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PICTURE
PERFECT

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On the Cover

A farm worker in a field near Mandalay, Burma, takes a moment to rest.
Photo by Sherry Bushue/U.S. Consulate General in Surabaya, Indonesia



Help When You Need It

As you read this column, you may be planning a project that requires new information, skills or contacts your office does not have. Or perhaps you are interested in your own career development. Could you benefit from the advice of a trusted expert but don't know where to turn? If so, our Situational Mentoring Program can help.

The State Department's Situational Mentoring Program was created in 2005 to help interns, contractors, Civil Service and Foreign Service employees, and Locally Employed Staff at all grade levels solve problems, uncover talents and learn new skills. Currently, we have more than 400 situational mentors with a wide array of expertise, from foreign affairs, consular issues and public affairs to human resources, information technology and program management.

Unlike other Department mentoring programs that involve a longer-term commitment between mentor and mentee, situational mentors provide advice on a specific issue or circumstance. Here are some examples of the more than 430 employees who have taken advantage of the Situational Mentoring Program this year:

- When an entry-level employee with a high school diploma wanted advice on how to advance, she contacted an office director who discussed her educational options and referred her to the Career Development Resource Center, where she could get specialized job counseling.
- When another employee was working in a position that was not clearly defined, she found it helpful to talk to a situational mentor who understood the challenges of initiating changes within a bureaucracy. Her mentor encouraged her to be more assertive and to attempt to create opportunities instead of hoping they would arise.
- Another employee was offered a coveted detail after following her situational mentor's advice to conduct informational interviews with Department professionals to learn more about what they and their offices do. Now, that employee is herself a situational mentor and has set up informational interviews for her mentees. In her words, it is "a great way to learn about another bureau or office, get to meet new people and get your name out there in a positive, low-risk way."
- A mentee in an IT position wanted experience with Human Resources but was reluctant to request a rotation until he had his next career ladder promotion. His mentor suggested that he check with his boss on whether

participating in a rotational assignment in HR would hinder his ability to get promoted on time. He followed this advice and got the green light. He will now be doing a rotation in HR, where he can utilize his IT experience while learning HR work.

- A locally employed staff member in Tunis was called to mentor an employee in Algeria in procurement activities. She went to Algeria for a three-day temporary duty and was a great help to that post.

None of us has all the answers to the wide variety of issues and challenges we confront on a daily basis. Whether an entry-level employee or a senior official, we all can benefit from a network of experienced advisors with whom we can brainstorm ideas and from whom we can solicit impartial guidance. That's what our situational mentors provide, and I encourage you to take advantage of this valuable resource.

For further information about our Situational Mentoring Program or to sign up to be a mentor, please visit the mentoring Web site at: <http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Workforce/Development/Pages/Mentoring.aspx>, e-mail mentoring@state.gov, or speak with Sue Beffel at (202) 663-2144.

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

Nancy J. Powell
Director General

Embassy Celebrates 15th Anniversary of U.S.-Vietnam Relationship

To commemorate the 15th anniversary of the normalization of United States relations with Vietnam, the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi held several activities, including a July luncheon where Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, “We have dedicated ourselves to the hard work of building peace [and] consistently moved in the direction of engagement and cooperation.”

Also that month, the embassy held a two-day symposium for scholars, officials and past and present U.S. and Vietnamese ambassadors on the early challenges of building the U.S.-Vietnam relationship and opportunities for better cooperation.

In June, the embassy hosted concerts of works by George Gershwin at Hanoi’s historic Opera House, and in August, former prisoner of war Senator John McCain sent video greetings to a crowd of Vietnamese and U.S. VIPs on board the *USS John S. McCain* when it made a port call in Da Nang.

Over the 15 years, the United States has negotiated the recovery of the remains of U.S. soldiers and airmen missing in action. Propelled by a bilateral trade agreement in 2000 and Vietnam’s 2007 accession to the World Trade Organization, the United States is now Vietnam’s largest export market, third-largest overall trade partner and leading foreign investor. Fifteen years ago, fewer than 800 Vietnamese studied in the United States; today, more than 13,000 do so.

The United States has provided Vietnam \$420 million to support the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS; engages in regular policy dialogues on security and defense issues; and cooperates on disaster relief, search and rescue, and dioxin remediation.

Another of the embassy’s activities, a contest to design an anniversary logo, was won by architect Nguyễn Trần Dương. U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael Michalak said Dương’s kite design “symbolizes the hope for even loftier and more successful relations between our two countries in the future.”

Dương could not attend the unveiling—he was away on business travel in the United States.



Manila Hosts Gay Pride Event

"Discrimination is a waste of talent," said Ambassador Harry K. Thomas as he welcomed more than 100 Filipino guests to the U.S. Embassy in Manila's first Gay Pride Month reception. The event, hosted and organized by Public Affairs Counselor Rick Nelson and his wife Pinky, was proposed by the Manila chapter of the State Department employee affinity group Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies.

Ambassador Thomas said the event was intended to show respect for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in the Philippines and recognize its contributions to the nation's culture and society. Although the Philippines has a sizable LGBT population, many of its members face societal discrimination.

Guests at the two-hour event came from Philippine arts, cultural, education and business groups, and from the government,

media and nongovernmental organizations. They included prominent Philippine television personalities and fashion designers, reporters from the country's largest newspapers and television networks, and officials of the Commission on Elections, National Police and Department of Foreign Affairs. Highlights included remarks from Ambassador Thomas and the GLIFAA's representative at post, Michael Pignatello, and a brief documentary about the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City.

Guest Danton Remoto, a former Fulbright Scholar and the first openly gay man to run for office in the Philippines, noted President Barack Obama's declaration of June as LGBT Pride Month. "We are no longer in the closet," Remoto said. "We are now at the center of the room." Remoto's LGBT political party earned a significant number of votes in the nation's recent election, but not enough for a seat in the Philippine House of Representatives.



Philippines



Gathered at the Gay Pride Month reception are from left U.S. Embassy in Manila Public Affairs Counselor Richard Nelson, U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Harry K. Thomas and television host Eugenio "Boy" Abunda Jr.



FSI Adds Online ePerformance Training

The Foreign Service Institute and Bureau of Human Resources have launched a distance-learning course titled ePerformance for Civil Service (PA 449), which teaches Civil Service employees and their managers how to plan, review and approve performance appraisals online.

The course provides role-based online training that models the Department of State's performance management system and the roles of rating and reviewing officials and employees. The course mirrors the Civil Service appraisal process and teaches employees every step of the process, from entering work commitments into ePerformance to depositing the appraisal into the employee's Official Performance Folder. The course can accommodate Department-specific business rules.

"We are committed to the Civil Service employees' success in ePerformance," said Ruben Torres, executive director of HR's Executive Office. "We wanted to provide another helpful training tool for Civil Service employees, their rater and reviewing official, and HR to assist them in the performance appraisal process."

Employees may register for PA 449 at <http://fsi.state.gov/rd.asp?ID=774>.

Secretary Clinton Opens Expanded FSI Facilities

In June, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton cut the ribbon to open an expansion of the Foreign Service Institute that added almost 100 classrooms and a high-tech modular multipurpose space where FSI can hold events for more than 400 people.



The increased training space allowed FSI to relocate its information technology training operation from Warrenton, Va., to the School of Applied Information Technology on the institute's main campus in Arlington, Va. The project expanded FSI's cafeteria and child care facilities and added a new wing on the main Building F and a new Building K.

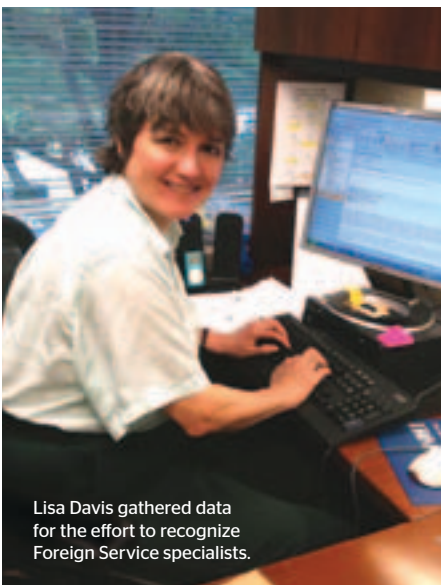
At the ribbon-cutting were representatives of the Department's partners on the project, including General Services Administration Senior Counsel Stephen R. Leeds and senior representatives from the architectural firm, construction company and construction management firm.



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton prepares to cut the ribbon inaugurating the new FSI facilities.

In her remarks, Secretary Clinton noted the need to expand training in response to the increases occurring in Department hiring. She said the expansion was timely, "because we not only can, we must provide the same high-level training that is adaptable to the situations we face, and I have great confidence in the leadership and the staff here at FSI to do whatever is necessary to make sure that every man and woman who we send out from this training center is fully prepared to face the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century."

Foreign Service Specialists Get Recognition



Lisa Davis gathered data for the effort to recognize Foreign Service specialists.

Where Foreign Service specialists once only received a cable announcing they had achieved tenure, they have this year begun receiving individual certificates of recognition for that milestone.

Certificates signed by the Director General were first distributed to the newly tenured in 2008. Then the program was recommended for extension to all specializations. It was also recommended that certificates should be signed by the Secretary of State and sent to all of the more than 4,000 specialists with tenure, not just those newly tenured.

The new program, announced in March, required identification of each specialist's tenure date. The Bureau of Human Resources said this major undertaking, done by Office Management Specialist Lisa Davis, was complicated by the fact that the Department's computerized personnel

system only came into existence in 1998. To identify those tenured earlier, Davis worked with the Diplomatic Research office to retrieve archived cables, which were available only back to 1984. For 250 earlier tenure announcements, she worked with the Records Department.

Gathered over several months, the resulting data constitute a complete database of tenure information for HR's future use, the bureau said. Using this information, Davis, James Hsu and summer intern Mulki Ahmed printed the certificates and obtained the Secretary's signature on each. The certificates were also embossed with the official State Department seal.

Certificates for specialists tenured in 2010, 2009 and 2008 have been mailed to employees, and the rest are expected to be sent by the year's end.

Singapore FSN Helps Prevent Blindness

An estimated 18 million people suffer from blindness, and 48 percent of all blindness is caused by age-related cataracts, according to the World Health Organization. Yet many people lack access to early cataract detection or cataract surgery.



However, a Foreign Service national at the U.S. Embassy in Singapore is making a difference. Teo Yew Kiat recently used his annual leave to help battle eye disease in a remote village in Sri Lanka.

As a volunteer, he helped set up specialized ophthalmology equipment and performed pre-operative tests on 70 candidates for eye surgery who were among the 1,000 people receiving medical, dental and ophthalmology care in the village.

The services were provided by the group Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation. Yew Kiat, a seven-year member of the group,

has made three similar excursions with the organization to remote parts of Indonesia. In Sri Lanka, he helped the group set up a free clinic in the village of Karawanella.



Singapore

"We had support from the local health ministry, and while communication was a problem, some English-speaking locals helped us do translations," he said.

Yew Kiat, who has worked in the regional security office for seven years, said he volunteers for these missions because the only thing more miserable than getting sick is "knowing that there is a cure but you cannot afford or gain access to treatment."

During his trip, Yew Kiat said he met an old man who had been blind for 10 years due to a cataract infection and had never seen his grandchildren.

"After we removed the cataract from one eye, we brought his grandchildren in," Yew Kiat recalled. "Now he is a very happy man because he can finally see his grandchildren."

Lahore Holds 1st Child to Work Day

In June, the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore, Pakistan, celebrated its first Bring Your Child to Work Day, during which 25 Pakistani children between ages 6 and 16 participated in several educational activities.

The management section provided a tour of the compound, including stops to see the fully armored vehicles and the warehouse. There were briefings on staying healthy and cyber security, and a question-answer session with the regional security office.

The children also conducted a radio check at Post One, in which they practiced radio jargon, and underwent marksmanship training using "super soaker"-type water guns. Each child received a personalized visitor badge, marksmanship certificate and water gun.

The public affairs section held a mock press conference and digital videoconference where the children, divided into separate rooms, took turns introducing themselves on screen.

The political and economic sections discussed political and economic topics,

including how a bill is passed in Pakistan's legislature and how to conserve water and electricity to help alleviate Pakistan's drinking water and electrical shortages.

For lunch, attendees dined on pizza and cake. They then spent time in their parents' offices and later joined in a group photo with Consul General Carmela Conroy.



Pakistan

Regional Security Officer Bill Wommack shows attendees the protective gear used by Bureau of Diplomatic Security agents.





Combined Federal Campaign Begins This Month

During the current economic recession, charities that support those in need are struggling to support such groups as Haitian earthquake survivors and Pakistani flood victims, and to provide meals and education for families in our own communities. Federal employees can make a difference this fall by supporting the charities of their choosing through the Combined Federal Campaign, which kicks off October 4 in the Harry S Truman Building.

The annual campaign reflects the collective generosity and compassion of federal employees. And now it is easier to participate using online tools and credit card donations. Donors can support more than 4,000 nonprofit organizations, including schools and charitable groups, each of which has a unique number in the CFC's 2010 Catalog of Caring, available at www.cfcnc.org. Employees can give to one or more of the organizations in the catalog through a lump-sum donation or a payroll deduction.

Each year, volunteers help coordinate the campaign, which runs through mid-December. Employees can also participate in bureau and office fund-raisers, such as last year's Fun Run. In the 2009 campaign, the Department raised roughly \$2.2 million from more than 2,000 donors. This year it hopes to increase employee participation.

The Department's CFC Coordinator, Judy Ikels, said all employees are urged to participate. Directing her comments at new employees, she said, "We are anxious to demonstrate our culture of sharing and invite them to participate at whatever level they can. The strength of our community is measured in part by our compassion for others."

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, honorary chair of the CFC's national capital area campaign, has regularly endorsed CFC giving. Noting the challenges charities face in the current economic climate, she said in November that "By making a contribution to the CFC you're giving charitable organizations the resources they need to help make lasting progress against these and other challenges."



DS Participates in National Night Out

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security brought an entire diplomatic motorcade to a recreation center in Northeast Washington, D.C., to celebrate the annual National Night Out in August.

Motorcades are a familiar sight in Washington, but families and children at the event enjoyed a rare opportunity for a close-up look and a chance to meet the men and women behind the dark sunglasses and learn about the DS role in protecting U.S. interests worldwide.

"The face of Diplomatic Security is people just like you and me," DS Assistant Director for Domestic Operations Barry Moore told the crowd.

National Night Out is a national evening event involving anti-crime activities that brings together citizens, police, firefighters, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials to strengthen community-law enforcement partnerships.

At top, Diplomatic Security Service Special Agent Amanda Austensen shows how to turn on the lights and sirens in a DS armored Ford Explorer, while below DSS Supervisory Special Agent Christopher Tremann helps a youngster try on body armor.

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Send changes of addresses to our staff using the contact information at left. Please remember to include your previous mailing address.

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Letters to the Editor

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Submissions

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request our guidelines, "Getting Your Story Told," by writing to our main office; by e-mail at statemagazine@state.gov; or by downloading them from our Web site at www.state.gov/statemag. *State Magazine* does not purchase freelance material.

Deadlines

The submission deadline for the December 2010 issue is October 15. The deadline for the January 2011 issue is November 15.

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Not the Only Game in Town

As a workplace, the State Department is highly rated for employee satisfaction and career development, even compared with private industry and nonprofit organizations. The staff of the Office of Civil Rights knows full well, however, that workplace problems and career hassles still happen. Our job is to assist in resolving conflicts, provide advice and investigate and sometimes adjudicate complaints made under equal employment opportunity laws.

But we are not the only game in town.

For efficiency and best results, it is important to work through problems in precisely the best forum. For instance, not all problems are equal employment opportunity complaints. In fact, S/OCR has found that well over 90 percent of the situations brought to it are not violations of civil rights; they often relate to concerns for which there are other avenues available that employees should be aware of and use. Employees can also bring concerns to the attention of the grievance staff of the Bureau of Human Resources, unions, Employee Consultation Services, the Office of the Inspector General or the Civil Service Ombudsman.

It is important to find the right venue because, for example, if an employee has filed a formal grievance with the HR grievance staff, then he or she may not file a formal EEO complaint on the same issue. There are three separate procedures for filing a grievance with

HR: one for Foreign Service employees, one for Civil Service employees who are part of a bargaining unit and one for Civil Service employees who are not represented by an exclusive bargaining representative. Employees may file grievances about performance appraisals or other evaluations, disciplinary actions, alleged leave abuse actions and other subjects as permitted. To get more information on the grievance process and the procedures for filing a grievance, check out HR's Web site or call the grievance staff at (202) 261-8110 or visit them online at <http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/g/Pages/default.aspx>.

Employees represented by a union may bring claims relating to violation of the collective bargaining agreement or other claimed violations of rule, law or regulation affecting employment conditions. These processes are open only to employees who are represented by an exclusive bargaining representative. For more information, contact your local union representative or see Department Notice 2009_08_109 dated Aug. 24, 2009, titled "Employee Right to Labor Organization Representation," http://mmsweb.a.state.gov/asp/notices/dn_temp.asp?Notice_ID=11784.

ECS is an employee assistance program with an experienced professional staff of social workers offering such services as short-term confidential counseling and referral assistance; consultation and support to families with children having special needs; administrative review and assistance with compassionate curtailments, breaks and extensions of service; and consultations with leaders and supervisors for employees with performance-related issues. ECS can be reached at (202) 663-1815 and is on the Web at http://med.state.gov/mentalhealth_ecs.htm.

The Department of State's Ombudsman provides a designated neutral place outside of the normal management channels to help staff address workplace-related issues in a safe and confidential environment. While the Ombudsman does not make decisions or mandate actions, the Ombudsman may make recommendations, review materials and speak with anyone in the Department to facilitate a solution.

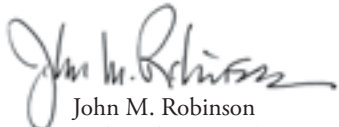
For complaints involving waste, fraud and abuse, mismanagement or misconduct affecting Department programs and operations, employees should contact the Office of the Inspector General. Its hotline is on the Web at <http://oig.state.gov>.

Outside the Department, there are other entities that cover myriad personnel-related issues. One is the Office of the Special Counsel, an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency

that processes complaints concerning prohibited personnel practices as set forth in 2302(b) of Title 5 of the United States Code, including reprisals for whistle-blowing. It also promotes compliance with the Hatch Act. Another entity is the Merit Systems Protection Board, an independent, quasi-judicial agency with jurisdiction outlined in part 1201 of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, including over cases brought by the OSC and appeals by individuals challenging various agency actions. There are specific rules and procedures associated with OSC and MSPB. To find out more about either, check out their Web sites, <http://mspb.gov> or www.osc.gov.

The Department of Labor handles two special areas that may assist employees. One is the Veteran's Employment and Training Service, which processes complaints for individuals who feel that their veteran's preference has not been applied correctly. Complaints to this office may be made only by veterans and need to be made within 60 days of the alleged violation of preference rights. Within DOL, the Workers' Compensation Office handles all appeals of workers' compensation claims.

These offices are some of the great resources within and outside the Department that may assist individuals who may have non-EEO issues or workplace conflicts. S/OCR is open to employees who believe they have been discriminated against based on EEO-protected matters, and it will also direct you to other entities that can be helpful. We will do our best, but remember, we are not the only game in town. ■


John M. Robinson
Office of Civil Rights



Left: Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann uses voice-control software. **Right:** Erdenebold Uyanga works with assistive technology during a Foreign Service Institute class.



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and it comes on the heels of issuance of an Executive Order requiring federal agencies to increase their hiring of people with disabilities by 100,000 over the next five years.

The order also calls on the federal government to be a model employer of such individuals, and the Department of State is responding, having last year established a Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Division in the Bureau of Human Resources. DRAD provides sign-language interpreters for hearing impaired people and readers for employees with vision impairments, and also offers the equipment and technologies that can enable most persons with disabilities to perform the essential duties of their positions.

DRAD Director Patricia Pittarelli said she is committed to finding and maintaining the most appropriate state-of-the-art equipment and training for any Department employee. A 12-year veteran of assisting those with disabilities, Pittarelli said her division will, at full staff, have 13 employees, including

four focused on assistive technology. In addition, she will maintain three or four contractors as readers.

Essential Aids

Whether their disability is visual-, hearing- or mobility-related, Department employees say such technology is essential in performing their jobs. Alexander Barrasso, a blind Foreign Service officer in the political cone headed to his fifth tour, said his Job Access With Speech software, which reads what's on the computer screen, and his PAC Mate Portable Braille Display, which works with desktop computers, are essential. He said that during his 11 years in the Foreign Service he has seen improvements in technology, but finds some assistive software programs are incompatible with many other programs and with classified cable systems. Nonetheless, Barrasso, who has worked at posts ranging from Colombia to Singapore and had been the desk officer for Burma, said the Department went to great lengths in 2000 to make accessible the consular applications he needed.

Carol Mills, a Civil Service employee who works as a human resources specialist in

the Office of Medical Services, also uses the JAWS software, as well as Magic software, which magnifies words on a computer screen. In addition, she uses a closed-circuit TV to enlarge printed material and a reader supplied by DRAD. Mills said she could not perform

Good Accommodations

Assistive technology enables Department employees ///

By Marjorie Stern and Alicia N. Cahoon



her work without the technology because her job involves personnel actions, which must all be completed online utilizing the new Global Employment Management System software.

Assistance Applauded

Another user of assistive technology, Roberta Mather, is a marketing director for Global Publishing Services. Mather, who is deaf, said she applauds the Department's commitment to assistive technology and equal access for all, and hopes it will continue.

Erdenebold Uyanga is a locally employed alumni coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. She is blind and had attended the national school for the blind and deaf in her country, but had no accommodations so she relied on family members and used tape recorders. Uyanga

graduated from Louisiana State University on a Fulbright grant with a master's degree in library sciences. She received reasonable accommodations, rehabilitation services and mobility instruction while attending LSU. Uyanga, according to her post's public affairs officer Marisa Maurer, uses assistive technologies such as JAWS software, a note-taker and a Braille printer—plus her guide dog Gladys.

The Department's Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, Judith Heumann, leads the Administration's efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy to promote the rights of persons with disabilities internationally; coordinates an interagency process for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; leads on disability human rights issues; ensures that the needs of

persons with disabilities are addressed in international situations and that foreign assistance incorporates persons with disabilities; and conducts public diplomacy, on disability issues.

Assistive technology, Heumann said, can improve employees' work by enabling them to be more effective. Heumann uses the Dragon Naturally-Speaking brand software for speech-based control of her computer and the Victor product, which reads text to her from the computer screen. ■

Marjorie Stern is deputy coordinator for the cultural affairs officer course at the Foreign Service Institute. Alicia N. Cahoon is the senior reader for the blind and visually impaired in the Human Resources Bureau's Office of Employee Relations.

Family Album

Photo contest paints rich portrait of EAP region // By Brittney McClary

Black-and-white photographs of playing children, solemn monks, bustling streets and breathtaking landscapes adorn the walls of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs' front office, the result of a recent photo contest. The photos were taken by U.S. government employees, Locally Employed Staff members and family members from throughout the EAP region.

Earlier this year, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell invited staff members in the EAP region to submit their favorite black-and-white photographs from countries they had lived in or visited in the region. More than 500 striking images poured in, and the contest judges—Campbell, plus several EAP deputy assistant secretaries and office directors—chose 80 images from 40 photographers to be printed, framed and displayed. All 500 submissions, broken down by country of origin, can be seen in a slideshow at <http://eap.state.gov/Mainslideshow.cfm>.

'Rich Understanding'

"These photos represent the intimate and rich understanding that members of our community have of the diverse people and cultures of the Asian-Pacific region," Campbell said. "This collection is the perfect visual celebration of EAP's 100th anniversary and of the ongoing relationship we have with this vibrant region."

The photos reveal the authenticity of the people, the striking cultural diversity and the vastly differing photogenic landscapes of the region. Ranging from a print of a crisp and modern Shanghai skyline to a dramatic scene of hundreds of worshipers thronging the streets of Manila, the photos evoke the sounds, feelings and excitement of EAP's region.

One couple, Martin and Sherry Bushue, had eight photos selected. Their images of Burma, China and Indonesia capture moods of solitude, weariness and warmth.

Martin, an electrical engineer, and Sherry, who works for the U.S. Consulate in Surabaya, recently served in Cambodia and Burma. After six years in the region, Sherry said she found it easier to be accepted as a photographer in many cultural



situations because of her gender, enabling her to capture the hidden scenes of everyday life. Their photography in Cambodia led them to establish a nonprofit organization that supports schooling for 20 street children.

"Photographing people is an entry into other cultures, where we can see that we are all pretty much the same," said Martin. "A good portrait with a nice smile is a very satisfying experience."

Great Wall

Another winner, Jamison Fouss, provided several photos of a gentle, traditional side of China, including one of bright cherry blossoms in front of the Great Wall. His forays off the beaten path in China allow him to photograph the countryside. The nonimmigrant visa chief at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, Fouss is well acquainted with EAP countries, having

served as a Foreign Service officer in Taipei, Taiwan and Beijing and worked for the Peace Corps in American Samoa and the Marshall Islands.

"To encourage the villagers to let me photograph them," he said, "I always made it a point to give them a copy of the photo I had taken previously. I especially liked it when they invited me into their homes or place of work so I could capture how they lived."

For Susan and Janelle Jorgensen, photography is a family affair. The mother-daughter duo presented photos of urban scenes of Seoul, Korea, that highlighted the city's mix of old and new. One depicts a small outdoor market stall laden with western-style women's dress shoes. Susan and Janelle are the wife and daughter, respectively, of Consular Officer Mark Jorgensen, who serves at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

Another winner, Tho D. Le, produced what Campbell said was one of his favorite photographic scenes in the contest: five photos showing the path of a lone woman's bicycle ride home at dusk in the Vietnamese countryside. Tho, who grew up in Vietnam, also offered an eye-catching scene of an unusually calm Hanoi intersection of three famous streets. Tho is a distribution clerk for the Information Resource Center at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi.

"I'm very proud of these photos," Tho said. "This is a good chance for me to introduce my 'small and peaceful Vietnam' to friends."

This photo collection not only captures some of East Asia's most evocative images but also reveals the hidden photographic talents of the EAP community. ■

The author is an EAP public diplomacy officer.





A girl in Russian national costume offers bread and salt to a visiting U.S. Navy officer.

Ship Visits

Breasting barges? Yokohama fenders? Med moorings?

Hardly the typical vocabulary of America's diplomats, but these are just some of the terms staff of the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok have become familiar with as they facilitate ship visits to the Russian Far East by destroyers, cutters or mine sweepers from the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet.

These visits include policy discussions between high-level personnel of the U.S. and Russian navies, and ceremonial events such as participation in marches to mark the Allied victory in World War II. But they are also a superb opportunity to expose the local population to

America and Americans, whether it be chess matches between sailors and local children, cook-offs, jazz concerts or volleyball games for naval personnel.

Navy ships the post has welcomed include the *USS Cowpens*, *USS Stethem* and, most recently, the *USS Blue Ridge*. During my tour in Vladivostok as consul general, post personnel were thrilled to see sailors on the city's streets, or to catch that first glimpse of a ship coming through the fog, flag flying high. On departure, some ships play "Stars and Stripes Forever" on their loudspeakers, another morale-lifter for Americans in this far-flung part of the Russian Federation.

The latest of dozens of U.S. Navy ships to visit Vladivostok, headquarters of the Russian Pacific Fleet, the *USS Blue Ridge* arrived in May. The flagship of the U.S. Seventh Fleet arrived with fleet commander Vice Admiral John M. Bird and its crew of 1,200 sailors and Marines to help Russia to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the end of WWII. After the *Blue Ridge* docked alongside Russian warships, its sailors came ashore to engage in outreach and community relations events.

Much Planning

Ship visits are often planned as much as year in advance, although their actual schedules

may not be fully developed until about three weeks before arrival. For our small consulate, each meeting requires all hands on deck. The consulate identifies the interests of the ship's personnel—for example, what sports competitions are preferred—and organizes outreach efforts such as visits to spruce up orphanages, children's cancer wards or veterans centers. The *Blue Ridge* visit, for instance, required the consulate to coordinate more than 15 events.

The consulate also works with the local authorities to arrange protocol meetings with the city's mayor and other officials. The city's leaders welcomed the *Blue Ridge* with a traditional

Post comes alive when U.S. Navy hits port /// By Thomas Armbruster



Above: Members of the *USS Stethem's* crew participate in the Victory Day Parade in Vladivostok. **Below:** A Russian woman and a sailor dance to the music of the 7th Fleet Band.

ceremony involving bread and the sprinkling of salt.

The fun is in the community relation events. Seeing 12-year-old Russian kids beat the sailors in chess is a guilty pleasure. When possible, the staff also likes to get out to the ship aboard the pilot boat to welcome its captain.

The post arranges briefings on security and the economic and political situation. The post also works closely with Russian naval officials, ensuring that senior U.S. Navy officers get meetings with their Russian counterparts and with a Navy

advance team on security issues, such as setting the “Cinderella Liberty” rule—everyone is due back on board by midnight.

Once off limits to all—including most Russians—during the Cold War, Vladivostok is today a place that delights sailors of all ages. They enjoy the night life and dislike having to be back aboard ship by midnight.

During ship visits, the Russian press has a field day, inevitably finding just the right photos such as the one taken of a Russian boy on the bridge

with his hands on the ship’s wheel.

On another occasion a ship arrived with a female Navy captain, and Russians who met her said they were amazed and impressed with her professionalism and poise. There are no women in the Russian navy.

That’s just one more way ship visits build understanding among host nation leaders and among those at the post supporting the visit. ■

The author is now a Diplomat in Residence in New York City.



The author, at left, meets with Australian Captain Justin Jones, center, and U.S. Admiral John M. Bird on board the *USS Blue Ridge*.

Consul General Gets At-Sea View

As consul general in Vladivostok during the *USS Blue Ridge* visit, I was mindful of how ship visits give U.S. diplomats opportunities to remind Russia of the importance of our cooperation. At official events, talks can segue from World War II’s successful U.S.-Soviet alliance to space and security cooperation today.

The visits also promote ties between the U.S. Navy and the Department of State. To that end, when the visit concluded, I was invited to return with the ship on a three-day trip to its home port of Yokosuka, Japan. On the way, I watched the *Blue Ridge* conduct a man-overboard exercise. The sailors, who showed professionalism and dedication while ashore, displayed great synchronicity when “saving” their shipmate from the sea.

It was very interesting to learn about their traditions. At the mess table, a sailor approaching with his tray will ask the senior officer, “May I join you?” Sailors also ask to be excused from the table. Hats can be worn in some ship spaces, but not in others. Also, everyone passes each other on the right in corridors. The ship’s captain, Rudy Lupton, also explained the workings of the ship’s bridge, and Fleet Commander Vice Admiral John Bird and I had a good talk about regional security as the ship was mooring in Yokosuka.

It’s clear that the Seventh Fleet has a sense of its regional mission and challenges and is making its presence felt.



Mental Health

Counseling and your security clearance

By the Bureau of Diplomatic Security

After a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January, just as night fell, agents of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security from the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince went out into the darkened city to locate missing embassy staff members.

What they encountered can be best described as hell on earth. The walking wounded emerged as shadows out of the dust, begging for help, while sounds of pain, anguish and prayer filled the air.

Diplomatic Security Service Director Jeffrey Culver traveled to Haiti on Feb. 8 to monitor the emergency-response effort. He gathered the dozens of agents who had volunteered for the mission and thanked them. Then he said, "You saw things that you never want to see again. Don't underestimate that you need to talk to people about your experiences. Don't keep all this inside of you. If you need to talk with somebody, let us know."

DS special agents are not the only ones experiencing traumatic environments. Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources Nancy J. Powell said, "We recognize that Department employees serving in combat zones are exposed to stress levels comparable, at times, to those experienced by military personnel. We need to continue thinking about how to assist employees with post-traumatic stress disorder."



Diplomatic Security Service Director Jeffrey Culver, standing at center, meets with DSS agents involved in the Haiti earthquake-response effort in Santo Domingo, advising them to take advantage of mental health counseling available at the Office of Medical Services.

To that end, the Office of Medical Services has developed programs where employees can talk about their experiences at high threat/high stress posts such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

Still, an urban legend regarding mental-health treatment and its impact on security clearances continues to pervade the halls of the State Department. Although senior Department leaders clearly encourage employees to seek help when needed, a recent Office of the Inspector General report titled "Review of Support for Employees Who Are Serving or Have Served in

High Stress, High Threat, Unaccompanied Posts" said that employees believe there is a "significant stigma attached to seeking mental health assistance."

When being investigated for an initial security clearance, or re-investigated for continued access, individuals complete an Electronic Questionnaire for Investigations Processing. Question 21 focuses on mental health. It states:

In the last seven years, have you consulted with a health-care professional regarding an emotional- or mental-health condition, or were you hospitalized for such a condition? Answer "No" if the counseling was for any of the following reasons and was not court ordered:

- 1) strictly marital, family or grief not related to violence by you; or
- 2) strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment.

So, if a person were going through a divorce or family crisis and sought counseling, he or she would answer "No" to question 21. If a Foreign Service officer developed PTSD after time served in a military combat environment, he or she would answer "No" to question 21.

During the subject interview, the background investigator will ask certain mental-health questions to best place in context the employee's answer to question 21.

DS works closely with MED so that any evaluation of the impact of mental-health counseling on eligibility for a security clearance is made by MED. The details of that assessment are retained by MED and never shared with DS.

Of the 517 cases concerning mental-health issues that DS referred to MED in 2009, not one resulted in the denial or revocation of a security clearance for mental-health reasons.

Also, if DS concludes that a security clearance needs to be revoked based wholly or in part on mental-health issues, that decision is eventually reviewed by the Under Secretary for Management plus two (non-DS) senior officers.

While the urban legend exists, the fact is that simply seeking mental-health counseling has never solely

resulted in the revocation or denial of a clearance. The government-wide Adjudicative Guidelines are clear that seeking mental-health counseling is to be viewed in a positive light when rendering a clearance determination. DS views seeking mental-health assistance as a positive step and a normal part of a person's overall health and wellness.

DS stands by to answer any question employees may have about this or any other personnel-security issue and can be reached at 1-866-643-4636 or by e-mail at securityclearance@state.gov. ■



The campers dance their final performance at a local mall. More than 1,500 people attended.

Hip-Hop Happy

For two weeks in April and May, the U.S. Embassy in Manila sponsored a summer camp where 50 Filipino teens from diverse backgrounds shared their love of dance, community and country.

The Hip Hop Happy camp brought together emerging artists from across the country from the conflict-ridden Sulu Archipelago in Muslim Mindanao in the south to the indigenous people of the Cordillera region in the north. Selected for their academic achievement and leadership qualities, participants studied modern-urban dance and traditional Philippine dance for 12 days. Dance teachers also got two days of master classes.

The camp's workshops were led by Department of State Cultural Envoy Lenaya "Tweetie" Straker, an instructor at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York.

The campers shared with Straker their dance traditions, music and communal values, which were drawn from throughout the Philippines. The camp's lectures, demonstrations and cultural activities culminated in a public performance at a local mall that drew more than 1,500 attendees.

Promoting Understanding

Many participants came from communities that had been fractured by violence from terrorist or insurgent groups. By the camp's end, they had become promoters of unity and understanding.

"It was my first time to join this kind of activity," said one camper. "Our place is known for violent rebels. When I was selected, I felt so happy and blessed."

For the project, the embassy partnered with Ballet Philippines and the Cultural

Center of the Philippines.

The participants were of mixed origins and, because they were randomly grouped, learned patience and appreciation of others' cultures and religions. They also learned self-discipline, self-confidence, teamwork, cooperation and a passion for dancing, a cultural center official said.

Amraida Jamasali, from the town of Tawi Tawi, thanked the embassy at the public performance and said, "We learned a lot—not only hip hop but also working with groups and understanding one another's culture. This learning will be treasured and shared with our own communities. We hope that you continue to conduct projects that promote peace and understanding among all cultures."

Embassy dance camp brings youths together /// By Najlaa Abdus-Samad



A Philippine television network interviews U.S. Cultural Envoy Lenaya "TweeTie" Straker and a teary-eyed female participant after the show. **Below:** Camp participants write their reflections on the camp's "freedom wall."



Besides the intensive dance lessons, participants engaged in discussions on trust, respect, understanding and mutual appreciation, and explored their goals and aspirations. Most also experienced their first airplane ride, first trip to their country's capital and first meeting with someone from a different province, religion and background—or from the U.S. Embassy.

The speakers included alumni of other Department programs, such as the Fusion Arts Exchange Program, the Kennedy Center Arts Programs and the Study of the U.S. Institutes. Participants visited such sites as the National Arts Center, the International Rice Research Institute and the Philippine High School for the Arts.

PAS Role

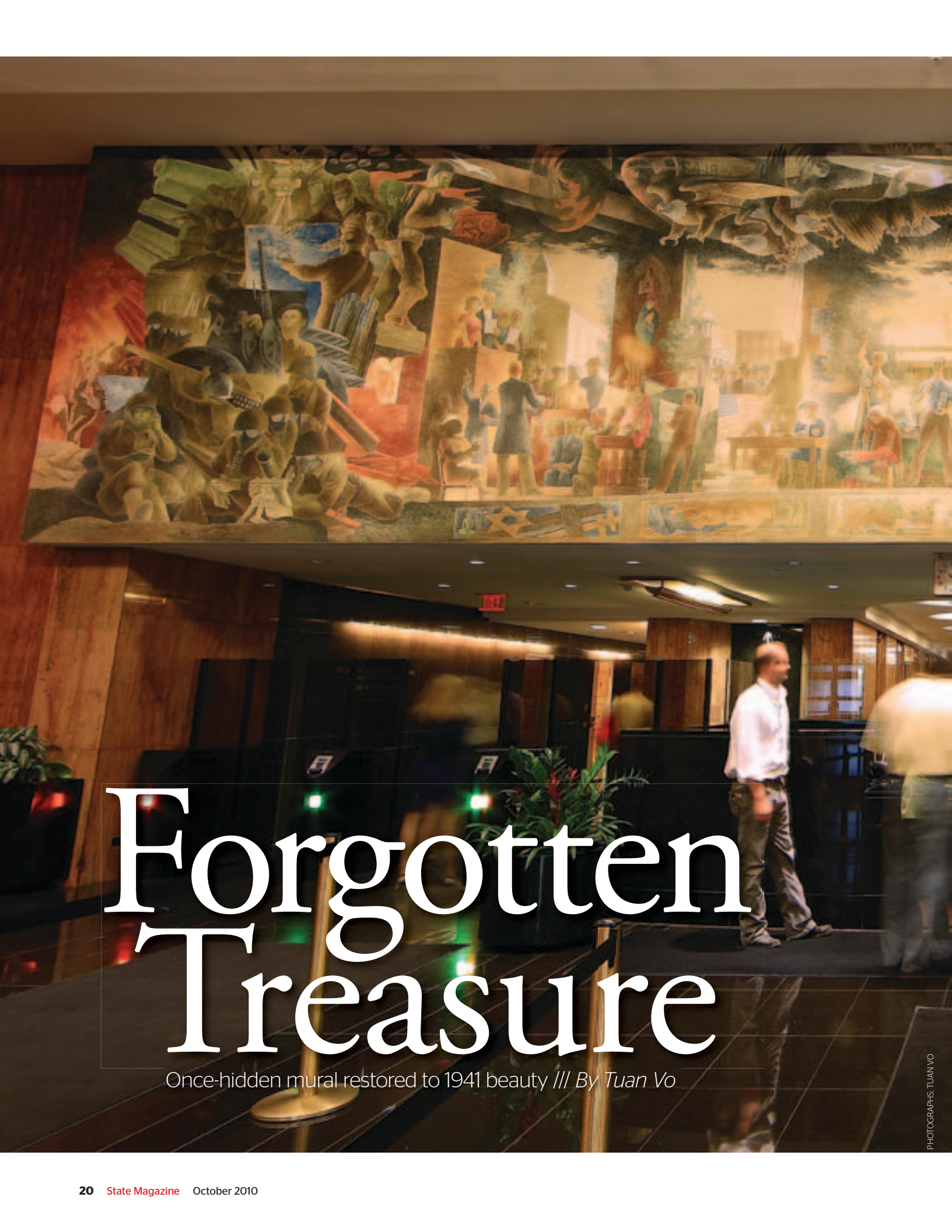
The public affairs section staffed the camp, which supported the embassy's goals of promoting mutual understanding, maintaining positive relationships and promoting equality, nonviolence, social responsibility and volunteerism.

The section exposed participants to the Department's online alumni community (www.alumni.state.gov) and has since kept in touch with them via Facebook, the State Alumni Web site and the ExchangesConnect social networking site, <http://connect.state.gov>. It also provided hands-on tutorials. An unforeseen benefit was that participants with little or no access to computers became adept at engaging with others responsibly via social media. Since the camp, two students have been offered scholarships to continue their college educations.

Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr. visited the camp and spoke with participants and members of the media, and Deputy Chief of Mission Leslie Bassett spoke at the final public performance. The widespread press coverage included a TV network's one-hour feature on the program, which was rebroadcast repeatedly after the camp's conclusion.

The final day of the camp was one of teary good-byes. The youths had bonded in a special way and offered testimonies on how the camp had changed their lives and their perceptions about the United States—and each other. ■

The author is assistant cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Manila.



Forgotten Treasure

Once-hidden mural restored to 1941 beauty // By Tuan Vo

PHOTOGRAPHS TUAN VO



The restored mural greets visitors to the Marshall Wing entrance to Main State.

Visitors entering the northeast corner of the Harry S Truman Building's Marshall Wing walk under a 12-by-50-foot mural, "Defense of Human Freedoms," that's almost 70 years old and is now being restored.

The mural was created in 1941 by Kindred McLeary shortly after the construction of the building, which was to house the War Department. The General Services Administration had budgeted \$11,000 for the mural, and McLeary was chosen in a competition. In 1947, the Department of State, under Secretary of State George C. Marshall, took over the building.

By 1954, the mural had a new name, "America the Mighty." Because of its powerful military images, however, the mural was no longer deemed appropriate and was covered by plywood for the next 23 years.

Four Freedoms

McLeary's design was selected in part because it represented the famous "four freedoms" that President Franklin D. Roosevelt outlined as fundamental principles for a peaceful and democratic world in a 1941 address to Congress: freedom of speech, freedom from want, freedom of worship, freedom from fear. In 2007, Ambassador at Large for Religious Freedom John V.

Hanford referred to the mural's importance, saying that in the face of great national challenges and threats, "the heart of our foreign policy encompasses the protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms."

The mural has many fascinating details. Its center, showing energetic rallies and vigorous speakers, reflects the openness of American society and its respect for individual freedoms and rights. The mural's far right, where a group of people gathers in front of a drug store, emphasizes free enterprise, the backbone of the American economy. In contrast, the open society is surrounded by the powerful armed forces defending the nation. Many of the soldiers wear gas masks, reflecting the fear of chemical warfare, which killed and injured many in the First World War.

The mural was painted with water-based paint on dry plaster in the crosshatching style, which originated in the Middle Ages and was popular for Italian church paintings during the Renaissance. More recently, the style can be found in cartoon drawings. Close up, the artist's original pencil outline of the mural is clearly visible after seven decades.

McLeary, born in Texas in 1901, also painted murals in Pittsburgh and New York City, and taught architecture at Carnegie Tech until his death in 1949, when he fell from the roof of his studio.



Maura Duffy, paintings conservator with Olin Conservation, touches up the mural.

Repairing Damage

Olin Conservation, Inc., which is undertaking the conservation of the mural with funding from the General Services Administration, said that building structure fatigue and fluctuations in humidity and temperature had caused cracks in several places, and the plywood covering placed over the mural in 1954 left holes in its surface. When the painting was uncovered and restored in 1977, further damage was caused by the restoration artists, who used oil paint over the original water-based paint. Over time, incorrect light fixtures may have faded the mural.

Restoration work is a delicate and detailed process. First, the conservator examines the mural with enhanced lighting, including ultraviolet lights, and magnification. Small and discrete solvent tests determine the solubility of the original paint and surface, which helps identify the cleaning methods to use.

Repairing and filling up cracks is a major undertaking. First, the crack is cleaned, and then an acrylic resin is carefully injected using syringes and pipettes. To repair the damage from the use of oil-based paint, Olin Conservation removed the old paint and then touched up the area with an “inpainting” technique. Synthetic resin paint made especially for art restoration was used since it doesn’t bond to or damage the original painting and can be removed later if needed.

Restoration requires concentration and skill. As one conservator said, “It’s so peaceful doing this work; you think of nothing else.”

Restoration of this mural, and of another on the HST Building’s fifth floor, is being facilitated by the Office of Real Property Management and conducted by GSA’s Art in Architecture Program. The program has for more than 30 years commissioned American artists to create art for federal buildings, including 350 works in GSA’s National Capital Region. ■

This close-up shows the crosshatching lines and the artist’s original pencil outline, invisible to viewers on the ground.



The author is an architect with the Office of Real Property Management.



Post of the Month

Bishkek

U.S. Mission Nurtures Growing Partnership ///

By Lauren Perlaza and Rick Marshall

Not all poppy plants are opium producing; some are simply beautiful. The red poppies that bloom in May are emblematic of Kyrgyzstan and are a beautiful harbinger of the coming summer months.



Deputy Chief of Mission Larry Memmott and his family enjoy a horseback ride near Lake Song Kul.



Above: This carved memorial to an ancient Kyrgyz warrior is called a balbal. **Right:** From left, Lauren Perlaza, Linda Davis and Jennifer Holmes look at the unique felt and silk scarves at an artisan's shop in Bishkek.



The Kyrgyz have a saying—Көч жүрө жүрө түзөлөт—which means “as the caravan goes along, it straightens out.” Their journey has been long and often difficult, but whether the country’s caravan will ultimately straighten out and achieve its full potential remains to be seen.

Kyrgyzstan is in some ways an enchanting natural fairyland. The Tien Shan mountain range (“celestial mountains” in Chinese) covers most of Kyrgyzstan, creating a fantastic landscape of peaks, colorful valleys and awe-inspiring lakes. The largest and most famous is Lake Issyk Kul, the second-largest mountain lake in the world and a major attraction and source of pride. Outside of a few villages, there is little sign of human presence, particularly on the lake’s southern shore.

Long History

Although Kyrgyzstan is a new country, the land and the people have a long and complex history, much of it determined by geography. The Tien Shan Range begins just south of Bishkek, where a spectacular series of snow-capped peaks is easily visible from embassy windows. Further south, the peaks rise to more than 24,000 feet along the border with China. Silk Road caravans followed the few passages through these mountains. For centuries, Persian kings and Turkic tribes battled for the territory. Genghis Khan captured the region in 1207. Later, the Russians were welcomed by some Kyrgyz tribes looking for protection from more threatening neighbors.

In 1936, Stalin created the Kyrgyz Republic and, in an effort to divide and conquer, set the borders that stand today. In the south and west, this wraps Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan around each other in a complex knot, isolating many Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik villages and complicating access to the Ferghana Valley, the most fertile and populous region in Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan did not greet independence from the Soviet Union with the same anti-Russian fervor as many other Soviet republics. Askar Akayev, a member of the USSR’s Supreme Soviet, was elected president in October 1991. Initially seen as relatively liberal, he was overthrown in 2005 by the Tulip Revolution, when Kurmanbek Bakiyev took over and began shifting power toward his home base in the South.

Last April, violent protests drove Bakiyev out. Since then, a caretaker government has been formed under Interim President Rosa Otunbaeva, and a June referendum changed the country from a presidential to parliamentary system. New parliamentary elections are slated for the fall.



Above: Ambassador Tatiana Gfoeller holds the colorful puppets used in a highly successful anti-corruption campaign. **Below:** Kyrgyz women in the Naryn region whip wool for felt.

In early June, ethnic violence erupted in Osh, Jalalabad and other sections of the South. More than 300 people were killed, mainly ethnic Uzbeks, and hundreds of thousands briefly fled to Uzbekistan.

Since December 2001, the U.S. Air Force has operated the Transit Center at Manas, adjacent to Bishkek's international airport, to transport troops and fuel to and from Afghanistan. The closure to U.S. forces of a similar logistics hub in Uzbekistan in 2005 and

the difficulties of transporting goods through Pakistan add considerably to the Transit Center's importance and by extension to the U.S. presence in Kyrgyzstan.

Vibrant Mission

The United States opened diplomatic relations with Kyrgyzstan in February 1992, when the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek moved into a building next to the former KGB headquarters. In 1998, it moved to its current building on the southern edge of town. The size and importance of the mission has grown steadily as the U.S. partnership with Kyrgyzstan deepens, and construction on a new embassy is expected to begin soon.

Camaraderie among the staff at this small post is one of the highlights of working here. People get together for Wednesday night basketball and Thursday night billiards or to visit the National Opera and Bishkek's many night spots. The mountains beckon just half an hour away, with hiking at Al Archa National Park and several other locations. There are ski stations within easy reach, and mountain trekking is available for the adventurous. And, of course, there is Lake Issyk Kul with its resorts and fantastic scenery. The community liaison office organizes horseback riding trips, white water rafting and outings to local artisans' shops and museums.



Post of the Month



Top: The U.S. Air Force Band "Falcon" plays for students in the square in front of the American University of Central Asia. **Middle:** Public Affairs Officer Kimberly McDonald meets young komuz players at a music school in Bishkek. **Bottom:** U.S. Embassy staff spend a day off at a ski base near Bishkek.

Kyrgyzstan may be a small country, but the mission's work is hardly small. This year, the staff of the embassy and the U.S. Agency for International Development have been dealing with the consequences of the events of April and June and the many challenges inherent in the nation's political and interethnic conflict.

PAS Activity

The public affairs section has supported local young people's campaigns to raise awareness of citizen responsibility for inter-ethnic peace and tolerance. One PAS-supported campaign focused on providing assistance to those most in need in the South. A

local organization set up a system to track aid shipments to ensure they reached their recipients. Ambassador Tatiana Gfoeller met with the young people who developed these creative projects, to encourage their efforts to support peace and healing in the country.

USAID has supported a Youth Theater for Peace program, training young people to use innovative theater techniques to bring peaceful change and new thinking to their towns and villages, which have been affected by recent conflict.

Youth and education have been major focuses of the mission for many years. The Millennium Challenge Account initiated a successful anti-corruption campaign using a colorful cast of Kyrgyz-speaking puppets in schools that is now a cartoon on national TV. The campaign educates children about the negative consequences of corruption at any level.

Sports diplomacy has reached a particularly vulnerable segment of youth. After a horrific plane crash in 2008, in which several members of a local youth basketball team were killed on their way to a tournament, the embassy sent the survivors on an exchange to the United States, where they met professional basketball players

and American youth. Those young people and coaches have become vital partners for the United States in reaching out to at-risk youth through sports envoys and basketball programs that emphasize teamwork and playing by the rules.

The embassy is constantly approached by young people and teachers, many of whom have been introduced to English and America by Peace Corps volunteers. They want more English-language and American studies resources, and many children talk about studying in the United States under one of the many popular U.S. government exchange programs. To begin to meet this demand, the mission supports 10 American Pilot Schools throughout the country with modern English books, American resource centers and computer labs having Internet connectivity.





Men in Bishkek play Kok-boru, a team sport on horseback which is Kyrgyzstan's national game.

Educational Support

The United States also supports the development of American studies curriculum and resources for higher-education institutions, including the U.S.-supported American University of Central Asia in Bishkek. Ambassador Gfoeller recently gave a series of lectures there on democracy and the American Revolution, which encouraged students to discuss their country's development and think creatively about their

roles and responsibilities in their evolving democracy. The lecture was apparently well-received; the ambassador was asked for repeat performances at numerous universities around Bishkek.

USAID works on economic growth, health, education and the building of democratic institutions. In response to the violence in the South, the United States pledged \$48.6 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, including some

\$25 million in small grants and transitional assistance through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. Since the announcement of parliamentary elections, USAID and the embassy have played an important role in the lead-up to the voting.

So the Kyrgyz caravan is once again setting out across this fascinating country, traveling its ancient trails through narrow, twisting valleys and mountain passes. But whether all the pieces eventually fall in a line or not, the embassy is working hard to support the journey. ■

Lauren Perlaza is the cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek. Rick Marshall is a USAID staff member on temporary assignment in Bishkek.

At a Glance >>>

Kyrgyzstan



Capital: Bishkek

Government type: Republic

Area: 199,951 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than South Dakota

Population: 5.43 million

Official languages: Kyrgyz and Russian

GDP—per capita: \$870

Export commodities: Cotton, wool, meat, tobacco and gold

Export partners: Switzerland, Russia and Uzbekistan

Import commodities: Oil and gas, machinery, chemicals and food

Import partners: China, Russia and Kazakhstan

Currency (code): Soms (KGS)

Internet country code: .kg

Source: Country Background Notes

Assignment Leavenworth

Department employees study at Army college

/// By John Dyson



The Army's Command and General Staff College, in Leavenworth, Kan., offers mid-level Foreign Service officers and specialists and Civil Service employees the opportunity to earn a master's degree during a year of study and join a list of alumni that includes former Secretaries of State George C. Marshall and Colin L. Powell.

Recent alumni include Daniel Ricci, now an assistant political advisor at the U.S. Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany, and Pedro Erviti, an assistant political advisor at the U.S. Southern Command in Miami.

Another alumnus, Brent Brown, went on to serve as an assistant regional security officer in Afghanistan, where he worked with American and foreign military forces preparing for the opening of the U.S. consulates in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat.

Priceless Experience

"I enjoyed making friends with the individuals in the class and maintain contact with most of them," Brown said. "I maintain contact with many of the foreign officers as well and have called upon them from time to time to assist with official matters. One simply can't put a price on the excellent relationships and liaison gained from this course."

Students from the Department of State fill an important role at the college.

"I often had the opportunity to discuss with students and faculty the Department of State's role in interagency operations, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan," said 2006 graduate Gene Del Bianco of the U.S. Embassy in Manila. Del Bianco, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan before attending the college, said the school helps military leaders understand the Department's importance in volatile regions.

The benefits to Department employees include learning about the Army from the inside out, said 2010 graduate



Top: Department employees receiving 2010 certificates for study at the college included Sasha Mehra, center; Ernesto Pizzaro, second from right at front; and Daniel Ricci, third from right at rear. **Bottom:** Students attending the college from other nations' military forces have lunch during a field trip to the U.S. Pacific Command.

Sasha Mehra of the Bureau of International Organizations. Mehra, one of the first graduates to earn a certificate in Overseas Contingency Operations—Planning, said her cohort group "studied Army doctrine, worked side-by-side with officers to plan complex military operations and acquired planning and critical thinking skills."

As a result, she continued, she and her cohorts can now "liaise with our military counterparts with confidence, understanding and respect, and understand the complexity of planning military and peacekeeping operations and the Department of Defense's capabilities and limitations."

Key Role

Brown said the Department's students provide information on what they do every day. He remembers defending the Foreign Service during a class discussion.

"No one had anything good to say about the Foreign Service, but by the end of the day members of my class were complaining about how we are underfunded and

proposing ways they could assist our efforts overseas," he said.

According to Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV, employees of the departments of Defense and State and other government professionals often don't get exposure to other U.S. government cultures until they're in senior positions or studying at the war colleges or National Defense University. Caldwell, past commander of the college's parent organization, said this exposure should begin at the eight- or 10-year marks in these employees' careers through an education like that offered at staff and command colleges.

The current commanding general of the college's parent organization, Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen Jr., told the college's incoming class to use its year of study to build contacts with their U.S. military classmates and other students, including the 115 international military officers from 81 countries.

The Command and General Staff College has three schools.

Most interagency students attend the Command and General Staff School, a 44-week course that covers the basic capabilities and constraints of the U.S. military and interagency community. The course also has segments on planning for complex operations and on military history, and includes elective courses in such specialties as area studies; diplomatic, economic and interagency theory; intelligence; and special operations.

Critical Thinking

The School of Advanced Military Studies is a follow-on school that focuses on educating American and international officers as leaders who can think critically at the strategic and operational levels and solve complex, ambiguous problems. Because the school is the Army's think tank for planning, its civilian students include those with planning experience in the Department's Office of Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The third school, the School for Command Preparation, develops and supports the operations of the Army's field-grade commanders and their senior enlisted advisors, including the command teams of the U.S. military's joint force commanders. This three-week course is open to Department officers who will be working with military counterparts. Ideally, they and their counterparts should attend together.

For more information on attending the Leavenworth training, see <http://www.cgsc.edu> and the Bureau of Human Resources' annual Foreign Service and Civil Service Long-Term Training Opportunities Booklet on the Web at <http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/workforce/Assignment/Pages/foreignserviceandcivilservice.aspx>. ■

The author is the State Department faculty advisor at the Army Command and General Staff College.



Office of the Month

A strategic goal of the Bureau of Administration is the use and protection of the Department's information, and to this end, the bureau has three offices under its Global Information Systems umbrella, including the Office of Directives Management.

The office's products and services seem simple: design and maintenance of the Department's forms, publishing and maintaining the Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbooks, submitting to the Office of Management and Budget requests to collect information from the public and coordinating the Department's rule-making with public participation. Implementing Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's commitment to government transparency, public participation, collaboration and innovation, the office works with clients to develop new ways to access, collect and use information, aiming to streamline work processes and save time and money.

For instance, DIR is assisting clients with the collection and practical use of information by integrating individual forms with such Microsoft Office applications as Outlook, Excel and Access, and with such databases as Oracle and SQL Server. So far, the office has developed tools and prototypes that allow its clients to develop end-to-end information flows. Although 85 percent of work processes start with a form, it's possible that using a form to just collect information written in pencil in a form's fields may therefore someday be passé.

Recently, DIR and the A Bureau's Office of Logistics Management collaborated on data collection with Form DS-0859, "Receipt for Consular Accountable Items." DIR installed warehouse bar codes in several important fields to help A/LM track inventory more easily, and then reviewed the resulting database and suggested some changes to have fields align with the form. Next, DIR provided a prototype application that searches a computerized folder for forms that have been submitted and imports the data in the forms to the new database. This "user-driven on command" application allows A/LM to import data as often as needed.

DIR also produced a form and "event driven" application for the Global Partnership Initiative in which users completed a form and e-mailed it to a special mailbox set up for it. The application notes the arrival of an e-mail and imports the data to the GPI database.

"DIR's strategy is to provide Department employees with Department policies and procedures through effective directives management, and to provide Department personnel with the information needed in the right place, at the right time and in a useful format," said Office Director T.J. Furlong.

Functional Forms

Directives Management
office keeps info flowing ///

*By Jonathan Mudge and
Dan Martinez*



Office of the Month

Forms Team

One of the office's recent accomplishments was making all Department forms available via the e-Forms system and thus accessible to the public, including the visually impaired (under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). DIR's forms team used commercially available text-to-speech software and collaborated with the National Federation for the Blind to train DIR staff on the software. Once the software was installed on the form designers' workstations, the team established standards for design of the forms and redesigned and published almost 700 forms. Because, by some studies, almost 11 percent of the American public needs some sort of accessibility technology to read, the project will have a broad impact. It has also placed the Department at the forefront of Section 508 compliance.

Recently, Forms Manager Kirk Masterson made a presentation on the team's work to the Business Forms Management Association's annual conference, reflecting how the Department is being looked to as a source of best practices when it comes to forms.

The forms team also developed a Section 508-compliant electronic signature, the NT Domain signature, and is converting more than 300 forms that permit electronic signatures to this new format. NT Domain works by authenticating the user through the Department's OpenNet directory, matching users' network usernames and passwords. This breakthrough will make signing a form easier and provide stronger confirmation of the signer's identity.

Another challenge DIR is addressing is getting useful information quickly to the fingertips of a consular officer as he or she sits across from a visa applicant.

The FAM team is collaborating with the Bureau of Consular Affairs to help the bureau find solutions to its information access challenges.

FAM Team

The FAM team manages 16 volumes of FAM material and 32 FAHs, encompassing 25,000 pages of policies and procedures. The team works with coordinators for FAM volumes in the program offices, helping keep FAM volumes updated and written in plain language and ensuring that past policies are archived for future reference.

A challenge the team is helping customers address is how, in a world of fast search engines, to have a FAM or FAH that can be easily and quickly searched, say, for the policy on family medical leave or on preparing official correspondence. Another challenge it's helping with is how to streamline the approval and codifying process, which will let the FAM and FAH be updated as policies are announced in ALDACs or Department Notices. Archived policies dating to 1960 are

online at http://arpsdir.a.state.gov/archive/fam_archive.html.

Regulatory Compliance

One question DIR has wrestled with lately is whether the Paperwork Reduction Act applies to data gained by the Department via social media such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. The act requires federal agencies that collect information from the public to keep their paperwork minimal. It also requires that the information collected and the collection method get prior Office of Management and Budget approval. DIR's Information Collections Team is the Department's liaison with OMB on information collection and collaborates with Department bureaus and offices to ensure the Department is reducing the paperwork burden on the public.

In a sign of the times, OMB this year issued a memo exempting Web-based social media from the act—if the agency is not collecting additional materials or conducting surveys. The Information

Members of DIR's information collection team include, from left, Mary Remmers, Ray Ciupek and Dennis Andrusko.



PHOTOGRAPHS: LESLIE PACHECO

Right: Members of DIR's FAM team include, from left, Denise Dunaway, Denise West, Kevin Cross, Maureen Whitsett, Barbara Shacklock and Tim Egert. **Below:** Members of DIR's forms team are, from left, Kelli Delaney, Yvonne Romano, Kim Ahern, Kirk Masterson, Matt Arritt, David Record and Kim Waggoner.



Collections Team is working with OMB to assess what this means for Department Web sites and the Department's use of social media.

The Department collects information through applications for passports and visas; reports demonstrating compliance with federal rules, grant and contract

agreements; and focus groups and surveys. If an office's survey has identical questions and 10 or more respondents, the office should contact DIR's experts for guidance on the Act's requirements, exemptions and exclusions.

The Information Collections team also processes public notices in the Federal Register, all delegations of authority and presidential determinations.

The regulatory and customer service commitments of federal agencies mean the Department needs to provide employees, contractors and the public with easy access to information while protecting confidential, classified and personally identifiable information, and archiving it as well. DIR's role is key to helping the Bureau of Administration reach this goal. ■

The authors are Foreign Service officers in the Office of Directives Management.



What Works?

Program evaluation assesses strengths /// *By Stephanie Cabell*

At the Department's June conference on program evaluation, "New Paradigms for Evaluating Diplomacy in the 21st Century," more than 200 professionals reflected on how foreign affairs agencies can make effective use of evaluation to understand the global impact of their programs.

Program evaluation should always be part of the planning and management process, according to Peter B. Davis, coordinator for Planning and Performance Management in the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance.

When planning an evaluation, some questions to consider include:

- What question(s) should be answered?
- What other evaluations and research exist?
- What information is needed, and when and how will it be used?
- Who are the principal stakeholders/users?
- What resources are needed?
- What will ensure that evaluation recommendations are implemented?
- How will findings and recommendations be shared?

Possible Solutions

The answers to these questions will help narrow the strategic questions to be answered, determine the type of evaluation and conceptual framework, identify funding and guide the use of findings and recommendations.

Those considering program evaluation should keep in mind that it is not about proving the success or failure of a program but about helping managers understand how effectively programs are working. Evaluations reveal effective practices and can show whether a program should be adjusted to strengthen weaknesses in planning and implementation.

"A good evaluation produces information, favorable or not, that is relevant, useful and meaningful for program managers and implementing partners," said Fruzsina Csaszar of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

A myth is that program managers need a full understanding of terms such as "validity" or "reliability" to know when and how to evaluate. In fact, the complexity of the Department's foreign policy agenda means managers should consider what strategic question need answering. For example, how does a peacekeeping operation contribute to national or regional security? An evaluation may also ask what information is needed to make decisions, determine the impact of U.S. policies or justify resource requests.

Another myth is that evaluations can be carried out only by entities not directly involved in the design or implementation of a project or program. While program-impact evaluations conducted by an external organization are recognized for their impartiality, other types of evaluations, such as process evaluations or case studies, can help bureaus and posts assess a program and guide decision making.

"While impact evaluations for large programs can be expensive, the typical performance evaluation is not expensive or time consuming and often pays for itself with the recommendations," said Davis.

Shaping Budgets

Agencies do an evaluation because they have a vested interest in how their programs are performing and whether there are successes, as defined by the program. Thus, the Department's program evaluations help shape budget priorities and ensure funds are spent effectively and efficiently.

First steps in an evaluation are determining what questions need answering, what information must be collected and what resources are available. According to Rick Ruth, director of Policy and Evaluation at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "You can measure public diplomacy and the impact of exchange programs—you just have to decide to do it and commit the resources to do it."

ECA, he said, focuses on developing quantifiable measures and capturing longitudinal effects of public diplomacy activities. "Congress and the Administration have greater confidence in applying new funding to those activities where [we] can say we've measured it, here are the results," he said.

Evaluation Leader

The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy's Office of Policy, Planning and Resources has been a leader in providing independent evaluations for International Information Programs, Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy programs.

The director of its Evaluation and Measurement Unit, Cherreka Montgomery, said R/PPR believes evaluation involves a valuable strategic partnership between her unit's evaluation officers and bureau program managers and the evaluation's stakeholders. This, she said, ensures evaluations successfully move from identifying the questions to producing practical recommendations.

The Department's effort to achieve robust evaluations is spurred by its goal of systematically documenting its accomplishments and ineffective program practices. Thus, evaluation improves accountability and performance, and makes funding requests more transparent.

The Department promotes evaluation through such methods as the June conference, which featured a message from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, international plenary sessions and workshops, and presentations on evaluations by officials from the Department, other federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Presentations were also made by representatives from foreign ministries and foreign media. The conference proceedings are at www.state.gov/evaluationconference.

The Department plans to launch a "community of practice" group for those involved in evaluation to hold discussions, communicate best practices and network. More information is available at the Program Evaluation Portal on Diplopedia. The Department is also co-leader of the interagency Foreign Affairs Evaluation Coordination Workgroup, which meets monthly to discuss opportunities for cooperation in evaluation.

Assessing the Department's programs requires a focus on results and a commitment to measuring their impact—exactly what program evaluation is about. ■

The author is a program analyst in the Office of Strategic and Performance Planning.

FSI Helps Students Gain College Credit Recommendations

A Foreign Service Institute program gives Department of State and other U.S. government employees the opportunity to obtain recommendations that can lead to their receiving academic credit for certain FSI training courses. Since 2007, FSI has participated in the American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service. Colleges and universities use ACE CREDIT to gain reliable course-equivalency information to facilitate decisions on whether to award academic credit for formal training taken in the workplace. ACE CREDIT only makes credit recommendations, which colleges then use, modify or reject.

ACE CREDIT has reviewed 18 FSI courses and language proficiency tests in Arabic, Russian and Spanish, awarding college credit recommendations at the undergraduate or graduate level. The courses include Federal Information Risk Assessment, Europe Area Studies and Crisis Leadership. Others will be added to this list as funding for future reviews becomes available.

ACE establishes the effective date of the recommendation on a course-by-course basis. ACE CREDIT recommendation can be considered only for FSI courses, exams and language-proficiency tests completed after the date they were reviewed and approved by ACE.

To benefit FSI students, the institute participates in the ACE Transcript Service. The service offers a lifelong academic record for students who have successfully completed courses reviewed by ACE CREDIT and enables adult learners to present a nationally recognized transcript to the college or university of their choice for the potential award of academic credit.

Rodney Burney, a Foreign Service information management technology specialist stationed in Vienna, Austria, is pursuing a degree in Information Assurance via distance learning at the University of Maryland University College - Europe. He completed the FIRA course last July, and

UMUC verified FSI's participation in the ACE CREDIT program and granted him two credit hours of elective credits.

"I took FIRA to gain a greater understanding of the various federal regulations regarding information assurance," Burney said. "It was a pleasant surprise to learn I could also earn college credit. The course material closely fit my degree plan and, thanks to FSI's participation, I progressed both professionally and academically. I hope the ACE CREDIT program at FSI grows to include more courses."

For internal training requests, FSI's online Training Application provides FSI students with the option of declaring their intent to request an ACE CREDIT recommendation when applying for an ACE-reviewed course. Students must declare their intent at least two weeks prior to the course's start-date so that the course manager is prepared to assist them through this process, which may include successfully completing additional coursework or achieving a specified final exam/test score. Students from other U.S. government agencies may also pursue an ACE CREDIT recommendation for FSI courses by contacting FSI's Office of the Registrar at (703) 302-7144 for guidance.

FSI's Accreditation/Certification Web site, <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg/default>

[asp?Heading=Accreditation/Certification](#), provides updates and a list of courses, exams and language proficiency tests designated for ACE CREDIT recommendation. Students may obtain additional course information or verify the possibility of pursuing an ACE CREDIT recommendation prior to enrollment by contacting the course manager of the FSI school offering the course.

More information on ACE CREDIT is at <http://www.acenet.edu/acecredit>, and ACE's National Guide, at <http://www2.acenet.edu/credit/?fuseaction=browse.getOrganizationDetail&FICE=1005379>, provides a comprehensive, list of approved courses and information about each FSI course. The number of semester hours available for ACE CREDIT recommendation for Arabic, Spanish and Russian language-proficiency tests depends on the language and the students' proficiency exam score.

Frequent users of the FasTrac Distance Learning Program should know that certain SkillSoft courses are recommended for ACE CREDIT. At the FasTrac Web site, <http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac>, students can select the link to Obtaining College Credit, <http://fsi.state.gov/rd.asp?ID=229>, for the most up-to-date list of courses and instructions for obtaining credit recommendations.

Questions about ACE CREDIT can be answered by the Office of the Registrar at (703) 302-7144 or via e-mail at FSIRegistrar@state.gov or by contacting Arline Hetland, ACE CREDIT Program manager at (703) 302-3012 or via e-mail at HetlandAR@state.gov. ■

Future leader dog Spinner, which Hegenbarth is now raising, gets camera-shy.



Puppy Love

Almost a year ago this month, I toured the Seeing Eye School of Morristown, N.J., helped staff transport seeing eye dogs to nearby New York City and then, while blindfolded, was taught how to harness a dog and “walk blind” through New York streets.

I went from being terrified to trusting, confidently navigating with the dog’s help. The experience brought me full circle from raising puppies for Leader Dogs for the Blind, an institution similar to the Seeing Eye, to handling a trained dog.

At seven weeks of age leader dogs—primarily German shepherds, Labrador and golden retrievers, standard poodles or mixes of these breeds—are issued to a volunteer puppy raiser, who will housebreak and train them in basic obedience commands such as sit, come, down and stay. They learn to “heel,” or walk on their caretaker’s left at a loose leash, meaning they cannot pull ahead

or drag behind, which strains the leash. They also learn some career-specific commands, such as to go under, around, left and right.

Going Everywhere

Perhaps my most important task is acclimating them to public places. That means, if possible, I take the puppies with me everywhere I go. In public, the puppies are taught to respond to the “under” command by quietly getting under chairs, tables, church pews and such. They must learn to accompany their masters anywhere, including restaurants, churches or a doctor’s office, without being obtrusive.

We teach the puppies to walk calmly beside a shopping cart while in a supermarket and not get their paws run over by its wheels. They must also learn not to sniff at or try to eat any of the tempting food items in the store.

The puppies also learn to remain calm in loud or confusing situations that might frighten them and to deal with crowds and people who may try to pet or get the dog’s attention. The puppies learn to ignore these distractions and learn that when they wear their jackets—the precursor to their guide harnesses—they are not just regular dogs but working guides.

I can only let them play with toys that won’t choke or hurt them, and I can never let them play with a ball; if they associate balls with fun they could later, while working, be distracted by someone playing with a ball. I must discourage them from reacting to cats, squirrels, birds, rabbits or other dogs. I also cannot give them “people food” or even excessive doggie treats; they must learn to never beg at the table while their owner is eating.

Retiree raises young leader dogs /// *By Hava Hegenbarth*

Early Interest

I first got interested in guide dogs while still in the Foreign Service. While stationed in Gaborone, Botswana, I visited the Seeing Eye's Web site and made a donation. They thanked me and invited me to visit when I was next in the United States. When I did so, they asked me whether, after retiring, I'd be interested in raising puppies for them.

I was delighted and so were they—until they heard I was retiring to Iowa. That was too distant, but they did advise me to contact Leader Dogs, which is based in Rochester, Mich. When I retired, I applied for a Leader Dogs pup and later received the first of three I've so far raised.

The first, Dobie, a male black Labrador, did not make it as a dog guide and was "career-changed"—he became someone's pet. My second, Solomon, another male black Lab, is now a working guide dog in Illinois. My latest, Spinner, a female black Lab, shows great potential to also become a working guide.

After the raiser raises a puppy for approximately a year, Leader Dogs sends a letter that informs the raiser that it's time for their puppy to return to the



Left: Spinner tries on a harness. **Above:** Spinner relaxes with Bax, Hegenbarth's own dog. Bax was given to Hegenbarth as a puppy at her last post, Port Louis, Mauritius.

school to begin formal training. This is always a sad time for me, because I've come to love the puppy. What gets me through this time, though, is knowing this leader dog is part of something special and that, by raising him or her, I've become part of it, too.

The letter's arrival means I will again begin the long journey to Rochester, just outside Detroit. Once there, the Leader Dogs staff gives me some private time to say goodbye to "my" puppy. With Spinner, for instance, I know I'll hug her and tell her to become the best leader dog she can be.

Then, a Leader Dogs staff member will lead her away, and I know that I'll cry. But I also know I'll be proud of and hopeful for this future leader dog who will bring a sense of freedom and independence to its owner. ■

The author is a Foreign Service retiree.



Take Two

Medical Clearances, the Sequel III *By Dr. Tom Yun*

In the June Medical Report, we explained the different classes of medical clearance and reviewed when people need to renew their clearance. This month, we counter some myths about medical clearances and explain a policy change that allows more to serve with greater assignment opportunities.

The Department is committed to a medical program that assigns employees abroad when it is medically safe to do so. Our medical clearance policy in particular has continued to evolve to serve Department employees' needs, meet the challenges of service abroad and reflect advances in medical science. We have broadened the Class 1 medical clearance to include those with stable medical conditions that require only periodic monitoring. As part of this change, employees are responsible for getting their needed follow-up care and paying for any required transportation if the medical care is not available at post. This change, which enlarges the number of individuals eligible for Class 1 clearances, demonstrates that the Department's medical clearance policy has not been static.

The primary purpose of the medical clearance program is to ensure that the assignment will not cause harm to the individual because of his or her medical condition. In general, the risk of harm to an individual with a history of asthma exacerbation or heart attacks is likely to be much greater at some posts than at others. Similarly, someone recently diagnosed with cancer should not be assigned to posts where needed treatment isn't available.

Employees differ about where to set the threshold for medical clearance for any given post. Employees with medical complications can optimistically believe that their medical condition will never deteriorate. When not allowed to travel, they complain the Office of Medical Services is too strict.

On the other hand, those at post who have to either provide medical care or perform double duty to support medical curtailments complain about the opposite situation. For example, those serving in several highly stressful and austere posts have asked MED to impose stricter limits on who can serve at these posts. They have seen firsthand that the stressful and harsh environment can exacerbate health conditions in their co-workers, making them unable to perform their duties. We get similar complaints from medical providers when they have had to stabilize and medevac a seriously ill patient who required care beyond what could be provided at post.

However, if we raise the threshold high enough to avoid any exacerbations we would be excluding many employees with medical conditions who could have successfully completed their tours without medical incidents. Instead, the Department has worked to set a threshold that would allow the largest number of employees to serve with the fewest number of exacerbations. In other words, we have chosen to accept a few non-life-threatening exacerbations in order to allow many more to serve.

To try to achieve the best balance, MED monitors medevacs and medical curtailments from posts and adjusts its medical clearance thresholds as needed. Recently, five people were medically curtailed from one small post in 18 months, and the post understandably complained that MED's clearance threshold for that post is too low. When we examined each curtailment, however, we found all but one were caused by new acute medical problems that arose after the medical clearance, not by exacerbation of a pre-existing condition. The post was simply unlucky to have experienced a chance cluster of medical curtailments. Therefore, MED did not raise the medical clearance threshold for this post.

Likewise, MED has adjusted its medical clearance criteria in response to advances in medicine. For example, at one time HIV-positive individuals could not be assigned to many posts

because they were immunocompromised despite the best treatment. In recent years, however, treatment advances have allowed some HIV-positive individuals to maintain a healthy immune system, and they no longer need the same level of monitoring. Consequently, such persons are now given a Class 1 clearance and are available for assignment worldwide. MED also once denied clearances to patients in their first year after receiving a coronary artery stent because the re-occlusion rate was too high. With improvements in stents, however, MED now returns these patients to post as soon as they recover from the procedure.

Similar adjustments to our clearance criteria have been made as we gain more experience with a particular disease. For example, we used to prevent anyone going through the alcohol rehab program from being assigned overseas during the first three years after undergoing rehab. As MED gained experience with Alcoholics Anonymous programs overseas, however, it began clearing lower-risk rehab patients to return overseas more quickly.

When adjudicating a medical clearance, MED until recently considered a patient's follow-up needs, even if the medical condition was stable. Individuals with stable conditions who were not likely to be harmed by the assignment but did require medical follow-ups that were not available at all posts were not being cleared for those posts. For example, someone with pre-glaucoma who needed his or her eye pressure measured every six months or a newly diagnosed non-insulin-dependent diabetic who needed to see his or her endocrinologist every six months would not have been cleared for posts that could not provide that care.

However, many employees with stable medical conditions have told MED they would take responsibility for obtaining the follow-up care if MED would clear them. Recently, MED broadened the Class 1 medical clearance criteria to include individuals with stable medical conditions who need routine follow-up, allowing them to be responsible for obtaining that care.

The medical clearance decision is based on the individual's medical condition, not a diagnosis, and is dynamic rather than permanent. For example, individuals newly diagnosed with cancer or depression or who had a recent heart attack would be assigned a Class 2 clearance since they cannot be assigned to posts where treatment is unavailable. However, when they become stable with a favorable prognosis and require only periodic follow-up care, they may be able to receive a Class 1 clearance again.

The same holds true for post-traumatic stress disorder. A diagnosis of PTSD doesn't automatically affect one's medical clearance. While some may be issued a Class 2 clearance until treatment is complete and some time has passed to determine the stability of their condition, others have been issued a Class 1 clearance after undergoing treatment at MED's Deployment Stress Management Program.

The medical clearance policy has evolved to allow greater assignment opportunities. Although advances in medicine have allowed more people to serve in hardship posts, there are many posts where local medical care is inadequate and the risks of tropical and infectious disease remain high. The medical clearance program seeks to prevent harm coming to the individual because of his/her medical condition, but also aims to allow as many employees as possible to serve in these hardship posts. ■

The author is the Department's Medical Director.

U.S. Ambassador to Iceland

Luis E. Arreaga of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland. Previously, he led recruiting and hiring efforts during the largest increase in Foreign Service personnel in Department history. He has been deputy chief of mission in Panama and consul general in Vancouver. Other postings include Geneva, Spain, Peru, El Salvador and Honduras, the latter three with the U.S. Agency for International Development. He is married and has three children.



U.S. Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic

Eric D. Benjaminson of Oregon, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic. He will serve concurrently as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe. Previously, he was minister-counselor for Economic Affairs in Ottawa. Other postings include Windhoek, Ouagadougou, Brussels, Stockholm, Beijing, Montreal and Lagos. He is married to former Foreign Service officer Paula Brumbaugh. They have two daughters.



U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Rosemary Anne DiCarlo of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She previously served as U.S. alternative representative for Special Political Affairs to the U.N. and deputy assistant secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs. Other postings include Moscow and Oslo. She is married.



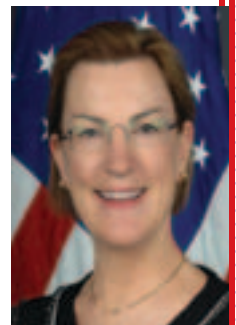
U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso

J. Thomas Dougherty of Wyoming, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. He previously served as minister-counselor for Public Affairs in Baghdad and acting deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. He was deputy chief of mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi and also served in Cameroon, Germany, Eritrea, Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia and Senegal. He is married and has two children.



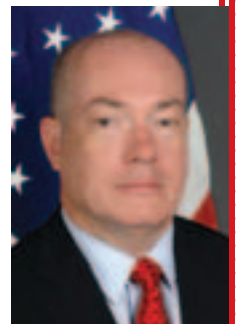
U.S. Ambassador to Timor-Leste

Judith R. Fergin of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Previously, she was consul general in Sydney. Before that, she was deputy chief of mission in Singapore. Other postings include Canberra, Jakarta, Russia, Liberia, South Africa and Germany. She is married to retired Foreign Service officer Gregory Fergin. They have two children.



U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon

Robert P. Jackson of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Morocco and Senegal. He was director of the Office for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy and coordinator of the Entry-Level Officer Training (A-100) Program. Other postings include Burundi, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Portugal and Zimbabwe.



U.S. Ambassador to Iraq

James Franklin Jeffrey of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. Previously, he was ambassador to Turkey. Before that, he was deputy national security advisor and principal deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He was ambassador to Albania, did previous tours in Iraq and Turkey and served in Kuwait. He served in the Army in Germany and Vietnam.



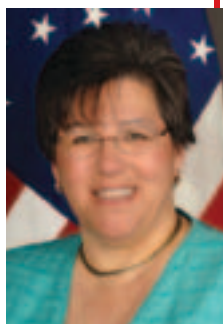
U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Patrick S. Moon of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. Before that, he was deputy assistant secretary and coordinator for Afghanistan. Other postings include Beirut, Lubumbashi, Geneva, Vienna, U.S. Mission to NATO and Zagreb. He served in the Air Force. He is married and has three daughters.



U.S. Ambassador to Peru

Rose M. Likins of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Peru. Previously, she was deputy director of the Foreign Service Institute and before that dean of FSI's School of Professional and Area Studies. She was ambassador to El Salvador and principal deputy assistant secretary for Political-Military Affairs. She also served in Monterrey, Asunción and Sofia. She is married and has two sons.



U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo

Christopher W. Murray of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Before that, he was deputy chief of mission in Beirut, where he directed the evacuation of 15,000 Americans from Lebanon. Other postings include Algiers, Damascus, Lubumbashi and Kingston. He has a son and a daughter.



U.S. Ambassador to Colombia

P. Michael McKinley of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Before that, he was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Other postings include Mozambique, Uganda, Belgium, London and Bolivia. He is married and has three children.



U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone

Michael S. Owen of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. Previously, he was acting deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. He has been consul general in Mumbai and deputy chief of mission in Tanzania. Other postings include Ghana, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Mauritania and Ireland. He is married and has two children.



U.S. Ambassador to Panama

Phyllis Marie Powers of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama. Previously, she was director of the Office of Provincial Affairs in Baghdad. Before that, she was deputy chief of mission in Lima. Other postings include Jordan, Russia, Poland and Colombia, where she was director of the narcotics affairs section and management counselor.



U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic

Theodore Sedgwick of Virginia, a business executive, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic. He founded Pasha Publications, a specialty publisher focused on energy, defense and environment markets, and served as its chief executive for 20 years. More recently, he founded Io Energy, an online energy information company covering the natural gas, coal and electricity industries. He was also president of Red Hills Lumber Co., a producer of pine flooring.



U.S. Ambassador to Greece

Daniel Bennett Smith of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic. Previously, he was executive secretary of the State Department. He is a recipient of the Arnold L. Raphel Memorial Award. He has also served as principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs and deputy executive secretary. His postings include Switzerland, Turkey, Canada and Sweden. He is married and has three sons.



Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

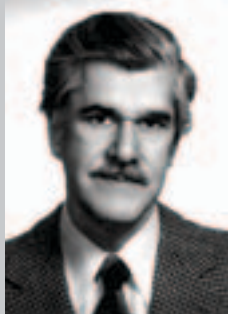
Ann Stock of Virginia, an arts executive, is the new Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Previously, she was vice president of Institutional Affairs at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Before that, she was deputy assistant to President Bill Clinton and social secretary at the White House. She was also a vice president for Bloomingdale's Department Stores and deputy press secretary to Vice President Walter Mondale during the 1980 presidential election campaign.



U.S. Ambassador to Zambia

Mark C. Storella of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. He previously served as senior coordinator for Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He was deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva and DCM in Phnom Penh. Other overseas postings include Rome, Paris, Bangkok and an earlier posting in Phnom Penh. He is married and has two children.





John Vincent Abidian, 85, a retired Foreign Service regional security officer, died June 24 in Brussels, Belgium. He served in the Pacific during World War II and joined the Department in 1955. His postings included Moscow, Rio de Janeiro and Paris. He ended his career with a nine-year secondment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as its director of security. After retiring in 1978, he and his wife were involved in professional, charitable and sports activities in the cities where they divided their time—Brussels and Venice, Fla.



James E. Akins, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 15 of natural causes. He lived in Mitchellville, Md. He served in the Navy and joined the Department in 1954. His postings included Naples, Paris, Strasbourg, Damascus, Beirut, Kuwait, Baghdad and Saudi Arabia, where he was ambassador. He and his wife amassed a collection of Near East artifacts, many of which they donated to his alma mater, the University of Akron. He was a consultant to

multinational corporations on foreign policy and energy issues, an avid gardener and patron of theater and the arts.



Dorothy D. Bruins, 108, widow of Foreign Service officer John H. Bruins, died April 27 in Washington, D.C. She accompanied her husband on postings to Singapore; Southampton, England; Hamburg; Danzig; Hong Kong; London; Prague and Beirut. She played piano in duets and was active in the Women's Association of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., where she was a deacon.



Peter Collins, 72, a retired Foreign Service officer and husband of retired Foreign Service employee Gloria Collins, died July 17. He lived in Albuquerque, N.M. His 30-year career included postings to Thessaloniki, Athens, Saigon and provincial posts in Vietnam, Paris (Vietnam Peace Talks), Brussels (USNATO Mission) and Lisbon. After retirement, he worked as a rehired annuitant and as a consultant with Sandia National Laboratories. He was an

active tennis player and runner and enjoyed baseball and independent films.



Francis P. "Frank" Coward, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 11 of cardiac arrest in Albany, N.Y. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1962 and served in Madras, Bangkok and Rangoon. After retiring in 1979, he was involved with a nature preserve/biological field station and not-for-profit organizations in Rensselaerville, N.Y. He enjoyed traveling and reading historical biography.

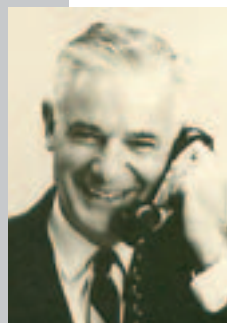


Susan K. Donnelly, 63, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Ambassador Shaun Donnelly, died July 12 of cardiac arrest at her home in Silver Spring, Md. She accompanied her husband on postings to Dakar, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Bamako, Tunis and Colombo. She worked overseas as a journalist, teacher and community liaison officer. A professional clown, she volunteered at orphanages, schools

and retirement homes. She was a singer and was active in community theater and her church.



Gerald "Jerry" Goldstein, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 24 of esophageal cancer in Seattle, Wash. He served in the Army during World War II and entered the Foreign Service in 1950. His postings included Munich, Vancouver, Port of Spain, Bonn and Brasilia. He retired in 1976. He enjoyed woodworking and read extensively in economics and history.



Douglas Henderson, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 14 of cancer at his home in Weston, Mass. He joined the Foreign Service in 1942 and served in Mexico, Chile, Switzerland, Peru and Bolivia, where he was ambassador. After retiring in 1975, he volunteered on Weston's sewer committee and co-founded a nonprofit that promotes the use of local resources. Two of his children, Lee Martinez and Jennifer Henderson, also worked for the Department.



Eugene O. Kern, 95, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died July 6 at his home in Tenaflly, N.J. He joined the recently established Voice of America in 1942 and served as a broadcaster and executive. During World War II, he narrated numerous motion picture documentaries, including William Wyler's famous portrayal of the air war in Europe. He was VOA program center director in Munich. He was an avid radio

amateur and designed and built electronic gadgets well into his 70s.



Dorothy L. Magee-Berkely, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 19 in San Diego, Calif. Her postings included Austria, the Azores, Brazil, Bangladesh, England, France, Germany, Liberia, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Korea. After retiring in 1989, she was a consultant, traveled extensively, enjoyed sailing, took creative writing classes, was a docent at a history museum, volunteered with a grammar school reading program and

founded a puppy lovers club.



Marilen Jison Maher, 67, wife of retired Foreign Service specialist James Maher, died Aug. 15 of lung cancer at her home in Royal Palm Beach, Fla. A native of the Philippines, she met and married her husband in Manila and worked in the embassy's consular section. She accompanied him on postings to Mogadishu, Athens, Seoul, Lima and Kuwait and worked as an office management specialist. In Athens, she was deeply involved with Mother Theresa's projects,

organizing food and clothing drives.



James D. McHale, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 23 of prostate cancer in Arlington, Va. He lived in McLean, Va. He served in the Army and joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1957. His postings included Burma, South Africa, Laos, Indonesia, Singapore, Belgium, Niger, Hong Kong, Zaire and Cambodia, where he provided an early warning of the Khmer Rouge genocide. He was a talented pianist, singer and writer and worked on furthering the

cause of Alzheimer's victims.



Maria L. Otero, 68, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 12 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, after a long illness. She joined the Department in 1967 and served in Mexico City, Riyadh, Moscow, London, Zimbabwe, Rome and Barranquilla. She retired in 1993 to Pembroke Pines, Fla., and Dorado, Puerto Rico.



George W. Pittarelli, 85, husband and father, respectively, of long-time Department employees Rachel Pittarelli and Patricia Pittarelli, died July 11 of kidney failure at his home in Hyattsville, Md. A research scientist with the Department of Agriculture, he published more than 50 papers and obtained a patent for a biological insecticide. After retiring in 1987, he continued his work as a research collaborator and mentored high

school science students. He took his family back to his native Italy every summer.



Thomas Joseph Roesch, 74, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 31 in Tallahassee, Fla. He served overseas for 30 years and retired in 1989. He then worked for the Florida departments of Commerce and Juvenile Justice until 2000. He sang in his church choir and a community college band and volunteered with the Tallahassee Museum and county election board.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Akgun, Carole Diane
Binner, Lawrence N.
Brooks, Vanessa C.
Cloud Jr., John Albert
Dulisse, Judith A.
Eastham Jr., Alan W.
Gfoeller, Michael
Harral, Gary Lee
Howes, Robert C.
Hughes, Miriam K.
Klanderman, Eric John
Kunsman, June Heil

McCutchan, Betty Harriet
McLoughlin, Gerald
Moreno, Edgar P.
Mueller, David M.
Olivarez, Ernest R.
Pazdral, Ronna Sharp
Rada, William Lee
Smith, John D.
Smith, Kaye
Summers III, Hollis S.
Wilhelm, Steven A.

Civil Service

Alexander, Diane J.
Clark, Susan M.
Coleman, Verogene P.
Dayrit, Ricardo San Pedro
Eccleston, Jerry A.
Effner, Alice E.
Forrester, Charles Tucker
Goldberg, Olga E.
Hamrick, Lanah Berryhill
Horton, Brenda D.

Lee, James William
Lurch, Henry Schleining
Ponting Jr., Harry T.
Quijano, Antonio
Asombrado
Ramsay, Lorna Elizabeth
Southern, Doris Allen
Stinson, Connie L.
Thurman, Audrey E.

Coming In Our November Issue:

DOS Plays a Role
in Gulf Oil Spill

Foreign Service Officers
Study PD Theory
at Southern Cal

Department's Wellness
Program Encourages
Healthier Behavior

...and much more!

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Both also can be found by searching for "State Magazine" in the iTunes store.



Debunking Urban Myths

The myth persists, despite many past efforts to dispute it: Seeking help for stress or mental health issues can brand an employee with a significant stigma and may even cost the seeker a coveted security clearance. Not so, says the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which conducts security clearance investigations for Department personnel. DS flatly states that simply seeking mental-health counseling has never solely resulted in denying or revoking a clearance. Actually, says

DS, investigators view seeking such help as a positive step and a normal part of overall health and wellness.

DS Service Director Jeffrey Culver, speaking to DS agents who were early responders to the Haiti earthquake disaster, emphatically told dozens of volunteer agents who had spent hours in the center of the post-earthquake chaos, “Don’t keep all this inside of you. If you need to talk with somebody, let us know.”

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and the White House recently issued an Executive Order requiring federal agencies to increase their hiring of people with disabilities by 100,000 over the next five years. The Department took a leadership role by establishing in 2009 the Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Division in the Office of Employee Relations. The division provides sign-language interpreters for hearing-impaired employees and readers for those with visual impairments.

When fully staffed, the division’s 13 employees will include a recruiter dedicated to recruiting persons with disabilities and a selective-placement coordinator who will match those with disabilities with job openings that fit their skills. The staff will also include four employees focused on assistive technology such as Job Access With Speech software and PAC Mate Portable Braille Display. It will play a big role in ensuring that the Department helps the overall federal government effort to become a model employer for people with disabilities.

Starboard, port, aft, foreward—hardly terms associated with U.S. missions abroad. For colleagues in the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok, however, these nautical terms have become quite familiar because of a robust schedule of visits to the Russian Far East by U.S. Navy destroyers, cutters and mine sweepers. Working closely with the U.S. Pacific Fleet command, the CG staff often plans ship visits years in advance,

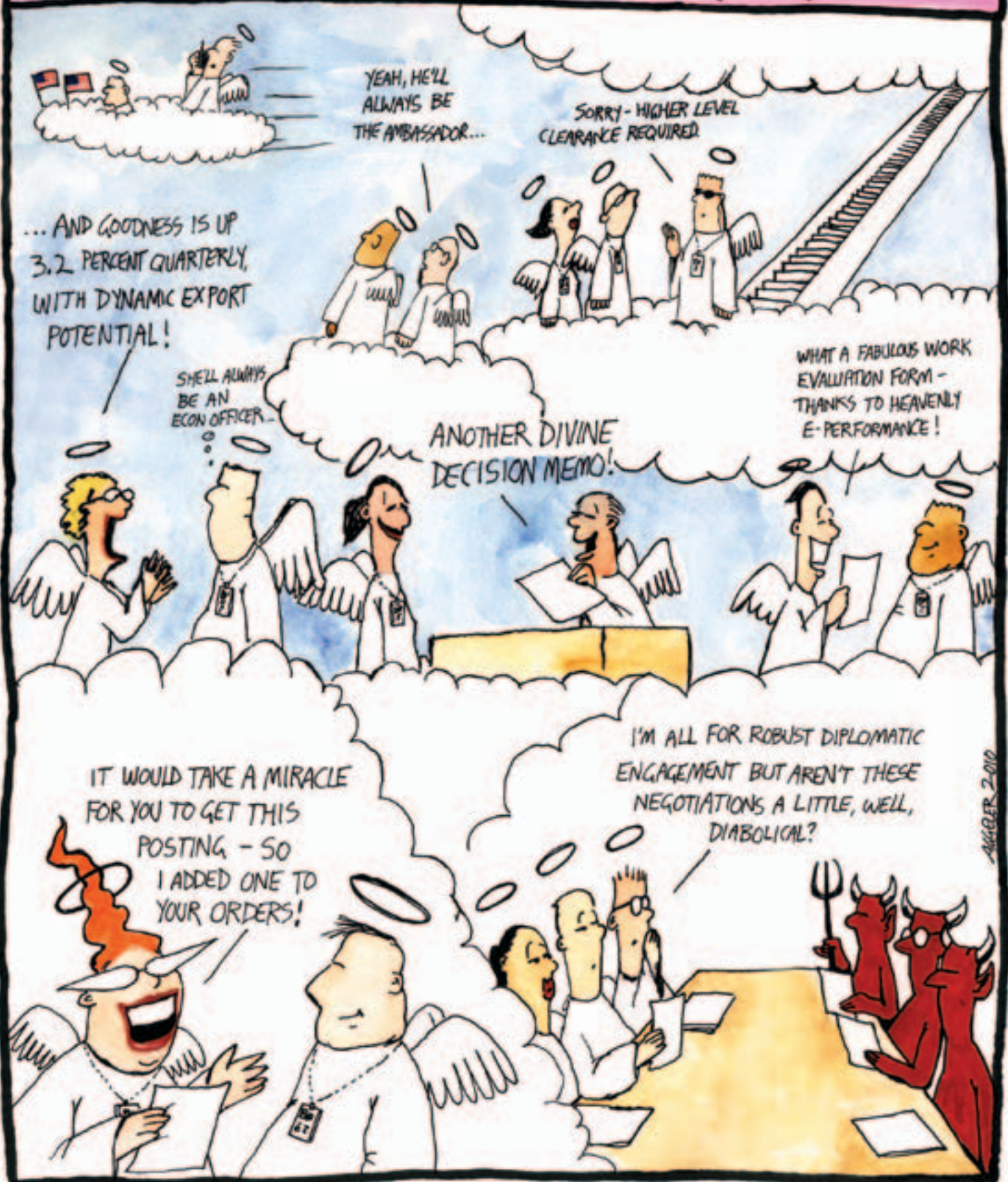
although actual schedules may not be fully developed until weeks before the ships arrive at the docks. Visits can include high-level policy discussions between U.S. and Russian naval officers and ceremonial events such as participation in parades and marches to mark the Allied victory in World War II.

The visits also expose local people to America and Americans in venues ranging from chess matches between sailors and local children to jazz concerts. Former Consul General Thomas Armbruster notes that the visits promote ties between the U.S. Navy and the Department while giving diplomats multiple opportunities to emphasize to Russia the importance of continued cooperation between the former Cold War foes.

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *John Vincent Abidian; James E. Akins; Dorothy D. Bruins; Peter Collins; Francis P. “Frank” Coward; Susan K. Donnelly; Gerald “Jerry” Goldstein; Douglas Henderson; Eugene O. Kern; Dorothy L. Magee-Berkely; Marilen Jison Maher; James D. McHale; Maria L. Otero; George W. Pittarelli; and Thomas Joseph Roesch.* ■

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

LYING IN STATE: LIFE IN THE HEAVENLY EMBASSY





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2010 Federal Benefits Open Season

Employees may enroll or change their health, vision and/or dental insurance during the 2011 plan year's open season, Nov. 8 through Dec. 13. Benefit fairs featuring health insurance representatives will be held Nov. 9 at the Foreign Service Institute's Wood Lobby and Nov. 10 at the Harry S Truman Building's Exhibit Hall.

