STATE MAGAZINE

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June 2014

Songs of Inspiration
Gospel Choir Brings Hope to Uruguayans

Mexico City
Post of the Month, Vibrant Metropolis

Community Effort

Creative Collaboration Yields Positive Results in São Tomé

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Vibrant metropolis, thriving democracy

Photo by Konrad Głogowski

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On The Cover

A foosball table is a popular hangout spot for a group of children in São João Angolares, a fishing village in São Tomé, where U.S. Embassy Libreville is coordinating with locals to revitalize the central market.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Communicate, Collaborate, Connect

In the digital era, the ubiquitous mobile phone provides many people around the world with on-demand online connectivity and instant access to news and entertainment. Within this technological paradigm, social media has emerged as the preeminent form of communication, and is extensively employed by public and private organizations to connect with various audiences.

Within the Department, social media outlets have been used extensively as community outreach tools, allowing posts around the world to engage uniquely with people in their localities. While social media outreach has flourished during the past several years, and led to numerous success stories in public diplomacy, many posts have justifiably continued to stress the importance of traditional people-to-people connections.

Several posts have developed programming that capitalizes on current communication tools to spread the word about events offering face-to-face interaction with speakers, artists, performers and public figures. Public Diplomacy offices at U.S. Embassies in Montevideo and Libreville are at the forefront of this movement, leveraging current communication tools to garner attention for their novel outreach programs, where locals can work directly with Americans.

In Uruguay, the public affairs section partnered with the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) American Music Abroad exchange program to bring Oscar Williams and The Band of Life to the country for a multi-city concert tour during Black History Month. In several of the small towns where the singers performed free concerts, some Uruguayan residents had never met an American.

The Americans performed alongside their Uruguayan counterparts and led workshops in impoverished communities, which helped advance intercultural cooperation and build friendships. The outreach program also provided a platform for the U.S. Mission to address discrimination and social inclusion issues in a country where a majority of the population is of white, European decent. Read more about this successful program on page 14.

This month's cover story examines a unique collaborative art program in São Tomé that is tapping into local creativity and community action. Embassy Libreville, which also covers São Tomé and Principe, teamed with ECA, the Bureau of African Affairs and leading "Social Practice" art practitioner Edgar Arceneux to develop the Three Million Years project.

The project focused on integrating local ideas and artistic talents into several endeavors that benefit the community and reflect the country's cultural heritage. To coordinate with locals over vast distances, team members in the United States and at post used online tools and social media to share documents and provide feedback. Be sure to check out the full story about this innovative project on page 10.

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Deep in the heart of Northern California's Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park, the brilliant blue summer sky breaks through a natural oculus in the forest canopy.
Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

In the News

Ambassador Kristie Kenney, second from left, and Bangkok Governor Sukhumbhand Paribatra, far right, lead more than 100 cyclists on a ride to highlight Bangkok's bike-share program, which the embassy participated in as part of its Green Cooperation Month in October.
Photo by Ployping Siripakdee

Mission Thailand Wins Greening Award

The Department's Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI), which promotes environmental and economic performance, annually gives three GDI awards, including one to a post or bureau chosen by the senior-level Greening Council. This year's winner is Mission Thailand, for its efforts to encourage sustainability.

Among their accomplishments, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and Consulate General in Chiang Mai launched a multi pronged campaign to reduce energy use and costs that put the mission on target to reduce household and office electricity consumption by 11 percent in the coming year, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars. Energy use at the Chief of Mission's Residence fell to its lowest recorded level in at least 16 years, in part due to "Turn It Off" stickers posted on electronics to be completely shut down when not in use. Facilities Management drastically reduced air conditioning use, and the General Services Office rolled out an education campaign for households to help reduce monthly energy usage.

Mission Thailand also worked with the Thai community on eco-diplomacy, designating October 2013 as "Green Cooperation Month." The management team held a reception for local environmental and conservation-related government, business and academic representatives. In addition, the embassy and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration co-sponsored an event in which the ambassador and Bangkok's governor led more than 100 embassy, city government and local cyclists through city streets, highlighting Bangkok's innovative bike-sharing program.

Other of the mission's green events included:

- A visit to a zero-waste community in Bangkok,
- A presentation by a Thai magazine editor and environmental advocate on changing attitudes toward conservation,
- A roundtable discussion with entry-level officers and special ists to discuss conserving energy at work and home,
- Installation of LED lights throughout the chancery and warehouse, and
- A coral reef restoration conducted by 80 mission employees in central Thailand.

So far, the mission has reduced energy use by 11 percent, standalone printers by 58 percent and paper use by 24 percent. It also has purchased a hybrid vehicle and 10 bicycles, and installed a battery recycling station in Chiang Mai. The cafeterias have replaced plastic bags with biodegradable bags and food containers made of recycled sugar cane fiber.

The other GDI awards, the "People's Choice" Award (decided by employee votes on The Sounding Board) and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations award for Excellence in Utility Data Reporting, will be announced later and posted at state.gov/green.

Department Celebrates World Water Day

The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, with help from the Global Partnership Initiative and Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, celebrated World Water Day in April with an event called US Tech H2.O that highlighted 28 American-made water technologies selected by experts convened by the U.S. Water Partnership. Included were pioneering approaches to water purification, pumping, efficiency, nutrient recovery and hydro power. One surprise involved 3-D modeling of a water treatment plant's architecture.

Presidential Science Advisor Dr. John Holdren, the keynote speaker, endorsed such techniques, "to get the most out of the water we have."

New ways to manage ever scarcer water resources are needed. Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Cathy Novelli said that if we continue business as usual, water demand in 2030 could outstrip supply by 40 percent, putting $3 trillion of the global domestic product—22 percent of the world's economy—at risk.

Master of Ceremonies Charles Fishman, author of the book "The Big Thirst," sounded an optimistic note, proclaiming that the innovation "revolution is coming to water."

Among the booths in the Exhibit Hall were those of eight U.S. government agencies involved in technology commercialization or offering export assistance.

USAID Global Water Coordinator Chris Holmes announced 83 semi finalists in USAID's Securing Water for Food Grand Challenge for Development, which offers $32 million in grants. He also unveiled a new competition featuring a $500,000 grand prize for organizations that develop innovative desalination technologies. Up to 10 "Desal Prize" semifinalists will receive seed money to test or further develop their devices.

The U.S. Water Partnership, McWane Industries and ProTexting (which provided an instant audience polling app) sponsored the event. Launched in 2012 by the Department of State at Rio+20, the U.S. Water Partnership mobilizes U.S. expertise, resources and ingenuity to address global water challenges. Its 87 partners have committed some $650 million to fund global water projects over the next five years.

More information is available from waterteam@state.gov.

Presidential Science Advisor Dr. John Holdren speaks at the World Water Day event on solving complex water, food and energy problems.
Department of State photo

Local children teach one of the volunteers, James Rider, assistant cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Mission in Israel, how to speak Arabic.
Photo by Maida Rider

Fallen FSO's Giving Spirit Remembered

April marked the one-year anniversary of the death of Anne Smedinghoff, the 25-year-old Foreign Service officer who was killed in a car bomb blast along with several other Americans last April while delivering books to a school in Afghanistan. To mark her passing, her former A-100 colleagues gathered at posts worldwide to celebrate her spirit of giving through charitable acts of their own.

They included:

- In Islamabad, former A-100 classmates and the first- and second-tour officer group organized a bake sale that raised more than $1,300 to buy books for a local nonprofit that educates street children.
- In Prague, U.S. Embassy staff collected more than 100 books. A shelf was dedicated in Smedinghoff's honor at the University of J.E. Purkyne Library.
- In Jerusalem, a dozen entry-level officers from the U.S. Mission visited a West Bank school to donate sets of "My English Library" and "My Arabic Library" books.
- In Lima, Peru, volunteers collected dozens of books to help a day care center and a shelter start a library.
- In Abu Dhabi, the staff at the U.S. Embassy donated more than 200 books to a school in a rural corner of the United Arab Emirates.
- In Riga, the embassy community is collecting books to donate to an alternative family home that supports children in need.
- In Arlington, Va., former colleagues held a fundraiser for the Johns Hopkins University fund established in Smedinghoff's name, raising more than $2,000. The fund provides financial support to students studying diplomacy.
- In São Paulo, the consulate community donated books to help establish a library at an elementary school in one of the largest favelas in Brazil.
- In Mexico, the Consulate General in Monterrey donated hundreds of books to a center for the children of single-parent homes and plans to hold a reading series at a local school. In Mexico City, embassy volunteers and members of the community and a charitable organization helped build, in just a few days, a new home for a mother and her three children.

Former classmates also offered their recollections. Jeremy Jewett, now in Abu Dhabi, called her a hero. As the son of a librarian and a teacher, he said, "I cannot accept a world where good-hearted people get killed for delivering books to kids."

Kris Morrissey, now in São Paulo, said, "It feels right to remember her by supporting the education of children in needy communities. We can see that same bright light in the eyes of the children when they open the door to a full library for the first time."

Emma Marwood, now in Mexico City, said first- and second-tour officers there wanted to help others, "to embody her spirit because she was so positive and so determined."

News

Chennai Supports Mid-level Officers

While leading an outreach trip to Coimbatore, Chennai mid-level officer Nelson Wu answers press questions while entry-level and Locally Employed Staff observe.
Photo Harvey Beasley

The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai's professional development efforts, long focused on entry-level officers (ELOs), recently began addressing the needs of mid-level officers (MLOs), who are filling positions at post with substantial management, supervisory and mentoring responsibilities.

The post's approach emphasizes the theoretical and the practical. The theoretical focus, coordinated by Michael Cathey, deputy consular section chief, emphasizes broad foreign policy and management topics and typically involves sessions with visiting senior Department officials. Consular Section Chief Nicholas Manring coordinates the practical focus, emphasizing operational topics and activities.

Manring said the program started in earnest in the 2013-2014 rating year after he served on a 2013 promotion panel and consulted with HR/CDA/ML.

Chennai's program follows the approach of the FSO promotion precepts by developing skills incrementally across a career path, and takes officers to the next step beyond what ELOs do. For example, where ELOs are asked to participate in an outreach public speaking event, MLOs are asked to lead it. Where ELOs are asked to draft cables, MLOs are asked to edit them. Where ELOs are asked to attend a representational event, MLOs host one.

MLO participation in professional development activities is tracked on a spreadsheet, giving them a plan of things to accomplish during a two-year tour. It also gives post management a tool to ensure MLOs are developing the professional skills needed to assume positions with greater leadership and management responsibilities.

Chennai is often able to tap experts from other posts in India to share their knowledge with the post's MLOs via digital videoconference. A recent DCM-hosted, mission wide DVC on the Department's Career Development Program featured the mission's senior human resources officer. Mid-level Political Officer Kalpana Murthy said she found the DVCs useful.

Military Commands Brief DS Team

In early February, a small team from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's International Programs Directorate traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, for briefings with leaders of two U.S. combatant commands.

Diplomatic Security (DS) has partnered more closely with the Department of Defense (DOD) for increased security support for Department of State personnel in war zones and other high-threat environments. "In this enhanced relationship, DOD provides security support to missions abroad in crises or difficult situations," explained DS Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs Mark Hunter. "As we go to 'new normal,' it will be even more important for DS to work with the combatant commanders."

To better understand DOD's security support, Hunter, Office of Special Programs and Coordination Director Kevin Wetmore and DS Africa Desk Officer Special Agent Stephen Robertson met with leaders of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). EUCOM and AFRICOM are two of 10 combatant commands, or "COCOMs," that manage U.S. military assets across the military services and develop U.S. military policy and plans for contingencies abroad. Each focuses on a geographic region or functional specialty, such as special operations. They have also deployed personnel and equipment for relief operations in humanitarian and natural disasters, peacekeeping missions and counterterrorism operations, and stand ready to assist DS in an overseas crisis.

AFRICOM Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Engagements Ambassador Phillip Carter III, right, discusses DOD security support for U.S. diplomatic facilities in Africa with DS Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs Mark Hunter, center, and DS Director of Special Programs and Coordination Kevin Wetmore in February.
AFRICOM Public Affairs photo

"I learned a lot about the capabilities of both AFRICOM and EUCOM, and how they operate, how they are structured and how they are poised to support us when needed," Hunter said. "Just as importantly, I learned what their capabilities are not, and what's realistic regarding response times, and what types of units they can provide in different situations."

On their first day of briefings, Hunter and his team joined the DS liaison officer to AFRICOM, Special Agent Greg Sherman, for meetings at AFRICOM headquarters. The next day, the DS liaison officer to EUCOM, Special Agent Tim Dumas, accompanied the DS team to briefings with civilian and military leaders at EUCOM and U.S. Marine Forces Europe/Africa headquarters.

Hunter said a highlight "was the support and positive energy that we gained from meeting with the combatant commanders and their staffs," whom he said were always seeking ways to support DS better. "They would do anything they can to ensure the safety and security of our people and facilities," he added.

Consul General Patrick Linehan, center, and staff from the consulate's consular and public affairs sections stand tall after hosting a student outreach/Super Bowl party with the Japanese collegiate football national championship team from Kwansei Gakuin University.
Photo by Tomoko Takatori

Leadership Day 'Football' Communicates

At the U.S. Consulate General in Osaka-Kobe, Japan, the consular section used the convergence of the Bureau of Consular Affair's (CA) annual Consular Leadership Day (CLD) and the Feb. 3 Super Bowl to focus on this year's CA Leadership and Management Tenet: Communicate. The section's Consular Communication Football game aimed "to teach and review communication concepts, utilize those concepts in a practical application exercise rooted in football, then view the Super Bowl through the lens of communication and teamwork," explained consular officer and CLD organizer Ben Abbott.

The rules of Consular Communication Football were based on American football except that points were scored through communication. In the first quarter, players communicated directly with team coaches, but the inherent chaos and confusion showed how even direct communication creates barriers and filters to be overcome. In the second quarter, coaches were forced to instruct the players via a coordinator who relayed instructions to the team, highlighting the challenges of indirect communication. In the third quarter, only non verbal communication was allowed.

"I was amazed that we could plan a strategy for the game non verbally," said Locally Employed (LE) Staff member Kaori Baba. "Non verbal communication could even better unite the team."

In the fourth quarter, restrictions were eased, and the players could choose the most effective communication method to relay instructions.

To conclude the CLD, Consul General Patrick Linehan and the consular and public affairs sections hosted a student outreach/Super Bowl party with the Japanese collegiate football national championship team. The Super Bowl's first play involved a stunning miscommunication between the quarterback and center, highlighting for CLD participants how even professional football teams make mistakes. "We learned that miscommunication will cause damage to the team that will gradually tear the team apart," concluded LE Staff member Yoichi Tanaka.

In all, "This was a helpful reminder that we all need to constantly work to improve communication, personally and professionally," said Deputy Consular Chief Amy Nicodemus.

Embassy Kyiv Copes with Challenges

A Wall of Remembrance on the central Maidan honors those killed in Ukraine's strife.
Photo by Lisa McAdams

Ukraine's renewed political struggle is a huge challenge for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Senior Regional Security Officer Karen Lass and her team at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. Lass said her staff has been working flat out, around the clock since the crisis broke.

Lass said challenges include making new contacts on the local police force and within the new government. Until the final structure is in effect, the Regional Security Office continues to meet regularly with the traditional diplomatic police, the Special Brigade, as well as the liaison from the new Special Defense Force, which protects foreign missions.

Another challenge was managing the authorized departure of 115 eligible family members to Poland and overseeing their recent return to Kyiv. Also, 22 families living near Kyiv's main square had to be relocated due to the recent heavy fighting and political protests. All have since returned home.

Embassy Kyiv staff moved into a new embassy compound (NEC) in January 2012. It is approximately 30 minutes from the city center by car and includes a large USAID office, the chancery, a GSO warehouse and a Marine Security Guard residence. Before the NEC was built, the embassy was spread out across five separate buildings throughout the city. Now, 156 Americans, 477 Locally Employed Staff and more than 100 eligible family members all work in the same compound.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs Mark Hunter traveled to Kyiv recently to assess the challenges facing the post and bring praise and encouragement from Washington, D.C. He said he has full confidence in Lass and her team: "We are in good hands in Kyiv."

Lass said the biggest worry is what will come next, with Russian troops poised on the border with eastern Ukraine. "The staff is preparing for every eventuality," she said.

Diversity Notes

JOHN M. ROBINSON
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Extraordinary Leadership Liaisons

Ambassador Janice Jacobs, one of the Department of State's most productive and prolific senior leaders, left the Department in April for well-earned retirement. She was sworn in as Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Counselor Affairs in 2008 after 28 years of service in Senegal, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mexico and Thailand. A lesser known but very significant role for Jacobs has been her service as Leadership Liaison (LL) for one of the Department's prominent Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs), Executive Women at State (EW@S). In this role, she provided guidance to EW@S leaders and participated in numerous events, all while simultaneously attending to her demanding day job as assistant secretary. Her extraordinary efforts are indeed a legacy.

EW@S is one of 11 EAGs that serve as key partners in the Department's efforts to foster and maintain a diverse and inclusive work environment. EAGs promote internal networking and sponsor professional development opportunities. The Department's EAGs are quite unique in that each is matched with a prominent senior official, who serves as its LL. LLs, appointed by the Secretary of State, provide advice and guidance about effective leadership within the context of Department culture and mentor EAG leaders. Each LL also serves on the Diversity Governance Council, chaired by the Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy, himself an LL for the Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA).

As we say goodbye to A/S Jacobs, we welcome Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson, Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom, Counselor Thomas Shannon and Director of Civil Service Human Resource Management Ray Limon. Our new LLs are in good company as they join the ranks of a number of senior officials who graciously offer their time to serve as LLs to EAGs.

Despite the demanding duties required of their own high-level positions, LLs continuously make time to serve as mentors and advisors and to engage in a number of events hosted by EAGs. From delivering remarks at a commemorative month celebration, to participating on a panel discussion or workshop on professional development, to offering guidance on effective leadership at a brown bag discussion, LLs are dedicated to offering their support in a variety of ways.

No other cabinet-level agency can match the exceptionally high level of commitment demonstrated by our Department's senior officials. As such, the EEOC and OPM recognize our LL Program as a government-wide best practice. If you would like to know more about the LL Program, please contact the Diversity Management and Outreach team in the Office of Civil Rights—DiversityManagementandOutreach@state.gov. To join one of the Department's EAGs, please contact the EAGs at the addresses listed below. ◘

Employee Affinity Group

Asian American Foreign Affairs Association - AAFAA@state.gov
Carl T. Rowan Chapter of Blacks in Government - BIGCTR@state.gov
Council for Career Entry Professionals - CEPCouncil@state.gov
Disability Action Group (DAG) - DAGCouncil@state.gov
Executive Women at State - EWS@state.gov
Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies - GLIFAA@glifaa.org
Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies - HECFAABoard@state.gov
Presidential Management Fellowship Advisory Council - PMFAdvisoryCouncil@state.gov
Returned Peace Corps Volunteers - RPCVs@state.gov
South Asian American Employee Association - SAAEA@state.gov
Thursday Luncheon Group (TLG) - TLG1973@state.gov

Leadership Liaison

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Joyce Barr, Assistant Secretary (A)
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Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary (WHA)
Patrick F. Kennedy, Under Secretary (M)
Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary (AF)
John Bass, Executive Secretary (S-ES)
Raymond Limon, Director (HR/CSHRM)
Thomas A. Shannon, Counselor to the Secretary
Heather Higginbottom, Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources (D-MR)

'Country X'

New FSOs help create oral assessment's fictional nation

By Tom Engle, assessor, Board of Examiners, Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment

Recent Foreign Service officer (FSO) candidates who survived the day long oral assessment may recall a testing scenario based on the fictional nation of Sythia, a multi ethnic, aspiring NATO-member country with a serious drug-trafficking problem. Other candidates may have been "assigned" on test day to the fictional U.S. Embassy in Kuman, a poor, former Soviet client in the Third World with an authoritarian government and nascent democratic movement that was struggling to attract investment by American oil companies.

Some of those candidates are now FSOs, and they are helping the Board of Examiners (BEX) develop the next fictional country, known so far only as "Country X." BEX will use this country in future versions of its famed group exercise, a key component of the oral assessment and a challenging FSO rite of passage.

"We regularly update our testing materials with new fictional countries," explained BEX Staff Director Woody Staeben. "Our materials should describe a place that could be a plausible imaginary country but should not be recognizable as any actual country."

BEX staff developing the characteristics of Country X based on their years of experience serving at posts overseas—plus a generous dose of imagination—recently invited new FSOs to play the role of oral assessment candidates in a mock group exercise designed to test the utility of Country X. The FSO "candidates" had to defend fictional projects the embassy might implement in Country X and then, since the scenario dictates limited resources, reach consensus on the projects to support or discard. As part of the oral assessment, the exercise tests prospective Foreign Service officers' planning and organizing skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, judgment, oral communication and composure.

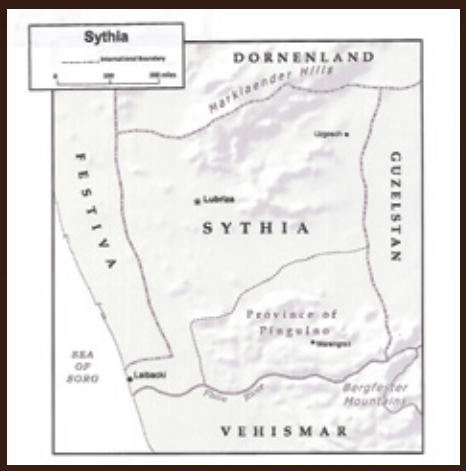
BEX staffers observed the mock exercise and debriefed the role players, asking such questions as whether the features of the new fictional country were plausible and whether the projects proposed made sense, given the country's geography, economy and political climate.

"Feedback from our role players helps refine our picture of Country X and the group exercise projects," said Mary Kruger, the senior BEX assessor who coordinates development of the new country for the board. "BEX officers are now revising the projects they drafted based on that input."

Kruger also manages the often tedious task of eliminating conflicts and inconsistencies that always arise in any committee drafting exercise, including such details as geographic features. "The River X in one officer's project flowed right up and into the X Mountains in another officer's project," she said. "It was a relatively easy fix to redirect the river to obey the law of gravity." Maps produced with the help of the Office of the Geographer round out the country background materials provided to group exercise participants.

An industrial psychologist will evaluate the new materials for their validity and consistency with Departmental personnel policies. The entire process of developing a new Country X can take more than one year.

Before Country X is used in a real group exercise, it must receive a name. Kruger also oversees this process and receives plenty of novel suggestions from colleagues. When Country X finally comes into use for assessments, it might have a name such as Andruvia, Bajukistan or Chomlandia. ◘



A map created by the Office of the Geographer shows the nation of Sythia and its neighbors.

New murals emphasizing culture and learning adorn the American Corner.
Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

Three Million Years

The art of collaborative development

By Kevin Krapf, public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Libreville, Gabon

According to myth, the fishing community of Angolares on the island of São Tomé traces its origins to the 16th-century wreck of a Portuguese caravel loaded with Angolan slaves. Survivors broke free, swam ashore and, with time, built a community now known island-wide as creative, hard working and independent. Angolares is an important cultural hub for São Tomé, one reason the U.S. Embassy in Libreville, which also covers the island, chose it as a partner for an avant-garde Arts Envoy program that supported the mission goals of private-sector-led economic and education development.

To start, the post contacted Los Angeles artist Edgar Arceneaux, a leading player in the emerging "Social Practice" art genre, which transfers creativity from the studio to the streets. For example, in a hypothetical disaster-relief scenario, a Social Practice project might unite an artist, architect, sociologist and development professional to collaboratively design temporary housing, engender community activism or redevelop stricken neighborhoods. Such a project would have affinities with traditional aid, but would also mine the community's history, traditions, culture and aspirations. The "art" would reside in both the collaborative process and the resulting tangible objects and documentation.

A successful Social Practice program requires a committed partner. In this case, the post contacted representatives from an assortment of villages before choosing Angolares.

Arceneaux presented an art/aid concept new to São Toméans. Because the island's population is extremely poor, consisting predominantly of marginalized and underdeveloped rural communities, numerous international NGOs promote projects focused on health care, agriculture, education and economic development. They do good work, but often discount residents as passive participants. Social Practice does not. The post sought an active, innovative community with realizable aspirations, and Angolares offered just that. Arceneaux proposed a partnership that the community welcomed. Together they developed a project titled Three Million Years (3MY), reflecting the geologic history of the island and São Tomé's potential.

The 3MY project (sponsored by ECA, AF/PDPA and Embassy Libreville) quickly converged on three principal objectives:

- renovating Angolares' dilapidated, non functional market;
- producing a blueprint for a marquee sculpture and landscape design in a small but prominent garden at the village entry; and
- redesigning the embassy's new American Corner on the campus of São Tomé's only public university, the Instituto Polytechica Superior.

The renovated market would increase economic activity while providing a venue for learning and partying; the improved garden would announce Angolares to passers by, generating tourism; and the American Corner would serve as a symbolic and literal hub for the project and for education, culture and outreach on the island. The mayor committed funds to the market, and the embassy agreed to fund the garden and American Corner. Arceneaux contributed designs.

Counterclockwise from top: The American Corner's library shows the painters' artistry. *Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco;* Arceneaux is interviewed by Voice of America. *Photo by Pat Becker;* A globally influenced design decorates one of the American Corner's classrooms. *Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco;* Hollow-log canoes are painted for the sculpture garden. *Photo by Kevin Krapf*

Arceneaux's laid-back demeanor and enthusiasm quickly attracted local support. At the hotel during breakfast or the lobby bar in the evenings, on the road in villages or at plantations, he described the project to interested listeners, cemented commitments and created a buzz. A team of TV reporters followed the project throughout, generating a far-reaching response that ultimately led to a Voice of America report broadcast throughout Lusophone Africa.

The publicity generated more assistance offers. An American botanist attending São Tomé's TEDx conference provided a list of garden plant species, local artist Eduardo Male volunteered to paint murals, São Toméan architect Enerlid Franca offered to collaborate on the market and American Corner designs, and Angolares Deputy Mayor Joao "Nezo" Silva, a musician and essential team member, enthusiastically committed his support. Even the manager of a nearby cocoa cooperative contributed, donating traditional tools for art installations. Arceneaux had tapped into island wide community pride and aspiration.

Between June and December, the team worked via email, Skype and Dropbox to exchange documents, drawings, budgets and work plans and to complete preparations with local partners. When Arceneaux returned to São Tomé in early December, renovations were already under way in the market and at the American Corner, and Silva had cleared the garden in preparation for a sculpture that would be built from a blooming spray of upright, brightly painted pirogues.

By the end of the December visit, the team had completed the American Corner's exterior painting scheme and transformed its library and classrooms using a global/local design that bolstered the embassy's commitment to education, entrepreneurship and youth outreach. The team also installed artwork inspired by Angolaren traditions, painted a mural and hosted project discussions with university students. In Angolares, Arceneaux organized classes with local artisans, sharing techniques for making saleable, decorative lighting from woven grasses or stitched coconut shells and yogurt cups. He also worked late into the night with community members painting hollow-log canoes in bright colors for the garden sculpture—accompanied by a local band.

The work in Angolares continues. The market will receive a stage, new furniture, plumbing and electricity, and new interior and exterior paint, and the garden requires an ironwork substructure set in cement to support the boat sculpture. Arceneaux continues directing efforts from Los Angeles, while the embassy presses contractors and local participants to complete the market renovations and garden sculpture.

This Social Practice project generated economic and educational growth—with the added benefits of artistic meaning and local significance. It is a versatile method that can advance other posts' thematic/strategic priorities while representing cutting-edge, 21st century American cultural innovation. ◻

Office of the Month

Staff of the Office of Authentications sit for their portrait.
Photo by Andres Rodriguez

The Authenticators

Transition to CA improves customer service

By Andrés Rodríguez, operations officer, Bureau of Consular Affairs

The phrase "seal of approval" takes on a literal meaning for the Office of Authentications, which provides signed certificates of authenticity for myriad U.S. documents destined for use in foreign countries. The office handles thousands of documents every day, ranging from those for students needing authenticated background checks to seek employment abroad to those for federal agencies submitting court rulings and legal documents that need to be recognized in other countries.

The Office of Authentications' origins date to 1789, when Congress changed the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of State and delegated to the Department the authority for authentication. Like the Office of Presidential Appointments, which affixes to documents the Great Seal of the United States (*State Magazine*, April 2014), the Office of Authentications affixes a seal—that of the State Department—on a range of Authentication and Apostille certificates that are signed by the Secretary of State.

To achieve better customer service and other efficiencies, Authentications, which had been in the Bureau of Administration, moved to the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) in October 2012. Both bureaus supported the move, which made sense due to CA's expertise with consulates overseas and domestic U.S. passport agencies. Authentications is similar to a consulate or passport agency in that it is open to the public for document drop-off/pick-up, operates precise internal workflows, is fee-based and must offer short turnaround times and good customer service.

File Assistance Supervisor Abimbola Abudu is ready to serve at the office's customer service window.
Photo by Andres Rodriguez

The CA Directorate of Passport Services (CA/PPT) drew on its expertise in serving the public to analyze operations and suggest areas of improvement for Authentications' employees and customers. Since the transition, Authentications has implemented changes that have increased revenue, improved physical office conditions, eliminated a backlog of work and satisfied many customers.

The office also added staff. "When I first started working here a number of years ago, we were a staff of six people, but now we are 15 government and contract employees," said Denitra Hawkins, the lead authentication officer. She oversees six administrative contractors and eight assistant authentication specialists, who can now concentrate on issuing certificates while the contract staff handles administrative tasks. The specialists have authority to sign Authentication or Apostille certificates for her, but officers still determine which certificate to issue, based on the country where the document will be used. Some documents include powers of attorney, trademarks, diplomas, treaties, warrants, extraditions, certificates of good standing and agreements.

CA/PPT also addressed how Authentications managed its public-service counter. "One of the first operational issues we noticed was that documents were submitted and picked up from the office throughout the day with no cutoff time," said Amanda Jones, director of Technical Operations for CA Passport Services.

"Employees were unable to address the work already in the system because their days were spent with customers in need of assistance and others dropping off or picking up work at the counter," she said, leading to a backlog and longer processing.

To solve the problems, she said her office replicated best practices used in domestic passport agencies, including initiating morning drop-off/pick-up times, updating the office's website, creating an appointment system for same-day service and updating the telephone system for customer inquiries and information. These changes helped eliminate the unscheduled arrival of customers at the public counter and let employees focus on completing work already in the system. In a little more than a year, the work backlog has been eliminated and processing time has decreased from 20 days to three. Creating a more efficient workflow also increased revenue by 30 percent.

Above: Amanda Jones, left, and Denitra Hawkins press the lever that imprints the seal; **Below:** File Assistance Supervisor Abimbola Abudu, right, and File Assistant LaToya Fauntleroy take a "smile break" at the office; **Left:** A Certificate of Authentication lies before the century-old instrument that impressed the Department of State Seal upon it. *Photos by Andres Rodriguez*

The Office of Authentications not only reports to a new bureau, but also has moved from SA-1 to the newly remodeled SA-17 building near Foggy Bottom where CA has consolidated its directorates. The office is on the ground floor next to the Washington Passport Agency, providing convenient public access. Being in the same building has increased interaction between Authentications staff and their CA colleagues. The office has more work space, more windows for the public and a larger lobby for customers.

Though there is room for improvement, Jones said the authentication process is now operating smoothly. Changes to the business process and the streamlined workflow have improved customer service and will increase the output of authenticated documents. "We have received numerous letters, emails and verbal accolades from offices within the Department and from the public," Hawkins said. "I think the improved operations of our office have been positively noticed both by employees and our customers."

American gospel singer Cecilia Brown electrifies the local community in a joint performance with the Uruguayan choir Afrogama.
Photo by Carissa Gonzalez

Songs of Hope

U.S. gospel band brings joy to Uruguayans

By Carissa Gonzalez, deputy public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay

Tears filled an elderly woman's eyes as she hugged me and thanked the United States for bringing a U.S. gospel band to perform in February in her hometown of San José, Uruguay. "I never met an American before tonight," the woman said. "Only what I see on television, and what I see is not good. But now, after this, you are family."

I was speechless. I never expected such an outpouring of goodwill based on one concert by U.S. musicians. The United States' complicated diplomatic history with Uruguay during its dictatorship (1973-1985) still contributes to an undercurrent of mistrust; the U.S. government's approval ratings in Uruguay are the third lowest among all Latin American countries, according to a 2012 Latin Barometer poll.

Furthermore, much Hollywood fare consumed in Latin America presents at best a partial picture of America and at worst a distorted and sensationalized image of our country and its culture. While there are examples of American pop culture that convey the liberty, pioneering spirit, diversity, innovation and respect for self-expression characteristic of U.S. society, Uruguayans are more apt to remember the images and words that come to them via racy music videos and violent movies.

Public diplomacy challenges U.S. diplomats to tell America's story creatively, consistently and truthfully to the world. If we can do it in person, the impact is that much greater. Therefore, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo partnered with

Youth at the Providencia education center sing alongside the visiting gospel artists in a vocal workshop.
Photo by Carissa Gonzalez

the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' American Music Abroad exchange program to design a multi city tour for a U.S. gospel band, Oscar Williams and The Band of Life. The tour would showcase U.S. diversity and help counter stereotypes about Americans.

The American Music Abroad program annually sends 10 American music ensembles representing a spectrum of American musical genres to more than 40 countries. More information is at http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/american-music-abroad.

Uruguayan society is relatively homogenous, with 92 percent of the population being of white European descent. People of color face significant discrimination, according to recent studies. U.S. Black History Month presented an ideal opportunity to address mission priorities to combat discrimination and promote greater social inclusion for Uruguay's minority Afro-Uruguayan community. To get beyond traditional venues frequented by elites and reach people in the nation's interior, PAS arranged free concerts in the towns of Minas, San José and Maldonado. The performances were held in public squares, schools, community centers, cathedrals and NGO facilities—wherever there was an open door and a willing local partner. The band's uplifting music transcended language and cultural barriers, and brought the struggle of the African-American community to life through songs of hope, respect and joy.

The response was tremendous. Every venue was packed, and audience members lined up to thank the embassy and request autographs and photos with the musicians. The priest in San José who donated space for the concert said, "I never thought I'd see them so excited. They started with their arms crossed—all very skeptical. But before I knew it, they were dancing with the singers and singing out loud."

To publicize the performances and explain Black History Month, PAS participated in live radio interviews in the weeks leading up to the tour and conducted print, Web and social media outreach, reaching an estimated 225,000 Uruguayans. PAS also organized a live TV performance and interview for the band on Uruguay's most popular talk show, reaching nearly 1 million Uruguayans.

By design, educational outreach was a major component of the tour. While Uruguay has long been known for one of the region's highest standards of living, its education system has faced tremendous challenges in recent years, with declining graduation rates and growing concerns about substance abuse and suicide rates. The embassy has partnered with Uruguay to address inequalities in educational opportunities.

The band led vocal workshops at Colegio Providencia, an independent educational center in a poor neighborhood of Montevideo with a 40 percent repetition rate among public school students. The workshops focused on songs of self-esteem, mutual respect and hope in the face of adversity. Band members explained how diversity has made our culture and country stronger. Many of the participating students, parents and community members had never before met an African American or heard U.S. gospel music.

"I didn't know what to think when my daughter told me that U.S. singers were coming to the school, but this was amazing," one parent said. "Thank you so much for teaching these kids to believe in themselves and that being different isn't a weakness; it's a strength."

The Band of Life also performed at the Martin Luther King public school, which runs a free summer program for kids from one of the highest-crime, lowest-income suburbs of Montevideo. Teachers, students and members of the local community took part in the workshops, in which the band used participatory call-and-response songs to transmit messages of perseverance, acceptance and anti-bullying. Later, a group of students surprised the Americans by performing "candombe" rhythms on drums made from empty buckets. Candombe, originally performed by African slave communities, was outlawed by the ruling European classes in colonial Uruguay but today is performed in widely attended Carnival parades.

The tour closed with a joint performance with an Afro-Uruguayan women's choir called Afrogama at the House of African-Uruguayan Culture. U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Julissa Reynoso and a local parliamentary leader gave opening remarks. Spectators overflowed into the street and around the block.

The 30-member Afrogama choir performed anthems of national and community pride, and The Band of Life improvised new arrangements of their songs with a 15-piece candombe drum and dance group. "The energy was electric," said one audience member. "I've never heard anything like it before." The leader of Afrogama also lauded the joint performance, saying, "Our home is your home. You are now our brothers and sisters."

Clockwise from top: Gospel singer Brown gets the initially skeptical crowds on their feet with her powerful vocals; Youths from underprivileged Casavalle surprise visiting American artists with their own "candombe" drum line; Listeners crowd around an American gospel singer on the first night of the tour in San José, Uruguay. *Photos by Carissa Gonzalez*

Uniting Women

Embassy forum puts women's issues on national stage

By Susan May, economic officer, U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby, and chair of the embassy's Women's Empowerment Working Group.

Above: Embassy Port Moresby Deputy Chief of Mission Melanie Higgins, left, poses with Political Assistant Melissa Kembol and the Papua New Guinea prime minister's wife, Linda Babao, after the PNG Women's Forum opening; **Bottom:** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands Dennise Mathieu shares the spotlight as Dame Josephine Abaijah shows off her certificate as the embassy's 2014 nominee for the Secretary's International Women of Courage Award. *Photos by Stella Magazine*

A team of four officers and five local staff at the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby created the two-day Papua New Guinea (PNG) Women's Forum in March, which advanced gender equality in a nation where women face enormous challenges, including sky-high rates of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and poor education, health and access to banking.

One challenge was uniting women from throughout the country to have their voices heard and focus on solutions. There are many organizations and women working to advance the status of women in PNG, but few national networks for collaboration. This leads to duplication and unnecessary competition for scarce resources. The post's Women's Empowerment Working Group worked with women's organizations to create a national-level platform to amplify their agenda. Together with the PNG government and local women's groups, the team developed a program for the forum that focused on women's priority concerns and included expert panels that allowed a free-flowing exchange of ideas.

Public Affairs Officer Natalia Capel and I met with international organizations, diplomatic partners and corporations to ask for support. We had no prior experience in fundraising, but after countless hours of meetings—and carefully studying the Department's rules on fundraising—we raised $35,000 in local funding and around $10,000 in reduced rates and in-kind contributions from 17 outside sponsors.

We regularly reached back to Washington for help. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) and USAID enthusiastically offered moderators and sponsored travel for panelists, while the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs provided advisory support. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands Dennise Mathieu volunteered as keynote speaker, and we secured another expert speaker through the Bureau of International Information Programs.

The resulting PNG Women's Forum brought together almost 300 participants to develop recommendations on how to advance gender equality and empower women and commemorate International Women's Day. The audience included members of women's groups, student leaders from universities, PNG government officials and diplomatic, international and private-sector representatives.

The forum, whose motto was "Working Together to Inspire Change," was the first time PNG women's groups had gathered nationally to discuss how to promote women's welfare and leadership. PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neil in his opening remarks rallied the gathering, saying, "When you speak with one voice, you have no idea how loud you can be." The agenda focused on developing the next generation of women leaders, women's groups as agents of change for peace and security, the role of men in combating gender-based violence, women's health, improving non-traditional educational opportunities, getting women into business and using technology to empower women.

A key objective of the forum was to promote linkages between women's groups. The working group compiled, published and distributed the first directory of women's organizations in the country.

Attendees played "networking bingo" to get to know each other, and won donated prizes including office furniture and laptops. A lunchtime panel of current and former female members of PNG's parliament provided an unprecedented public venue to discuss the failure of legislation in 2012 that would have reserved 22 seats in parliament for women.

"To say the audience was on the edge of their seat during this discussion would be an understatement," said Political Officer Jacob Surface. "Women were literally jumping out of their seats to ask questions, and made very impassioned arguments both for and against reserved seats for the parliament." After the forum, one of PNG's top television stations did a feature piece on this panel.

During her keynote address, Mathieu said, "Women bring a range of unique experiences and contributions in decision making to matters of peace and security, which leads to improved outcomes in conflict prevention and resolution." She presented former parliamentarian and trailblazer for women's political participation Dame Josephine Abaijah with a plaque commemorating her as Embassy Port Moresby's 2014 nominee for the Secretary's International Women of Courage Award.

After Abaijah spoke, audience members rushed the stage and serenaded her with one of her province's welcome songs. S/GWI Senior Advisor June Shih, the forum's master of ceremonies, said, "It was a very moving moment, and there were more than a few tears in the audience." Abaijah's nomination made the front page of the main daily newspaper the following day.

The panel discussions and breakout sessions produced recommendations that the embassy working group is compiling and sharing with the PNG government, women's groups, NGOs, international organizations, diplomatic partners and the private sector. Over the next year, the team will work with these groups to prioritize the recommendations and develop action plans for implementing them.

"Our embassy is now recognized as playing a leading role on gender issues in PNG," remarked Deputy Chief of Mission Melanie Higgins. "Taking a concept from a mere idea to reality was truly inspiring. The working group developed a spark of innovation into a two-day event that received widespread national attention and created openings for young women leaders to mix with their role models and together develop recommendations to empower women."

The Women's Empowerment Working Group created networking bingo cards to encourage networking among forum participants.
Photo by Stella Magazine

Organizing such a large event tested the embassy's limits. "We had some true 'all hands on deck' moments, but the team spirit of our embassy community really pulled us through," said Public Affairs Assistant Natasha Bodger. Some embassy family members volunteered to help with registration, note taking and even sewing fabric goodie bags, she noted.

"Seeing the end result made the sleepless nights worthwhile," said Capel. "It was amazing to see PNG women band together to pursue initiatives such as creating a mentoring group to develop the next generation of leaders."

One participant, Matilda Koma, president of the local women's group Papua Hahine Social Action Forum, said the forum was "tremendously nourishing, and strengthened and mended many pathways that link [to] a brighter future" on women's issues.

PNG women's groups say they hope the forum will become an annual event, and the embassy hopes that the women of PNG will take up the torch to make this a reality. The embassy team is already hard at work to support the 2015 PNG Women's Forum.

More information on the PNG Women's Forum can be found at http://portmoresby.usembassy.gov/forum.html.

During the discussion about women's political participation with female members of Parliament, many participants passionately expressed their views on reserving seats for women in the legislative body.
Photo by Stella Magazine

Post of the Month

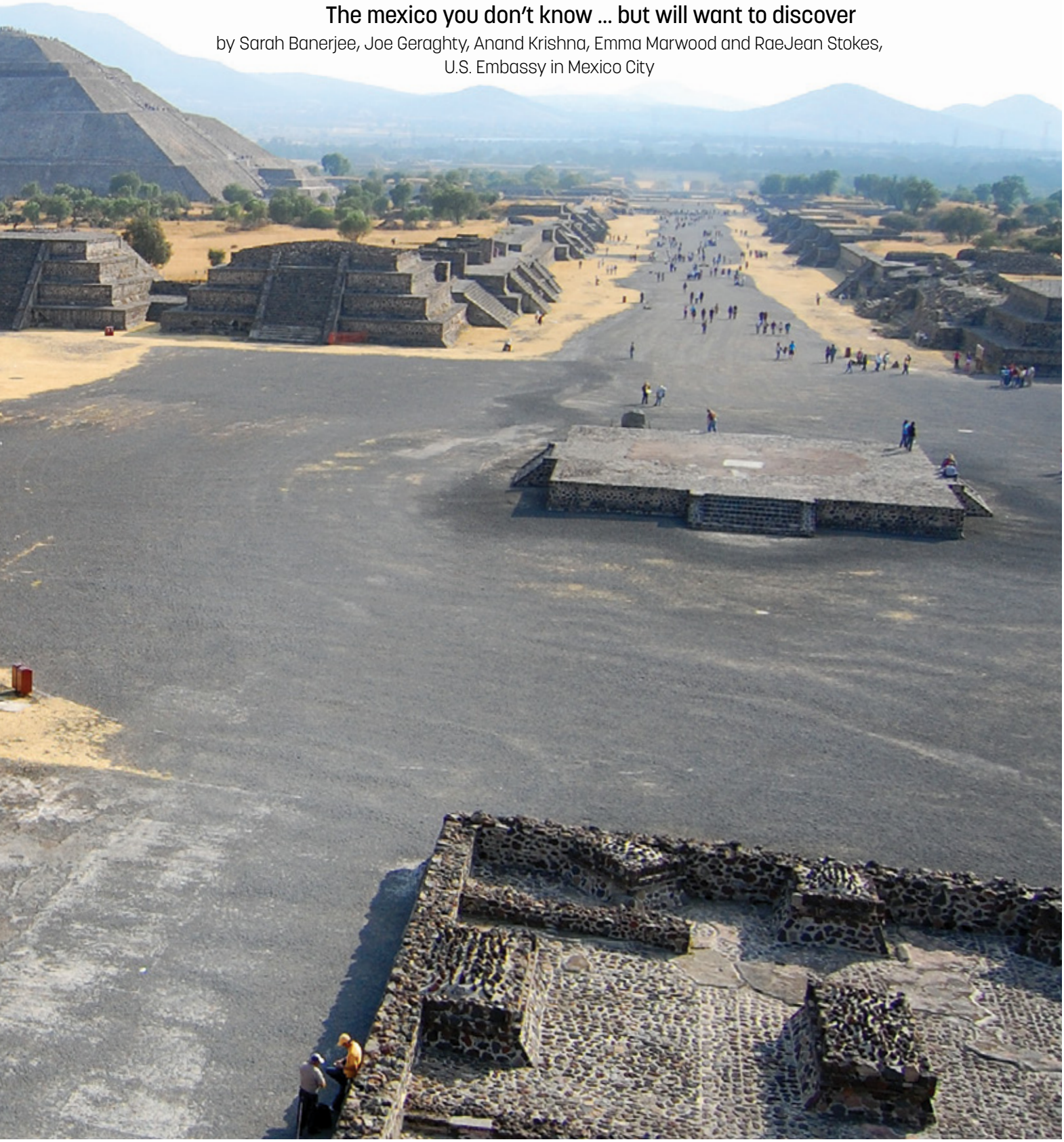
Teotihuacán is an ancient city a short drive from Mexico City. This shows the main boulevard as seen from the Moon Pyramid, with the Sun Pyramid to the left.

Photo by Mark Saavedra

Mexico City

The mexico you don't know ... but will want to discover

by Sarah Banerjee, Joe Geraghty, Anand Krishna, Emma Marwood and RaeJean Stokes,
U.S. Embassy in Mexico City



One of the world's largest and most vibrant cities, Mexico City hosts a diversity of people and activities—just like the U.S. Mission to Mexico, which manages a broad and multi faceted agenda of economic, security, political and social issues that reflect the two countries' shared border, culture and history. The food and cultural offerings, such as world-class museums and spit-fired pork tacos, only add to the allure of a posting here.

Mexico City has a bounty of attractions and activities for residents and visitors alike. With more than 21 million people living in the metropolitan area, this megacity offers something for everyone.

The U.S. Embassy is right in the heart of it all, located on the city's main ceremonial avenue, Paseo de la Reforma. Employees on their way to work dodge tourists taking photos of the Angel of Independence, salesmen hawking their wares and women selling tamales. The Angel is a favorite location for the city's frequent peaceful protests, giving embassy staff the chance to witness Mexico's thriving democracy in action.

Cuisine and culture

Mexico City features Aztec ruins and must-see historical sights, but its charms don't end there. High-quality cuisine is available in venues ranging from world-class fine-dining restaurants to crowded taco stands that seem to sprout up on every street corner. Cultural offerings include traditional Mexican music and dance performances as well as visits from major touring musicians. Ample green space is preserved in Parque Chapultepec and the nearby Desierto de los Leones National Park. The city even boasts a thriving bike-share program; you can see these bikes and many more in motion each Sunday as the city shuts down many principal arteries to allow residents up to 20 miles of car-free riding.

The Community Liaison Office (CLO) through its "welcome wagon" program helps orient newcomers to all the city has to offer, with individuals and families coordinating neighborhood group activities. The CLO also organizes day and weekend trips outside of Mexico City. Within driving distance are countless quaint, colonial towns nestled in the hills of central Mexico, all just waiting to be explored. And Mexico's famous beaches are a quick flight or a few hours' drive away.

Mexico is the United States' second-largest export market and third-largest trading partner. More than $1.4 billion worth of goods cross the 2,000-mile shared border each day, or about $1 million per minute. The importance of the economic relationship has been underscored by several visits from President Obama and Vice President Biden, as well as the launch of the High Level Economic Dialogue, which aims to make both economies more competitive on the world stage.

Above: The Mexican Stock Exchange is a gleaming example of the many skyscrapers that make Mexico City an architectural mecca.

Photo by Lucy Welch

Below: Boats are for hire in Xochimilco, a network of canals that once were connected to Lake Texcoco, on which Mexico City was built.

Photo by Gautam Ramnath

Above: Mexico City's emblem, the Angel of Independence, provides a historic backdrop as American musicians march before thousands at the International "Feria de las Culturas Amigas."

Photo by Benjamin Medina

Below: Members of the Embassy Charity and Activities Committee deliver gifts to senior citizens during the holidays.

Photo by Embassy Mexico City

Economics and people

The relationship isn't based just on economics; it's based on people. More than 20 million American and 14 million Mexican citizens visit each other's country every year, in addition to the approximately 1 million people who cross the border as part of their daily routine. Tourism is considered to be a U.S. export. Led by the Foreign Commercial Service, the Interagency Travel and Tourism Committee also includes members from the Consular, Economic and Public Affairs sections, as well as the Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection. The embassy visa unit is one of the busiest in the world, processing up to 3,000 visas per day. The American Citizens Services unit manages one of the world's largest and fastest-growing passport workloads and handles a huge demand for emergency services of all kinds.

Tying economics, people and politics together is the Merida Initiative, a landmark bilateral security cooperation program started in 2008. Managed through the post's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs section, the initiative funds multiple U.S. government agencies to partner with public- and private-sector stakeholders in Mexico to promote the rule of law and help decrease the drug-fueled violence that has affected citizens on both sides of the border.

The U.S. commitment can be measured by a robust $2-billion investment, but according to USAID Deputy Director Sean Jones, "It's really the day-to-day relationships, mutual understanding of difficult issues and joint strategic vision that are the key benefits of the Merida Initiative." The Department of Justice and other law enforcement agencies at post focus on solidifying partnerships with their Mexican counterparts, sharing information about threats and criminal activity, and bringing criminals to justice, sometimes extraditing them from one nation to the other.

The embassy's educational and cultural programs are also shaped by the shared border. At the top of the bilateral agenda is increasing high-level educational exchanges and joint research through such programs as President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative and the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation and Research. The embassy has also established a number of special Mexico-U.S. initiatives such as *Jovenes en Accion* (Youth in Action), which takes low-income Mexican youth to the United States for leadership training.

Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne and renowned American baseball coach Joe Logan demonstrate a ball toss for the Giants, one of Mexico's Little League teams.

Photo by PAS Mexico City

Palacio de Bellas Artes, in the heart of the historic center, is a concert hall and arts center that has art deco interiors and a number of famous murals.
Photo by Kirsten Lorgen-Knapp

Interagency emphasis

Embassy Mexico City has a strong interagency presence, with 29 U.S. government agencies or departments represented at post. A few highlights from the embassy's diverse portfolio are illustrative of the work being done.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has representation in Mexico through the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Agricultural Research Service. FAS manages a relationship characterized by high levels of technical cooperation and bilateral trade valued at $37 billion. APHIS works closely with regulatory counterparts in Mexico and plays a critical role in protecting U.S. agriculture from the introduction of invasive plant pests and animal diseases that damage crops, orchards and livestock. In addition, APHIS conducts inspections in Mexico that mitigate risks to U.S. agriculture while facilitating livestock, meat and horticultural exports.

The Office of Defense Cooperation is the busiest security cooperation office in the Western Hemisphere. Security assistance and cooperation has more than quadrupled since 2009. The office coordinates Mexican military students' training in the United States and provides resources to support the Mexican military in the fight against transnational criminal organizations.

Peace Corps Mexico began in 2004 after the Mexican government expressed interest in working with highly skilled technical volunteers. Currently, about 70 volunteers—the majority mid- to late-career professionals or retirees—are working throughout central Mexico in partnership with either the National Council for Science and Technology or the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources.

The embassy is at the forefront of State Department efforts to promote gender equality worldwide. An interagency Gender Working Group, chaired by the public affairs officer, meets regularly to coordinate gender-related activities and programs. Innovative examples of cross-agency gender programming include two Tech Camps held in 2013, one on Empowering Women in Technology and another on Combatting Trafficking in Persons.

Above: Modern Mexico City beautifully combines the old with the new. Here the monument to Mexico's petroleum industry contrasts with a modern office building.
Photo by Martin de la Torre

Below: The world-famous Zócalo, one of the largest city squares in the world, hosts The NFL Experience. Many Mexicans love American football.
Photo by PAS Mexico City

Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs John Brennan, center, leads a team of vice-consuls to Mexico's highest summit, Pico de Orizaba in Veracruz, which towers at 18,491 feet.
Photo by Chuck Vetter

Multiple tours

Given the size and scope of the mission, Embassy Mexico City offers no shortage of interesting work and developmental opportunities, at the entry level and above. More than a few Foreign Service officers have served in Mexico City multiple times.

Minister Counselor for Political Affairs Thomas Smitham served his first tour in the consular section from 1991 to 1993. He considered it a valuable "boot camp" during which he learned how to work effectively in a big mission, had opportunities to travel and work in other parts of Mexico, and began friendships with a group of officers that have continued to the present day.

Smitham returned in 2013, and has been impressed by the maturing relationship between the two countries and the dramatic changes to the city. (Pollution is better, traffic is worse.) He noted that few other posts offer such diversity of experience, proximity to the United States and a chance to work on foreign policy issues of critical importance.

Former Deputy Visa Chief Michael Garcia also served in Mexico City twice, first as an entry-level officer (ELO) and newlywed from 2002 to 2004, and six years later as a mid-level tandem with three kids. He honed his language and decision-making skills during his first tour. Then, as a mid-level consular manager, he supervised 15 ELOs. Garcia found Mexico City a great place to live.

"We had a great experience in Mexico City both times," he said. "It's not difficult to imagine ourselves going back a third time."

Above: Mexico City is framed by a stained glass window of Chapultepec Castle, located in Latin America's largest city park. *Photo by Martin de la Torre;* **Left:** Every Sunday in Mexico City, up to 40 km of main thoroughfares are closed to regular traffic, bringing out thousands on skateboards, rollerblades and bikes, including the embassy's Green Team. *Photo by Embassy Mexico City;* **Below:** First- and second-tour officers bring their children to build a house for a needy family on the outskirts of Mexico City. *Photo by Emma Marwood*

At dusk, headlights and traffic signals illuminate Mexico City's main artery, home to everything from government buildings and gorgeous private residences to frequent peaceful protests.
Photo by Martin de la Torre

Post of the Month

At a Glance Mexico

Capital: Mexico City

Government type: Federal republic

Area: 1,964,375 sq. km.

Comparative area: About one-fifth the size of the U.S.

Population: 120,286,655

Languages: Spanish (official)

Religions: Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witnesses and other Evangelical churches

GDP per capita: $15,600

Export partners: U.S.

Export commodities: Manufactured goods, oil and oil products, silver, fruits, vegetables, coffee and cotton

Import commodities: Metalworking machines, steel mill products, agricultural machinery, electrical equipment, car parts for assembly, repair parts for motor vehicles, aircraft and aircraft parts

Currency: Mexican pesos (MXN)

Internet country code: .mx

Source: The World Factbook

The new facility's auditorium also has a large conferencing area.
Photo by Ed Warner

A New HQ

CA gains efficiencies from centralizing

By Mark Padgett and Dawn Wagner, bridge officers, Bureau of Consular Affairs

The reviews are in: A January 23 *Washington Post* article on the new Washington Passport Agency, following its relocation from 1111 19th St. NW to 600 19th St. NW, said, "The geographic distance is slight, but the improvements in operations and aesthetics are substantial." In addition to the passport agency, the new location, SA-17, houses more than 1,800 employees from the bureaus of Consular Affairs (CA) and Administration (A).

Located between G and F streets, only a few blocks from the Harry S Truman Building (HST), SA-17 is the culmination of years of planning to optimize and consolidate employees and processes, cut costs and improve operability and customer service. Not long ago, CA employees worked at four annexes and HST. Today, nearly all are in one building.

"Being colocated has definitely improved communications and our ability to work together more efficiently," said Michelle Bernier-Toth, managing director of CA's Overseas Citizens Services office. "There's no substitute for face-to-face communications; you can communicate in a way that's not possible through email or phone calls."

CA's Special Issuance Agency and Authentications, two members of the same team, are now together, not city blocks apart. The customer support specialists of CA's General Services Division (CA/EX/GSD) can now meet face-to-face with those whom they support. No one has to trek across town to the weekly CA expanded meeting, so attendance is up dramatically.

"A couple of blocks can be an impediment to seeing people," said Denise Urs, CA's deputy executive director. "Now there is an opportunity for broader representation, additional opportunities to see the Front Office and an ability to bring people together faster in order to make decisions more quickly. In a crisis, this is of critical importance."

Others in the building agree. The A Bureau's Executive Office (AEX) occupies one floor rather than being spread across three floors as at its old location in SA-27. This move "has given us synergy and allowed for greater collaboration within A/EX," said Executive Director Bill Amoroso.

From left, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy and Assistant Secretary for Administration Joyce Barr cut the ribbon at SA-17 in November.
State Department Photo

Amoroso added that the new site fosters camaraderie and stronger professional relationships, which in turn creates a more team-oriented atmosphere. The result: better service for customers within and outside the Department.

At the building's November ribbon-cutting, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs said, "We must shape our activities and approach our challenges as a global enterprise. We must be able to communicate, innovate and plan across our offices and directorates, a process made much easier by our consolidation under one roof."

The concept for bringing CA together in one building was born more than six years ago. By mid-2010, a steering committee consisting of representatives from CA, GSA, A, DS and IRM began finalizing the planning and concept elements of the move. Design work commenced in 2011, and a 10-year lease was signed in December 2011. By the middle of 2012, construction and renovations had begun.

IRM's Ronnie D'Errico was in charge of the IT implementation. "We formed a team to meet the challenges and get the building operational under a strict time constraint," he said. The team linked the site's IT equipment with an existing infrastructure connected to HST, resulting in significant savings in conduit costs. Additionally, SA-17 was the first Department building configured for using a single wire to carry voice and data, saving an estimated $1.15 million.

Thanks to the building's environmentally efficient design, its landlord, the World Bank, hopes to be awarded a Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating in the Existing Building Operations and Maintenance category and a Gold rating in the Commercial Interior category. SA-17 will be the sixth of the Department's domestic facilities to achieve LEED status.

Apart from the numerous financial and organizational advantages, SA-17 has many features that make it special. The eco-certified Diplotots Childcare Center, set to open this summer, can accommodate up to 108 children. The two-story fitness center run by Foreign Affairs Recreation Association covers 7,500 square feet and includes state-of-the-art exercise equipment and two rooms dedicated to exercise classes. "Work-life balance and employee well-being considerations factored heavily in the design of SA-17," said Sharon Tucker, a CA/EX/GSD Support Services supervisor. A terrace and snack bar offer great city views and fresh air. Additionally, there are two lactation rooms, more than two dozen large conference and training rooms, law and fraud libraries, computer labs, an auditorium and a Crisis Task Force Room.

Certain aspects of the building remain to be completed, and occupants are still adjusting to the move, but most are pleased. Eve Anderson of A/EX, for instance, said she was "happily surprised that the transition was so much easier than anticipated."

The consolidation benefits and the site's eco-friendly designs make it an energy-saving bargain, and its work-life amenities make it seem like a visit to the future. As Jacobs said in November, "Now we are housed in one building, a building that is so much more than bricks and mortar. This is now a hub of innovation, a tool of communication and a nexus for everything that our global enterprise is and works for."

Left: CA employees use one of the new building's break rooms; **Below:** At rear, an employee works out on an elliptical trainer in SA-17's new gym. *Photos by Ed Warner*

MSAU Marines pose with Vice President Biden during his visit to Panama.
Photo by David Leinemann

Marines at the Ready

New unit can boost security coverage

By Maj. David C. Emmel, commanding officer, MSG Security Augmentation Unit

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and U.S. Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG) partner on providing security for U.S. diplomats overseas. Besides assigning new Marine Security Guard (MSG) detachments to diplomatic posts previously without them and increasing the number of Marines in established detachments, MCESG has worked with DS to create the new MSG Security Augmentation Unit (MSAU), which will train, organize and deploy MSGs to provide responsive, scalable increases to security at diplomatic posts in response to threat conditions.

Marines selected for the MSAU are typically on their second or third MSG posting and complete a minimum of three weeks of specialized training. Instructors from the MSAU and the DS Training Directorate provide the training as well as continuous proficiency training to maintain standards in basic and advanced MSG augmentation operations. This training includes a review of the MSAU mission and structure and specific security augmentation procedures.

DS trainers provide instruction in first aid, communications, advanced weapons use and room-entry tactics, and review the use of physical security equipment commonly encountered at overseas posts. Additionally, MSAU Marines learn firefighting, how to survive in a collapsed structure, observation techniques and skills dealing with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards.

"Our training is better," said Sgt. John A. Alvarez, a team leader and one of the original Marines assigned to the MSAU. "We take what [the MCESG] has put out there as a baseline and we exceed it." He added that DS instructors "gave me the ability to understand what I'm doing wrong. So now I can see that in other Marines … [and] correct them so they can develop their skills."

After the initial MSAU training, the Marines are based in Quantico, Va., where they must be continuously ready for deployment in support of Department needs. They are assigned to one of nine regionally aligned, but not regionally exclusive, squads of 12 MSGs, each under a detachment commander who is a noncommissioned officer. The Marines' training focuses on the diplomatic posts within their assigned region, but each squad is also ready to support posts in other areas.

A DS instructor evaluates the shooting proficiency of an MSAU Marine with a 9mm service pistol.
Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. Larry Gage

The decision to deploy MSAU elements typically results from a request from the chief of mission through the regional security officer (RSO) in response to security-related events at a post. The request can be based on present or anticipated conditions, but focuses on pre- or post-crisis periods.

Posts tell the DS MSG branch what the proposed mission is and how long the deployment is expected to last. The MSAU works closely with the branch and post officials to meet requests in a timely manner, deploying as quickly as possible.

Requests can also come from the Department, as was the case for the first MSAU deployments, in September 2013. In anticipation of an increased threat during the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya, the Department identified specific posts for security augmentation. The MSAU, with assistance from the DS MSG branch and posts' RSOs, simultaneously deployed augmentation teams to eight embassies in Africa and the Middle East for 30 days.

Each of these embassies presented different security challenges. The teams worked closely with the RSOs, defining security requirements and how to meet them through implementing random anti-terrorism measures. Following the deployment of a team to Bamako, Mali, the post's RSO, Corynn Stratton, said MSAUs have "incredible potential for enhancing security measures at our high-risk posts."

Near the end of this first deployment period, the DS MSG branch received another request for support, from the RSO in Nairobi, Kenya, following the Al-Qaida attack on the Westgate Mall. Within 24 hours, one of the initial 9/11 augmentation teams was sent to the embassy in Nairobi for two weeks.

Nicholas Comas, a program analyst with the DS MSG branch, said the deployment was "a great example of why MSAU was created. The RSO had a problem following the Kenyan mall shooting, Westerners were targeted, and we were able to expeditiously send Marines to the post after a request."

Another MSAU squad recently completed a mission in Adana, Turkey, acting as an interim MSG detachment until the consulate completed preparations for a permanently assigned detachment.

MSAU Marines engage in a security response drill in Adana, Turkey.
Photo by Marine Gunnery Sgt. Chamous Duhachek

The MSAU also deploys in support of its secondary mission: providing security during overseas visits of the president, vice president and Secretary of State. In November, an MSAU team supported Vice President Biden's trip to Panama City, Panama. The post's RSO, Christopher Stitt, said the Marines "contributed to the success of the overall mission and visit," adding that the MSAU "can become the gold standard for VIP-visit deployments." As of April 18, the MSAU had supported eight other VIP trips overseas.

The MSAU has met every operational requirement, though each mission posed myriad coordination challenges for DS and the MSAU. From training to deployment, the team approach has proven essential to the MSAU's success. The experience and flexibility of MSGs and Department officials allow the augmentation teams to effectively integrate into security plans at diplomatic posts, whether by augmenting resident MSG detachments, providing security where there is no detachment or supporting VIP visits.

With continued support from DS, the MSAU will remain a viable option to meet diplomatic security concerns and sustain the strong Marine Corps-State Department partnership. ◻

Left: MSAU Marines conduct medical training with a casualty mannequin; **Below:** The initial three squads of Marines assigned to MSAU after their first week of indoctrination training. *Photos by Marine Lance Cpl. Larry Gage*

Participants in the San José, Costa Rica, Leadership Month get ready to sample a variety of Starbucks coffees.
Photo by Jason DeRosa

Leadership Month

EB events emphasize 'innovate' tenet

By Dana Marie Jea, public diplomacy officer, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs

Economic Leadership Month, hosted every past March by the E family of bureaus, has for four years encouraged officers to organize and participate in professional development and networking activities focused on one of 10 Economic Leadership Tenets. This year, the focus was on the innovation tenet and fostering an atmosphere in which new ideas can be developed and fresh perspectives and adaptability encouraged.

Officers around the world embraced the theme. For instance, in Washington, D.C., the day's activities at Main State began with remarks from Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Catherine Novelli, who said the concept of innovation in the workplace is especially important because economic officers increasingly are working on fast-moving issues that require new and creative approaches. The keynote address on "Innovation: A Growing Opportunity for Global Diplomacy" was given by Dr. Charles Wessner, a National Academies scholar who studies how to foster new technologies to address global challenges in health, climate, energy, water, infrastructure and security. Participants then divided into small groups to discuss demystifying economic diplomacy, using one of three brainstorming techniques. Their ideas will inform exhibits on economic diplomacy at the Diplomacy Center, scheduled to open at Main State in 2015.

Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin closed the day's events, saying innovation is central to Secretary of State John Kerry's economic agenda for the Department.

Meanwhile, in Managua, Nicaragua, the embassy's economic section organized a presentation by Ernesto Varela, general manager of technology provider Comtech, and David Cadia, CEO and founder of Think26, a Nicaraguan company offering coaching services and marketing strategies. Varela said he was able to grow his business by demonstrating to companies' CEOs how innovative technology products contribute to their bottom line. Cadia said embracing innovation will empower low-income countries to lift their people out of poverty.

Approximately 20 embassy staffers and members of the embassy's Youth Council attended, and several discussed working together to recognize innovation's value for improving their everyday lives.

Consulate General in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, economic officers from the U.S. Consulate visited DuBiotech, a new development that hosts biotechnology research and development companies. Officers toured four companies hosted at DuBiotech and came away with new ideas on how to incorporate innovation into their daily work life. They also learned about Firmenich, whose perfume and flavor business has forced them to adapt to new audiences.

At the U.S. Consulate in Erbil, Iraq, there was a brown bag discussion about the post's economic work in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) and presentations on subjects such as outreach to the U.S. business community, Foreign Commercial Service programs and developments in the IKR's energy and banking sectors. Consulate participants completed a multiple-choice quiz on the banking sector, energy and the IKR's investment climate.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow hosted a panel discussion on fostering an open, innovative workplace. The chargé spoke, and Moscow representatives from 3M and Virgin (telecommunications) discussed their company cultures, which they said facilitate creative thinking, open expression and innovation. Panelists took questions and responded to comments for more than an hour from embassy staffers representing several sections, as well as the departments of Energy and Agriculture and Foreign Commercial Service.

In Riga, Latvia, economic-coned Deputy Chief of Mission Caryn McClelland led a group of U.S. Embassy staff on a trip to two small Latvian cities to discover how Latvians define their innovative spirit and what it means for the next generation of entrepreneurs. They toured the machinery training grounds at a vocational school, where students demonstrated forestry-equipment simulators, and went on a hike to examine how the surrounding forests are maintained and cultivated for sustainable growth.

Finally, at the U.S. Embassy in San José, Costa Rica, Chargé d'Affaires Gonzalo Gallegos and Starbucks Director of Global Agronomy Carlos Mario Rodriguez joined embassy staff at the Starbucks Farmer Support Center in Costa Rica. The company's Global Agronomy Office, headquartered in Costa Rica, created a program that ranks factors such as economic accountability, social responsibility and environmental leadership when deciding where to source Starbucks coffee.

Starbucks employees explained how the company fosters an atmosphere that welcomes innovative ideas, and embassy staffers held a lively discussion on applying innovative private-sector models to their daily work.

More information on Economic Leadership Month and other outreach events conducted this year by posts worldwide is at http://eb.e.state.sbu/sites/ex/ELD/SitePages/Home.aspx. ◻

Deputy Chief of Mission Caryn McClelland, second from right, and Foreign Service National Economic Specialist Alina Jefremova, right, tour the machinery training grounds at Ogre Vocational School as part of the U.S. Embassy in Riga, Latvia, Leadership Month activity.
Photo by Elise Reifschneider

Above: Consulate Erbil Political Assistant Sabah Abdulrahman displays his award as one of the winners of the multiple-choice quiz on the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's economy; **Below:** Economic Officer Lidia Avakian, at front, gives an overview of Consulate General Erbil's outreach to U.S. business. *Photos by Erin Kotheimer*

FS Promotions

HR releases analysis of 2013 data

By Victor Villones, analyst, Bureau of Human Resources

The primary consideration in determining the number of promotion opportunities is service need. The methodology for determining this compares current and projected Foreign Service position requirements with estimated personnel numbers. A computer model simulates the movement of employees through the Foreign Service career system and averages promotion opportunities over multiple years to create a smoothing effect in closing projected staffing gaps. If the Department were to promote to fill only the gaps occurring in the current year, promotion opportunities would vary drastically from year to year, especially for many specialist skill groups.

The director general directs the promotion planning process and authorizes the final generalist and specialist promotion opportunities. Further details on the Foreign Service promotion planning process as well as historical and projected promotion trends are at http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Workforce/WorkforcePlanning/Pages/default.aspx.

The Bureau of Human Resources compiled the 2013 Foreign Service Selection Board results by class for generalists and specialists, placing the data into tables that show promotion numbers, promotion rates, average time in class and average time in service for each competition group. The bureau also analyzed and compared certain 2013 promotion rates and levels to the 2012 results and the five-year averages. While the Department promoted more generalists and specialists in 2013 than in 2012, the total number of employees eligible for promotion increased at a faster rate. The overall 2013 promotion rate for all eligible Foreign Service employees was 22 percent, slightly lower than the 2012 rate of 23 percent and the five-year average of 24 percent.

Generalists

The overall Foreign Service generalist promotion rate decreased from 31.4 percent in 2012 to 29.1 percent in 2013. However, the number of 2013 generalist promotions into and within the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) increased from the 2012 level and was higher than the five-year average. The number of generalists who were promotion-eligible into and within the senior levels decreased from 2012 and was lower than the five-year average. Thus, the overall SFS promotion rate increased to 22.1 percent, higher than 2012 (20.7 percent) and the five-year average (16.6 percent).

The 2013 promotion rate from FS-02 to FS-01 was 14.9 percent with 163 promotions, slightly lower than the promotion rate and number in 2012 (17.6 percent and 179) and lower than the five-year averages (18.8 percent and 173).

The promotion rate from FS-03 to FS-02 in 2013 was 35.5 percent with 263 promotions. The 2012 rate was 40.1 percent with 289 promotions. The 2013 promotion rate and number were also lower than the five-year averages of 43.6 percent and 284 promotions.

The number of FS-04 to FS-03 generalist promotions increased from 330 in 2012 to 387 in 2013, higher than the five-year average of 330 per year. Since the number of generalists eligible for promotion to FS-03 increased at a faster rate, from 526 in 2012 to 775 in 2013, the 2013 promotion rate decreased to 49.9 percent, lower than the 2012 rate (62.7 percent) and five-year average (64.9 percent).

Specialists

Nearly 16 percent of all eligible Foreign Service specialists were promoted in 2013, the same rate as in 2012 but less than the five-year average of 17 percent. The overall number of specialist promotions in 2013 was higher than the 2012 level and the five-year average. For many specialist skill groups, the 2013 promotion rates were similar to the 2012 rates and five-year averages. Though the number of promotions for certain specialist skill groups may have increased, the number of eligible employees often increased as well. For example, 199 security officers were promoted in 2013, 29 more than in 2012 and 28 more than the five-year average. However, the number of eligible employees increased by 167 in 2013 to a total of 1,229. The resulting 2013 promotion rate was 16.2 percent for all security officers, slightly higher than the 2012 rate (16 percent) and lower than the five-year average (18.5 percent).

In 2013, 29 facility managers were promoted, the same number as in 2012 and one more than the five-year average of 28 per year. Due to an increase in the overall number of eligible facility managers from 2012 to 2013 (114 vs. 123), the 2013 promotion rate actually decreased to 23.6 percent, lower than the 2012 rate (25.4 percent) and the five-year average (26.2 percent).

Gender and Ethnicity/Race

State Magazine in its June 2012 issue published promotion statistics by gender, ethnicity and race for the first time. For the 2013 promotion results, the statistics that offer detailed breakouts by grade level for each generalist cone and specialist skill group can be found online at:

http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/rma/Pages/DiversityStats.aspx. ◻

FOREIGN SERVICE

Promotion Statistics

2013

HR releases analysis of data

By Victor Villones, analyst, Bureau of Human Resources

Compiled from the 2013 Foreign Service Selection Board results, the 2013 Foreign Service promotions statistics were not included in the June 2014 printed issue of *State Magazine*, but are now available in the June 2014 online issue of *State Magazine* at:

http://digitaledition.state.gov/publication/

Promotion statistics can also be found online at:
http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/rma/Pages/StatisticalReporting.aspx.

The 2013 Foreign Service promotions statistics will also be published in the July-August 2014 print and digital issue of *State Magazine*.

Foreign Service Promot

HR releases ar

FEMC to FECM	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	30	0	0	6.4	0	30.3	0
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	20	0	0	6.3	0	32.3	0
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	31	2	6.5	6.8	5.1	31.3	23.9
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	38	3	7.9	6.8	6.2	31.5	33.2
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	26	0	0	6.2	0	30.3	0
CLASSWIDE FINANCE	1	0	0	5.5	0	28.2	0
CLASSWIDE INFO TECH MNGR	4	0	0	6	0	27.6	0
CLASSWIDE CONSTR ENGR	1	0	0	4.7	0	28.3	0
CLASSWIDE PSYCHIATRIST	2	0	0	11.6	0	22.2	0
CLASSWIDE MEDICAL OFFICERS	10	0	0	10.2	0	21.8	0
CLASSWIDE SECURITY OFFICER	2	0	0	5.6	0	27	0
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	**165**	**5**	**3**	**6.8**	**5.7**	**30.3**	**29.5**

GENERALIST FEOC to FEMC	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	41	1	2.4	3.5	3.5	25.5	24.5
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	40	2	5	3.9	5.6	26.1	28.7
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	53	7	13.2	4.4	4.1	26.4	25.1
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	63	7	11.1	3.9	3.9	26.4	24.9
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	40	1	2.5	3.9	2.5	25.5	20.8
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	237	18	7.6	3.9	4	26.1	25.1
MANAGEMENT	40	8	20	3.5	3.4	25.5	24.8
CONSULAR	38	8	21.1	3.8	3.4	26	24.8
ECONOMIC	46	8	17.4	4.4	4.2	26.6	27.1
POLITICAL	56	13	23.2	3.9	3.4	26.6	25.2
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	39	8	20.5	3.9	3.3	25.6	25.5
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	219	45	20.5	3.9	3.5	26.1	25.4
COMBINED TOTALS	**237**	**63**	**26.6**	**3.9**	**3.7**	**26.1**	**25.3**

GENERALIST FSO1 to FEOC	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	42	3	7.1	5.6	7	22.1	18
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	56	2	3.6	5.1	6.2	22.7	19.8
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	93	11	11.8	6.2	6.8	23.1	21.9
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	119	11	9.2	6.1	6.5	22.9	21.8
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	63	1	1.6	6.9	6.7	22.3	23.8
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	373	28	7.5	6.1	6.7	22.7	21.4
MANAGEMENT	39	13	33.3	5.5	4.6	22.4	22.1
CONSULAR	54	14	25.9	5.1	4.3	22.8	21.6
ECONOMIC	82	14	17.1	6.2	6.6	23.3	22.9
POLITICAL	108	16	14.8	6	5.4	23	22.3
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	62	18	29	6.9	6.8	22.3	22
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	345	75	21.73	5.9	5.6	22.8	22.2
COMBINED TOTALS	**373**	**103**	**27.6**	**6.1**	**5.9**	**22.7**	**21.9**

GENERALIST FSO2 to FSO1	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	144	3	2.1	4.3	4.4	12.9	13.1
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	238	4	1.7	5.2	8	14.8	18.6
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	267	13	4.9	5.4	6.7	14.9	16.2
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	319	27	8.5	5.2	6.3	13.9	14.7
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	127	0	0	4.1	0	12.6	0
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	1095	47	4.3	5	6.4	14	15.3
MANAGEMENT	141	27	19.1	4.3	4.8	12.9	13.1
CONSULAR	234	19	8.1	5.2	5.2	14.8	13.3
ECONOMIC	254	21	8.3	5.3	6.7	14.8	15.9
POLITICAL	292	25	8.6	5.1	5.8	13.8	14.1
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	127	24	18.9	4.1	4.1	12.6	12.4
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	1048	116	11.1	4.9	5.3	14	13.7
COMBINED TOTALS	**1095**	**163**	**14.9**	**5**	**5.6**	**14**	**14.2**

GENERALIST FSO3 to FSO2	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	111	5	4.5	3.6	4.1	9.1	8.9
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	185	16	8.6	4	5	9.3	9.7
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	149	14	9.4	4.1	4.8	9.3	9.8
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	133	15	11.3	3.7	4.9	9.1	10.1
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	162	9	5.6	3.5	4	8.8	9
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	740	59	8	3.8	4.7	9.1	9.7
MANAGEMENT	106	42	39.6	3.5	3.4	9.1	8.7
CONSULAR	169	36	21.3	3.9	3.6	9.3	8.9
ECONOMIC	135	32	23.7	4	3.8	9.3	8.8
POLITICAL	118	50	42.4	3.6	3.3	9	8.4
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	153	44	28.8	3.5	3.5	8.8	8.7
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	681	204	30	3.6	3.5	9.1	8.7
COMBINED TOTALS	**740**	**263**	**35.5**	**3.8**	**3.8**	**9.1**	**8.9**

GENERALIST FSO4 to FSO3	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
CLASSWIDE MANAGEMENT	124	63	50.8	3.5	3.5	5.1	5.1
CLASSWIDE CONSULAR	169	73	43.2	3.2	3.1	4.9	4.7
CLASSWIDE ECONOMIC	129	69	53.5	2.9	3	4.7	4.7
CLASSWIDE POLITICAL	168	94	56	3.2	3	4.5	4.5
CLASSWIDE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	185	88	47.6	3.1	3.1	4.8	4.8
CLASSWIDE TOTAL	**775**	**387**	**49.9**	**3.2**	**3.1**	**4.8**	**4.7**

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SPECIALIST FEOC to FEMC	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
FINANCE	4	0	0	5.7	0	24.8	0
GENERAL SERVICES	1	0	0	6.5	0	30.7	0
INFO TECH MNGR	12	1	8.3	4.2	5.5	27.9	30.6
DIPLOMATIC COUR	1	0	0	5.5	0	20.6	0
PSYCHIATRIST	2	1	50	4	2.5	10.2	8.5
SECURITY OFF	39	3	7.7	4.3	5.3	26.5	26.4
CONSTR ENGR	5	0	0	3.7	0	17.7	0
FACILITIES MAINT	1	0	0	2.5	0	21.4	0
INFO RESOURCES	1	0	0	6.5	0	37	0
MEDICAL OFFICERS	7	3	42.9	3.7	3.2	10.3	8.8
HEALTH PRACTITIONER	3	0	0	4.6	0	27.6	0
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**76**	**8**	**10.5**	**4.3**	**4.2**	**24.2**	**18.1**

SPECIALIST FS01 to FEOC	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
FINANCE	17	1	5.9	6.3	4.7	17.8	21.6
HUMAN RESOURCES	8	1	12.5	7.2	11.7	23.5	34.2
GENERAL SERVICES	4	1	25	6.7	6.7	25	34.4
INFO TECH MNGR	23	3	13	5.4	8	23.5	20.2
PSYCHIATRIST	4	1	25	4.9	6.2	5.2	6.5
SECURITY OFF	49	10	20.4	5.1	5.9	24.4	25.3
SECURITY ENGINEER	11	1	9.1	6.2	6.7	24	25.2
CONSTR ENGR	6	1	16.7	6.4	9.7	16.7	19.2
FACILITIES MAINT	4	0	0	8.2	0	19.4	0
ENGLISH LANG PGMS	1	0	0	14.2	0	29.7	0
INFO RESOURCES	2	0	0	7.2	0	17.2	0
MEDICAL OFFICERS	8	3	37.5	7.3	8.5	7.6	8.8
HEALTH PRACTITIONER	3	0	0	6.7	0	20.2	0
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**140**	**22**	**15.7**	**5.9**	**7**	**21.2**	**21.9**

SPECIALIST FS02 to FS01	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
FINANCE	48	3	6.3	5.8	7.4	10.7	12.1
HUMAN RESOURCES	22	3	13.6	4.6	4	15.8	17.6
GENERAL SERVICES	30	4	13.3	4.8	5.7	14.1	15.2
INFO TECH MNGR	163	9	5.5	7.2	7.3	20.1	19.4
DIPLOMATIC COUR	5	1	20	8.7	7.7	22.4	20.6
SECURITY OFF	236	25	10.6	6	7	16.4	16.5
SECURITY ENGINEER	63	3	4.8	7	8.4	14.8	14.2
CONSTR ENGR	7	2	28.6	3	3.2	9.8	8.9
FACILITIES MAINT	19	3	15.8	4.1	4.7	16.8	15
ENGLISH LANG PGMS	11	1	9.1	5.5	4.7	9.9	8.3
INFO RESOURCES	9	2	22.2	5.3	3.7	9.8	7.6
MEDICAL TECH	1	0	0	14.8	0	33.7	0
HEALTH PRACTITIONER	26	1	3.8	5.4	5.7	11.6	10.6
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**640**	**57**	**8.9**	**6.2**	**6.5**	**16.2**	**15.7**

SPECIALIST FS03 to FS02	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
FINANCE	26	11	42.3	3.6	4	4.2	4.9
HUMAN RESOURCES	17	9	52.9	3.8	3.5	11.4	12.3
GENERAL SERVICES	69	10	14.5	5.5	7.3	12.1	11.4
INFORMATION MGMT	253	24	9.5	6.2	6.2	13.2	12.7
INFO MGMT TECH	57	6	10.5	6.2	6.9	12.1	12.1
DIPLOMATIC COUR	9	1	11.1	6.4	12.7	14	20.9
SECURITY OFF	492	48	9.8	5.3	6.8	10.8	11.9
SECURITY ENGINEER	22	12	54.5	3.6	3	8.4	7.6
SECURITY TECHNICIAN	35	0	0	5.6	0	12.3	0
CONSTR ENGR	4	4	100	3.2	3.2	6.3	6.3
FACILITIES MAINT	44	8	18.2	4.3	5.2	9.9	10.5
ENGLISH LANG PGMS	8	3	37.5	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2
INFO RESOURCES	9	3	33.3	2.8	2.8	3.2	3.2
MEDICAL TECH	5	0	0	10.1	0	15	0
HEALTH PRACTITIONER	44	6	13.6	4.5	5.3	4.9	5.7
OFFICE MGMT SPEC	28	0	0	5	0	25.9	0
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**1122**	**145**	**12.9**	**5.4**	**5.6**	**11.4**	**10.3**

SPECIALIST FS04 to FS03	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
FINANCE	2	1	50	5	1.3	10.5	10.5
HUMAN RESOURCES	37	12	32.4	2.7	3.2	4.3	5.4
GENERAL SERVICES	69	16	23.2	3.4	3.3	4.4	4.7
INFORMATION MGMT	233	41	17.6	4.9	7.6	7.1	10.3
INFO MGMT TECH	31	10	32.3	2.7	3.6	4.6	5.5
DIPLOMATIC COUR	43	2	4.7	6	8.1	10.1	11
SECURITY OFF	413	113	27.4	2.2	2.5	5.1	5.4
SECURITY ENGINEER	31	13	41.9	2.1	2.1	3	3.4
SECURITY TECHNICIAN	66	8	12.1	4.7	6.2	7.8	10.4
CONSTR ENGR	12	5	41.7	2.5	2.6	2.8	3
FACILITIES MAINT	55	18	32.7	2.3	2.6	2.7	3
MEDICAL TECH	1	1	100	1.3	1.3	3.2	3.2
OFFICE MGMT SPEC	112	9	8	4.1	4.9	18.3	18.8
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**1105**	**249**	**22.5**	**3.4**	**3.7**	**7**	**6.6**

SPECIALIST FS05 to FS04	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
OFFICE MGMT SPEC	202	20	9.9	3.8	3.7	11.3	10.6
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**202**	**20**	**9.9**	**3.8**	**3.7**	**11.3**	**10.6**

SPECIALIST FS06 to FS05	Number Competed	Number Promoted	Percent Competed Promoted	Avg Time-in-Class of Competed	Avg Time-in-Class of Promotees	Avg Length of Service Competed	Avg Length of Service Promotees
OFFICE MGMT SPEC	217	49	22.6	3.7	4.2	5.8	6.3
FUNCTIONAL TOTALS	**217**	**49**	**22.6**	**3.7**	**4.2**	**5.8**	**6.3**

Good Preparation Key to Quitting Smoking

By Lorie J. Morris, director, Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program, Office of Medical Services

Do you want to quit smoking? A good place to start is the smokefree.gov website. It tells you how to get ready for your planned quit date and offers a mobile text messaging service, SmokefreeTXT, where you can sign up for encouraging daily text messages and tips, and get other information to help you quit.

There is also much good information on the NIH.gov website. If you want to work with others, you can print out materials to share, plan your quit dates together and meet to discuss how you can best support each other. Health insurance plans often have good handouts and tips on quitting, so log on to your provider's website to see what free resources are available.

Not everyone quits the same way. Some people quit better by going "cold turkey" and others succeed by the gradual method. Some try electronic cigarettes, but e-cigarettes still deliver addictive nicotine, and there are questions about the safety of the delivery system itself. It can help to change from a favorite cigarette brand to another brand before the quit date, mostly because the differences in pH or menthol tend to be perceived as unpleasant.

If your health unit has a foreign service medical provider (FSMP), he or she can help you plan for success. You can ask about quitting aids, such as prescription anti-craving aids (Bupropion and Varenicline) and the patch. Nicotine gum, which should be tucked into the cheek but not chewed, may also be useful. Ask the FSMP to meet with you for a few minutes each week to provide support and encouragement.

It's important to get ready before your quit date. "Quit preparation" checklists will suggest removing anything from your home that might prompt you to smoke, such as ashtrays or lighters. Stop smoking indoors well before your quit date, so your home is no longer a cue to light up. Ask some friends to be "quit buddies" you can call on to help you keep focused on your positive reasons for quitting. Check in with them several times a day for the first few days after you quit. Plan to be busy at times of the day when you usually smoke; for example, take a walk immediately after a meal or brush your teeth.

Once you quit, it's common to have cravings. They can occur multiple times for the first few days, but typically only last a few minutes. Some activities and certain times of day may be harder for you than others. Most people should use distraction or call a quit buddy when a craving reaches 4 or 5 on a scale of 10. But some people find that focusing attention on the sensations of the craving can make the craving seem less intense, whereas trying to avoid the sensations may make them seem more prominent.

Cravings are annoying, but they can't hurt you, and they are not an indication of failure. In fact, remind yourself that they are evidence of progress (a cognitive technique that can increase success), and that they won't last forever. At the same time, it is important to realize that slips are common and can lead to discouragement or a full return to smoking. If you light up, put that cigarette out and get back to actively coping with cravings. Call your quit buddy for support and get right back on track with your quit plan. A slip is not failure; it is a sign that you need more support and may need to adjust your quit plan to deal with the triggers or cravings that you experience.

After the first few days, the surprisingly hard part about quitting tobacco is that much of the social life of a smoker is built around smoking and spending time with other smokers. So plan ahead on how to spend the time that was once taken up with smoking. Learn to relax without lighting up and deal effectively with cravings. Alcohol can be a major trigger for smoking, especially after a meal, and tends to reduce your inhibitions and resistance. It may be useful to stop drinking for a time if that reduces the cues that prompt lighting up.

Inbox

Three Complete HR Leaders Forum

James Simmons and April Torikai-Bookstaber of the Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management and Lindsay Fridinger of Shared Services have completed the Emerging HR Leaders Forum, a professional development program in which participants come together monthly for a year to discuss interagency challenges and best practices and pursue professional growth. Federal Human Resources (HR) employees in the program gain exposure to an interagency network of other federal HR professionals and subject matter experts. Participants are nominated by their supervisors based on their outstanding performance and demonstrated ability to be leaders. The three join an Emerging HR Leaders Alumni Network, an organization of previous graduates.

From left, April Torikai-Bookstaber, Ray Limon, Lindsay Fridinger, Manuela Tantawy, Linda Taglialatela, Kim Bruner and James Simmons display awards at the HR Emerging Leaders Forum graduation event at the Partnership for Public Service.

Photo by Mollie Allers

Robin Cooke sings with the band Deja-Vu at the 100 Years of Black American Music concert.

Photo by Rahat Yasmeen

Islamabad Celebrates Black History Month

The Black History Month (BHM) committee of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad facilitated a month long program in February to honor the contributions of African Americans to America. Events were held in the embassy and at Pakistani universities, American Corners and media outlets in the capital. Political Officer David Lewis and Consular Officer Stephanie Woodard spoke on a call-in radio program to an audience of tens of thousands of Pakistanis about African-American leaders.

The BHM committee also organized a lunch-time film series that highlighted African-American art, educational initiatives and non-violent tactics used during the civil rights movement. At the International Islamic University in Islamabad, the post showed "42, The Jackie Robinson Story," and held a discussion of the film.

The embassy and diplomatic community also came together for a cookout and happy hour featuring traditional African-American dishes. For a BHM finale, the mission's own band, Deja-Vu, led by Robin Cooke, put on an in-house concert titled "100 Years of Black American Music," featuring African-American musical contributions from artists such as Chuck Berry and Aretha Franklin. Ambassador Richard Olson opened the concert by paying tribute to the contributions by African Americans in diplomacy.

Mission Bakes up a Helping Hand

In January 2013, heavy rains overwhelmed Jakarta, Indonesia, flooding large areas of the city, killing 47 and causing more than 20,000 to be evacuated. Local Foreign Service National (FSN) employees lost their houses to the rising waters and received help from the FSN Emergency Fund, which relies on donations from American and local staff and serves the emergency needs of FSNs at all U.S. embassies.

Recognizing the need to replenish the emergency fund, the U.S. Mission in Jakarta this year decided to raise money for the fund. With help from its First and Second Tour Officers/Specialists Group, Sofia Blake, Michele Rajic Tang and the mission community, the embassy organized its first mission wide bake sale in February.

With the support of the family members, Ambassador Robert Blake and Deputy Chief of Mission Kristen Bauer, the organizers baked a variety of goods and pre-sold them via the Internet and traditional methods. They raised nearly $1,700.

A/S Recognizes LE Staff Dedication

At Bangui International Airport, Ambassador Power, center, far rear, stands to the left of Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield as they pose with the jubilant LE Staff awardees.
Photo by Jason Brown

In an April 9 ceremony at the Bangui airport, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield recognized the dedication of the 30 Locally Employed (LE) Staff at the U.S. Embassy in Bangui, presenting them with a group Superior Honor Award.

Since American staff were evacuated from that post in December 2012 as rebels advanced on the capital, the LE Staff in the Central African Republic (CAR) has maintained the embassy compound and reached out to key political, diplomatic and civil society leaders. They have also reported to the Department on political and security developments, and organized public outreach to reassure the CAR's population of continued U.S. engagement and efforts to end the violence. They did all of this despite conditions that put them at daily personal risk.

In the violence that has followed the rebellion, several relatives of LE Staff have been killed, and the homes of several staff looted. This violence has resulted in the displacement of about one-fourth of the entire population, internally or into neighboring countries, and left about half the population at risk of serious food deprivation. This is the third extended time that the post's LE Staff has had to take over operations. (The other periods were from March 1997 through January 1999 and November 2002 through January 2005.) The Department is planning for the return of American personnel to Embassy Bangui as soon as security conditions permit.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Bopp, Joseph J.
Falterman, Mark S.
Jeffers, Mary V.
Leech, Theresa Mary
McKenny, Lloyd E.
Owen, Evan W.
Peterson, Freeman D.
Scharf, Christopher F.
Schroeder, Kenneth N.

Civil Service

Ballard, Lisa B.
Ball-Gulljee, Jacqueline Ann
Blaisdell, Richard A.
Botts, Eric Christopher
Chaney, Frederick M.
Condo, Antoinette J.
Desilets, Paul H.
Garcia, Jesse G.
Gatz, Karen L.
Hartman, Steven G.
Kuhn, Lisa T.
Mancus, Jeannette G.
Nash, Robert C.
Neely, Michael D.
Owens, Romaine N.
Purcell, Jane Elizabeth
Rhinehart Jr., Walter L.
Russell, Gary P.
Sanner, John P.
Schroeder, Anne T.
Stein, Daniel D.
Tavarez, Amanda
Thompson, Terry R.
Williams, Cheryl F.
Willson, Carolyn L.
Zorn, Yoshie T.

Ethics Answers

Q: I recently accompanied my ambassador to a local art show. He complimented one particular piece an oil painting of a local nature preserve. The painting was beautiful, but also very expensive, and the ambassador did not want to spend a lot of money. The show organizer offered to loan him the painting to hang over his bed in his official residence, provided he return the piece at the end of his tour of duty. Is this OK?

A: No. The loan of the painting has value and must be considered a gift. Unless an exception applies, a Department employee may not accept a gift given because of his/her official position or from a prohibited source, which includes anyone who is doing or seeking to do business with the Department. It is very likely in this case that the gift of the loan was offered because of the ambassador's position, so it falls within the prohibition even if the organizer is not seeking business at post. Because no exception applies here, the ambassador should either politely decline the gift or pay the organizer fair market value for the loan.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.

Appointments

Deborah L. Birx
Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally

Timothy M. Broas
U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Tom Malinowski
Assistant Secretary for Democracy Human Rights and Labor

Robert A. Sherman
U.S. Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic

Dwight L. Bush Sr.
U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco

Kevin Whitaker
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia

Check out our online magazine to watch a video message from featured ambassadors.

Deborah L. Birx of Maryland is the new Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally. Previously, she was director of the Division of Global HIV/AIDS at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Before that, she was director of the U.S. Military HIV Research Program at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. She helped lead one of the most influential HIV vaccine trials in history, and has developed and patented vaccines.

Timothy M. Broas of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Previously, he worked as a lawyer, and was a partner in the litigation department of the Washington, D.C., office of Winston & Strawn, LLP. He served on the boards of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Partners in Health and St. Mary's College of Maryland, as well as the Board of Visitors of Mount Vernon. He is married and has three daughters.

Dwight L. Bush Sr. of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco. Previously, he was president of D.L. Bush & Associates, a financial advisory and business consulting firm, and vice chairman of EntreMed, Inc. He has worked with a variety of philanthropic and educational institutions, including Cornell University, the Vaccine Fund and the Joint Centers for Social and Economic Studies. He is married and has two children.

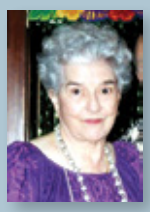
Tom Malinowski of the District of Columbia is the new Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Previously, he was Washington director for Human Rights Watch. Before that, he was senior director on the National Security Council, where he oversaw the drafting of President Clinton's foreign policy speeches. He also served as a speechwriter for Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Warren Christopher and as a member of the Department's Policy Planning Staff.

Robert A. Sherman of Massachusetts is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic. Previously, he was a founding member of the Boston office of Greenburg Traurig, an international law firm. He has a wide range of trial and regulatory experience. He was an original member of the Obama for America National Finance Committee and a member of President-elect Obama's Transition Team, where he vetted cabinet-level positions. He is married and has two children.

Kevin Whitaker (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary for South America in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Before that, he was director of the Office of Andean Affairs. Other postings include the United Kingdom, Jamaica, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela, where he was deputy chief of mission. He is married to former Foreign Service officer Elizabeth Whitaker.

Originally published in May 2010.

Obituaries



Dorothy K. "Dottie" Bishop, 86, a retired Foreign Service nurse, died March 10 of heart disease. She lived in Blue Ridge, Ga. She served in the health unit at the State Department and, with her husband, Gene Bishop, at embassies in Yemen and India. She was an active supporter of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Missionaries of Charity in those countries. She founded the Association of Retired Nurses.

Roger L. Brown, 67, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died April 17 of natural causes in Georgetown, Texas. He was a special agent with Diplomatic Security, and served in Abidjan, Monrovia, Bucharest, Helsinki, Nicosia and Beijing. After retiring in 1999 with 24 years of service, he worked several years for Science Applications International. He enjoyed woodworking, golf, reading, ham radio and spending time with family.

Paul A. Crowe, 76, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 9 of leukemia. He worked for the Federal Reserve and Department of Commerce before joining USAID in 1983 as an economist. He served in Cairo, Kingston, Colombo and the Marshall Islands. After retiring in 1993, he accompanied his wife, Rosemary, on her Foreign Service assignments.

William N. Dale, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 24 at his home in Durham, N.C. He served in the Navy during World War II before joining the Department. His postings included Copenhagen, Ottawa, Paris, London, Ankara, Tel Aviv and the Central African Republic, where he was ambassador. After retiring in 1975, he moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., where he lectured on the Middle East at local universities. He was active in the Democratic Party and enjoyed collecting art and artifacts and playing tennis.

Hugh Dwelley, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 10 of a heart attack in Fairfax, Va. His postings with USAID included Turkey, India, Sri Lanka and Italy. He maintained close ties to his home village of Islesford on Little Cranberry Island, Maine. He helped found the local historical society and wrote a history of the island. He helped youths throughout Maine with the costs of higher education.

Philip J. Griffin, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 27 in Sandy Spring, Md. He served in the Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1957. During his 35-year career, he was chargé d'affaires in Abu Dhabi and also served in Kuwait City, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Beirut, Dhahran and West Berlin. After retiring in 1992, he was a consultant for a Saudi firm. He was an avid reader and enjoyed watching Washington Nationals baseball.

Denise J. Hoof, 75, wife of retired Foreign Service Communications Officer Bruce F. Hoof Jr., died Feb. 17 in Portland, Ore. A native Australian, she met her husband on his first tour in Bonn, Germany, and for the next 31 years accompanied him on postings to 13 countries. Her favorite assignments were Moscow, Wellington, Santiago, London, Tunis, Paris and Brussels. She was always traveling or living vicariously through family who traveled.

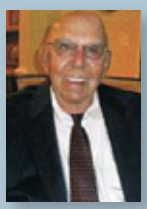
George Gould "Jess" Jespersen, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 23 in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. He served in the Navy during World War II. His postings included Tehran and Mashhad, Iran; Trieste; Saigon; and Liberia. He retired in 1978 and tended the family tree farm for a number of years, then tried various jobs following his own interests.

Stephen T. Johnson, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 28 from ALS at his home in Arlington, Va. He served in the Army Reserve before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. His postings included Montreal, Paris, Saigon, Nha Trang and Vientiane, where he married Foreign Service officer Judith Rodes. They then served together in Romania and Kenya. After he retired in 1993, he accompanied her on tours to Belgium and the United Kingdom.

Samuel W. Lewis, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 10 of lung cancer at his home in McLean, Va. He was ambassador to Israel for eight years and had a major role in the Camp David peace talks that resulted in a treaty between Israel and Egypt. Earlier assignments included Italy, Brazil and Afghanistan, where he was acting ambassador. He was director of the U.S. Institute of Peace for six years, then director of policy planning for the Department. He taught at Georgetown and Johns Hopkins universities and advised foreign policy think tanks.

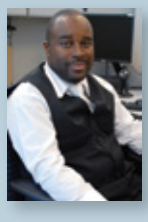
John Alden Mason Jr., 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 7 of a heart attack in Boston, Mass. He served as a Navy aviation officer during World War II. His postings included Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador. He retired in 1980. His interests included writing, music and theater, literature, environmental issues and international politics.

David L. Roberts, 75, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Feb. 11 at his home in Arlington, Va. He served with the Marine Corps and Naval Intelligence Service before joining the Department. During his Diplomatic Security (DS) career, he served in Zaire, SALT/Genéva, Moscow, Morocco and Frankfurt. He helped rescue embassy employees after the 1984 terrorist bombing in Beirut, despite being wounded. After retiring in 1994, he worked as a corporate security consultant while continuing to work with DS in Iraq and other embassies.



Oscar A. Reynolds, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 25 at his home in Knoxville, Tenn., from lung cancer. He served in the Navy during the Korean War and joined the Department in 1955. His postings included the Philippines, Iran, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Nigeria, Zaire and Senegal. After retiring in 1983, he lived in Tennessee with his wife, Lee, a retired Foreign Service secretary, and enjoyed family and fishing.

William Pierre "Bill" Schoux, 74, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 28 in Washington, D.C., of complications from Alzheimer's disease. He served in the Army Reserve and joined USAID in 1966. His postings included Vietnam, Honduras, Guatemala and Sri Lanka. After retiring in 1992, he was a consultant on democratic governance and civil-military cooperation. After being diagnosed with dementia, he helped establish a social club for people with the disease.



Durron Swain, 48, a Civil Service employee, was killed March 1 on his way to the office. He was a senior passport specialist at the Miami Passport Agency where he worked for 30 years. He traveled frequently in the region, representing the agency at outreach events. He also assisted with the evacuation of thousands of Americans from Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.

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. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Bill Palmer at palmerwr2@state.gov or (202) 203-7114. ◻

End State

Germany

A lonely tree stands watch over a field of yellow flowers on a beautiful spring day.

Photo by skoeber

Uruguay

A vendor hawks fresh produce at La Feria de Parque Juan Zorrilla de San Martín in the Punta Carretas neighborhood of Montevideo, Uruguay.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

Saudi Arabia

A portion of a bank along the northern Red Sea coast, resembles an abstract painting as captured by a crewmember on the International Space Station.

Photo by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center

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Thailand

Breaking dawn casts an indigo glow over the horizon on Koh Samet, a small island in the Gulf of Thailand.

Photo by nate2b

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Bureau of Human Resources
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