service officer. With a pensive smile, he captured the essence of our experience perfectly:

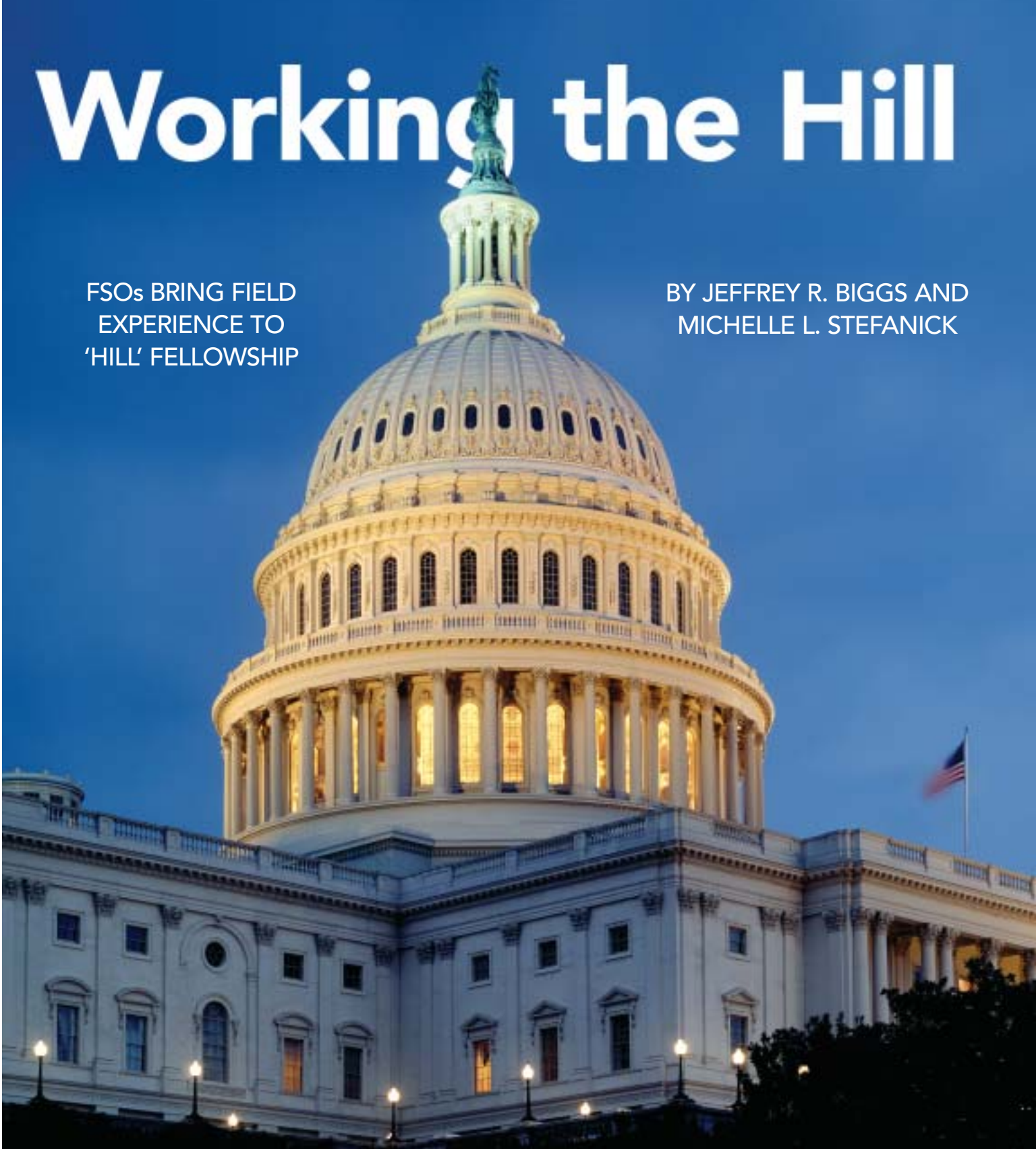
"It's not often you get to be involved in something so unambiguously worth doing." ■

The author is currently consular section chief in Yaoundé.

Working the Hill

FSOs BRING FIELD EXPERIENCE TO 'HILL' FELLOWSHIP

BY JEFFREY R. BIGGS AND MICHELLE L. STEFANICK



Every year a dozen or so State Department Foreign Service officers are accepted to spend a year gaining legislative experience by working as congressional staff. One of the two primary programs for this purpose is the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship Program.

Founded in 1953, the APSA Congressional Fellowship over the years has brought talented political scientists, journalists, domestic and foreign policy government specialists, health policy specialists and international scholars to Capitol Hill to experience the U.S. Congress at work.

A 1964 Department of State News Letter pictured 16 federal Congressional Fellows at the White House at the invitation of President Lyndon B. Johnson. They were all white men. The president told the Fellows that "no high government official can be completely effective if he does not understand the role of Congress in our democracy." After looking over the group, he reportedly asked, "Where are the women?" The class following the meeting with President Johnson included three women.

Left: Michelle Stefanick with Canadian Senator Romeo Dallaire. Right: Michelle Stefanick joins Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) as she talks to a constituent.

The APSA fellowship includes a two-month foreign affairs seminar in September and October run in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The seminar is run by Professor Charles Stevenson, who brings the experience of several decades as a Senate staffer on national security and foreign policy and nearly a decade on the faculty of the National War College.

In November, the Foreign Affairs Fellows join the other 20 to 25 APSA Fellows in an intensive three-week orientation on Congress, the political atmosphere for that session and the mechanics of the legislative process. Panels of Senate and House staffers talk about their work, expert speakers lead in-depth discussions of areas such as the political landscape and the budget and appropriations process, and there are visits to key legislative support organizations such as C-SPAN.

Concluding the orientation is a program on utilizing the resources of the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service and an introduction to advanced Senate and House legislative procedure.

EXPANDED EXPERIENCE

APSA Fellows begin their assignments in December or January. Michelle Stefanick joined the staff of Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine), who at the age of 31 in 1978 became the youngest Republican woman and first Greek-American woman elected to Congress.

To broaden their legislative experience beyond what a single assignment can provide, the Fellows also attend the bi-monthly Wilson Seminar Series, which includes speakers from the House Parliamentarian, Congressional Budget Office, Government Accountability Office, Office of Legislative Counsel and the press corps.

The APSA Fellows also spend a day at the Annapolis State House observing the workings of the Maryland State Legislature.

A high point this year, Ms. Stefanick said, was attending the State of the Union address.

APSA Fellows participate in a Canada-U.S. Parliamentary Exchange. The Fellows organize and host a week's orientation for the Canadian parliamentary interns in Washington and the Canadians return the favor in Ottawa. The Canadian interns met with Philip Drouin, then deputy director of the Sudan Programs Group on the Darfur crisis and the role of the U.S. and international community.

The Canadians arranged for Ms. Stefanick's attendance at an internal parliamentary discussion led by Senator Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, the U.N. commander in charge during the Rwandan genocide. She also had a personal discussion with Sen. Dallaire and since then has been exchanging information on Darfur with his staff.

REAL ISSUES

Having previously been assigned to Khartoum, Ms. Stefanick was the senator's point person on Darfur. She followed the issue closely and met with concerned Maine constituents, members of the non-governmental organization community and Senate staffers.

Ms. Stefanick also prepared Senator Snowe for her trip to Iraq, helped obtain the support of 65 senators to join Senator Snowe's request for an additional $150 million to support breast cancer research and helped win unanimous support for legislation cosponsored by Senator Snowe and Senator Barbara Boxer that expands the eligibility for the Purple Heart to prisoners of war who die in captivity.

The conclusion of the fellowship is marked by a reception in the historic Mansfield Room of the Capitol. Members and key staff are joined by alumni and the 180-plus individuals who have participated in the fellowship that year.

"This has been truly an amazing year," Ms. Stefanick said. "The relationship between the Congress and the Executive Branch is such a crucial one. I strongly recommend the APSA Congressional Fellowship Program to anyone who has an interest in learning more about Congress."

Additional information on the program can be found at www.apsanet.org. ■

Jeffrey Biggs is a former Foreign Service officer, former Foreign Affairs Fellow and current Congressional Fellowship director. Michelle L. Stefanick is a Foreign Service officer who just completed a 2005–06 fellowship with Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine).

MANAGING LOSS

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES LOOM DESPITE OVERALL LOW ATTRITION

BY MONICA BRADLEY

Life in the Foreign Service or Civil Service may not be for everyone. However, statistics bear out some simple facts. Overall, the Department's attrition rate is lower than other foreign affairs agencies, and the Department has a 77 percent job satisfaction rate.

When comparing Department data to other foreign affairs agencies, State's overall attrition rate for 2005 was the lowest, at 5.5 percent. According to the Office of Personnel Management's web site for 2005 employment trends, attrition rates for the U.S. Agency for International Development, Commerce and Agriculture were 8.6, 17.7 and 28.5 percent, respectively.

The 2004 Federal Human Capital Survey shows that 68 percent of Department employees were satisfied with their current jobs and 63 percent were satisfied with the Department. Both of these rates are comparable to other federal agencies and private industry, as reported in the FHCS.

In 2006, the Department conducted a Quality of Worklife Survey. Some 77 percent of employees reported being satisfied with their current job, and 70 percent said they were satisfied with the Department. Table 1 shows the results by service.

Table 1: State Satisfaction by Type of Service

	State 2006 Overall QWL Results	Civil Service Results	FS Generalist Results	FS Specialist Results
Current Job Satisfaction	77%	74%	79%	78%
Overall Agency Satisfaction	70%	72%	69%	70%

The nonprofit organization Partnership for Public Service compiles an index from the FHCS survey that ranks the best places to work in the federal government. State was ranked 10th in 2005, up from 19th in 2003.

Many factors affect attrition. One is that the Foreign Service is an up-or-out system. Employees must separate for others to move up the ladder. A small number of officers separate for lack of being tenured or decide the Foreign Service is not for them after one or two tours, and a small number are selected out during the promotion process. However, most officers separate because of time-in-class restrictions or voluntarily retire starting at age 50. On average, 3.6 percent of the Foreign Service voluntarily separated and 1.3 percent was involuntarily separated each year between 2001 and 2005.

FOREIGN SERVICE GENERALIST ATTRITION

The average annual generalist attrition rate for 2001–05 was 4.3 percent. Junior officer attrition has dropped significantly over the last five years, from 2.7 percent to 1.4 percent. Table 2 displays the attrition rates for junior officers, mid-level officers and the Senior Foreign Service by fiscal year.

Table 2: Foreign Service Generalist Attrition Rates FY 2001–05

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Junior Officer	2.7%	2.7%	2.5%	1.8%	1.4%
Mid-Level Officer	4.6%	3.6%	4.5%	3.7%	4.3%
Senior Foreign Service	10.3%	9.9%	6.6%	8.8%	11.1%
TOTALS	5.1%	4.4%	4.3%	3.8%	4.2%

To develop promotion plans, the Department uses a computer simulation to project future attrition. The average generalist attrition rate is expected to increase slightly over the next five years from 4.3 to 4.7 percent. This is primarily because of increased attrition projected in the Senior Foreign Service for age and time-in-class. The rate for junior officers is projected to remain below the five-year historical average of 2.1 through the end of fiscal year 2010. Table 3 displays the projected attrition rates for junior officers, mid-level officers and the Senior Foreign Service by fiscal year.

Table 3: Projected Foreign Service Generalist Attrition Rates FY 2006–10

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Junior Officer	1.6%	1.9%	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%
Mid-Level Officer	4.0%	4.8%	4.1%	3.9%	4.2%
Senior Foreign Service	11.7%	13.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.9%
TOTALS	4.3%	5.0%	4.9%	4.6%	4.7%

Some 79 percent of Senior Foreign Service generalists are eligible to retire, and 97 percent will be eligible to retire within five years. Although these percentages are high, retirements in the Senior Foreign Service will create opportunities for others to be promoted into the senior ranks. The current deficit of mid-level officers should be significantly reduced over the next four years as newly hired junior officers are promoted. There should be sufficient numbers of eligible mid-level officers prepared to move into the senior ranks when the time comes.

Table 4: Average Annual Foreign Service Specialist Attrition		
	Previous 5-Year Average Attrition	Projected Average Attrition Next 5 Years
Construction Engineer	3	3
Diplomatic Courier	6	2
English Lang. Programs	1	1
Facilities Manager	9	8
Financial Management	6	8
General Services	6	10
Health Practitioner	3	4
Human Resources	4	6
Information Technology	48	60
Information Resources	1	1
Medical Officer	1	2
Medical Technician	0	1
Office Management	45	46
Printing	1	0
Psychiatrist	1	1
Security Engineer	8	10
Security Officer	57	61
Security Technician	1	2
SPECIALIST TOTAL	201	226

The Department's attrition rate for junior officers has steadily declined over the last 20 years. A recent analysis of Foreign Service generalist attrition revealed that 7.1 percent of the officers who entered the Department in 2000 (just prior to the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative) left before 2005. By comparison, the cumulative five-year attrition rates for employees entering in 1985, 1990 and 1995 were 12.5 percent, 8.8 percent and 7.5 percent, respectively, as shown in Figure 1.

At a time when the number of Foreign Service language-designated positions has been increasing, the Department is concerned that a growing number of employees with the most proficient (4/4 or higher on the FSI scale) "super-hard" language skills are expected to separate over the next five years. Currently, 34 percent of these employees are eligible to retire, and 60 percent will be eligible in the next five years. By comparison, 22 percent of all FS generalists are eligible to retire, and 39 percent will be eligible within five years. The Department anticipates that approximately one-third of its most advanced language speakers/readers will separate within the next five years and is looking at ways to increase the number of employees with advanced language skills.

FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST ATTRITION

The average annual Foreign Service specialist attrition rate for 2001–05 was 5.5 percent. This rate is expected to decrease to 4.8 percent over the next five years because of increased specialist hiring over the past several years. However, the actual number of employees separating will increase by about 12 percent per year for each of the next five years.

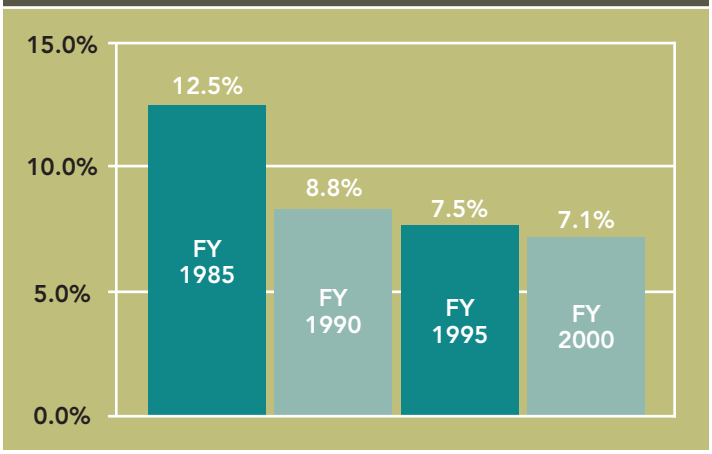
Attrition rates within the management sub-functions are expected to increase over the next five years. The attrition rate for General Services is projected to increase from 3.6 percent to 5.3 percent, while Human Resources will increase from 5.3 percent to 5.9 percent and Financial Management will increase from 4.1 percent to 5.1 percent. Attrition is projected to increase for all three management sub-functions because of retirements and time-in-class restrictions.

The Information Technology Manager skill group was created in March 2002. Because the Information Management Specialist and Information Management Technicians merge into this new skill group at the rank of FP-02, they were considered together for projection purposes. A 24 percent increase in the attrition rate is expected in the IT skill groups over the next five years—mostly because of projected retirements.

While retirements in the IT field are projected to increase, resignations are expected to decrease. This projected decline is partially related to the IT Skills Incentive Program, which began as a five-year pilot program in 1999 and was formalized in May 2006. The program has helped the Department retain employees while motivating IT professionals to obtain and maintain advanced industry-wide skills, certifications and credentials. With the continuous review of certifications and credentials eligible for this program making the Department more competitive in the IT field, resignations are expected to continue to decline.

PHOTOGRAPH: (PREVIOUS PAGE): CORBIS

Figure 1: Cumulative 5-Year Attrition for Junior Officers by Entry Year



Currently, 16 percent of all specialists are eligible to retire, and 35 percent will be eligible to retire within five years. Specialist groups with 25 percent or more of the population currently eligible to retire include financial management officers, human resource officers, general services officers, information technology managers, medical officers, medical technicians and office management specialists.

CIVIL SERVICE ATTRITION

Civil Service attrition is expected to rise over the next several years as the baby boomers reach retirement age. The Department's Civil Service population has gradually aged over the last decade, with the average age rising from 41 in the early 1990s to 47 in 2006.

The average annual attrition rate for Civil Service employees was 6.3 percent during the past five years and is projected to increase to 7.2 percent in the next five years. At 8.1 percent in 2005, the attrition rate was higher than the most recent five-year average annual attrition rate. However, this is still well below the overall Civil Service attrition rate for all federal agencies for fiscal year 2005—12.83 percent—and the attrition rate for all agencies in the Executive Branch—12.97 percent—as reported by OPM.

Although overall Civil Service attrition rates are relatively low compared to other Executive Branch agencies, several of the Department's mission-critical occupations are projected to see average annual attrition rate increases above 20 percent over the next five years. They therefore warrant special attention. These include public affairs specialists (35 percent increase), passport visa examiners (25 percent increase) and security administration (23 percent increase). Information technology management (17 percent increase) and foreign affairs (11 percent increase) are additional categories to be tracked, given the traditionally high number of vacancies in these occupational skill groups.

Currently, 14 percent of State's Civil Service employees are eligible to retire, and 33 percent will be eligible within five years. 73 percent of the current eligibles are in the Civil Service Retirement System and 27 percent are in the Federal Employees Retirement System.

According to OPM data for 2004, 30 percent of the federal workforce in CSRS and 13 percent of the workforce in FERS were eligible to retire. At State, 34 percent of CSRS employees are eligible to retire and 5 percent of FERS employees are eligible. Some 54 percent of the Department's most senior Civil Service employees (GS-15 and SES) will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Therefore, leadership and management training for GS-13s and -14s is all the more important to ensure these employees are ready to assume top positions.

While Human Resources projects increased attrition in some categories of employees over the next five years, everything possible is being done to proactively manage losses. With the increased focus on management/leadership training and mentoring that Secretary Powell began and Secretary Rice has further strengthened, the Department will be ready for the next generation of employees to step up and take charge. ■

The author is a management analyst in the Office of Resource Management and Organization Analysis.

Table 5: Attrition Rates for Selected Mission-Critical Occupations

	Previous 5-Year Average Attrition Rate	Projected Attrition Rate Next 5 Years	Difference in Rates	Resultant Percent Increase
Public Affairs Specialist	5.2%	7.0%	1.8%	34.6%
Passport Visa Examiner	4.0%	5.0%	1.0%	25.0%
Security Administration	5.2%	6.4%	1.2%	23.1%
Foreign Affairs	5.6%	6.2%	0.6%	10.7%
Information Technology Management	4.2%	4.9%	0.7%	16.7%

Clockwise from left: Ernestine Pierce, Celine A. Neves, Shaunita Hart-Wright and Jonathan Tull.

OES-DRL Training

OFFICE DELIVERS ON LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING

BY ROY CHAVERA AND CELINE NEVES

In the last few years, the Department has emphasized leadership and management training. It has sent the message through the ranks that employees must be given training to become better leaders.

That message has been taken to heart and given top priority by the Executive Office for the bureaus of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

However, it takes more than management support to make career development a reality. It requires initiative and dedication on the part of the employee. Several OES-DRL/EX staff members have taken their careers in hand by negotiating with management for the time, funds and support for advanced training. The office has one graduate from the National Defense University's Advanced Management Program and three graduates from the Executive Potential Program.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE): TONY FELDER; (OPPOSITE PAGE): TONY BELL AND CELINE NEVES

NDU's Advanced Management Program is a 14-week executive curriculum that gives senior information technology leaders an integrated understanding of the policies and priorities that affect their field. It provides a series of challenging tasks and opportunities that help develop and refine strategic leadership skills.

Strategic Insight

In this era of dwindling resources, budget shortfalls and increasing emphasis on competitive sourcing, the AMP curriculum gives IT managers insight into strategic planning, security, emerging technologies and functional management. Students become familiar with management practices that facilitate better planning and acquisition of IT systems. They also learn how to redesign work processes in light of organizational and human factors.

AMP graduate Celine Neves, Information Management division chief in OES-DRL/EX, found the program to be one of the best experiences of her life.

"This experience challenged me like never before," she said. "By the second week of the program, I learned it wasn't so much about learning the subject matter. Anyone can learn, given sufficient time and resources. It was about learning when to lead, learning when to follow, learning when to let go, learning to work with people you don't necessarily agree with, learning to work under short deadlines and accomplishing an objective as a team."

The Executive Potential Program, offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Leadership and Management Graduate School, is a year-long program designed to make mid-level managers more effective leaders. Participants engage in classroom discussions, group exercises and team and independent studies that encourage stretching, growing, contributing and making a difference. The intense curriculum is based on experiential learning that includes completing temporary job assignments, Senior Executive Service shadowing, mentorship, team projects, benchmarking and networking.

EPP graduate Ernestine Pierce, Administrative Services division chief in OES-DRL/EX, said the training was very intense, but worth it.

"The two 90-day detail assignments and interviews with Senior Executive Service and high-level managers taught me that good leaders care about their people, because without them the work would not be done," she said. "These successful leaders also emphasized the importance of improving listening and communication skills. The EPP is one of the best programs available to mid-level Department employees who wish to improve their leadership and managerial skills."

Shauntia Hart-Wright, Administrative Services deputy division chief in OES-DRL/EX, is also an EPP graduate. She said some of the tasks were quite challenging and took her out of her comfort zone, but ultimately the lessons learned were immeasurable.

"It has opened many wonderful opportunities, such as my current position in OES-DRL/EX, and given me many new skills," she said.

Effective Leadership

Jonathan Tull, one of the office's Information Management team leaders, enrolled in the EPP because, he said, "careful analysis of my career aspirations showed me that I needed to equip myself with the knowledge and methodology of effective leadership. My participation in this intense program has allowed me opportunities that normally would not have been available. It is providing me with insight and countless intangibles that touch every part of my life."

Becoming a stronger and more successful leader and manager helps strengthen the Department's ability to meet its transformational diplomacy goals.

The achievements of the OES-DRL staffers would not have happened without support that extends from their immediate supervisors all the way to Secretary Condoleezza Rice, who expressed her vision for professional and personal development in a Town Hall meeting in 2005:

"I'm a huge believer in human capital. What you do in nurturing people, in training them and making sure that they have what they need is extremely important."

The OES-DRL/EX staff members who have had these opportunities to expand their leadership skills look forward to challenging and fulfilling careers. They encourage others to make their career dreams a reality by seeking out leadership and management training opportunities. ■

Roy Chavera was until recently the OES-DRL executive director. Celine Neves is the Information Management division chief in OES-DRL/EX.

The United Nations estimates 600 million light weapons work against peace around the world.

Weapons Removal and Abatement

THIS OFFICE SAVES LIVES AND MAKES THE WORLD SAFER

BY THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF WEAPONS REMOVAL AND ABATEMENT

Since World War I, the ever-expanding use of explosive devices, including land mines, has led to the killing and injuring of innocent civilians long after conflicts have ended. Land mines and explosive remnants of war kill or maim tens of thousands of civilians each year—decades after the fighting has stopped.

Abandoned ordnance and poorly secured or ill-managed stockpiles of small arms and light weapons pose a serious threat to regional stability and public safety, particularly if they fall into the hands of criminals and terrorists. This complicates U.S. diplomatic and development efforts in key countries for the war on terror.

PHOTOGRAPHS: OFFICE OF WEAPONS REMOVAL AND ABATEMENT

To clean up this aftermath of conflict and forestall new ones, the Department created in 2003 the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to reduce the harmful effects of indiscriminately used, illicit and abandoned conventional weapons of war.

On any given day, WRA staff may be addressing a Rotary Club in Arizona, chairing a 24-nation donor meeting in New York or donning helmets and body armor to monitor programs in minefields and clearance sites in some 25 countries around the world. The staff is diverse, with Foreign and Civil Service personnel, military officers and contractors working together to clear a path to a safer world.

PM/WRA formulates policy, manages programs and conducts public outreach. As Murf McCloy, the office's senior technical adviser and a 36-year veteran of the Marine Corps, says, "Nothing we do is in a vacuum. We work with the Defense Department, international donors, the United Nations, host nation officials, everybody."

Having to coordinate work with so many actors is difficult, but Mr. McCloy says it's nothing that can't be solved with a little "extra elbow grease." Office staff all say their top priority is keeping innocent people alive and returning valuable land to productive use.

The Tools of War

The United Nations estimates that there are as many as 600 million small arms and light weapons in circulation around the

At a Glance

Office name
Weapons Removal and Abatement

Symbol
PM/WRA

Office director
Richard G. Kidd, IV

Staff size
28

Office location
SA-3, Sixth Floor, Suite 6100

Web site
http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra

Complying with international mine action standards, program manager Dennis Hadrick, left, and deputy director for programs Col. Stu Harris, center, don protective gear during a visit to a demining site in Afghanistan.

Left: This shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile was recovered and destroyed in Chad by the Mines Advisory Group through a WRA grant. Above: A munitions cache in Afghanistan gets the "ultimate" WRA treatment.

globe. Ammunition, explosives and other instruments of war are readily available as well.

"You see piles and piles of shells," says foreign affairs officer Katherine Baker, describing a munitions dump she recently visited.

Many weapons that have not yet reached the black market are highly vulnerable to theft by terrorists and criminal organizations. In countries flooded with light weapons, the rule of law is trumped by the rule of the gun, making any lasting peace nearly impossible.

PM/WRA works to change this equation by securing stockpiles of small arms, light weapons and munitions; destroying unneeded stocks (more than 900,000 small arms and light weapons and 80 million pieces of munitions so far); and fighting the illicit arms trade.

One particular weapon—the man-portable air defense system, also known as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles—has risen to the top of the post–9/11 U.S. security agenda, in large part because of the 2002 attempted shoot-down of a civilian airliner in Mombasa, Kenya.

Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs Robert Joseph has characterized MANPADS as the second greatest weapons threat, after weapons of mass destruction, that the U.S. faces today. Since the 1970s, MANPADS have been used against at least 40 civilian aircraft, resulting in more than 24 crashes. PM/WRA leads the Department's effort against loosely secured, excess or otherwise at-risk foreign stocks of MANPADS, helping to destroy more than 19,000 since 2003, with commitments for the destruction of thousands more.

Policy adviser Stephanie Pico says the job offers great satisfaction in "eliminating the tools of war and doing our small part in the war on terror."

Problem Solving

In 2005, there were a reported 7,328 casualties from land mines and other explosive remnants of war, with estimates as high as 20,000 worldwide if non-reported casualties were included. Some 21 percent of the victims are children. But the effects of land mines and explosive remnants of war go far beyond the number of people killed or disabled. Land mines make large swaths of valuable land unusable, hindering economic development, post-conflict reconstruction and the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Even if mines are not actually present, the fear that they could be often stalls post-conflict recovery. That is why PM/WRA's programs are focused on clearing land mines and explosive remnants of war from areas where they have the greatest humanitarian impact, rather than expending finite resources to locate and clear every last land mine in some remote area.

"The Survey Action Center, a nongovernmental organization that specializes in measuring the impact of land mines, has estimated that some 20 percent of the world's minefields cause about 80 percent of the casualties," says Richard Kidd, director of PM/WRA. The key management challenge is to target limited resources where they will have the greatest effect.

"This focused approach, one which is being emulated by more and more donors, really is working," adds Jim Lawrence, the office's principal deputy director. "The global land mine problem won't be with us forever. This is one humanitarian problem that has an end state. Using a public health metaphor, land mines are like polio, not malaria. Their harmful effects can be eradicated."

Program Manager Deborah Netland enjoys "making a difference in the world." Like most office staff, she spends a lot of time traveling to countries affected by land mines, small arms and light weapons. She loves the feeling of accomplishment she gets from her projects.

"One year, an area is an active minefield," she says. "Return a year later and there are now houses, crops, schools and clinics. It is a great feeling. You get to see and enjoy the impact of your work."

Connecting with Americans

PM/WRA has built a public-private partnership program that raises awareness and resources from the business community and civil society to support mine action programs around the world. With nearly 60 nongovernmental organization partners, the office staff reaches tens of thousands of American citizens each year at outreach events, conferences and other gatherings.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE LEFT): MINES ADVISORY GROUP; (RIGHT): COL. STU HARRIS; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP): COL. STU HARRIS; (BOTTOM): OFFICE OF WEAPONS REMOVAL AND ABATEMENT

WRA permanently removed these munitions from the conflict in Afghanistan. Below: WRA Director Richard Kidd stands next to a dump of hazardous ordnance in Laos.

Addressing audiences in large cities and small towns, officers describe the successful U.S. program and the progress being made. They challenge students and adults to take action. Stacy Bernard Davis has seen the program grow to a nationwide network of concerned and impassioned supporters.

"Something about the land mine problem and its terrible impact on innocent children and civilians really moves and motivates people," she says. "We love connecting with Americans whose core values of compassion, philanthropy and volunteerism are as strong as ever. They just need a program they can support, and we provide it by linking concerned citizens with NGOs who need help."

PM/WRA assistance has helped raise tens of millions of dollars for mine action. The office makes excellent use of information technology, including a highly acclaimed web site, distribution lists, a stream of media notes, an e-newsletter and web-conferences. In 2004, the office won the Secretary's Award for Public Outreach.

PM/WRA has an ambitious goal: to rid the world of the harmful effects generated by surplus and dangerous conventional weapons of war. With each weapon the office destroys, the world becomes just a little bit safer, something all in PM/WRA are rightly proud of. ■

Arms Control

U.S. LEADS UKRAINE MISSILE DESTRUCTION PROJECT **BY MICHAEL M. UYEHARA**

The destruction site near Shostka rests about 50 miles from the Ukraine-Russia border.

As an Army officer, I never imagined that I might someday travel in a helicopter that once formed part of a potential adversary's military might. Yet here I was, seated next to U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bill Taylor—a West Point graduate who flew helicopters for the Army—in an MI-8 HIP helicopter that had been built in 1989.

We were flying in September to a location in northeast Ukraine, just 50 miles from the Russian border, as part of a group of diplomats witnessing the destruction of the last of 1,000 man-portable air defense systems that were once part of the Soviet arsenal, but now excess to Ukraine's defense needs. The MANPADS, shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, were similar to the U.S. Redeye and Stinger missiles I had once been trained to deploy.

A North Atlantic Treaty Organization Partnership for Peace Trust Fund project was the impetus for destroying the missiles, as well as 133,000 tons of munitions and 1.5 million small arms/light weapons that pose a hazard to the population living nearby.

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement has been deeply involved in the project's design, funding and implementation. The NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency is managing the project.

As representative of the lead nation for the Trust Fund project, Ambassador Taylor invited representatives of donor nations to the site near the city of Shostka for the ceremony. Defense Attaché Air Force Colonel Jim Molloy and Public Affairs Section staff member Vadym Kovaliuk were also on the trip. Colonel Molloy and I had already gone to Shostka in June to witness the start of the MANPADS destruction process.

THE COLD WAR LEGACY

Until I began working at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, I had not realized the magnitude of Ukraine's demilitarization challenge. Ukraine figured prominently in Soviet war plans. As the Warsaw Pact countries liberated themselves from communism's yoke, first-echelon Soviet units often dumped large quantities of weapons and ammunition in Ukraine with minimal accountability as they withdrew to Russia.

Ukraine is endeavoring to transform its military forces and military-industrial complex to meet its current needs. It holds

PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. EMBASSY IN KYIV

Above: These two shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles were part of the 1,000 destroyed under the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund project. Below: A woman dressed in traditional Ukrainian garb presents ceremonial scissors to NATO official Susan Pond as Ukrainian Ministry of Defense officials look on.

as many as 7 million small arms/light weapons and stores around 2.5 million tons of obsolete and excess munitions, some dating from the two world wars.

The munitions, stored in more than 180 depots and arsenals throughout Ukraine, have caused serious accidents. There have been five explosions or fires since October 2003. The most serious fire caused seven fatalities.

NAMSA developed a proposal for the Trust Fund project in response to a Ukrainian government request. The agency estimated it would cost donors more than $25 million and take 12 years.

The United States agreed to be the lead nation for the first three years, or phase one, of the project because of our strong concerns over the MANPADS and small arms/light weapons threat. NATO describes the project as the largest of its kind ever.

To date, more than $7 million has been contributed to phase one, which is projected to cost nearly $10 million. In addition to the substantial U.S. contribution of more than $3.6 million and Ukraine's in-kind contribution, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the European Union's European Commission have contributed.

THE LAST MANPADS EXPLODE

In Shostka, Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Volodymyr Tereshchenko briefed us on the procedures to destroy the MANPADS. After being uncrated, two missiles at a time were taped together and carried by a special handling device, essentially two lengths of rope looped around the front and back of the missiles. Once the missiles were placed in an outdoor destruction pit, soldiers added six pounds of plastic explosives and prepared to explode the whole assembly.

In the bunker at the destruction site, Ambassador Taylor was invited to turn the key to the electric detonator. The ground shook from the explosion of the two MANPADS. Regional Governor Nina Harkava then exploded the 999th and 1,000th missiles. Back outside the bunker, we inspected the pit and found very little debris left from the missiles.

Addressing journalists afterward, Ambassador Taylor hailed the successful cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, and noted that the project had enhanced the security of Ukrainians and others by eliminating the possibility that the MANPADS could fall into the hands of terrorists.

After a light lunch and the usual vodka toasts, we returned to Kyiv, knowing that the world was safer and that this vital Ukraine-NATO project was off to a good start. ■

The author is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv.

EDUCATION + TRAINING

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FS-2/GS-14
PT207 Intermediate Leadership Skills

FS-1/GS-15
PT210 Advanced Leadership Skills

Managers and Supervisors
PT107 EEO Diversity Awareness for Managers and Supervisors

Newly Promoted FS-OC/SES
PT133 Senior Executive Threshold Seminar

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

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Security		Dec	Jan	Length
MQ911	SOS: Security Overseas Seminar	4, 18	8, 22	2 D
MQ912	ASOS: Advanced Security Overseas Seminar	12	2	1 D

Foreign Service Life Skills		Dec	Jan	Length
MQ115	Explaining America		26	1 D
MQ116	Protocol and U.S. Representation Abroad		27	1 D
MQ853	Managing Rental Property Overseas		31	.5 D

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

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ABOVE): BOB KAISER; (OPPOSITE PAGE): CORBIS

Keep Your Kitchen Safe

BY EILEEN VERITY

Many people would say the kitchen is the most important room in their house—and the busiest. It is the place where food is stored and meals are prepared, and it is also where families and friends like to gather and socialize.

Unfortunately, the kitchen can also be a place where people can be seriously injured, especially children. Typical accidents involve burns, cuts and falls; more serious ones involve electrical shocks and poisonings. To prevent an accident, look for potential hazards and use safe kitchen practices.

The kitchen can be the scene of a serious electrical shock. The installation of inexpensive ground fault circuit interrupters on the outlets is a good measure to prevent shocks. More than two-thirds of the approximately 300 electrocutions and thousands of electricity-related injuries that occur in and around the American home each year could be prevented by GFCIs. They interrupt the flow of electricity when current leaking to ground is detected. The GFCI constantly monitors electricity flowing in a circuit and stops current flow when it detects a loss. GFCIs should have a trip point of no more than 10 milliamps to fully protect children.

All outlets on the kitchen counter should be protected by GFCIs and should be tested monthly to ensure proper operation. To test one, plug a lamp into the outlet and turn it on. Press the TEST button. The RESET button should pop out and the light should go out. Press the RESET button to restore power to the outlet. Contact an electrician to correct any defects if the GFCI does not operate properly.

Many common household products, such as cleaning agents, are poisonous if ingested. Keep them out of reach and out of sight of children by securing them in a locked cabinet or closet and make certain that the cabinet beneath the kitchen sink is child-proof, since this is often a popular spot to store cleaning products. Do not repackage toxic or harmful products (e.g., solvents in a soda bottle), because this may result in mistaken identification. And always remember to keep these items—cleaning fluids, detergents, lye, soaps, insecticides, etc.—away from food and medications. Finally, always place the number of your poison control center and other emergency numbers near the telephone.

Scalds and burns can occur because heat is required to prepare many foods. Most adults will suffer third-degree burns if exposed to 150º F water for two seconds or to 120º water for five minutes. To prevent scalds and burns, turn pot- and panhandles inward when cooking on the stove, have oven mitts available, keep hot beverages and food away from the counter edge and out of the reach of children, remove lids and covers on microwave-heated food carefully to prevent burns from the steam that is released from the container and set the temperature on the water heater to no more than 120º.

Cuts are usually caused by contact with a knife or broken glass. Clean up broken glass immediately using a vacuum cleaner. Keep knives sharp. The old adage "A sharp tool is a safe tool" applies. Dull knives are more likely to slip and can cause skin tears in addition to cuts. Keep knife grips clean and grease-free and always use a good cutting surface away from the body. Store knives in a drawer or knife block out of the reach of children. Don't leave knives lying on the counter and never leave them unattended in the sink.

Kitchen floors can be very slippery when wet so get into the habit of cleaning up spills immediately. A mat on the floor in front of the sink will help absorb water from dishwashing and other activities. Be sure to eliminate tripping hazards by keeping kitchen walkways clear and free of clutter and closing kitchen drawers or cabinet doors, especially the low ones.

Why not take a close look at your kitchen today? The approaching holiday season is a busy time of the year in the kitchen. Don't let an unrecognized hazard cause an accident that will dampen your holiday spirit. ■

The author is a safety and occupational health specialist with the Division of Safety, Health and Environmental Management.

Passionate About Painting

FACILITIES MANAGER CREATES WITH HIS BRUSH **BY LISA SABOL-SIKORSKI**

"I have an addiction, and this is what comes from it," says Steve Krueger as he walks through his Helsinki apartment. He has more than 400 of his paintings artfully hung on every bit of available wall space and stacked in piles or leaning against the walls of his art studio.

During the workweek, Steve is a mild-mannered facilities management officer at the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki. During his off time, he channels his energy and emotion through his paintbrush and creates modern tableaux that hang in art galleries and collectors' homes all over the world.

"Painting comes from inside," he says. "I don't really think about what influences me, but it is probably an expression about how I feel or what I am thinking at the time. My painting is strictly emotional. There have been times when a painting has bothered me so much that I take a painting knife, cover it up and start over. Sometimes my best paintings come out that way."

Steve became interested in painting while working at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. He started visiting Viennese museums with his wife Klaudia and became intensely attracted to 20th-century modern art.

"I was looking at the paint, the strokes, and seeing how the painter actually created the painting," he says. "After going to museums for a while, Klaudia made the suggestion, 'Why don't you paint?' Eventually, I picked up a brush and started painting."

His early influences were Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele.

"Some artists talk about the different professors they studied under, but I feel I learned from the best artists that ever lived by looking closely at what they did," he says.

Steve has found inspiration from the places where he has lived. In Vienna, he started painting landscapes. When he was living in Guatemala, he was influenced by Cubism and Abstract Expressionism. On a whim, he bought a beat-up Spanish guitar from a Mayan shop and kept it in a corner of his house for a while. One day, he started painting guitars and eventually created 20 guitar paintings that were exhibited in a Guatemalan gallery.

Since moving to Finland, the abstract tradition that is so strong in Finnish design pulsates through Steve's work.

"I use just about everything," he says, "because everything interests me, even collage. Sometimes my art derives from materials lying around the house. If I didn't travel the way I did, I'd be painting on old doors and windows or whatever I'd have lying around.

Steve wants his paintings to be shown in public "so people can enjoy them—or hate them and react toward them. I don't mind if I get a bad reaction. A bad reaction is better than no reaction."

When he is not working or painting, he is networking in Finland's arts community. Steve and Klaudia go to museums and galleries to see what styles and trends are taking hold of artists and collectors. Many galleries in Helsinki show only Finnish artists. He has found that the ones showing international artists are often booked until 2007 or 2008.

Steve Krueger stands with one of his works at the opening of his exhibition at the AVA Galleria.

Still, Steve has gotten positive reactions in Finland to his work. In 2006, he has exhibited his paintings in the American Resource Center at the University of Helsinki Library and at AVA Galleria in Helsinki. His next exhibit will be at the Hanko City Library Gallery late this year.

Besides Finland and Guatemala, Steve's work has been on exhibit in Vienna. In Washington, his paintings can be seen at L'Enfant Galerie. His work is also on his web site at www.stevenkrueger.com. ■

The author is the community liaison officer at the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki.

PHOTOGRAPH: LISA SABOL-SIKORSKI

U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland

Peter R. Coneway of Texas, a businessman and community activist, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, serving concurrently as Ambassador to the Principality of Liechtenstein. Prior to his appointment, he was an advisory director with Goldman, Sachs & Co. He founded and managed the firm's Houston office and also worked in Tokyo. He is married and has two children.

U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic

Richard W. Graber of Wisconsin, an attorney and community activist, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. His law practice, at one of Wisconsin's largest firms, focused on business transactions and government relations. He has been elected chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin four times and served as chairman of the Wisconsin delegation at the 2004 national convention. He is married and has two sons.

U.S. Ambassador to Guyana

David M. Robinson of Connecticut, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Previously, he served as deputy chief of mission in La Paz, from 2003 to 2006, and in Asunción. His other overseas postings include the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Iceland.

U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

Ambassador Christina B. Rocca of Virginia is the new U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Most recently, she was assistant secretary for South Asian Affairs. Before joining the Department, she was foreign policy adviser to Senator Sam Brownback, working on issues relating to South Asia. Prior to that, she served many years with the Central Intelligence Agency. She is married and has two children.

U.S. Ambassador to Brazil

Clifford M. Sobel of New Jersey, a businessman and former ambassador, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil. He was ambassador to the Netherlands from 2001 to 2005. Prior to that, he was chairman of Net2Phone, the largest provider of Internet telephone service. He has served on the boards of two public policy think tanks and was on the advisory boards of Empower America and the Republican Leadership Council.

U.S. Ambassador to Belarus

Karen B. Stewart of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus. She was deputy chief of mission in Minsk. Her other overseas postings include Bangkok, Colombo, Vientiane, Udorn and Islamabad. In Washington, she was director of the Office of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus Affairs.

U.S. Representative to the Office of the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva

Warren W. Tichenor of Texas, active in President Bush's presidential campaigns and a former business executive, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the U.S. Mission in Geneva. Prior to his appointment, he was president of W.W. Tichenor & Co., a San Antonio–based private investment firm. He has served on the boards of numerous charitable, political, business and civic organizations.

U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture

Ambassador Gaddi H. Vasquez of California, a public servant and son of migrant farmworkers, is the new U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture. Most recently, he was director of the U.S. Peace Corps. He was an appointee of three former California governors and was appointed by former President George H.W. Bush to federal commissions.

<<< Merrill M. Blevins, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 27 of congestive heart failure in Houston, Texas. He served in the Army Air Corps in World War II before joining the Department in 1947. His overseas postings included Brussels, Paris, Bonn, Bern, New Delhi, Canberra and Rome. After retirement, he served as chief of protocol for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

<<< Alexander "Doc" Chodakowski, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer, died August 11 of congestive heart failure in Venice, Fla. He served in the Navy in World War II. His overseas postings included Vienna, Bonn, Frankfurt and Pretoria. After retiring in 1977, he worked as a technical security instructor and consultant for the Department until this year.

<<< Leland W. Cross, 76, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 3 of congestive heart failure in Lawrence, Kan. He served in the Army before joining the U.S. Information Agency in 1961. His overseas assignments included Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and the Soviet Union. After retiring in 1983, he served as an escort officer for the Department and taught English as a second language.

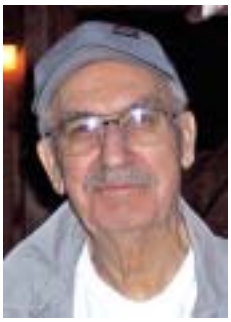
<<< Jonathan W. Dublin, 53, a Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 18 of a heart attack in Al Hillah, Iraq. After retiring as a Navy electrical engineer and working for Raytheon, he joined the Department in 1999. His overseas postings included Rabat, Kingston and Bogotá, in addition to Iraq.

<<< Clifton Forster, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 19 following a fall at his home in Tiburon, Calif. A high school student in Manila at the beginning of World War II, he was interned by the Japanese. Following his repatriation, he served in the Navy. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1949 and served overseas in the Philippines, Burma and Israel, as well as 15 years in Japan.

James Gorman, 75, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 6 of a heart attack in Oregon. He served in the Air Force before joining the Department in 1957. His overseas postings included Bogotá, Palermo, Georgetown, Montevideo, Managua and Istanbul. After retiring in 1982, he lived in Medford, Ore., where he operated a bookstore.

<<< John A. "Jack" Hols, 73, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 15 of bladder cancer in Spokane, Wash. He served in the Army and worked in public relations before joining the U.S. Information Agency in 1967. His overseas postings included India, Vietnam, Ghana, Turkey and Canada. After retiring in 1989, he conducted tours to Europe and Asia and was an avid bicyclist and fisherman.

Ray Jones, 84, a retired Foreign Service secretary who served several ambassadors, died Aug. 4 of a heart attack in Washington, D.C. A veteran of World War II, he served in the military government in Berlin before joining the Department. His overseas postings included Dusseldorf, Bern, Khartoum, Vienna, Saigon, The Hague, Beijing and Berlin. He had a keen eye for art, antiques and carpets, which he accumulated around the world.



<<< Lawrence L. Petersen, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 4 of congestive heart failure in Delta, Colo. He served in the Marine Corps in World War II. His overseas assignments included Sweden, Germany, Taiwan, Bolivia and Guyana. After retirement, he was a professor of economics at Arapahoe Community College in Colorado.

<<< William T. Sandalls, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 8 in New London, Conn. He served in the Army during and after World War II. His overseas assignments included Beirut, Damascus, Hamburg, Mogadishu and Adana, Turkey. He retired in 1968.

<<< Judith A. Thurman, 62, widow of retired Foreign Service officer J. Richard Thurman, died Sept. 26 of lung cancer in Boulder, Colo. She accompanied her husband on overseas postings to Santiago, Ankara, Nicosia, Mexico City and Brasilia. After his death in 1997, she lived in Santa Barbara, Calif., and Boulder.

<<< Roger L. Street, 68, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died June 15 of cancer at his home in Bethany Beach, Del. He joined the Department in 1990 and served overseas in Mauritania, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Ghana and Panama. He retired in 2003. He was a member of the Bethany Beach city council and volunteer fire department.

<<< Donald A. Wetherbee, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 8 after a brief illness in Silver Spring, Md. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean Conflict and as part of embassy Marine Security Detachments in Asunción and Santiago. During his 23 years with the Department, he served overseas in Laos, the Belgian Congo, Algeria, France and England. He retired in 1978.

<<< Ruth Marriner Szopa, 79, widow of retired Foreign Service officer Eugene Stanley Szopa, died Aug. 26 of respiratory failure in Camden, Maine. She met and married her husband in Tehran and accompanied him on overseas postings to Palermo, Munich, Warsaw, Mozambique and Singapore. They retired to the coast of Maine in 1984, where she was active in local art events.

In the Event of a Death

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960.

*retirements

Foreign Service >>>

Bigelow, Stanton R.
Bracken, Joseph M.
Clark, Jennifer A.
Cook, William H.
Cooper, Melissa J.
Curley, Renate H.
Davis, Luella B.
Erdman, Richard W.
Gould, Barry K.
Levine, Henry A.
Louton, John
Magnusson, Lori G.
Maxstadt, James Edward
Moore, Barbara Calandra
Nielsen, Marie A.
Roberts, Mary F.
Rogers, P. Diane
Rose, Ellen Mae
Slotta, Gregory S.
Williams, Stephen Bryan
Youmans, Patricia J.
Young, Michael L.

Civil Service >>>

Botti, Anita Louise
Conrad, Maria Julia G.
Courlang, Edward M.
Davidson, Michael C.
Gallini, Linda Schmitt
Hancks, Merry Susan
Hardesty, Charles R.
Irwin, Bayard M. Jr.
Lewis, Carolyn M.
Muller, Edward G.
Sayasithsena, Souksomboun
Sears, Elizabeth Ann
Thompson, Richard A.
Ward, Everett B.
Ward, Marvin E.
Webber, Daniel Stewart
Winter, Roger P.

"Worth Doing"

This issue overflows with examples of Department colleagues around the world actively engaged in deeds described eloquently by a Canadian Foreign Service officer as "unambiguously worth doing."

For example, we fill out the picture of the Department's response to the Lebanon crisis with reports from Beirut, Haifa and Turkey. We'll see how the professionals in Beirut, tasked with expediting the departure of 2,000 Americans a day from that war-torn country, actually doubled that number by foregoing sleep and working closely with their old friends from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. We'll watch the embassy's consular agent in Haifa and his Locally Employed staff as they dodge Hezbollah rockets to provide calm, professional service to the estimated 25,000 Americans living in Haifa and northern Israel.

Finally, half of the students enrolled in the PC-532–Advanced Consular Course at FSI got a treat in the middle of the course—an all-expenses paid trip to Turkey to put into practice what they were learning in the classroom. Within 24 hours, these 13 students were on the ground near Adana, Turkey, taking a real examination in the art and science of helping more than 1,700 real and frightened citizens fleeing the chaos in Lebanon.

Colleagues in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement set their goals high: cleanse the world of the harm caused by surplus and dangerous conventional weapons of war. With the United Nations estimating as many as 600 million small arms and light weapons circulating around the world, the task is daunting. But the rewards are just as great as the challenge: keeping innocent people alive and returning valuable land to productive use. So far, the diverse staff of Foreign and Civil Service professionals can claim more than 900,000 small arms and light weapons, 80 million pieces of munitions and more than 19,000 man-portable air defense systems destroyed—and a somewhat safer world.

While the staff is small—just three full-time employees—the heart is big, because the Office of Casualty Assistance represents the Department's human face to grieving families following the death of an employee. It also acts as advocate for sick or injured employees. In cases of mass casualties, the office can call on crisis support team volunteers from the Bureau of Human Resources, but much of its work focuses on the routine but vital questions that follow a loss—shipping household effects, access to Social Security benefits, keeping children at post and in school.

Last but never least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Merrill M. Blevins; Alexander "Doc" Chodakowski; Leland W. Cross; Jonathan W. Dublin; Clifton Forster; James Gorman; John A. "Jack" Hols; Ray Jones; Lawrence L. Petersen; William T. Sandalls; Roger L. Street; Ruth Marriner Szopa; Judith A. Thurman; and Donald A. Wetherbee.*

Rob Wiley

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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Robert F. Wiley, Editor-in-Chief
Date: September 30, 2006

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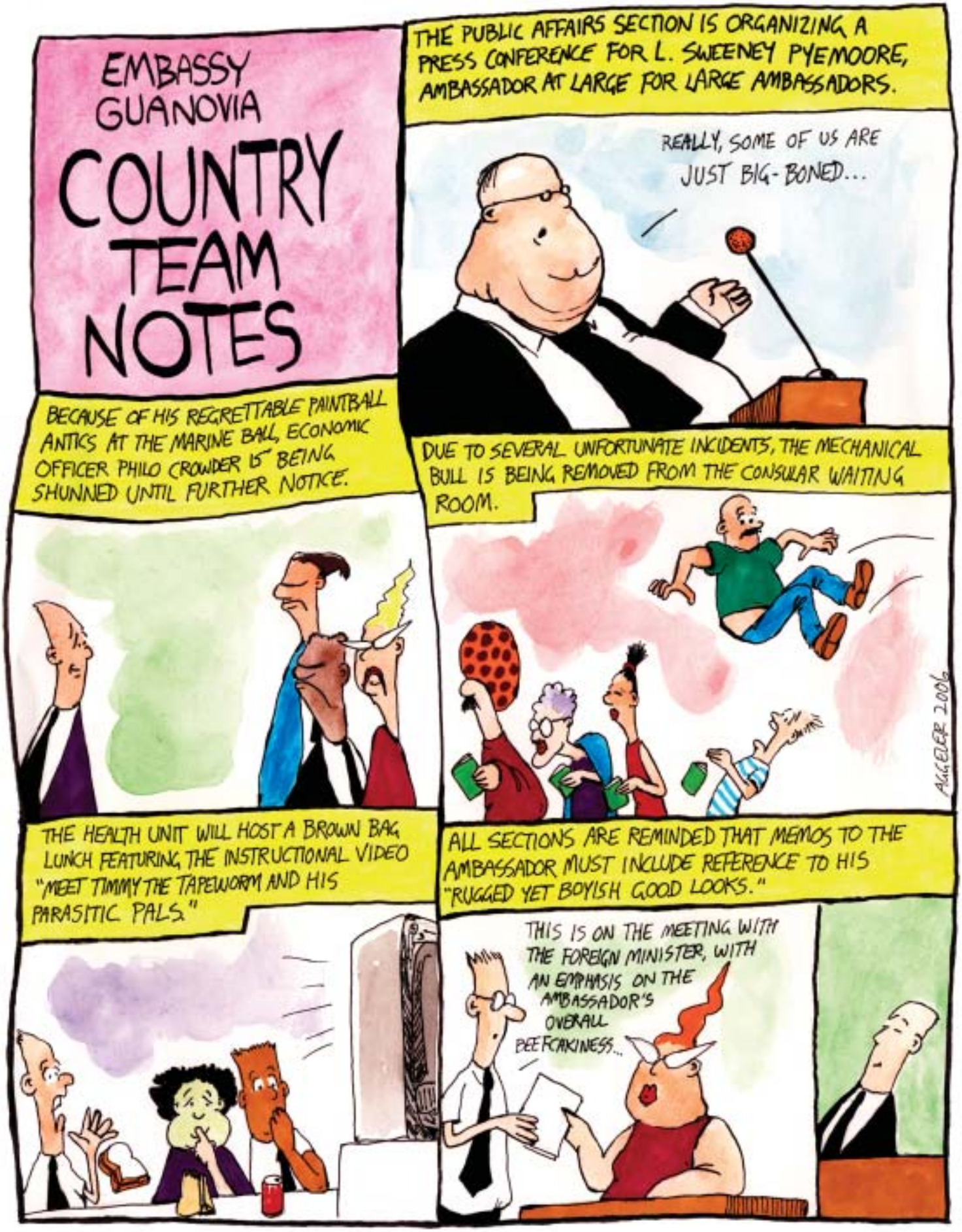
EMBASSY GUANOVIA
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THE HEALTH UNIT WILL HOST A BROWN BAG LUNCH FEATURING THE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO "MEET TIMMY THE TAPEWORM AND HIS PARASITIC PALS."
ALL SECTIONS ARE REMINDED THAT MEMOS TO THE AMBASSADOR MUST INCLUDE REFERENCE TO HIS "RUGGED YET BOYISH GOOD LOOKS."
THIS IS ON THE MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE AMBASSADOR'S OVERALL BEEFCAKINESS...

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