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December 2012

MAGAZINE

Digital Revolution

TechCamps give Organizations
Tools to Succeed

Overseas Deployment

Program lets CS Employees
Experience FSO Life

BEIJING

Embassy Builds Lasting
Partnership with China

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A close-up photograph of a person's hand typing on a laptop keyboard. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with fingers pressing down on the keys. The laptop is silver and occupies the right side of the image. The background is a plain, light color.

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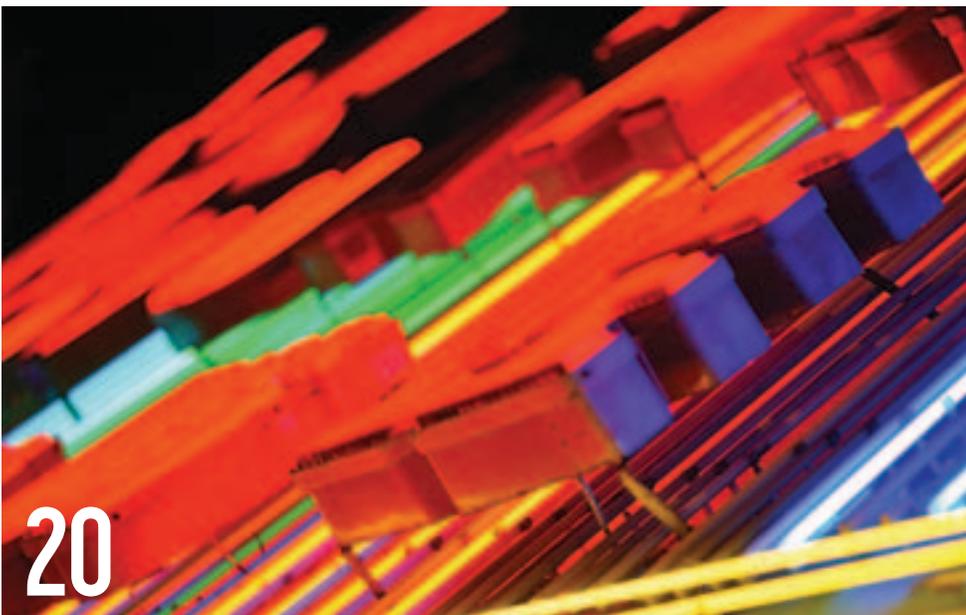
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On the Cover

Colorful lanterns illuminate the Gui Jie (Ghost Street) night market in downtown Beijing.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Illuminated View

Beijing is one of Asia's most vibrant cities, with many interesting sights and activities for residents and visitors to enjoy. Unfortunately, the city's notorious smog often casts a gray/green pall over the landscape during daylight hours, making it appear dull and lifeless. However, when dusk settles over the flickering metropolis, the streets awaken as the city's many late-night haunts cast their light defiantly into the unrelenting haze.

Walking the crowded corridors of Wangfujing's famous night market is akin to stepping into a scene from Ridley Scott's sci-fi classic *Blade Runner*. The flashing neon and lamp-shaded tungsten bulbs cast an ethereal glow on the masses shuffling through the district's tight alleyways.

Tourists, romantics, explorers and vagabonds, all from different corners of the globe, plod through this foaming maze of strange sounds and stranger smells, each searching for something different—each vanishing into the shroud as quickly as he or she appeared.

Gui Jie, also known as Ghost Street, is decidedly less mysterious than Wangfujing, but no less vibrant. The two-kilometer stretch of Dongzhimen is lined with dozens of restaurants that hang garish red lanterns in front of their establishments to attract customers.

The aroma of boiling noodles and sizzling stir-fry wafting out from the bustling kitchens conspires with the din of traffic and stroboscopic radiation of thousands of ruby-tinged lights to short circuit the brain's olfactory, auditory and visual processing centers. No wonder some newcomers feel overwhelmed the first time they visit.



It is within this pulsating, incandescent carnival that Beijing's true character reveals itself. The smoldering streetlamps on every block illuminate a city on the forefront of a rapid transition—a people striving to find their voices and share their ideas on the international stage.

As China forges into the 21st century, State Department employees posted in Beijing are strengthening a shared vision between the two nations (pg. 20). By working to resolve divisive issues and develop relationships with students, businesses and national leaders, Department employees have helped create a framework for a lasting partnership.

Their dedicated efforts to promote human rights and break down barriers to free speech have opened the doors for Chinese citizens to engage with their global counterparts in new ways, and given the country's sparkling capital city a platform from which to shine its brilliant light out to the rest of the world. ■

Corrections

November 2012, pg. 20 – The name of the author of the “Inside the Board Room” article is spelled correctly as Lawrence Mandel.



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In the News



Members of the alt-rock band Linkin Park, including the three men at the right end of the rear row, meet with Deputy Chief of Mission Jefferson Brown, rear row center in jacket; Environmental, Science and Technology Counselor Mark Cullinane, rear row far left; and members of the embassy's Green Team and representatives of an embassy supported environmental NGO.

Photo by Jorge Gomez

Post's Green Team Meets Rockers Linkin Park

Rock stars and diplomats may not overlap much during their day jobs, but members of the Green Team promoting environmental practices at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires recently met with members of the rock band Linkin Park and discovered a shared commitment to environmental awareness.

The embassy staff reached out to the band ahead of its South American tour, resulting in a backstage, pre-concert meeting focused on energy initiatives and opportunities for collaboration. Deputy Chief of Mission Jeff Brown and Environmental, Science and Technology Counselor Mark Cullinane briefed the band on Argentina's emerging renewable energy industry. Representatives of the group Community Housing and Energy Efficiency Forum (FOVISEE), an embassy partner and grant recipient, spoke about green energy solutions.

Linkin Park's members, in turn, discussed how their Music for Relief Foundation, founded after the 2005 Indian Ocean tsunami, is raising funds for disaster relief. Also, in connection with the United Nations' Year of Sustainable Energy for All initiative, Linkin Park launched Power the World—an initiative to highlight energy

solutions and provide opportunities for people to get involved. The band is promoting the initiative online at powertheworld.org, as well as at concerts and among fans, seeking signatures for an online pledge supporting sustainable energy.

The meeting inspired the Green Team, which Elizabeth Ballow, office management specialist and Green Team chair, described as "small but passionate." "We are in the midst of re-launching the group, working to connect with the League of Green Embassies and striving to build interest and awareness throughout the embassy community," she said, adding that the meeting with Linkin Park brought together Americans and Argentinians and members of public and private sectors, "giving us all a chance to share the ways we are using our platforms to strengthen greening initiatives globally and locally."

As a result of the meeting, FOVISEE is in talks with Music for Relief to partner on an energy project in low-income communities. The post's public affairs section has connected with new audiences via social media and encouraged existing fans to learn how they can help Power the World.

NEWS

DG Speaks at CFC Kickoff

Some of the benefits of organizations funded through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) were made clear in early October when the keynote speaker at the kickoff of the Department's CFC campaign talked about how at least two of these organizations helped his daughter while she was hospitalized and in need of a heart transplant.

Michael Taylor, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Customs Service, said his daughter spent several months at Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., and was in such serious condition that she suffered a stroke. Later, she was given a free trip by the Make-A-Wish Foundation, a benefit usually provided to patients for whom there's little hope.

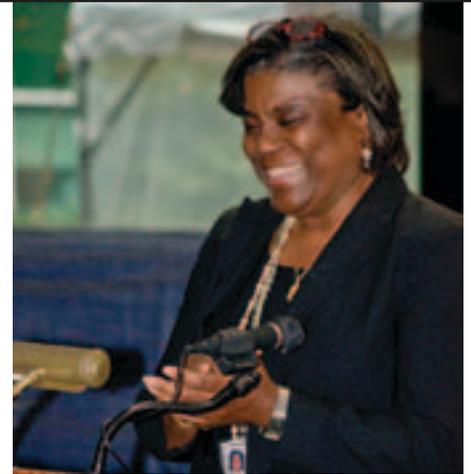
Then, roughly a year after her 2008 diagnosis, his daughter received a heart

transplant. "I realized how fortunate I was," Taylor said, pointing to the annual leave time he had available and the fact that he was not a single parent. Those less fortunate were not slighted; he observed that lower-income patients at the hospital received the same level of care his daughter did.

Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield (photo at right) told event attendees in Main State's Exhibit Hall of how another CFC charity, the American Red Cross, assisted people during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where she has family members. She said that she's always made it a practice to give to an NGO or charity doing good in the nations where she served.

Giving to charity, such as through the CFC, is a way to "show that we care," she said. "If everyone gives a little, it'll help a lot."

This year, the Department hopes to raise \$2.2 million for the CFC, part of the \$62 million the campaign hopes to raise through Washington-area giving. Donors can give



online via Employee Express, have their donation taken out of their pay in increments and have it go to one or several of more than 4,000 charities. At the CFC kickoff event, several of these organizations set up exhibits. Among them were Lydia's House, which provides foreclosure counseling; Rachel's Fund, which advocates against capital punishment; and the American Foreign Service Association, which offers scholarships of up to \$3,500 for the dependent children of Foreign Service members.

Anti-trafficking Campaign Launched

In September, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) launched a public awareness campaign to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the date when President Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. More than two dozen American embassies have joined the effort, reiterating the American commitment to freedom from involuntary servitude and slavery, known today as "human trafficking."

At the center of this initiative is the film "Journey to Freedom," produced by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in collaboration with J/TIP. The film highlights the anti-trafficking heroes identified in the Department's 2012 Trafficking in Persons Report, individuals recognized by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the report's release event in June. The film also honors the sesquicentennial

by underscoring the ties between antebellum abolitionists and current anti-trafficking heroes' efforts.

J/TIP worked closely with posts as they planned commemorative activities, including film screenings, receptions and roundtables, and created promotional materials to support the campaign's theme of "Take a Stand for Freedom." U.S. chiefs of mission, high-level foreign counterparts, NGO activists and representatives of the youth and faith communities have participated. The effort promoted people-to-people ties and advanced the policy dialogue on human trafficking by triggering open exchanges between U.S. diplomats and host-country officials.

At one event in September, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Daniel B. Smith hosted a reception and film screening at the embassy to honor anti-trafficking hero Philip Hyldgaard, who works with an anti-trafficking NGO in Greece. President Barack Obama's speech on modern slavery at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting was broadcast live for Athens attendees.

Ambassador Smith said "Journey to Freedom" is an inspiring portrait of several outstanding individuals dedicated to ending modern-day slavery and helping the victims of human trafficking. The film is "a powerful reminder that the struggle to end slavery that began in the 19th century continues to this day, and that we can and must all work together to bring an end to this global scourge," he said.

The commemoration and public awareness campaign will continue in the months ahead at additional posts.

The U.S. Embassy in Montevideo's commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, held at the ambassador's residence, featured at center, Ambassador Julissa Reynoso and members of the Advisory Group of Candombe, from left, Anibal Pintos, Isabel Ramirez, José Pedro Gularte, Waldemar Silva, Juan Manuel Gularte and Benjamin Arrascaeta y Aquiles Pintos.

Photo by Vince Alongi



Soccer Match Boosts Spirits at Yemeni Orphanage

At a heated soccer match in Yemen's capital of Sana'a, the players on the newly constructed soccer pitch were, on one team, boys from Al-Rahma Orphanage and, on the other, employees at the U.S. Embassy. Both groups had worked hard all day planning and erecting the soccer field on the orphanage's grounds and were now putting it to use, despite a language barrier.

Al-Rahma Orphanage, founded in October 2001 through a trust fund started by a Yemeni woman as the first orphanage for girls in the Republic of Yemen, expanded in 2003 to become Al-Rahma Foundation for Human Development, which seeks better laws for all children and operates three orphanages in Yemen. The Sana'a location, the largest, is home to more than 400 children from infant to high school age and is the only orphanage in Yemen to accept both girls and boys, making it the only facility where orphaned siblings of opposite sexes can remain together. On reaching university age, a child may continue to live at the orphanage in the role of a "den mother," much like a resident assistant at an American university.

The halls of Al-Rahma, which has only 12 paid staff members, are painted in cheerful colors chosen by the children. Its large community room and two family rooms radiate warmth, and its brightly decorated bedrooms are tidy. Children do daily chores and must attend school, which includes English lessons and training in skills such as sewing or weaving. The school is renowned for its handmade crafts and textile products, the sale of which helps cover operating expenses.

Al-Rahma, which receives no government funding and relies on donations and income from selling homemade items, has been a focus for employees of the U.S. Embassy in Yemen. They volunteer much off-duty time there, and, with grant funding from the Kirby Simon Trust, have bought soccer goals, balls, two basketball hoops and other sporting equipment for the facility. Recently, they also worked with boys from Al-Rahma to transform an adjoining dirt field into a play area for the smaller children and the soccer field for older kids. The next time the embassy soccer team comes onto the field against the boys it will be captained by Ambassador Gerald Feierstein.

The embassy's Community Service Group, consisting of embassy and Sheraton Hotel staff, recently collected plastic bottles and gave them to the orphanage to be turned in for cash. The collection drive also helped launch a permanent recycling program at the hotel, with monthly proceeds going to Al-Rahma.

Besides aiding the orphanage, the Community Service Group actively supports the Missionaries of Charity Home for the Developmentally Disabled, whose 80 residents have severe physical or mental handicaps and are

viewed as discards by some in local society.

Amid violent civil unrest in 2011, the charity was forced to evacuate the home's residents, leaving much furniture and equipment behind. To help overcome the loss, four embassy Marines raised funds to purchase 80 new hospital-quality mattresses for the home. For one month, each Marine ran daily laps around the embassy's grounds while employees pledged funds for each mile completed. Thirty days and 273 miles later, the embassy had raised \$5,050. Now the staff plans to assist the home with several renovation projects.

Other community service efforts on the horizon include projects involving two other orphanages and the Yemen Education & Relief Organization. Following regulations, the staffers always do their work with zero press and fanfare.

"We want the help to get to those who need it and keep politics out of it," said Jan Forman, who coordinates the embassy's community service work. She said that even amid the current political tensions, "our work with the community will continue."

Right: Members of the Sheraton Hotel's staff display water bottles collected to raise funds for the Al-Rahma Orphanage. *Photo by Jo Arbis*

Below: Embassy staff members gather with some of the orphans on the steps of the orphanage. *Photo by Embassy Sanaa*



Mission Processes Record 2 Million Visa Applications

Ambassador Anthony Wayne and leaders at the nine visa-issuing U.S. consulates general in Mexico celebrated World Tourism Day Sept. 27 by commemorating the adjudication of two million visitor visa applications by Mission Mexico during fiscal 2012, a nearly 30 percent increase over the previous year.

At the U.S. Embassy, Ambassador Wayne greeted one of the families receiving visas, wishing them a pleasant U.S. visit, and told waiting visa applicants that, “More Americans visit Mexico each year than any other country, and Mexicans visit the United States more than they do any other country in the world. Travel between the United States and Mexico reinforces the already close economic, cultural and familial bonds between our two nations and peoples.”

Mission Mexico attributed the high productivity to such recent steps as the introduction of new offsite Applicant Service Centers (ASCs) and the extension of the Interview Waiver Program for visa renewals. Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs John Brennan

thanked consular officers and Locally Employed Staff throughout Mexico for their efforts to meet the highest visa demand in the world.

Similar events with the principal officers and consular managers were held at the consulates. In Tijuana, the consulate recognized three generations of a family who accepted their visas at a World Tourism Day event.

Responding to President Obama’s call to facilitate travel to the United States, Mission Mexico has made significant investments to encourage business travel and tourism to the United States from Mexico. Three new ASCs opened this year, bringing the total to 14 across the country, allowing applicants more points of service than ever before. The ASCs are open six days a week.

The U.S. consular operation in Mexico is among the largest and most efficient in the world. The consulate general in Tijuana is a modern facility that opened in 2011, and the consulate general in Monterrey will move into a new building in 2014.

Embassy Hosts Four-Day Zambia Bike Tour

To get out among Zambia’s rural communities and engage its people, a 13-member cycling delegation from the U.S. Embassy in Lusaka made up of employees, youth ambassadors, exchange alumni and Peace Corps volunteers recently undertook a four-day bike tour of the streets and dirt roads of the nation’s Northern Province.

The riders, led by Ambassador Mark C. Storella, encountered throngs of supporters, who endorsed such U.S.-supported community projects as sanitation facilities installed at a girls’ school and a podcast listening station at a public library.

Along the route, the riders often heard bullhorns bellowing greetings and radio broadcasting trucks blasting a musical welcome. Children cheered, women sang and danced, and local officials and community leaders joined the ride, many sporting new bikes and speaking of a spirit of adventure and commitment to their constituents.

Riders included provincial ministers, government secretaries, mayors, businesspeople and community leaders, as well as representatives of the post’s public affairs section, USAID, regional security office and office of information management. The tour included discussions on freedom of expression and a demonstration of the country’s first audio-listening booth, a U.S.-provided system that lets area residents access embassy and State Department podcasts at a public library. During a visit to a girls’ school,

students demonstrated hand-washing techniques they learned through a USAID-funded program. A Peace Corps volunteer introduced the delegation to her host family, who offered a tour of their village. The riders also visited other U.S.-funded project sites.

The youth ambassadors and exchange alumni on the trip led panel discussions in local languages and offered insight into local values. One of the city-dwelling youth ambassadors returned to his ancestral land and met, for the first time, his tribal chief.

Media coverage of the ride included live radio feeds and field interviews with national media outlets and community radio stations. The youth ambassadors and alumni actively engaged on social media throughout the journey.



Ambassador Storella leads riders in the Kasama bike tour.
Photo by Chanda Mapoma

Interns Make Big Impact at Small African Post

In 2012, three summer interns at the U.S. Mission in Niger worked on officer-level projects, helped to brief the ambassador for an international interview, traveled with key embassy personnel on a trip to the Air Mountains and used legal knowledge in negotiations with Nigerien government officials.

It's unusual for a post of about 50 direct hires to get so many interns. However, Human Resource (HR) Specialist Marie Pyle and HR Officer Pat Nuwanyakpa made the case and Washington obliged.

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey wanted the interns—Lillian Baker, Hannah Feig and me—to be assets, so Nuwanyakpa asked the section supervisors requesting interns to identify what we would do and how we would fit into embassy operations.

University of Houston second-year law student Lillian Baker (photo at right) helped General Services Officer Jeff Hanley enforce leases with local landlords. Hanley said Baker gave an exceptional presentation to Locally Employed Staff on the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program for USG employees; she later worked in the consular section and traveled with the public affairs section on a Ramadan outreach program.

Baker said one of her most exciting moments came during a meeting with the head of Nigerien Customs to discuss diplomatic cargo that was being unlawfully searched by customs agents. She cited the Vienna Convention as the authority on diplomatic relations and procedures on diplomatic cargo, and had what she called an “a-ha” moment when she really felt what she was learning in law school was useful and relevant in promoting U.S. interests abroad.

Hannah Feig, a third-year University of South Florida student, worked in the political section on Self-Help and Democracy & Human Rights Fund activities. She also drafted reports on development, security and politics. A French-speaking chemistry and anthropology major, Feig took a course in the local language, Zarma.

She admits she had only vague expectations for the internship, which ended up giving her “real, firsthand experience” that included lunch with the prime minister of Niger, attending a National Assembly session, writing cables, translating documents, meeting with the ambassador and practicing Zarma. “I’ve learned that diplomacy depends on connecting with people, understanding different points of view and promoting equality and democracy,” she said.

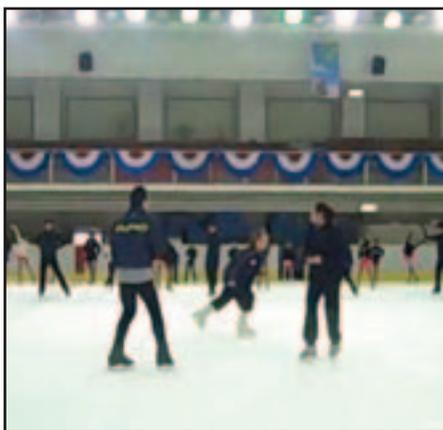


The third intern was Lisa Bull, a fourth-year French-speaking Yale undergrad who worked at the American Cultural Center, using critical-thinking skills to analyze and edit the daily Media Summary, a document that reaches policymakers and informs them about the goings-on in Niger. She also traveled with USAID on an eight-day tour of the nation's interior, using language skills to establish relationships with local youth, helping coordinate some of the embassy's Ramadan outreach and assisting in briefing the ambassador for interviews with local television and the Washington Post.

The interns also participated in an EducationUSA advising session, speaking with Nigerien students interested in studying at U.S. universities, and led a joint presentation at one of the post's weekly English Club meetings. At the end of their internships, the ambassador thanked them for their service and encouraged them to consider Foreign Service careers.

Baker is indeed considering the Foreign Service and plans to take the exam this fall. Feig will seek a Fulbright scholarship for research in Niger, and Bull has begun working on a project to donate Yale lab equipment to the University of Niamey.

This summer, these three women were truly part of the embassy team with real roles and responsibilities, and they showed how interns can make a big contribution at a small African post.



Ice Skating Clinic Raises Awareness

To emphasize Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's view that “gay rights are human rights,” the public affairs section at the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka, Japan, invited two world-famous skaters—three-time U.S. Men's Figure Skating Champion Johnny Weir and 2011 Women's World Champion and three-time Japan Champion Miki Ando—to conduct an ice skating clinic for more than 100 young skaters.

Weir, who is openly gay, spoke about the importance of being true to one's self. Ando, who learned English while training in the United States, served as his translator. They also gave the students advice and tips on going beyond technical proficiency to show one's own unique personality on the ice, and taught them a short routine choreographed to Lady Gaga's “Bad Romance.” The routine included Weir's signature “booty shake” move.

Weir and Ando also met with representatives from the local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community at a lunch at the home of Consulate Fukuoka Principal Officer Jason R. Cubas. One participant said, “It was like a dream to get to talk to Johnny Weir, and it was the first time I ever spoke about LGBT issues with a mixed audience.”

The clinic, held at a local ice arena, attracted an audience of 500 people, and more than 4,000 others in Japan and the world tuned in to a live stream of the event online. Video of the clinic is available on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/Qwfs4da77gE> and Ustream at <http://ustre.am/1H2QO>. ■

Direct from the D.G.

BY LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD
DIRECTOR GENERAL

I am Proud to Serve with You

It is holiday season once again. In that spirit, I would like to thank all of you for your hard work for the State Department and the American citizens it serves year round.

In September, I traveled to Germany, Kuwait and Iraq. My primary objective was to meet and hear from the men and women who serve there, so that we in the Bureau of Human Resources could better support them.

In Kuwait, I had a chance to see firsthand the outstanding work being done by our colleagues in a country that is critical to our interests in the Persian Gulf.

In Baghdad and Basrah, I was impressed by the high level of morale of our men and women; they know the mission, are committed to fulfilling it and work hard to meet that goal. The Foreign Service, Civil Service and Locally Employed (LE) Staff serving in Iraq and at other challenging posts are brave and heroic, and we are deeply grateful for their service.

In Berlin, I met with my DG counterparts from a dozen Western foreign affairs ministries and learned that they are grappling with some of the same issues that we are, such as the budget and changing world environment. In Frankfurt, I met with evacuated family members and employees from U.S. posts in Tripoli, Tunis and Khartoum.

While I was in Iraq, I received the devastating news about Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty. That was not long after we mourned the death of USAID FSO Ragaei Abdelfattah, along with three members of the International Security Assistance Force and an Afghan civilian, at the hands of suicide bombers in Afghanistan. We had also prayed for the safe recovery of both American and Pakistani victims after the attack on our consulate personnel in Peshawar and for an FSO who was injured in the suicide bombing in Afghanistan.

I know that our LE Staff have performed acts of bravery and faced a lot of harrowing experiences around the world through the events of recent months and have suffered loss. I am reminded of just how fortunate we truly are to work with these dedicated men and women. Again, thank you for all that you do in service to our country and yours.

I would also like to heartily thank our colleagues who took time to show their gratitude to those serving



in posts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan by signing the banners in the spring. Your support means a lot.

The Department of State is a relatively small organization, but it is filled with people who care about their employees and colleagues.

I encourage all employees and family members who have not already done so to enroll in the Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) PT-450, Working with Returnees from High Stress Posts. This course, available via DVC or webinar, provides useful information and concrete ideas for how we all can support our colleagues as they transition from high-stress posts.

FSI also offers a High Stress Out-brief Program (MQ-950/951), which is open to all, but mandatory for employees who serve 90 days or longer in Iraq and Afghanistan. This post-departure training helps employees to reintegrate. That is why I ask every senior Department leader who has staff arriving from war zones or other high-stress postings to have those employees attend the out-brief, which is available at FSI in group or individual settings and is also offered by medical units overseas.

Thank you for your support, your partnership and your commitment. I wish you and your families a happy and safe New Year. ■

Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Diversity Notes

BY JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

The Value of the EEO Award

Each year, the Department recognizes outstanding contributions by a Foreign Service or Civil Service employee to the Department's EEO Program through his or her exceptionally effective leadership, skill, imagination and innovation in extending and promoting equal opportunity for all employees. Winners of the \$10,000 award are selected from nominees whose jobs do not focus specifically on EEO or diversity.

Our efforts to sustain a just and inclusive workplace cannot rest solely on simply following orders and complying with routine procedures. Officers who care deeply and understand the fundamental principles of equity, fairness and inclusion are needed at all levels. They must take initiative, seek innovative ways to serve people and solve problems and selflessly persist with or without encouragement or affirmation.

Each year, the EEO Award Committee can select only one of the nominated candidates to receive the EEO Award and another to be the runner-up. In addition to public recognition, the recipient also earns a certificate from the Secretary, a \$10,000 cash award and a trip back to the Department for November's award ceremony.

This year's EEO Award winner was Gregory F. Stanford. His citation said: "Greg Stanford, Management Counselor of Mission Thailand, has distinguished himself and his Post by advancing the noble causes of ...EEO... and diversity. His unselfish, compassionate and successful efforts have demonstrably

helped create a Mission environment in which respect for all people is encouraged, expected and practiced."

The committee was impressed that Greg took Mission Thailand quite beyond the basics of passively posting EEO flyers, conducting EEO briefings and soliciting or "volunteering" EEO counselors. Stanford instituted sustainable cross-cultural training for all new employees—FS, Eligible Family Members and Locally Employed Staff. Rather than preaching, proclaiming and issuing orders, Greg began his tenure by listening. He solicited ideas from all mission members, regardless of career track, nationality or ethnicity, while enlisting their support for the mission's strategic goals.

Among other innovations, his outreach efforts included Same Sex Domestic Partner Outreach, which addressed policy that has been a sensitive issue at many posts. His determination to foster greater inclusivity for all categories of employees and to increase diversity awareness has netted real and lasting results.

The EEO Award Committee chose Julie Gianelloni Connor as the runner-up for the award, citing her outstanding leadership. Julie was a founder of Executive Women at State, often known by its abbreviation, EW@S, one of 12 recognized Employee Affinity Groups, and one of our most successful. EW@S seeks to encourage, support and inspire women to seek senior leadership positions. Under Julie's leadership, EW@S has grown to five affiliates and more than 1,700 members.



Previous award recipients include Mariju L. Bofill, who was selected in 2011 for her leadership role in the Department's Asian American Foreign Affairs Association. Each of these individuals demonstrated a commitment to practicing equal employment opportunity, albeit in different contexts. Winners have been consistent in their response, when notified of winning the award. All are clear that they did not set out to win anything or seek recognition of any kind. They just wanted to improve the Department and worked toward a more inclusive workplace—that's selfless service.

We know there are other outstanding employees like these winners. We in the Office of Civil Rights want to hear about them. Please nominate them for the 2013 EEO Award. See 3 FAM 4832.6 for nomination criteria and procedures. Join the Office of Civil Rights and all of State in saluting the 2012 award winner and the runner-up. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson".



Deputy Secretary Thomas Nides, right, meets with Lodinsky at Walter Reed.
Photo by Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

Wounded Warrior

FSO Bombing Victim Recovers at Walter Reed

By Michael Sears, Political-Military team leader, Office of Afghanistan Affairs,
Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan

On August 8, two months into his Afghanistan tour, Jeff Lodinsky was walking a narrow dirt road along the Kunar River, heading toward a meeting with the governor of Kunar Province. Lodinsky, a senior civilian representative in Regional Command East, was about to see his life suddenly change.

Clad in body armor, helmet and protective glasses, Lodinsky was walking with another U.S. civilian and 18 soldiers, who were providing security, when he noticed that a teenage boy in a white cotton tunic was pushing at one of the soldiers on the periphery, a few meters away. The soldier shoved the boy back while clutching his M4 carbine.

“I thought it was a little odd, as Afghans usually steer clear of us when we move down the road,” Lodinsky said. “I just thought that it was a boy being a nuisance.”

Later, he remembered that the boy seemed to shift and lurch when he moved, as if he had a heavy weight under his traditional tunic.

Pointing to the steep stairs as they approached the governor’s compound, Lodinsky was about to tell the other civilian, USAID employee Ragei Abdelfattah, to hold onto the rails to avoid what could be a catastrophic fall when wearing body armor. Lodinsky

recalled that Abdelfattah, who stood more than six feet tall, had a whimsical smile on his goatee-framed face.

But, just beyond Abdelfattah, the boy in the white tunic “had a look of real fear on his face—his eyes were wide and his mouth was open.”

Then came the bright flash and sharp crack that eviscerated the boy and sent a shower of steel pellets scything through the bodies of those nearby. A second suicide bomber a short distance away detonated his bomb simultaneously with that of the boy.

Immediately, Lodinsky was on the ground. He could not hear anything and felt no pain. He rolled over and saw Abdelfattah’s body facing him—eyes open, whimsical grin still in place. However, Abdelfattah, a naturalized American citizen from Egypt, had died instantly.

Checking his own wounds, Lodinsky saw that his right leg was nearly sheared off at the shin and that pellets had cut through his hands and legs. His eardrums had ruptured.

Then, he began to hear low moans from those nearby. Looking around, he saw smoke and carnage. He shouted to a wounded soldier nearby, “Hey, we have to get out of here!”

Lodinsky had been in dangerous settings before, but nothing like this. As senior civilian representative, he supervised about 30 U.S. civilians in Provincial Reconstruction and District Support Teams in Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan Provinces, which include some of the most remote and dangerous areas in Afghanistan. Prior to that, he'd headed the consular section at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He joined the Department in 1992, worked as a diplomatic courier for six years and then converted to a Foreign Service generalist through the Mustang Program. He said being an FSO was his career dream, and he loved consular work. But he wanted to do more political-oriented work, and Afghanistan had given him that chance. (He'd planned to move next to Embassy Kabul's Interagency Provincial Affairs Office.)

At the scene of the bombing, Lodinsky grasped a wounded soldier's body armor and dragged him. They used their elbows to crawl to a ditch near the road, and then tumbled into a concrete drainage system.

Lodinsky's first instinct was to call the embassy to report the attack, but he could not make his cell phone work. Loss of blood made him weary, he said, so he gave up on the phone and laid his head back to rest. He realized later that during those crucial moments after the attack, he was likely going into shock.

Meanwhile, U.S. troops who had been waiting to receive the delegation in the governor's compound raced to the site of the attack and secured it. They began aiding the wounded, but Lodinsky and the wounded soldier were out of sight in the drainage system and losing blood.

Then, a U.S. soldier looked into the drain and shouted to the other troops, who pulled Lodinsky and the wounded soldier out and began medical treatment.

The attack had killed three U.S. soldiers, an Afghan interpreter and Abdelfattah, who had been standing between Lodinsky and the bomber,

which is a likely reason that Lodinsky survived. Lodinsky was sent to Bagram Air Base for surgery, then to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for more surgery and a meeting with his wife. At the State Department's request, the Department of Defense granted Lodinsky Wounded Warrior status, and he was accepted into Walter Reed Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., possibly the world's best provider of medical care for those with battle wounds.

During his recovery at Walter Reed, Lodinsky received visits from State Department colleagues and other friends and family. He said he was thrilled to receive a telephone call from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and visits from Deputy Secretary Tom Nides and Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs, who heads his Foreign Service job cone.

"Although this has been a difficult experience, it is gratifying that State has provided critical support to me and my family," he said. "At no time did I ever feel alone. State and Consular Affairs' support has been genuine and heartfelt."

Lodinsky evinces a positive attitude and outlook, remarkable given his ordeal, and hopes the reconstructive ear surgery he received will improve his hearing. His shrapnel wounds have mostly healed, and if his shattered tibia heals, he hopes one day to walk again without support. He said he just wants to recover from his wounds and complete his Afghan tour at Embassy Kabul.

"My time in Afghanistan was short," Lodinsky said recently, "but the work we are doing is so important and it continues. From USAID to USDA to State Foreign Service specialists and generalists, we are achieving much on behalf of our Afghan partners."

Lodinsky can be reached at jefflodinsky@hotmail.com. His mailing address is Fisher House 4, Room 105, 24 Stokes Road, Bethesda, MD 20814. ■



Lodinsky, second from left, takes part in a traditional meal with colleagues in Afghanistan.
State Department photo



Taking Stock

At Two-year Point, Numerous QDDR Achievements

By Adam Lusin, strategy analyst, QDDR Office

In U.S. posts around the world, from South Sudan to Vietnam, action is occurring in response to the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). Diverse stories, many on the QDDR website (qddr.state.gov), illustrate how the QDDR is driving change and improvement in the State Department and USAID. The two-year anniversary of the QDDR marks a perfect juncture to take stock of the accomplishments, reforms and ongoing initiatives, and lay out where we're heading.

Structural reforms position the Department to meet the challenges reshaping the global landscape. Three new bureaus

now exist: Energy Resources, Counterterrorism, and Conflict and Stabilization Operations. The Bureau of Resource Management was split into the Bureau of Budget and Planning and the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to separate budget formulation and execution from traditional accounting and financial functions.

The "E" function was repositioned as the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment to enhance our effectiveness on interconnected global issues, while the G role was repositioned to J as Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights to organize our efforts to effectively advance human security. There's also now a Chief Economist to advise on economic issues that relate to foreign policy interests, and a Coordinator for Cyber Issues overseeing the global diplomatic engagement on cyber issues.

Policy and process initiatives from the QDDR are also working to more effectively promote U.S. interests and improve our operations, including:

- The Economic Statecraft agenda, which renews the effort to place economics at the heart of foreign policy by championing American business, creating a level playing field and strengthening relationships through economic ties.
- Efforts promoting the status of women and girls, which officers in the field are doing in unprecedented fashion, while gender equality is being highlighted as a priority in the new strategic planning and budgeting processes.





Left: Maria Otero is Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, the “J” function. **Right:** Rick Barton is Assistant Secretary for Conflict and Stabilization Operations. *State Department photos*

- Strategic planning exercises, which nearly two-thirds of the Department’s regional and functional bureaus and missions abroad have conducted, allowing for greater alignment of priorities and budgetary requests. Better program monitoring and evaluation processes are also in place.

- Rapid adoption of social media and connection technologies, which public diplomacy practitioners use as leading tools to engage audiences overseas and domestically.

The QDDR is expanding opportunities and strengthening the workforce. New courses at FSI tell the tale: “Understanding the Interagency,” “Gender Integration and Foreign Policy,” “Partnership in Development and Diplomacy” and “USAID Mission Directors Seminar.”

“The QDDR outlines a robust agenda for reform which requires an equally robust training and development curriculum to equip employees with the necessary skills to advance QDDR objectives,” said FSI Director Ruth Whiteside.

HR is also an integral leader, implementing new career flexibility programs such as the Overseas Civil Service Assignments, and working to strengthen workforce recruitment strategies through diversity and innovation.

Fiscal savings have been achieved through QDDR implementation. The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) saved almost \$20 million, nearly 40 percent of its budget, through contract realignment, space consolidation and shifting the Civilian Response Corps from a standby force to a global network. By identifying and recapturing an additional \$45 million in program money, CSO set the mark high for QDDR successes in only its first year. Assistant Secretary Rick Barton says, “By making tough budget decisions, we were able to use 70 percent of our funds to put people on the ground in the places where we need to be, including our four priority countries of Syria, Kenya, Burma and Honduras.”

Externally, the QDDR’s strategic platform to transform diplomacy and elevate development through “civilian power” has saved taxpayer dollars. As the U.S. military handed over operations to the Department and USAID in the Frontline States, the Administration’s FY 2011 budget request fell by \$45 billion for military expenses while diplomacy and development expenses rose by less than \$4 billion.

Progress is not measured in only status reports and scorecards. The hallmark of any well-designed plan is implementation at the grassroots level. There, many changes have taken place. For example:

- The Bureau of International Organization Affairs has initiated the

quarterly Senior Multilateral Forum to synchronize multilateral and bilateral policymaking and expand engagement with regional organizations.

- The Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI) co-chairs an Application and Data Coordination Working Group to standardize data and application

systems. Establishing a robust data governance system and bridging existing silos will ultimately automate and streamline queries to reduce “data calls” to the field. “We are working to provide our decision makers with corporate data that is clean, timely and relevant for making business decisions in a proactive way, providing the business intelligence that will ultimately save resources,” says Susan Curley, managing director of M/PRI.

- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs is implementing whole-of-government solutions by strengthening State-Defense cooperation and becoming the global leader in international development.

Outside the Department, there have also been changes. USAID has introduced a multitude of initiatives in its FORWARD project, and is modernizing and strengthening its operations to achieve high-impact development with new partnerships, emphasizing innovation and focusing on results.

Efforts to further institutionalize the QDDR are under way. The Secretary has established the QDDR Office under the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources to guide implementation and establish the structure for future quadrennial reviews. Under the direction of David McKean, senior advisor to the Secretary for the QDDR, the QDDR Office partners with nearly every bureau to maintain momentum for implementing the report’s recommendations and provide guidance on its strategic direction.

The value of the QDDR as an agency strategic planning process has also been realized by Capitol Hill. In September, the U.S. Senate mandated the submission to Congress of the QDDR every four years. The QDDR Office is working with Department and USAID leaders, as well as counterparts at the National Security Council, Department of Defense and Office of Management and Budget to capture lessons learned and plan accordingly for the next iteration of the QDDR. These efforts build a strong foundation for the QDDR to continue providing the strategic platform for future secretaries of State to articulate priorities, assess capabilities, identify needed resources and assure accountability.

A lot of progress has occurred in the second year of the QDDR’s implementation at the Department and USAID. While we applaud the efforts of so many around the world, there is much more that needs to be done, as we are now halfway through the quadrennial process. With continued cooperation and commitment from the Department and USAID, we can meet the goals and objectives the first report outlined, and set the stage for a successful transition to the next quadrennial review. ■

Broad Reach

Recruiters Seek Diverse Candidates for State

By Kathleen Eagen, recruiter, Office of Recruiting Outreach

Once upon a time, members of the Foreign Service were largely drawn from an elite group of mostly East Coast universities, and recruiting started and ended not far from Foggy Bottom. Those times are gone. Today's marketplace demands a diverse pool of candidates that "look like America" and have the skills and creativity to meet ever-changing demands.

Thus, State Department recruiters are as likely to show up at a military base in California, a tribal college in Michigan, a meeting of African-American MBAs in Indiana or a job fair at the University of Puerto Rico as they are to talk to international relations majors at Ivy League career fairs.

Today, the 26 full-time recruiters who seek out Foreign Service generalists and specialists, interns and Civil Service employees are driving the backroads of all 50 states, targeting nontraditional candidates and meeting candidates online worldwide. The recruiting team—16 Diplomats in Residence, 10 Washington-based recruiters and a marketing group—works together to tell good candidates about the Department's career opportunities.

Competition for Department jobs is fierce, and there is no shortage of candidates. Last year, more than 22,000 candidates took the written Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), though only 425 new Foreign Service generalists came aboard via six A-100 classes. On the Foreign Service specialist side, more than 11,000 applied, but just 320 were hired.

The recruiters' traditional outreach includes visiting high schools, colleges, universities and career fairs; lecturing to classes; or offering information sessions about Department career paths and Foreign Service life. On campuses, the Diplomats in Residence and Washington recruiters work with career counselors and school administrators.

But in recent years, the range of target institutions has broadened, in part to increase the number of under-represented minorities. Now, the recruitment staff targets historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and Hispanic-serving institutions, and such student associations as the East Coast Asian American Student Association or Out for Work, an LGBT student organization. Every year, recruiters attempt to visit all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico, to reach out to a geographically diverse applicant pool.



Reflecting this broad reach, during just two weeks this fall:

- Diplomat in Residence Ambassador John Nay and Washington-based recruiters Debbie Faltz and Jessica Norris talked with business majors at the National Black MBA career fair in Indianapolis;
- Veteran-recruiting specialist Faisal Khan and Diplomat in Residence William Martin provided military personnel with information about State careers during a fair at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii;

Above: Recruiter Jessica Norris speaks with a job candidate at the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science career fair in Seattle. *Photo by Kathleen Eagan* **Left:** Recruiters Josue Barrera, left, and Rosibel Hernandez discuss State Department careers with high school students attending an event organized by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. *Photo by Mayra Robinson*



Diplomat in Residence Steve Maloney, left, speaks at Highlands University in New Mexico. Photo by Diane Maloney

- Recruiter Daisy Valentin discussed State openings with students at several Puerto Rican universities, highlighting opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Recruiting Outreach Division Chief Terry Davidson engaged more than 100 returned Peace Corps volunteers at a fair hosted by the Peace Corps;
- Diplomat in Residence Patricia Guy and I provided information to attendees at the National Association of Asian American Professionals Conference in New York; and
- Washington recruiter Josue Barrera discussed careers with attendees at a meeting of the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association in Washington, D.C.

The results of this broad effort have proven very successful. Candidates from all 50 states and Puerto Rico signed up for the FSOT and applied for Foreign Service specialist and Civil Service positions in the past fiscal year.

“With the average age of joining the Foreign Service hovering around 31, mid-career professionals with broad experience are the most successful at navigating the highly competitive Foreign Service process,” said Kaara Ettesvold, director of the Office of Recruitment, Evaluation and Employment (HR/REE). She said Recruitment staff members look for opportunities to engage diverse professional organizations to gain racial, ethnic and religious diversity and targeted language skills.

Recruitment’s marketing team plays an integral role in this work, via a national recruitment advertising campaign that incorporates digital communications, email marketing and social media. Recruitment’s marketing manager, Rachel Friedland, said the Department’s recruiting effort must “educate diverse U.S. citizens about who we are and what we do, and then inspire them to take action, register for the FSOT or apply for a specialist or internship opportunity.” Her outreach tactics include Facebook and LinkedIn advertising and targeted messaging to highly qualified minority candidates.

Another venue is the Department’s career website (careers.state.gov), which includes employment opportunities and a step-by-step

primer on navigating the process. Consistently rated a top government website for user satisfaction, careers.state.gov also offers candidates multiple ways to engage with Diplomats in Residence and HR experts. The site’s “Forums” section allows visitors to ask questions and get answers from HR specialists, usually within hours.

Other online efforts include:

- Having all 16 Diplomats in Residence maintain Facebook pages to keep candidates abreast of opportunities and answer questions,
- Publicizing recruiting events via Facebook and Twitter,
- Reaching out to candidates through online career fairs and information sessions, and
- Using websites like INTERNational Connections, which allows Recruitment staff, Department employees and interns to discuss internship experiences.

The Diplomats in Residence also get involved in spreading the word about intern experiences. Jim Ellickson-Brown, Diplomat in Residence at the University of Michigan, invited all the interns from his area to post on his Facebook page a picture or a story about their experiences from the summer. Michigan State University intern Erin Kelly, for instance, described her time with the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg, Russia, as “the most challenging summer of my life, but also the most rewarding,” posting a photo of her meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The Diplomats in Residence and Recruitment staff prepare applicants for the FSOT and Foreign Service Oral Assessment, holding sessions throughout the United States. For the growing number of candidates residing outside the United States, there are online versions of the info sessions. Using Adobe Connect software, recruiters and Diplomats in Residence can help candidates from China to Iraq prepare for the exam.

This fall, Recruitment convened a panel of renowned recruiting specialists and focus groups of new hires to help chart future strategies. The team will continue charting new routes in search of the diverse, highly skilled personnel needed to lead our 21st-century foreign policy efforts. ■

Ready and Able

Department Recruits Persons with Disabilities

By Michael Wolfe, lead human resources specialist, Disability Reasonable Accommodation Division

The State Department is committed to recruiting a diverse workforce, including persons with disabilities and wounded or disabled veterans. Strategic planning for this endeavor is led by the Disability Reasonable Accommodation Division (DRAD), which since its establishment in October 2009 has been the Department's centralized resource for assisting applicants and employees with reasonable accommodations, hiring more persons with disabilities and fostering a more inclusive culture for employees with disabilities.

DRAD's recruitment and outreach efforts are led by the Department's Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC). Most federal agencies have an SPPC who is responsible for assisting applicants with disabilities with their federal job search and resume writing. The SPPC also answers questions regarding agency-specific career opportunities, reasonable accommodations or applying for positions using the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities. Schedule A is a quick and easy special hiring authority that lets applicants with disabilities, with proper documentation, apply noncompetitively for Civil Service positions.

DRAD also leads the Department's efforts to comply with Executive Order 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities. The order provides a plan for recruitment, hiring and retention of persons with disabilities, and requires all federal agencies to establish annual hiring goals for persons with disabilities and targeted disabilities. As a result of DRAD's outreach efforts, the Department exceeded its goals for those criteria in fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

The Department's success in hiring more persons with disabilities results from an extensive outreach initiative undertaken in collaboration with the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights; Office of Recruitment, Examination, and Employment (REE); and the Department's Diplomats in Residence. (DIRs are Senior Foreign Service officers who reside on college campuses around the country and assist with helping to recruit a diverse workforce for the Department.)

DRAD's SPPC and recruiters from REE attend outreach events targeting persons with disabilities and wounded or disabled veterans. The Department also participates in career fairs sponsored by Careers & the disABLED magazine and is an active member of the intelligence community's Wounded Warrior Working Group, which promotes internships with intelligence agencies for wounded and recovering Armed Forces members. Additionally, the Department participates in Operation Warfighter, a Department of Defense program that places wounded vets into internships with federal agencies, allowing them to gain civilian experience while recovering from their injuries.

Some of these Department initiatives came together during the recent celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. The Department hosted a Disability Networking Event/Job Fair at the George C. Marshall Conference Center that highlighted its commitment to hiring and promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities. Speakers included Director General Linda

Thomas-Greenfield and Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann.

There were also two panel discussions on Department career and internship opportunities and resources for employees and applicants with disabilities, and a panel of Foreign Service and Civil Service employees with disabilities who spoke about their experiences.

The highlight, though, was the job fair, where hiring and human resources personnel from more than 20 bureaus met with the more than 150 attendees to discuss career opportunities and answer questions. Since many of the attendees were eligible for Schedule A hiring authority, bureaus were encouraged to conduct follow-up interviews with qualified applicants for potential Civil Service vacancies. Many attendees said they had interviews scheduled for the days ahead.

"I was extremely impressed by the caliber of the attendees at the



DRAD Director Patricia Pittarelli speaks at the October event on recruiting people with disabilities, as the author listens at right.
Photo by Ed Warner

Disability Networking Event," said Roberta Mather, marketing manager in the Bureau of Administration's Office of Global Publishing Solutions. "A diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities gives it a competitive advantage by bringing people that have new ideas, viewpoints and approaches to solving operational challenges."

The Department emphasizes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities both during the application process and once on board. Advanced "assistive technology" products such as software that can read text aloud, plus other reasonable accommodations, allow employees with disabilities to serve all over the world. Emphasizing its commitment to such employees, DRAD recently led a government-wide effort to establish a working group to focus on sharing best practices and challenges related to the federal government's provision of reasonable accommodations. DRAD continues its outreach, while seeking to foster an environment in which employees with disabilities can be successful. Questions regarding the Department's Selective Placement or Reasonable Accommodations programs can be directed to [SelectivePlacement@state.gov](mailto>SelectivePlacement@state.gov). ■



Left: Bidding farewell to the nation of Z on the ConGen course's graduation day are, from left, Liza Petrush, deputy director of the Consular Training Division, and students Zennia Paganini from Tegucigalpa, Wilhelm Nassmacher from Ankara, Joshua Smith from Sao Paulo and Kenise Hill from Brasilia. **Below:** Student Kam Gordon from São Paulo conducts a "visa applicant interview" of student Virgile Borderies from Monterrey. *Photos by Kathy Reimondez*



'Republic of Z'

ConGen Prepares Diplomats for Action Abroad

By Michael Fitzpatrick and Katherine Reimondez, instructors, Consular Training Division

For its basic course in consular operations, the Foreign Service Institute operates the "U.S. Consulate General in Rosslyn," in the imaginary Republic of Z. A student taking the Consular Training Division's Basic Consular Course will face, in one scenario, one of a diplomat's hardest tasks: notifying survivors of a U.S. citizen's death abroad.

In the scenario, U.S. citizen Ginger Katz has been killed in a car crash in Z and her husband in the United States must be notified. The nation of Z's police have requested dental records to assist in identifying the remains, and local law stipulates that bodies be interred or embalmed prior to shipment out of the country within 24 hours.

How to break the news to the husband and gently convince him to provide the dental records quickly? The first-tour officer takes a deep breath and dials the number. On the other side of the room, another student in the course plays the role of Katz.

The death notification scenario is just one part of the Basic Consular Course, affectionately known as "ConGen." Of the estimated 2,000 government employees who come to FSI for training in any week, approximately 120 are in ConGen. Last year, more than 800 students took the course, and more than 15,000 participated in other consular-related training.

The ConGen moniker dates to 1977, when FSI decided to complement its in-depth review of the Foreign Affairs Manual with training that replicated a typical consular work environment overseas. The course aims to instill in students the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Consular Leadership Tenets and help shape their approach to work and life in the Department. Through lectures, mentoring, guest speakers, videos, role-playing, discussion, exams, field trips and practical exercises, students begin to experience life in a consular section. They "visit" U.S. citizens held prisoner in the city of Rosslyn's jail and "interview" visa applicants. Other scenarios are real, as when students take a trip to the city morgue.

Each ConGen course lasts 31 business days and involves up to 24 students. Held 34 to 36 times each year, the course is a requirement for FSOs embarking on their first consular tours, but also trains others headed out to consular positions, including mid- and senior-level officers, members of the Civil Service, Bureau of Diplomatic Security special agents and analysts, Limited Non-career Appointees and Eligible Family Members.

Consular training doesn't end with ConGen. In keeping with CA's leadership tenet of seeking continuous learning, the Consular Training Division offers officers and Locally Employed Staff more than 30 courses, many of them available via distance learning. They cover a range of topics and target a range of experience levels. Among other things, students learn to identify material issues, determine credibility, make quick and authoritative decisions and analyze and summarize pertinent information.

Students leave ConGen not only understanding how to do visa and passport interviews, but also understanding that those interviews affect people's lives, involve national security and are public diplomacy opportunities. They are prepared to lead consular outreach programs, so that they can teach about the United States and explain U.S. law and policy, often in a foreign language.

ConGen helps students establish a leadership style, gain experience with personnel and resource management and build great teams. And since consular work is often high-volume and high-stakes, even in the Republic of Z, students leave training with a better idea of how they react under pressure.

ConGen covers a lot in a relatively short period of time, and students feel a real sense of accomplishment when they successfully complete the course. The staff of Consular Training looks forward to welcoming the next generation of leaders to the Republic of Z. ■

'Netizen' Incubators

TechCamps Boost Civil Groups' Digital Media Competence

Pritam Kabe, technology analyst, Diplomatic Innovation Division, Office of eDiplomacy

The "Arab Spring" uprising showcased how low-cost technologies can accelerate social change. Innovations such as data mapping, social media and crowd-sourcing can help civil society organizations (CSOs) make progress across a wide range of issues, but traditional CSOs are often unaware of, reluctant to use, or inexperienced with such new tools.

To address this, the State Department created the TechCamp program, which introduces CSOs to technologies that can transform their work. TechCamps take place during two tightly organized, interactive days, where CSO participants listen to stories about projects that relied upon low-cost, easy-to-implement technologies. They are also trained on social media use, online organizing, digital safety, website

development, digital citizen journalism and other topics relevant to the CSO's mission.

Rather than tell participants how technology can solve their problems, the TechCamp facilitators listen as CSO representatives describe their challenges, then provide the technology skills the CSO reps need to develop their solutions. Using their new tech-based tools, the representatives can implement changes to make their organizations more efficient and effective.

The TechCamp concept was developed by the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Office of eDiplomacy and the Secretary's Office of Innovation and Technology. The offices have worked with U.S. embassies and other public and private partners to host 14 TechCamps that have trained more than 800 CSOs from more

than 50 countries. The TechCamp held in Chisinau, Moldova, for instance, focused on open government and transparency, helping raise awareness within the Moldovan government of the importance of open data.

Stela Mocan, head of the Moldovan government's eGovernment Center, said the TechCamp represented "the first time that we understood why we would use open data." As a follow-up to that TechCamp, the World Bank and the eGovernment Center held an Open Innovation Week and a "hackathon" to advance several of the TechCamp's open government projects.

The TechCamp in Bucharest, Romania, in December 2011, focused on social inclusion for disadvantaged and isolated communities. As a result of the camp, one CSO participant created the Civic Help





Left: Ayman Qarout, a trainer in Ramallah from Jawwal, Inc., talks with TechCamp participants about safe online practices for children. *Office of eDiplomacy photo;* **Above:** Nate Smith, of the organization Development Seed, teaches the production of custom maps and data visualization at the TechCamp in Kyiv, Ukraine. *Photo by the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv*

Service, which helps Romanians respond swiftly to emergencies by identifying the places or persons that need assistance and using social media to encourage the region's youth to volunteer in relief efforts.

"It was a real honor and pleasure to participate and work with technologists at TechCamp Bucharest," said Victor Chumak, who created the service. "I changed entirely my perspective on how to deal with the problems existing within the communities by using technology." TechCamp Bucharest also connected activists for the Roma people with representatives from American Corners and local libraries, providing the Roma representatives with more access to the libraries' information and services.

The 2010 TechCamp in Santiago, Chile, sparked cross-continental collaboration, as several CSOs focusing on election monitoring identified a need for an online space to collaborate and share ideas. The group developed a statement of need for online collaboration that was later taken up at a Random Hacks Of Kindness event in Africa and received World Bank funding. The resulting online collaboration tool, called "Umoja," is now used for election monitoring and support of other civil society initiatives.

At IRM's latest TechCamp, in Kyiv, Ukraine, in September, Ambassador John F. Tefft spoke of the U.S. commitment to youth development. Under a theme of "Creating a Global Citizen: Building Schools without Walls," the camp brought together representatives of more than 80 civil society organizations, including educators, youth advocates and community organizers from Ukraine and Belarus. Putting technology in the hands of teachers, librarians and youth advocates "gives hope for the future," Ambassador Tefft said.

TechCamp Kyiv focused on forming a community of learning surrounding

the creation and implementation of online gaming as a tool for teachers to connect with students. Another project developed and deployed an online map to display extracurricular opportunities offered in a city's secondary schools. Other TechCamp Kyiv projects included developing an online networking platform for citizen journalists and a website for people to report dilapidated houses to the local authorities.

To facilitate rapid diffusion of the TechCamp concept, the Office of eDiplomacy has developed TechCamp-in-a-Box, a do-it-yourself guide that provides all information necessary to organize and host a TechCamp. The first event based on TechCamp-in-a-Box took place in Guatemala in August, hosted by a leading social entrepreneur.

Some Department bureaus are looking at the TechCamp model as a way to engage on foreign policy issues. For example, The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs hosted two Youth TechCamps, which trained youths in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh on using technologies for collaboration on social issues.

TechCamps support peace and prosperity. As Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton put it, when meeting with TechCamp Vilnius participants in 2011, "as new networks are built and new avenues for communication open, it's critical that civil society stay at the forefront of these changes. The hands-on training you will receive from technology experts will help you open markets, increase accountability in governments and give women, girls and minorities their voices. You are essential to the progress we hope to see in your communities and your countries in the future."

For more information about Civil Society 2.0 or TechCamps, or for information on hosting a TechCamp, visit techcampglobal.org. TechCamp is on Facebook at TechCampGlobal and on Twitter

@TechCampGlobal. The Office of eDiplomacy can be contacted at eDip@state.gov. □

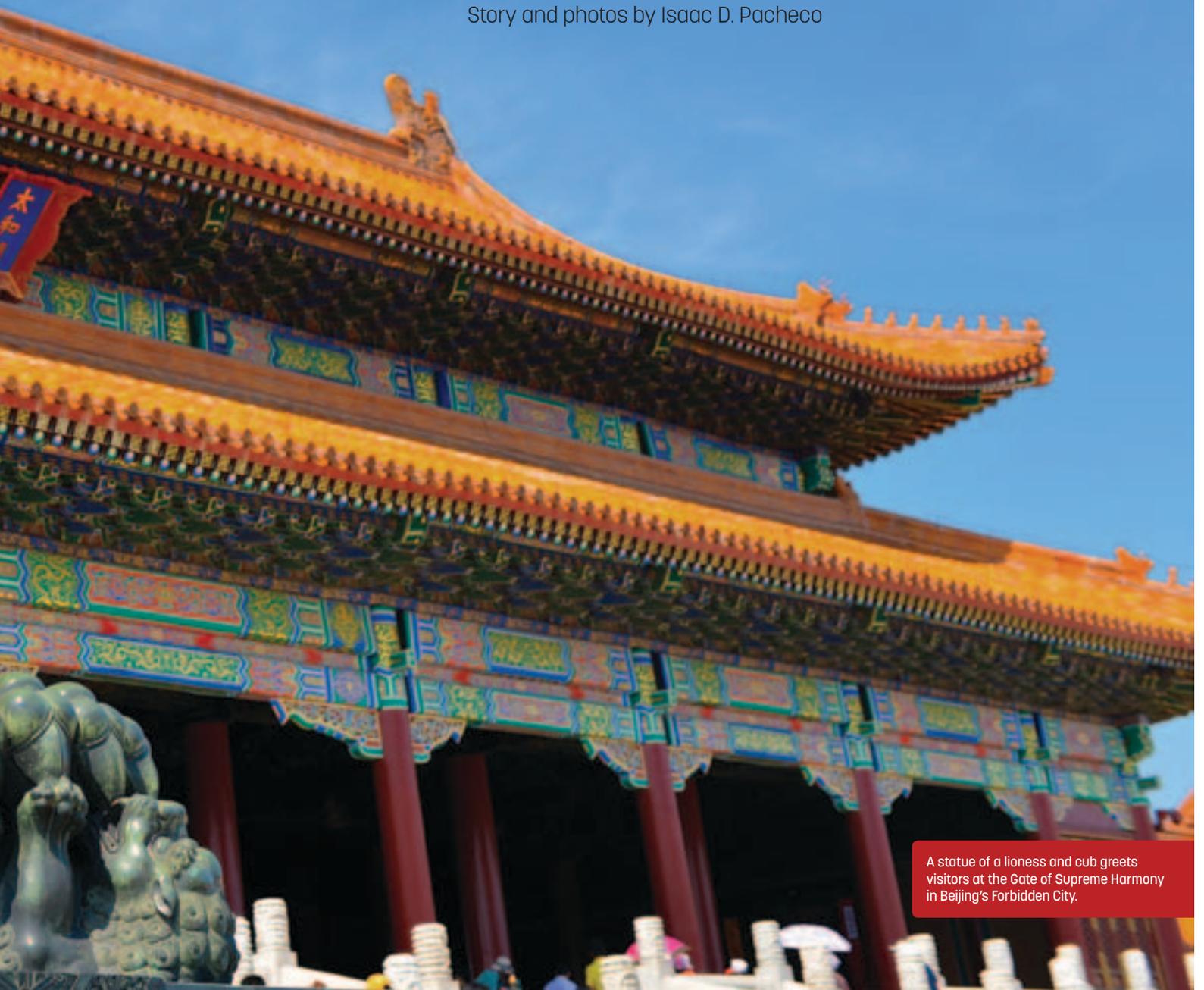
TECHCAMP



BEIJING

Shared Vision Drives Partnership in China's Gateway City

Story and photos by Isaac D. Pacheco



A statue of a lioness and cub greets visitors at the Gate of Supreme Harmony in Beijing's Forbidden City.



Left to right: A girl chats on her mobile phone as she walks through Beijing's brightly-lit shopping district of Wangfujing; Ambassador Gary Locke welcomes Secretary Clinton to the embassy during her visit in September. (*Embassy Beijing Photo*); The ornately decorated Temple of Heaven (Tian Tan) is one of Beijing's most popular tourist attractions; A woman pedals a fully-laden tricycle through the morning haze in Beijing's embassy district.

eted issues, both the U.S. and China continue to work toward establishing mutually beneficial partnerships based on areas of shared interest.

“Clearly, China is a rising power,” said Wang. “It’s already a regional power and it is moving, slowly but surely, toward becoming a global power in every aspect. Economically, it’s already a global presence and important to a lot of countries around the world. ... The country is growing, it’s changing, it’s at the cusp of something big, and what we do here therefore is critical.”

Leading from the Front

At the heart of the dynamic U.S. Mission to China is a team of dedicated State Department employees who work to strengthen the underpinnings of an evolving relationship.

“The foundation of our relationship is extremely important, and the embassy works on that on a daily

Beijing, the epicenter of the U.S. Mission to China, is a patchwork of many different cultures. The city is divided into dozens of small neighborhoods, each with its own distinctive look and feel. Wangfujing is one of these unique neighborhoods—a bustling shopping area in the heart of the city’s historic Dongcheng district, which attracts thousands of visitors each day.

The brightly lit enclave pays homage to China’s historic roots while simultaneously highlighting the country’s burgeoning international connections and its aspirations for economic success. In Wangfujing, millennia-old buildings sit in the shadows of sleek, high-rise office towers while human-powered rickshaws compete with expensive Italian sports cars for space on crowded side streets.

The main drag, a pedestrian mall, pulses with the glow of hundreds of neon advertisements for high-end restaurants, and fashion houses and boutiques specializing in luxury goods. Elsewhere, ornately decorated lanterns lure tourists and bargain hunters down dozens of crowded hutongs (residential alleyways) where

vendors of every conceivable product ply their wares. Epicurean thrill seekers follow their noses inside the legendary night market’s paifang (a traditional Chinese archway) where food vendors specialize in exotic treats like deep-fried lizard, offal stew and scorpion-on-a-stick.

From one street to the next, a traveler might overhear conversations in a dozen languages, a testament to the city’s increasingly global demographic, as well as to China’s successful efforts to attract visitors from around the world since opening its doors to the West.

One of the world’s most populous metropolitan areas, Beijing is the cultural, educational and political center of an ascendant China, a nation steeped in a rich and storied history.

“Most people who join the Foreign Service want to serve in places like this,” said Robert Wang, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. “They want to be a part of something that’s important, that’s historic, that means a lot to the U.S. and to the world.”

Despite lingering differences on a variety of complex and multifac-





basis whether it's through student exchanges, international business programs and the Fulbright program or through our work with the tens of thousands of American companies investing and trading here," Wang said. "On top of that maturing relationship, that strong foundation, we work on some of the more challenging key issues."

Often, the issues—including foreign policy, human rights, trade and commerce, Internet freedom and environmental protection—have implications beyond the citizens of the two respective countries.

"Name an environmental problem or challenge," said Erica Thomas, Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) counselor at Embassy Beijing during a Q&A session on climate change at the embassy. "You're not going to solve it if the U.S. and China aren't in the room. We are the biggest emitters—both of us. We are the biggest energy users. It's in the world's interest that we figure out a way to work together on these issues."

Of the 40 U.S. agencies besides the Department of State at the embassy, the Department of Energy (DOE) is one of the busiest and most visible. Its collaborative projects with the Chinese people seek to improve energy efficiency and encourage decreased





dependence on carbon-based energy sources. The State Department has partnered with DOE to promote such green technologies as solar power and renewable energy through extensive use of traditional educational programs and social media.

“Hopefully that will have an impact on pollution in China,” said Tahra Vose, a former ESTH officer. “The Chinese now being aware of this problem is important.”

Managing the Message

To communicate with China’s 1.3 billion inhabitants, Embassy Beijing relies on one of the Department’s largest and most innovative public affairs (PA) teams.

“We have unique and challenging obstacles and have to think of creative ways to get our message out,” said former Information Officer Richard Buangan. “We have to cater to a lot of audiences. We do that in a number of creative and traditional ways that support public diplomacy in China.”

The PA team’s economic and commercial diplomacy program encourages U.S. and Chinese businesses to collaborate, which creates economic incentives and benefits for both countries. Similarly, its cultural diplomacy program brings American artistic groups to China to promote U.S. art and culture.

Department sports and cultural exchanges deepen mutual understanding and support the goals of the U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange. For example, a Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program brought Chinese physical education professionals to the United States in October 2012 to explore how both countries can ensure that all sectors of the population have access to sports and recreational opportunities.

However, it’s the embassy’s pervasive use of social media that has proven most effective at reaching the increasingly Web-connected Chinese populace.

“Chinese Internet users are much savvier than users in other countries, including Americans, simply because that’s where they get their information now,” said Buangan. “You have 600 million Internet users here in China. A lot of them, because of the

challenges of getting information from the outside world, rely on the Internet to get information.”

Active on more than 10 of the most popular Chinese-language social media platforms, the PA office engages the country’s citizens on a gamut of issues ranging from study opportunities

in the United States to visa application requirements. Some of the embassy’s postings also aim to communicate more esoteric concepts.

“We’re quite proud of what we’ve done to talk about American values, American history and American culture,” said Buangan.





Clockwise from left: The Chinese people are some of the world's most savvy Internet users, and are especially active on mobile devices like smart phones; The Mutianyu section of the Great Wall of China is located 70 km northeast of central Beijing; Jeff Koons' steel sculpture *Tulips* serves as the centerpiece of the reflecting pond that partially surrounds Embassy Beijing's new consular building. (*Embassy Beijing Photo*); Embassy Beijing's consular section is one of the busiest in the Department; Blind Chinese civil rights activist Chen Guangcheng walks hand-in-hand with Ambassador Locke inside the U.S. Embassy compound after he sought asylum there in April. (*Embassy Beijing Photo*).

With more than 3 million online followers—students, academics and journalists who themselves have millions of digital followers—the embassy is able to amplify its message and reach a broader segment of the Chinese population than traditional communication media alone.

“Almost every aspect of the Chinese population is present in some form on Chinese social media,” said Buangan. “We get instant feedback. We engage in a conversation with Chinese ‘netizens’ who live as far away as Tibet and Xinjiang, and it’s much easier for us to talk with them online than it is to go out to some of these places and talk to them in person.”

A Team Effort

Nowhere has the success of Embassy Beijing’s social media outreach been more pronounced than in the enormous influx of visa applications processed by the consular affairs (CA) section each year. The section’s 40 full-time officers and legion of Locally Employed (LE) Staff conduct interviews and adjudicate requests

for more than 2,700 people each day. They process more non-immigrant visas (NIV) than any State Department post except the Consulate General in São Paulo, Brazil. According to Consul General Amber Baskette, those visitors bring significant economic benefits to the United States.

“Supporting tourism and study in the United States is critical not only to the embassy but to the Department of State and the White House. Every 65 visitors to the United States represent enough revenue to support a job,” said Baskette. “We’ve processed more than 500,000 NIV here in the last year and more than a million mission-wide. If you think of that in terms of jobs in the United States, it’s a huge impact.”

The consular affair section’s American Citizen Services (ACS) workload has grown significantly over the past



Right: A vibrant archway leads visitors from the Imperial Vault of Heaven, not pictured, to the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, center, in the 2.73 square km Tian Tan Taoist shrine complex. **Bottom:** Throngs of Chinese citizens seeking U.S. visas line up for their turn with a visa specialist in Embassy Beijing's state-of-the-art consular section.

several years as increasing numbers of Americans flock to China's major cities for education and business opportunities. The section has also seen a massive increase in visa requests from Chinese students seeking study opportunities at U.S. colleges and universities.

According to ECA officials, the Department sends more American students to study in China through programs like Fulbright than to any other country, and there are more students from China studying in the U.S. than from anywhere else in the world. This unprecedented level of educational exchange is creating enduring people-to-people ties as well as growth opportunities for Beijing's consular affairs team.

"Consular work is a growth industry," said Chuck Bennett, minister-counselor for CA at Embassy Beijing. "We grew at nearly 35 percent last year, and this year our growth will be about the same. Our staff is growing dramatically, as well, so this is a place of constant change."

With such an extensive portfolio and ever-increasing demands on its time, the section relies on LE Staff and Eligible Family Members to supplement its officer corps.

"We wouldn't be able to do it without them," said Baskette. "They are doing extraordinary amounts of work. They are so committed to this work that they want to keep ahead of it. It also takes incredible support from our management colleagues and our security colleagues, sometimes our OBO colleagues," she added. "It literally takes a village."

According to DCM Wang, one of the greatest challenges employees face at such a large post is getting to know their colleagues on a personal and professional basis. To that end, Embassy Beijing's Community Liaison Office (CLO) offers a number of counseling and professional development programs, as well as events that support a stronger sense of community. CLO develops programs geared toward encouraging a healthy work/life balance for all segments of the embassy population, including singles, families and empty nesters.

"Work isn't everything," said Karen Noble, former professional associate in the human resources office. "If you don't speak the language and are only able to absorb a fraction of what's going on around you, how can you feel like you belong here? When you feel like everything is passing you by, that impacts how you adjust and how you enjoy your time."



Check out our digital publication for more photos of Beijing at state.gov/statemagazine





At a Glance China

Capital: Beijing

Government type: Communist state

Area: 9,596,960 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than the U.S.

Population: 1.34 billion

Religions: Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Christian and Muslim
Note: officially atheist

GDP—per capita: \$8,500

Export partners: U.S., Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Germany

Export commodities: Machinery, apparel, iron and steel, textiles, and medical equipment

Import partners: Japan, South Korea, U.S., Germany and Australia

Import commodities: Machinery, oil and mineral fuels, optical and medical equipment, metal ores and plastics

Currency: Renminbi (RMB)

Internet country code: .cn

Source: Country Background Notes

A Brighter Future

The United States' diplomatic mission to China is one of the Department's evolving success stories. But Department leaders like Wang realize they have only scratched the surface of what is possible if both countries continue to work toward solutions based on their shared values. In this diplomatic journey of a thousand miles, successes are measured in small steps forward.

"I think that's the most unique point to working here in China; you're involved in something very important," said Wang. "It's a challenge as well as an opportunity to carry the message and develop relationships, to expose the Chinese people to what's going on in the U.S. and other places around the world."

"What is going to prevent a conflict in the future between the United States and China must be not a complete convergence but a movement toward some basic agreed values. Commonality of interest is too fickle," Wang added.

Anna Julia Cooper, a prominent 19th-century American scholar, famously wrote that "The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or a class—it is the cause of humankind, the very birthright of humanity." It is this type of shared connection that Department employees in Beijing seek to build upon as they engage with the Chinese people and their leaders, their gazes fixed firmly toward a future of greater cooperation between the two nations. ■

TRADING PLACES

Program Expands Civil Service Horizons

The Department last year created the Overseas Development Program (ODP) to provide mid-level Civil Service employees with opportunities to compete for overseas excursion tours and ease shortages of mid-level Foreign Service staff. Those selected gain firsthand insight into Department operations. ODP positions are announced in Department Notices, and the appropriate regional or functional bureau reviews and selects whom to hire.

Those hired serve on a limited non-career appointment while on their overseas assignment. The two employees who have been at post the longest under the ODP are Angi Pendergrass, an economic officer who has been at the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa since April, and Joseph Busby, a vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City since May. Their stories, which follow, provide a unique glimpse inside the program.

ODP Offers 'Great Opportunity'

*By Joseph Busby, vice consul,
U.S. Embassy in Mexico City*

I applied for the Overseas Development Program for Civil Service Personnel (ODP) in December 2011 and was offered the opportunity to serve as a consular officer in Mexico City. I was ecstatic. At the time, the whole ODP review and hiring process seemed like an eternity, but looking back, I see it was actually quite smooth. I learned quite a bit about how the Foreign Service operates and met Foreign Service officers who provided me with invaluable insight and advice.

Ever since I was in college, I'd wanted to join the Foreign Service. I started my career with the Department when I was in college, through an internship at the Consulate General in Tijuana in the summer of 2006. I was immediately enthralled by the work of the Foreign Service, especially that of the consular section. Approximately one year after my internship, I began working for the Department at the San Francisco Passport Agency.

This three-year experience would lay the foundation to further my career, as I moved from the Passport Agency to the office of Overseas Citizens Services/Children's Issues (OCS/CI), where I used my consular skills and knowledge to assist parents in distress over the possible international abduction of their children. While in OCS/CI, I took a one-month TDY to the U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo's visa section, which opened my eyes to the fast-paced world of visas.

All my prior experience enhanced my ability to effectively and accurately do my job as a visa adjudicator. During my years at the Passport Agency, I had learned how to become an effective adjudicator by detecting fraud, providing customer service and applying our immigration laws correctly. My experience in OCS/CI had improved my ability to defuse stressful situations to assist people in distress. When I applied for the ODP, I already had almost five years of

domestic consular service, plus the Brazil TDY. Although I have been able to apply my knowledge and experience in my current position, I also learn something new every day. For instance, in the few months that I have been at post, I have learned to read people quickly and get a sense of who is being honest and who is lying, a skill I can apply both professionally and in my personal life. Additionally, every time I call an applicant to my window, it is like playing the lottery. I may have a simple, straightforward case or get an applicant with a complicated situation requiring further investigation. Either way, I see each applicant as an opportunity to learn and represent our great nation to the world.

Before accepting this position, I'd thought of the Foreign Service as a great career and personal development opportunity. I've since learned it is not just a career but a way of life that requires dedication, passion and a yearning to serve. I am grateful to have this opportunity.



Vice Consul Busby works at his desk at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.
Photo by Flor Elizabeth Michel De Busby

Getting the Overseas Experience I Needed

By Angi Pendergrass, deputy director, economic section, U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

As a Civil Service employee, I was aware that opportunities to serve overseas were limited but I never believed that the lack of overseas expertise had hindered my performance or reflected negatively on my career. I did not see overseas experience as indispensable.

I was happy with my career development until the night, as the duty officer for the deputy Secretary of Management and Resources, I answered a call from the Operations Center. The U.S. Embassy in Cairo needed help, but I had no prior embassy-specific experience to draw upon to help my colleagues.

I managed to get through the night, but afterward, I began asking every mentor, friend and colleague how a Civil Service employee could gain overseas experience. My mentor suggested the Overseas Development Program (ODP), which she termed the perfect “go big” opportunity. That very afternoon I applied for several ODP positions requiring economics or public diplomacy backgrounds, as my master’s degree is in economics and I have five years of public diplomacy experience.

The merit-based process required that I apply via USAJOBS for the State Department-only openings and submit my most recent performance evaluation and a current personnel action indicating my employee status and grade level. These forms are required in order to establish eligibility to apply. Next came a more specific and thorough screening by the Department’s Bureau of Human Resources to determine my work-related qualifications for the position. Once I made the short list, there were more forms, language testing and several interviews by the hiring bureau. Upon being selected, I had to secure medical, security and legal clearances.

The process took several months and is described in my recent Sounding Board post.

While on annual leave over the Christmas 2011 holidays, I interviewed with the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau for an economic mid-level position in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. After two more interviews in January, I was offered a handshake on a two-year, limited non-career appointment as an economic officer. In late April, I began as the deputy director of the economic section at U.S. Embassy.

Within a month of arrival, I saw that there would be numerous opportunities to use my Washington experiences—for example, in



Angi Pendergrass puts the final touches on a table decoration for her post’s Election Day event at a local hotel, where more than 400 guests watched U.S. election results and participated in a mock election.
Photo by Edward Javier Ramirez

helping design a format for submitting award nominations. Two of our nominations for the Secretary’s 2012 Annual Award for Corporate Excellence (ACE) were well received and one made it into the semi-finalist round in the worldwide ACE competition (winners have not yet been chosen). This taught me that small editorial changes can lead to big results.

My Washington experience helped post achieve its goals in innovative ways. For example, during Economic Statecraft week, my office brainstormed ways to meet the goals stated in the action cable and to feature the post’s strategic initiatives on jobs, diplomacy and anti-corruption. I actively encouraged big ideas. Rather than limit ourselves to one day and one activity, we planned an entire week’s worth. We explained Honduran law to embassy officers, met with leading business contacts and Honduran government representatives and held an ambassador’s coffee with American companies which has since become a quarterly event.

The week enhanced knowledge of economic officers’ work and advanced our economic policy agenda. We received great feedback from Washington and kudos from such outside contacts as the Department of Commerce and World Bank.

I again learned much. Scheduling the ambassador requires significant advance planning both to secure a spot on her calendar and ensure we used her time to maximum advantage.

I also helped the Country Team frame information. For example, during a congressional delegation’s (CODEL) visit, I advised my colleagues the CODEL wanted information on specific issues. I knew this

because I had met one of the visiting senator’s staffers before. The post was able to assemble the right stakeholders, which made for an informative trip and brought compliments to Ambassador Lisa Kubiske and her team.

Sadly, three months after arrival at post, my husband and I were involved in a car accident and were medically evacuated to Fort Lauderdale, where we spent five weeks recovering.

Our support from Embassy Tegucigalpa was phenomenal. The Office of Medical Services and the travel office expedited our departure and even scheduled our first appointment with the specialists who eventually operated. My colleagues and even Ambassador Kubiske called every week to make sure we were recuperating, and helped to keep our spirits up. We were warmly welcomed back to post in September.

That led to another lesson: Embassies are small, friendly communities, and no matter what happens, mission personnel will always offer assistance, such as feeding your pets or moving your bedroom furniture into your living room because you cannot climb stairs.

Every day, I’m learning something new, gaining an insight and refining a skill. I understood when I accepted this position that it would not be easy because I would need to quickly acquire information about how embassies work. I’d entered the Foreign Service environment without full knowledge of its norms, procedures and protocols. But when I return to Washington I will, in my new Civil Service position, have the experience to help embassy colleagues should I ever get another late night call from the Ops Center. ■



AOs Work for You

Division's staff eases officers' shifts to new jobs

By Richard W. Nelson, director, Assignments Division, Office of Career Development and Assignments

It's time to nail down your next Foreign Service assignment. You've scoured the bid lists, sought advice from your career development officer, followed all the rules on "core" and "non-core" bids and lobbied for your top choices. Finally, a bureau has offered you the coveted handshake agreement on your new assignment.

Congratulations! Now what?

Meet your assignment officer (AO), who will now panel you for your next job, register you for the training you'll need and guide you through compliance with home leave rules and other requirements. Your situation may be straightforward, but many are not, and your AO will be your best resource for navigating the Bureau of Human Resources bureaucracy and planning your upcoming transfer.

AOs work in the Assignments Division (AD) of the Office of Career Development and Assignments (CDA). The division and CDA as a whole work to place people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time.

"We make sure the assignments system works equitably, efficiently and transparently," said CDA Director Mary Draper.

Assignments Division is one of CDA's four focus areas and its staff includes 20 Foreign Service (FS) generalists and specialists and four Civil Service employees with special expertise and the institutional memory. Unlike career development officers (CDOs), whose portfolios are broken down by cone/specialty and grade, AOs are responsible for specific bureaus. Thus, your AO handles domestic and overseas assignments for the bureau into which you are transferring.

AD has units for each regional bureau, a unit supporting functional bureaus and one dedicated to Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) assignments. Its AOs manage positions and handle assignments for most mid- and senior-level Foreign Service generalists and specialists—a total of nearly 10,000 positions.

While CDOs work with individual employees on their career trajectories and represent their interests at assignment panels, AOs advise regional and functional bureaus on staffing strategies throughout the year. They also work directly with individual FSOs, mainly from the handshake agreement through approval of the

travel itinerary. Some bureaus have personnel who also hold the AO title, but bureau AOs work exclusively for their bureau to find qualified bidders, while CDA's AOs represent those bureaus in the assignment process within HR. They ensure that bureaus and employees comply with Department rules and procedures, and that the assignments process is administered fairly and transparently.

AOs work with bureaus to build the Summer, Winter and Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan (AIP) bidding cycles. They also keep the bid lists accurate by adding and deleting positions as required. One officer in AD maintains the Bidding Tool, using information provided by bureaus. AOs closely monitor unfilled positions, matching them with unassigned bidders, and track AIP-linked assignments.

After a CDO registers an employee's handshake agreement on his or her new assignment, the AO reviews it to identify issues potentially affecting the assignment. Questions include:

- Is it a stretch assignment (up or down) and if so, does it meet the rules?
- Is it a tandem situation that might require the employee to be "paneled in principle" while awaiting the outcome of the tandem spouse or partner's assignment?
- Is the employee seeking a negotiated tour of duty?
- Do factors such as time-in-class, time-in-service or age affect the tour's length?
- Is it an urgent vacancy or one involving an onward position at an AIP post?
- Does the employee require a curtailment or extension at the current post?
- If the position is language designated, does the employee have the required score or sufficient time for training?

After working through these and other factors, the AO finalizes the tour of duty and places the proposed assignment on the agenda for either the Interdivisional or Mid Level CDA assignment panels.

AD initiates some 7,500 panel actions each year. When an item comes up for the panel's consideration, the AO speaks for the bureau. This is particularly important in contentious cases, such as a waiver request or a dispute with another employee over who gets an assignment.



Above: Senior Assignments Officer Wendy Vincent, at desk, works with Assignments Officer Tabrese Venson. **Below:** Senior Assignments Officer Bie Yie Ju Fox, left, takes a break from discussing a report with Assignments Officer Rosario "Cherry" Larsen. *Photos by Ed Warner; Opposite page:* A gathering of assignment officers for the regional bureaus includes from left Senior Assignments Officer Marianne Kompa, Senior Assignments Officer Wendy Vincent, Deputy Assignments Officer Sheena Driscoll and Senior Assignments Officer Stella Bulimo. *Photo by Richard Nelson*

Following the panel's approval, the AO sends a tailored Assignment Notification (TMONE) to post. Later, after working with the employee on training, home leave and other requirements, the AO gives final approval to the Proposed Travel Itinerary



Office of the Month

(TMTWO). The case then transfers to the assignment technicians in HR's Assignment Support Unit, who will prepare travel orders.

Many of AD's most complex cases involve AIP assignments. Staffing these posts remains the Department's highest personnel priority, but meeting the all-consuming needs of the frontline states also affects other posts, since some officers will curtail tours to go to AIP posts or leave them.

AD's DS unit handles all assignments for the nearly 2,500 DS agents and specialists in domestic and overseas positions. These assignments involve specialized training and often require quick action in response to world events, complicating the transfer process.

"We rely upon and appreciate the expertise and responsiveness of the Assignments Division in considering our agents' skills, preferences and career advancement," said DS Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Bultrowicz.

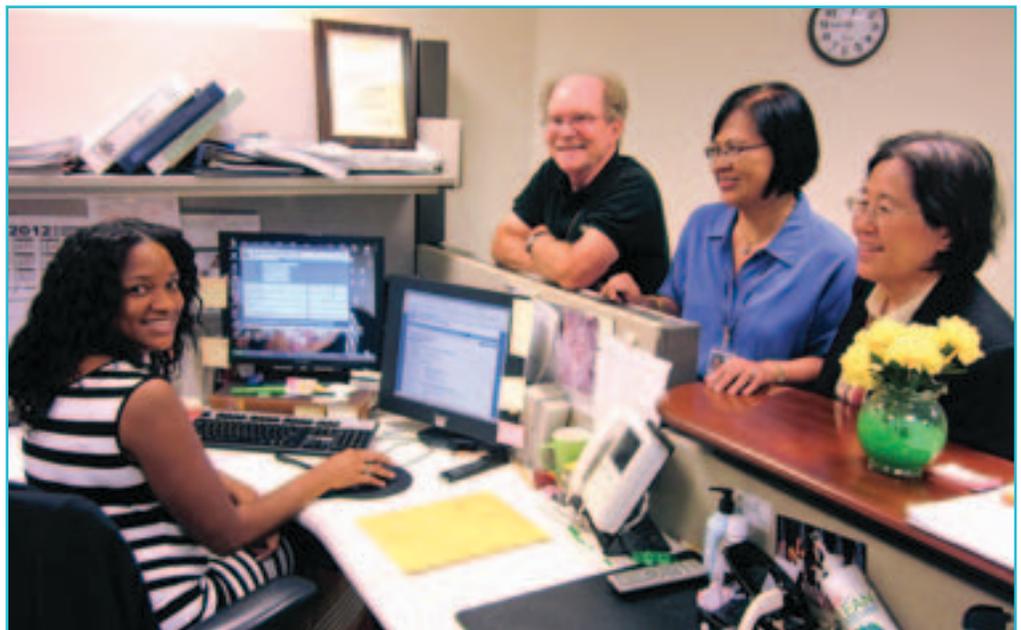
Beyond paneling assignments, AOs perform many other functions. Each CDA staff member has responsibility for at least one set of policies and accompanying programs. In AD, these include tour of duty, historically difficult-to-staff posts, service need differential, urgent vacancies, volunteer cables, consultative staffing, the Out-Year World Language program and many others. One AO also has the lead on the In-Country Language Training program. All AOs share responsibility for updating the personnel volumes of the FAM and Foreign Affairs Handbook, and more than 75 HR/CDA Standard Operating Procedures.

An AD staff member administers FSBid, the software application that manages the Foreign Service bidding and assignment process. Working with the FSBid redesign team in HR's Executive Office, AD is improving FSBid's user interface and adding new features such as projected out-year vacancies, enhanced job search capabilities and tracking lobbying efforts. CDA recently upgraded the HR SharePoint Bidding page, where new features include one-stop shopping for bureau vacancy announcements, which helps bidders

research opportunities for onward assignments. AD also created an informative Assignments Portal on Diplopedia and a feature that allows employees to provide feedback.

FSOs use the vast wealth of knowledge acquired through a tour in AD to become more effective mentors to colleagues and subordinates in future tours. Many say they wish they had gained this experience earlier in their careers.

Transfer season is inherently stressful for employees and families, and AOs go out of their way to help them plan efficient moves while staying within all applicable regulations. Throughout the process, everyone in AD and CDA strives to provide high-quality customer service to their FS colleagues. As CDA Director Draper puts it, "This is where we make dreams come true." ■



Top: Assignments Officer Meredith K. Katterson, left, meets with Senior Assignments Officer Sharon Featherstone. *Photo by Ed Warner;*
Bottom: Launching the summer 2013 open assignments bidding cycle are, from left, FSBid Administrator Guirhene Giordani, Deputy Assignments officer Tom Schuh, AD Deputy Director Elenita Shorter, Senior Assignments Officer Bie Fox. *Photo by Richard Nelson*

LYING IN STATE: A FEW OF THE FORGOTTEN DEITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT

KREDENZA THE SUBSTANTIVE, BESTOWER OF MANY CLEARANCES



DAGNABIT, WRATHFUL DEPUTY ASSISTANT OVERLORD WHOSE
THIRST FOR ANNUAL REPORTS CANNOT BE SLAKED

LUGNUTZ, PATIENT DEFENDER OF THOSE
WHO JUST CAN'T LEARN A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE

(UH, MERRY AFTERMORNING! I BE
DUCK LOAF IN PLEATED SPANX -
IS YOU?)



THE FEARSOME QUETZALSTEVENS, WHO CAN
ONLY BE PLACATED BY REGULAR SACRIFICES
OF UNTENURED GENERALIST FOREIGN SERVICE
OFFICERS

SO IS THIS A GOOD
TIME TO APPLY FOR
A SKILL CODE CONVERSION?



FEGNOP THE MYSTERIOUS, MAGICAL
KEEPER OF COVETED ASSIGNMENTS





Quilt Exhibit Tells Story of Slavery and Freedom

Eleven quilts recently were displayed during an Emancipation Proclamation and Anti-Slavery Reception at U.S. Ambassador Karen Stewart's residence in Vientiane, Laos. Sewn by Office Management Specialist Nancy Walraven, the quilts depict how, in some families of American slave descendants, quilt patterns told of their ancestors' escape from slavery in the South to freedom in the North.

One of the quilts has the flying geese quilt pattern, based on how American slaves took the direction and timing for their escape from the flights of migrating geese. Geese fly northward in spring, which was the best time to escape, and stop at waterways along the journey and loudly honk, making it easy for runaways to follow their flight pattern.

Another quilt has the wagon wheel pattern, since wagons with hidden compartments were one of the primary means of transporting runaways. This quilt's message: Pack provisions for the long journey as if packing a wagon, and in light of the limited space, only pack supplies essential for survival. Another quilt has a North Star pattern, reflecting that the Big Dipper, which always points to the North Star, was important to navigation. On a clear night when it was too dark to see landmarks, escaped slaves could look overhead and find the North Star.



Nafissa Payen, secretary to the ambassador of France to Laos, examines the Wagon Wheel Pattern quilt. At rear is the North Star Pattern quilt.
Photo by Xaykham Manilasith

VSFS Program Welcomes 338 New 'eInterns'

Angelica Anas attends college in New Jersey but is also on an internship with the U.S. Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan, as a result of being a new Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) eIntern. The VSFS program allows American students at universities in the United States and abroad to serve in online internships with the State Department or USAID.

Since its launch three years ago, the growing VSFS program has placed students in projects with numerous diplomatic posts and domestic offices. This year, 338 students are working on 180 VSFS

projects. The Department's VSFS projects come from 49 domestic offices and 56 overseas posts, and USAID's projects come from 52 domestic and 23 overseas offices.

Of the selected students, chosen from a field of 1,245 applicants, 11 percent are underclassmen, 41 percent are upperclassmen, 44 percent are pursuing master's degrees and 4 percent are pursuing Ph.D.s. They are drawn from more than 200 universities and various majors and minors, although international affairs and political science majors are the most popular. Supervisors of the eInterns say they are pleased at the interns' depth of knowledge and talent.

The VSFS Program is managed by the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Office of eDiplomacy. More information on it is at state.gov or available by emailing vsfs@state.gov.

Brussels TriMission Benefits from OBO's Purchase Program

Ambassador Howard Gutman, EUR-IO Executive Office Director Margaret Uyehara, TriMission Joint Administrative Services (JAS) Director Martin Hohe and 30 guests gathered before two newly constructed townhomes in October for a ribbon-cutting ceremony that welcomed two TriMission Brussels families into their new homes and celebrated the addition of 19 newly constructed apartments, townhomes and single family residences to the TriMission Brussels housing pool.

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Planning and Real Estate Office (OBO/PRE) negotiated the housing purchase agreement under the Opportunity Purchase Program. The program seeks to reinvest sales proceeds in properties that provide the highest investment yield, measured in savings to OBO's leasehold account, and to purchase properties, primarily residences, where the cost-to-own versus the cost-to-lease ratios are favorable and the post has a low ratio of owned versus leased properties.

In addition to the purchases in Brussels, OBO concluded purchases of residential property in Bangkok, Belgrade, La Paz, London, Reykjavik and Santiago in FY 2012 under the Opportunity Purchase Program.

The purchase of the Brussels residences needed to be completed by the end of the fiscal year, and acting on short notice, the general services office of the JAS quickly identified properties, negotiated prices and closed on the units.

The OBO funds allowed TriMission Brussels to double its government-owned housing inventory. (Some purchased properties are still under construction.) Involved in this team effort were the mission's facilities, finance, warehouse and the general services offices, which all worked closely with OBO.



Cutting the ribbon are, from front to rear, Margaret A. Uyehara, executive director, EUR-IO-JEX; Howard W. Gutman, chief of mission, Mission Belgium; and Martin P. Hohe, JAS director, TriMission Brussels.

Embassy Tbilisi Organizes Music Festival

The U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, worked with Ellen Brager and Jorge Aguirre, the directors of the Traveling Notes Program, to stage a music festival in August involving a full symphonic orchestra composed of 67 young music students from 11 countries—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Peru, Serbia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. During two weeks, they studied, practiced, performed and socialized.

"During our conversations and during the time we had together with our foreign friends, we learned many things from each other," one participant said. Another spoke of having "made many new friends from around the world here, which has taught me a lot, as well as given me perspective on the things I appreciate about my own culture."

The program included three concerts, which involved students from the nonprofit group Traveling Notes, UNICEF and First Step,

a group of Georgian orphans and children with disabilities who danced and performed traditional songs.

Also included was the wind and percussion ensemble from Tserovani, a nearby settlement for displaced people from the war with Russia. The ensemble, made up of refugee children between 14 and 18 years old, studied with the musicians of C Street Brass, a quintet in residence at the Carnegie Mellon Institute, and members of the festival orchestra to prepare to play with the festival's musicians during two of the concerts.

Cultural Affairs Officer Yaroslava Petrova arranged the festival by securing embassy funding and finding partners. She said she "had numerous late-night meetings with the organizers, went to classes, rehearsals and concerts to help make sure everything went smoothly." She also organized a pizza party for participants, hosted by Chargé d'Affaires Bridget Brink, which featured an impromptu performance.



FSO Speaks at Event for Therapy Pioneer

Robert Perls, a first-tour consular officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt, and the U.S. Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission James Melville attended an event in Berlin in October to honor Perls' grandfather, Fritz Perls, who with his wife invented Gestalt therapy, a departure from traditional Freudian therapy. The event, at Fritz Perls' childhood home, was held by the German Gestalt Therapy Association. Gestalt associations worldwide train new generations of psychotherapists in that therapeutic process.

The elder Perls fled Germany in 1933 with his wife and daughter, never to return. Robert Perls, who said he lost "half of my family tree" in the Holocaust, said the event recognized "an outstanding German who lived in Berlin, received his M.D. and Ph.D. in Germany, and changed the world of psychology."



Affinity Groups Gather at Annual Meeting

More than 50 Department of State employees ranging from assistant secretaries to interns gathered in the Delegates Lounge of the Harry S Truman Building in September for the Annual Employee Affinity Group (EAG) Reception. The event, hosted by Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy and Chief Diversity Officer John Robinson, recognizes leaders of the Department's 12 EAGs and those who support them.

The EAGs embrace and help leverage employees' talents by organizing events, mentoring colleagues and advocating for policies affecting members.

Attendees included the high-level officials who serve as leadership liaisons to the EAGs, providing advice and ideas about effective leadership. They also broker solutions, mentor EAG leaders and collaborate on diversity-related initiatives as members of the Diversity Governance Council. The council, formed in 2008, applies a diversity lens to the development and implementation of all Department management policies.

For further information on the annual reception, organized by the Office of Civil Rights' Diversity Management and Outreach team, contact the Office of Civil Rights at (202) 647-9295 or diversity@state.gov.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Allegrone, Kathleen Hatch
Ash, E. Charles
Barker, Lisa Gamble
Beaudry, Stephanie E.
Beauford, Elaine P.
Berry, Sheila Georgette
Blake, Stephen J.
Bodde, Tanya
Bodine, Anne Christy
Breed, Jeffrey C.
Brooks, Barbara A.
Buelow, Judy Marie
Callaway, James R.
Campbell, Martha Larzelere
Carlson, Alan J.
Chane Jr., George W.
Chovan, Loren E.
Clarkson, John Christopher
Cook, Timothy J.
Corey, Kathleen M.
Corwin, Elizabeth A.
Cozzens, Peter E.
Crawford, Nace B.
Datta, Christopher J.
Davis Jr., Robert E.
Delawie, Vonda Kimble
Derse, Anne E.
De Villafranca, Richard
Dinger, John R.
Drouin, Philip Raymond
Druzak, Stephen A.
Elizondo Herrera, Cecilia B.
Eppers, Laura Ann
Feeney, Donald Joseph

Forbes, James Arthur
Garvey, Janet E.
Grainger, Charles R.
Grandfield, Mary E.
Gullion, Guthrie W.
Heckman, Scott Randall
Hermann, Richard Charles
Hoagland, Richard Eugene
Holly, Nancy M.
Hooks, Kenneth E.
Hubler, Holly
Hudspeth, Bruce
Hugins, R.L.
Irving, Earl Michael
Jaberg, David E.
Johnstone, Jill L.
Keat, Stephen K.
Keegan, David Joseph
Keller, Daniel F.
Kraske, Julie A.
Lacy, Thomas J.
Lauritsen, William E.
Lebens, Steven J.
Lopez, Siria R.
Lucas, William E.
Luertzing, Kurt Frederick
Malkin, Joel Robert
Mangelsdorf, Caroline B.
Mansfield, Pamela Jean
McIsaac, Karen Jo
Mealey, Loren Gay
Meckler, Marcia A.
Meister, Stephen Christian
Meriwether, Crystal K.
Milkiewicz, John M.

Miller, A. David
Milovanovic, Gillian A.
Moore, Thomas H.
Morgan, Richard H.
Morrow, Wayne Jackson
Morse, Steven Bentley
Munter, Cameron Phelps
Nagy, Eleanor J.
Neary, Charles
Newell, David T.
Nickel, Karen L.
Novinger, George T.
Pawlowicz, Patricia Lynn
Pawlowicz, Stephen M.
Pierce, Theodore Stuart
Pinne, Jonathan L.
Prahar, Peter Alan
Quiles, Lillian E.
Rasari, Nancy Moore
Ray, Charles Aaron
Rhea, Ryan Curtis
Rinker, Michael Joseph
Robilotta, Thomas A.
Roecks, Alan L.
Ronay, Robert David
Roseli, James P.
Rowe, Leslie Ventura
Samson, Peter
Saxton, Paul J.
Schilling, John W.
Sedney, David Samuel
Sheaffer, Gary Lee
Smith, Jacqueline R.
Smith, Sandra Ruth
Stansbury, David J.

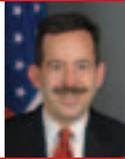
Stites, Richard W.
Suty, Sandra K.
Taylor, Dwayne L.
Tee, Anthony
Thomas, Kenneth Allan
Trueman, Kenneth E.
Urbancic Jr., Frank C.
Van Buren, Peter M.
Vann, Stephen A.
Van Voorst, Carol Lee
Weinberg, Donald W.
Welch, Gretchen Gerwe
Wellman, James C.
Whigham, Robert J.
Williams, James Keith
Wysham, John Anthony
Yeager, Thomas A.

Civil Service

Alirejsovic, Edina
Boyle, Dean
Burney, Robert G.
Fitzpatrick, Donald E.
Gheibi, Shahnaz
Goff, Linda A.
Kaufman, Adam E.
Leitz-Furlong, Thelma J.
Massabki, Farid
Maxedon, Linda R.
McInnis, Sara K.
Otts, Mary Elizabeth Seal
Patt, Elizabeth K.
Skopek, Jirina
Standing, Roy
Taran, Gleb O.

Appointments

Stephen D. Mull
U.S. Ambassador
to Poland



Michael D. Kirby
U.S. Ambassador
to Serbia



Richard G. Olson
U.S. Ambassador
to Pakistan



Robert S. Beecroft
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq



Makila James
U.S. Ambassador
to Swaziland



Walter North
U.S. Ambassador to Papua
New Guinea, the Solomon
Islands and Vanuatu



Shari Villarosa
U.S. Ambassador
to Mauritius and
the Seychelles



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

Robert Stephen Beecroft (SFS) of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission in Baghdad. Before that, he was ambassador to Jordan. He was executive assistant to two secretaries of state and has served in Amman, Riyadh and Damascus. He practiced international law before entering the Foreign Service.

Makila James (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Swaziland. Previously, she was the director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Earlier, she was deputy director of the Office of Southern African Affairs, principal officer in Juba and a member of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff. She also served in Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Jamaica. She is married and has one child.

Michael D. Kirby (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary for Consular Affairs. Before that, he

was ambassador to Moldova. He was consul general in Seoul and Warsaw, and also served in Krakow, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Dar es Salaam and Georgetown, Guyana.

Stephen D. Mull (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Poland. Previously, he was executive secretary of the Department. Before that, he was senior advisor to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. He led the Office of Under Secretary for International Security Affairs and Arms Control and was ambassador to Lithuania. Earlier, he served in Indonesia, Poland, South Africa and The Bahamas.

Walter North (SFS) of Washington State is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Republic of Vanuatu. Previously, he was director of USAID's Egypt program. Before that, he was head of USAID Indonesia. He led the agency's Africa Bureau, was mission director in India and Zambia, and earlier

served in Ethiopia and Indonesia. He was a Peace Corps volunteer. He is married and has two children.

Richard G. Olson (SFS) of New Mexico is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Previously, he was coordinating director for Development and Economic Affairs in Kabul. Before that, he was ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, where he had previously served in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Other postings include Mexico, Uganda, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, the U.S. Mission to NATO and Najaf, Iraq. He has two daughters.

Shari Villarosa (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. Previously, she was deputy coordinator for Regional Affairs in the Office of Coordinator for Counterterrorism. Before that, she was chief of mission in Rangoon. She was chargé d'affaires in Dili, Timor-Leste, and also served in Jakarta, Bogotá, Quito, Brasília and Songkhla, Thailand. ■

Obituaries



William D. Alston, a Foreign Service IT specialist, died Nov. 15, 2011, in Dubai. He served in the military for more than 25 years and then with the Department for more than 10. He loved to fish, travel the world and spend time with family and friends.



Aaron "Andy" Antroinen, 96, a retired USAID employee, died Oct. 6 of natural causes in Austin, Texas. He joined USAID in 1960 as a veterinary advisor and served in Ecuador, Uganda, Vietnam, Mali, Haiti, Iran and West Africa. He retired in 1975 to Richmond, Va., and later moved to Georgetown, Texas. He enjoyed golf and bridge.



Reginald Bartholomew, 76, a four-time ambassador, died Aug. 26 in New York City. He held high-level positions in the Defense Department, National Security Council and State Department. As ambassador to Lebanon, he was wounded in a bombing of the U.S. Embassy. Later, he was ambassador to Spain, under secretary for arms control and international security affairs, and ambassador to Italy, where he later remained for a number of years as a Merrill Lynch executive.



Donald W. Born, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 10 in Boston, Mass. His postings included Australia, Haiti, India, Ghana, Bangladesh and Liberia. After retiring from the Department, he worked for Chemical Bank before retiring to Waldoboro, Maine, and Boston. He enjoyed reading, studying literature, tennis, antique cars and visits from family and friends.



Connie V. Collins, 55, a Civil Service employee with 35 years of service, died July 26 in Fort Washington, Md., of natural causes. Most recently, she worked for the Office of East African Affairs and traveled on assignment to Tanzania. In addition to the Department, she worked for the JFK Special Warfare Center in Fort Bragg, N.C.; Quantico Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va.; Navy Annex in Arlington, Va.; and the Pentagon.



Robert Burdette Cook, 86, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, died Sept. 11 in Rochester, Minn., due to complications from lymphoma. He served in World War II and worked with the U.S. Forest Service and Air Force before joining USAID in 1979. His postings included Syria and Egypt. He retired to Faribault, Minn., where he enjoyed his family, woodcarving and history.



Roger M. Currier IV, 77, a former employee of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, died Sept. 22 of colon cancer in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. He served in the Army Corps of Engineers before joining the Department. He worked on upgrading and fortifying diplomatic buildings. He was project director for the renovation of the embassy compound in Tirana, Albania. He was admired for his sparkling wit and ability to get things done.



Patricia Maria Hillman, 61, wife of retired security engineering officer Stuart Hillman, died Jan. 18 of a cerebral hemorrhage in Limoges, France. They met while Stuart was assigned to Rio de Janeiro in 1987, and she accompanied him to assignments in Accra and London. In Ghana, she created a multiracial ballet school. In Washington, D.C., she worked for the International Monetary Fund. The couple retired to Bellac, France, in 2005.



Donald J. Ivanich, 75, a retired Foreign Service communications officer, died Aug. 18 in Dewey, Ariz. He served in the Army before joining the Department in 1964. His postings included England, Rhodesia, the Soviet Union, Kenya, Yugoslavia, South Africa (twice), Zaire, Malta and Saudi Arabia. He retired in 1995 and moved to Arizona in 2007. He enjoyed playing euchre, watching the Chicago Bears and White Sox, and volunteering at Yavapai Regional Medical Center.



Regina Ann Maloney, 85, a retired Foreign Service employee, died Aug. 28 in Lisbon, Portugal. During her 34-year career, she was posted to Peru, Mozambique and Portugal. She retired in 1992. She enjoyed travel, painting and music.



Toni C. Markle, 70, wife of retired Foreign Service specialist Michael D. Markle, died Sept. 22 in Brookings, Ore., of cancer. She accompanied her husband on postings to Sweden, Romania, Ottawa, Berlin and Nouakchott, Mauritania. She served as a diplomatic club manager at various posts and was an active member of Court Appointed Special Advocates in Curry County, Ore.



Richard Anthony "Tony" Thompson, 65, a retired Civil Service employee, died Sept. 13 of lung cancer at his mother's home in Bryans Road, Md. He served in the military in Vietnam and joined the Department in 1966. After retiring in 2006, he worked as a pressman and enjoyed collecting coins. He mentored many children and supported children overseas.



Thomas Patrick Phalen, 64, a retired Foreign Service communications officer, died Oct. 3 of lymphoma in Gaithersburg, Md. He served in the Navy in Japan before joining the Department in 1976. His postings included Jordan, Sinai Peace Mission, Ireland, Lesotho, Bonn, Havana, Mexico City, Bangkok, Frankfurt and Guatemala. He was held hostage for seven days by the Japanese Red Army in 1978. He retired in 2006.



Margaret Woodward, 102, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 18 of natural causes. She lived in the Glover Park area of Washington, D.C. Tutored by Edward R. Murrow, she was the first female broadcaster hired by NBC News during World War II and reported the invasion of Holland. Prior to joining the Department, she held several economic positions with the federal government. She served in Ottawa and retired in 1962.



Ruth "Ann" Sheridan, 79, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 20 in San Antonio, Texas. She joined the Department in 1958 and served in Buenos Aires, Guatemala City, La Paz, Manila, Bombay, London, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Hong Kong, Jakarta and Ciudad Juárez. She retired to San Antonio in 1994. She enjoyed travel, reading, bridge, theater and archeology tours.



John "Jack" C. Zeigler, 77, a retired Foreign Service officer with USAID, died Sept. 24 in Phoenix, Ariz., of a subdural hematoma. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. His postings included Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Cameroon, Sudan, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Liberia, Angola and Jordan. He retired in 1988. He volunteered with Meals on Wheels and a Sister Cities-affiliated organization that promoted understanding between the people of American and other countries.

Henry "Harry" Wray Allen, 93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 2 in Seattle, Wash. He was a Naval Intelligence officer during World War II, and joined the Foreign Service and was assigned to Hong Kong in 1951. After retiring in 1969, he returned to Hong Kong as director of the International Rescue Committee. He later retired to the West Virginia mountains, where he was a carpenter and made maple syrup. He loved the Chinese people and culture.

Robert J. MacAlister, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Sept. 14 in Frederick, Md. He served in the Navy in World War II. He was posted to the Ivory Coast, Chad and Zaire with the Peace Corps. He served in India with the U.S. Information Agency, Vietnam with the International Refugee Committee and Senegal with USAID. After retiring in 1989, he was Washington representative for the American Refugee Committee and Volunteers for Bangladesh. He was active in his church.

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 to State Magazine, please contact Bill Palmer at palmerwr2@state.gov or (202) 203-7114. ■

End State



Egypt



Modern and ancient worlds collide in Cairo where the densely-populated cityscape stands in sharp relief from the surrounding desert and provides a striking backdrop for a traditionally clad Egyptian man and his camel.

Photo by Robert Mooney

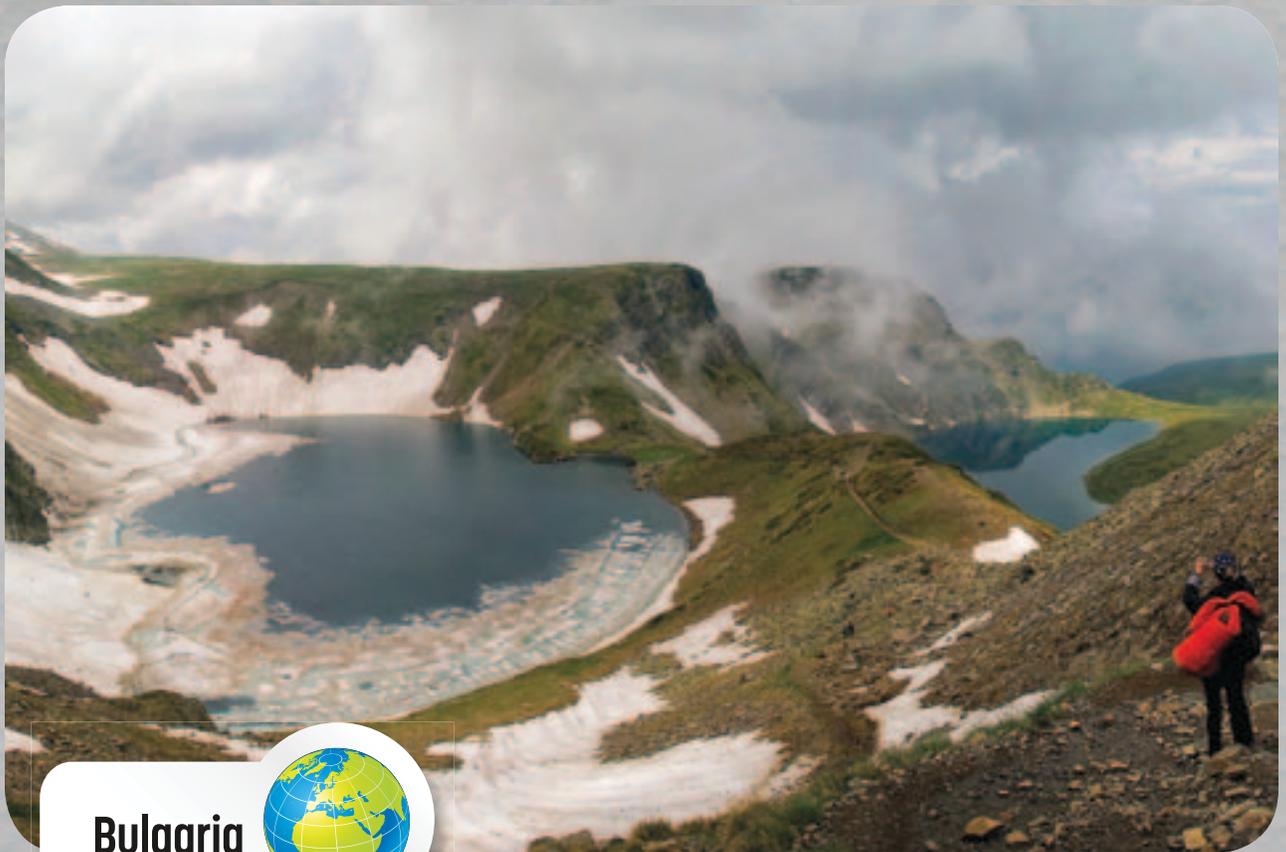


China



Members of the Nakhi ethnic group dance during a harvest celebration in Lijiang Old Town, Yunnan, China. The Nakhi people have their own written and spoken language and their own native dress.

Photo by Kelley G. Lawson



Bulgaria



A hiker takes in the grandeur of two of Bulgaria's famous Seven Rila Lakes atop Rila Mountain. The lakes, situated 2,100 to 2,500 meters above sea level, are connected by small streams that form tiny waterfalls and cascades.

Photo by Plamen Ivanov

Earlier this year, we asked readers to submit photos highlighting people, culture and landscape in some of the amazing places they have visited over the years. We received dozens of outstanding submissions, but these four shots stood out from the rest. We thank everyone who participated, and look forward to seeing what amazing visual adventures you take us on in 2013.



Portugal



A day's fresh catch dries aboard a fisherman's ornately decorated boat in Câmara de Lobos, Madeira, Portugal. The location of the modern town is believed to have been the landing point for the Portuguese explorer João Gonçalves Zarco, who is credited with the discovery of the Madeira Islands.

Photo by Philip Tinney





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