

Global Link

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WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

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THANK YOU TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS

Mary Lucius
Katarina Hamilton
Nancy Horan
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

AAFSW Halloween Party
October 30. Fun for all!
See page 4 of this issue for details.

Global Link is provided to the U.S. Foreign Service community as a service of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide. Your membership fees support this newsletter along with other AAFSW services. Please visit us at www.aafsw.org to learn more—and join today!

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Art&BookFair 2010

We are now just weeks away from the opening day of sales at AAFSW's 50th anniversary Art&BookFair 2010. Sales to Department of State employees begin on Friday, October 8th. If you graciously volunteered to assist with set-up or sales, please honor your time commitment because we absolutely need positive, upbeat volunteers to assist with this massive undertaking. Each year we have weather challenges and autumn scheduling conflicts; we hope this October's Art&BookFair will be calm, storm-free, and filled with eager customers.

There will be no stamp or coin sales this year and, of course, this information is reflected in our promotional information and in all D.C. Metro-wide publicity. We have garnered a massive influx of books and treasures from around the world which will be sold in the Department of State Exhibit Hall and under a huge courtyard tent.

Art&BookFair 2010 will be open to the general public during the following dates and times:

Saturday, October 9, 10-4
Sunday, October 10, 10-4
Monday, October 11, 10-4
(Columbus Day)
Saturday, October 16, 10-4
Sunday, October 17, 10-4
On the last day, Sunday, October 17th, all books and most Art Corner treasures will be half-price.

We ask that all AAFSW members assist with publicity for this Art&BookFair. Please tell your fellow book club members, your book lover friends and neighbors, plus all of your acquaintances, family, and friends who collect art, collectibles, and books.

Customers can enter the Exhibit Hall at the Department of State C Street entrance between 21st and 23rd Streets NW by presenting a photo ID and undergoing routine security screening. Everyone is welcome. Checks, MasterCard and Visa are all accepted, and we love cash!

Questions? Call 202-223-5796 or email bookfairvols@aafsw.org. Remember our profits benefit scholarships and special community projects.

Anne Kauzlarich, B.J. Harrick
Volunteer Coordinators
Art&BookFair 2010



October 8-17 2010



From the President's Desk

A billboard outside the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services station on the county road outside my home

caught my attention as I was driving by:



I suppose if AAFSW had a huge billboard, we could make the same argument! We are always in need of volunteers, either for board or committee vacancies, or for help at Art&BookFair, in BookPlace and in the Housing Office.

Speaking of volunteers, we owe a huge bouquet of thanks to former AAFSW President Judy Felt who has graciously stepped in to learn book pricing and has been working diligently in the BookRoom. Judy has been a mainstay in this transition period to new management and we all thank you. We have been fortunate to welcome several new volunteers to the world of books, and BookPlace. Thank you for answering the call!

Remember, if you are downsizing, decluttering, or just have a few extra tchotchkes, donate them to Art&BookFair. In addition to books and collectibles, we take CDs DVDs, audio books, jewelry, or any treasures that have outlived their usefulness in your home. Call Brian at the BookRoom, 202 223-5796 or email bookroom@aafsw.org if you need to have anything picked up. But hurry, the deadline is approaching!

I also wish to thank Clyde Taylor, Executive Director of the Cox Foundation, who assisted us in securing financial assistance to help offset the costs of re-recording the 50th anniversary play at FSI. (Unfortunately the original play as performed on June 4 had a defective sound track.) Once the new recording is edited and ready for "prime time" it will be featured on BNet and the Department's Intranet. Members who were present at the anniversary event

expressed interest in a DVD, and depending on the quality of the the finished product, we can make the same DVD available to our members for the cost of material, shipping and handling. We will keep you updated on developments at www.aafsw.org. Stay tuned! See you at Art&BookFair.

Faye Barnes
AAFSW President
president@aafsm.org

Help Wanted

Volunteers needed to fill the following AAFSW positions

- Archivist
- Event Photographer
- Legislative Liaison
- Evacuation (Crisis) Support
- BookRoom volunteers (Monday-Friday)
- Book Lovers to learn to sort and price books

Contact office@aafsw.org or president@aafsw.org for more information.

New Real School Reports

Is bullying a problem at a school you are considering? Can a third grader with special needs find help there—or will the school deny her admission? Are there programs for gifted kids? What kind of after-school activities are available? Will your high schooler be well-prepared for college? Is the school welcoming to newcomers? Are there weaknesses in some academic areas? Do the teachers speak English well?

These are the kinds of "real questions" asked by the non-profit organization Tales from a Small Planet in its new section, funded in part by a grant from the J. Simon Kirby Trust. Just click on the yellow "note-book paper" banner at www.talesmag.com to fill out a report. As with the Real Post Reports, you can stay anonymous, and the service is free to readers (registration is required to prevent spam and provide statistical info to advertisers).

Tales from a Small Planet, was founded in 1999 and continues to be operated by Foreign Service family members and volunteers.

Sanity Savers

By Kate Goggin, former Community Liaison Office Coordinator, and author of *Backpack Kids: The Safety Planning Checklist for Overseas Travel*. Find out more at www.kategoggin.com.



Wherever you are moving this year, this advice will help you keep your sanity!

It won't be easy.

Even if you have a supportive human resources department, a supportive spouse and realistic expectations--every move presents different challenges. Know that in the end you will have to solve your own problems regarding adjustment and you will be stronger for it.

Be open.

Otherwise the posting will feel like a bad camping trip in which Sunday never comes.

If it didn't work here, it won't work there.

I'm not just talking about appliances! Marital problems, social shortcomings, inability to understand others, whatever you're experiencing now will not disappear with a change in geographic location. Don't take an international assignment to solve a personal problem. It is a recipe for disaster.

Give yourself at least six months to adjust to living in a new culture.

Lighten up on the immediate job hunt. You'll never feel comfortable working there if you haven't given yourself a chance to enjoy living there. Take day trips and ride the tram/bus/train from end to end once a week. It's a great low cost way to take your own private orientation tour.

Invest in the best communications devices and services.

Initiating and maintaining communications may be the single most important investment you can make personally and professionally. Invest in a computer (with internet access) for your chance to work online from a remote destination or to keep in touch with family and friends. A webcam can make a world of difference in feeling included at "virtual" family gatherings (this is especially recommended for allowing children to stay in touch with distant grandparents).

Create a "perspective" tool kit.

The toughest part of an overseas assignment is not when you can't find your favorite foods at the local market or read the street signs or speak the language. All of those things will work out with time. The toughest part is when you become so immersed in "foreignness" that you lose perspective and feel you've lost control of your life. When "nothing seems to be going right," it's time to step back and breathe deeply. What helps you? Prayer, exercise, socializing, shopping or calling an old friend to vent? Combine a few of these to create your perspective tool kit and don't leave home without it.

Don't sweat the small stuff.

Something always gets broken during shipping, designated housing is always smaller than the photos they sent you ahead of time, and the food, water and neighborhood will always smell funny for a while. Know that you can't transplant your current lifestyle into a new culture no matter how hard you try.

Get connected and drop the bravado.

Save your judgments about people for later. Whether you consider yourself a "joiner" or not, benefit from group connections right away. In just about every location, there are established groups of people who have lived in-country longer than you have. Even if you feel you don't fit in immediately, take advantage of the shared knowledge out there. Don't try to go it alone.

Live in the here and now.

Give up on comparisons to your last posting and embrace the new. Those around you will only let you whine once about "how it was in..." After that, your audience will slim and you'll find yourself at home alone looking at old photos. Try to live in the present and soak up as much about your new culture as possible. The more you absorb, the more pleasant your posting will be.

Just about everything can be put off 'til tomorrow.

Medical emergencies aside, when everything in your new location is screaming unpack me now, move me now, connect me now, remember it can usually wait. It may be more important to have tea with your new neighbor or take a stroll to find the closest playground. Remember the inanimate objects will remain so, and you may not get another chance to make a new friend.

This article has been adapted from an original version which can be found at: <http://aafsw.org/articles/goggin/sanitysavers.htm>.

AAFSW HALLOWEEN PARTY

Dear Friends,

Our AAFSW program for October will be a fun and festive Halloween party. Get ready to choose your costumes! We will have prizes for the best, the most original, and the most colorful costumes.

Holcombe and Seyoung Thomas have kindly offered to host the party at their lovely home located at 7292 Highland Estates Place, Falls Church, VA 22043 (703-534-2772). The party will take place on Saturday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m.

The origin of Halloween is fascinating. Some believe that it may date back to the Roman feast of Pomona, the goddess of fruits and seeds, or the festival of the dead called Parentalia. However, the tradition is more typically linked to the old Celtic festival of Samhain in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales that recognized the end of summer. The ancient Celts believed that the border between this world and the "otherworld" became thin on Samhain, allowing both harmless and harmful spirits to pass through and freely wander as they wished. The family's ancestors were honored and invited home while harmful spirits or demons were warded off by disguising oneself with costumes and masks.

When Christianity spread to parts of Europe, including Celtic lands, instead of trying to abolish these pagan customs the church tried to introduce

ideas which reflected a more Christian world-view. In the 7th century, Pope Boniface IV introduced "All Saints" or "All Hallows" Day to replace pagan festivals of the dead, and the night before known as All Hallows Eve became the present day Halloween—a mixture of traditions and practices from pagan cultures and Christian tradition.

The Jack O'Lantern is the festival light for Halloween and the ancient symbol of a damned soul. Originally the Irish would carve out turnips or beets as lanterns as representations of the souls of the dead or goblins freed from the dead. When Irish immigrants came to United States in large numbers in the late 1800s, they could not find many turnips to carve into Jack O'Lanterns, but they did find an abundance of pumpkins as suitable substitutes, which have become an essential part of Halloween celebrations ever since.

We look forward to seeing you on October 30th at this enjoyable event!!

Sheila Switzer

*AAFSW Program Chairperson
programs@aafsw.org*



OCTOBER 30 PROGRAM: HALLOWEEN PARTY

Please reply no later than Friday, October 23. The event takes place on Saturday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas home in Falls Church, VA. The cost for this event is \$15 per person for members and guests. Send this form with payment to:

AAFSW Reservations
4001 North Ninth Street, Suite 214
Arlington, Virginia 22203

You may also reserve and pay online at www.aafsw.org.

OCTOBER 30 PROGRAM

Name (as you wish it to appear on the name tag)

Telephone

Name of guest(s)

Halloween Around the World

Halloween, one of the world's oldest holidays, is still celebrated today in several countries around the globe.



El Dia De Los Muertos

In Mexico, Latin America, and Spain, All Souls' Day, which takes place on November 2, is commemorated with a three-day celebration that begins on the evening of October 31. The celebration is designed to honor the dead who, it is believed, return to their earthly homes on Halloween. Many families construct an altar to the dead in their homes to honor deceased relatives and decorate it with candy, flowers, photographs, samples of the deceased's favorite foods and drinks, and fresh water. Often, a wash basin and towel are left out so that the spirit can wash before indulging in the feast.

Candles and incense are burned to help the deceased find the way home. Relatives also tidy the gravesites of their departed family members. This can include snipping weeds, making repairs, and painting. The grave is then decorated with flowers, wreaths, or paper streamers. On November 2, relatives gather at the gravesite to picnic and reminisce. Some gatherings even include tequila and a mariachi band! Celebrations honoring departed loved ones and family members are found as far back as ancient Egyptian times.

Guy Fawkes Day

On the evening of November 5, bonfires are lit throughout England. Effigies are burned and fireworks are set off. Although it falls around the same time and has some similar traditions, this celebration has little to do with Halloween or the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The English, for the most part, stopped celebrating Halloween as Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation began to spread. As followers of the new religion did not believe in saints, they had no reason to celebrate the eve of All Saints' Day. However, a new autumn ritual did emerge. Guy Fawkes Day festivities were designed to commemorate the execution of a notorious English traitor, Guy Fawkes.

On November 5, 1606, Fawkes was executed after being convicted of attempting to blow up England's parliament building. Fawkes was a member of a Catholic group who wanted to remove the Protestant King James from power. The original Guy Fawkes Day was celebrated right after his execution. The first bonfires, which were called "bone fires," were set up to burn effigies and symbolic "bones" of the Catholic pope. It was not until two centuries later that effigies of the pope were replaced with those of Guy Fawkes. In addition to making effigies to be burned in the fires, children in some parts of England also walk the streets carrying an effigy or "guy" and ask for "a penny for the guy," although they keep the money for themselves. This is as close to the American practice of "trick-or-treating" as can be found in England today. Guy Fawkes Day was even celebrated by the pilgrims at the first settlement at Plymouth. However, as the young nation began to develop its own history, Guy Fawkes was celebrated less frequently and eventually died out.

Where It All Began

In Ireland, where Halloween originated, the day is still celebrated much as it is in the United States. In rural areas, bonfires are lit as they were in the days of the Celts, and all over the country, children get dressed up in costumes and spend the evening "trick-or-treating" in their neighborhoods. After trick-or-treating, most people attend parties with neighbors and friends. At the parties, many games are played, including "snap-apple," a game in which an apple on a string is tied to a doorframe or tree and players attempt to bite the hanging apple. In addition to bobbing for apples, parents often arrange treasure hunts, with candy or pastries as the "treasure." The Irish also play a card game where cards are laid face down on a table with candy or coins underneath them. When a child chooses a card, he receives whatever prize is found below it.

A traditional food eaten on Halloween is barnbrack, a kind of fruitcake that can be bought in stores or baked at home. A muslin-wrapped treat is baked inside the cake that, it is said, can foretell the eater's future. If a ring is found, it means that the person will soon be wed; a piece of straw means that a prosperous year is on its way. Children are also known to play tricks on their neighbors, such as "knock-a-dolly," a prank in which children knock on the doors of their neighbors, but run away before the door is opened.

From History.com, the website of the History Channel.

Time for an E-Reader?

Admit it: you are probably considering an e-reader if you haven't bought one already. It's easy to see why the portable devices would be so popular in our community: Foreign Service families are major consumers of reading material and constantly on the prowl for new reading material while posted overseas! The physical books that we carry around the world with us are also very heavy, threatening to push many household shipments into overweight territory.

An e-reader weighing just a few ounces can be a permanent solution to that problem- and you can save a few trees in the bargain. Here is a very brief introduction to some of the options currently available. For more detailed advice on choosing an e-reader, and to learn about other brands of e-readers, check out ZDNet, CNet or PCMag for reviews and side-by side comparisons.

Most electronic books can be read on any type of computer, but e-readers are designed specifically for portable reading. The screen uses a technology called "e-ink" which is easier on the eyes than a normal computer screen and has an especially non-reflective surface to reduce glare.

The three biggest players in the e-reader market are Amazon's Kindle, Barnes and Noble's Nook, and the Sony Reader. Each has advantages and disadvantages for the overseas bookworm. All three now offer 3G wireless access from most of the world, and subscriptions to periodicals such as the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. Each reader comes in different versions with different options which may affect usability overseas, so shop carefully. Here is a brief comparison of features.

The Kindle is the most popular e-reader, but others are catching up. It offers access to Amazon's huge library of free books as well as thousands of retail titles in downloadable format. Amazon also allows purchases and downloads of books from overseas. However, the Kindle uses proprietary file formats that are not compatible with other readers or with public libraries (AZW and MOBI). It is possible to convert these files into more universally readable formats, but the process may be beyond the ability and patience of many people. You can, however, read a simple PDF file by emailing it to your Kindle.

Each new version of the Kindle comes with more extras, so you may want to consider buying an older model on eBay or in Amazon's Marketplace if you really just want to read books and nothing else (this is true for other brands as well.)

Karla Solomon, a State Department spouse currently in Moscow, is a big fan of her new Kindle:

"I think the best thing about my Kindle is that I don't have to worry about the physical weight of a book and if I will have to get rid of it before we move again. I also love not having to wait for books the 2-4 weeks it takes to get an Amazon order through the DPO. I can carry a pile of books with me when I travel without taking up precious carry-on space.

For my daughter, the ability to move the cursor to a word and have the definition show up means she is more likely to actually look up a word she doesn't understand. I have barely touched the other things the Kindle can do--basic internet, MP3/ music, and having books read aloud through text to speech. I am glad, however, that those extra things are not so tempting that I am diverted from actually reading, which was the point of getting the Kindle after all."

Barnes and Noble's Nook uses a file format that is more universal (EPUB) and can therefore be used to read public library e-book files. As with the Kindle, you can also read PDFs, such as the zillions of free titles found on Google Books. The Nook also has a unique "lending" feature which allows you to send an e-book that you have purchased to someone else for a 14-day period. But, there is some confusion over whether Barnes and Noble allows purchases and downloads from overseas. I was told by a salesperson in a Barnes and Noble store that I could do this by downloading the books to my computer first, then transferring them to the reader, but another Foreign Service spouse reports that she was told by telephone customer service that she could not do this. Barnes and Noble's website states that they are "working on" making overseas purchases possible. In the meantime, it may be possible to purchase books by using a device that masks your computer's IP address (a Virtual Private network, or VPN).

The Sony Reader also reads EPUB and PDF files and is similar in most respects to the Nook. The Reader Store emphasizes its universal format with prominent links to Google Books and a library finding service. One minor difference between the Reader and the Kindle and Nook is that books are downloaded to a computer, then transferred to the Reader via USB, rather than being downloaded directly to the device. Downloads at the Sony Reader store are available only in the U.S., but there should be workarounds. There is no information on the Sony website about when overseas purchasing might become available.

*Kelly Bembry Midura
AAFSW Creative Director*

There Has Never Been A Better Time To Be An Expat

Thanks to the Internet, expatriates now go out to a new posting more informed than their predecessors about their host cultures; they can learn new languages, make new friends before arrival, see pictures of new schools and homes.

They can find a chat group, a playgroup, or a mentor in the time it takes to google a new place. Accompanying partners can start home-based businesses, telecommute to old jobs, or snag consulting contracts.

Raising children abroad has also become easier because of websites and in-country counseling services which help parents make informed choices about schools, the primary concern for any expatriate family.

Mobile phones allow pick-up times after activities to be carried off smoothly and parents can keep a closer eye on their children thanks to digital technology which does everything but implant them with a GPS chip, although some newer models of phones now have them.

What has not changed in my experience, are attitudes towards financing organizational support for the mobile family. The corporate jet still flies high while many families and accompanying spouses spiral into depression, substance abuse, and divorce.

Naturally, personal responsibility must always be front and center, but too many nasty situations I've seen have been the direct result of company indifference.

I use the price of oil or the exchange rate on the US dollar as my shorthand codes for the amount of money which will be allotted to relocation support for families. If oil is up by the barrel, everyone is getting pre-departure training and language lessons.

Dollar down? That means cross-cultural training, a soft issue that costs money instead of generating it for a company, is the first item to be cut from mobility budgets. I've seen training offered and then taken away; housing allowances up, then down and then up again; language proficiency stressed as a plus and encouraged with allotments than taken away again.

I have seen it all come, go, come back again and go away yet again. Ask me about the price of oil tomorrow and I'll probably have yet another answer.

In short, from the privileged position I've had to observe and report on trends in global, rotational-style living, while things may have improved at certain points, nothing has remained changed for long and the

constant which never seems to change is that money spent on family support is not considered money well-spent despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Short term, reactive, attitudes prevail as the norm. Companies who do right by their families are the exception, not the rule. Expats I meet in the field say they now have the lowest of expectations of their organizations.

Broken promises (especially in the areas of spousal support) have led to broken marriages; children face gaps in their education if comprehensive management of their school years is not taken into account by the powers-that-be; and organizations are working many of their employees into early disability pensions as work-life balance in the global economy remains ephemeral as a goal and ignored, or worse, denied, as a challenge.

The growing addiction to 24/7 accessibility through incessant and unhealthy BlackBerry use doesn't seem to be setting off alarm bells anywhere either. Expats have had to become more self-sufficient which isn't necessarily a bad thing if not for the fact that all the industry surveys report almost 80% of postings fail because of the family's inability to adjust.

Lack of support for the relocation is right up there as a reason for that failure. It is a testament to the resilience, flexibility, grace, and often downright courage of many expatriates and their families that they succeed in spite of the non-existence of any kind of support they receive and the lack of attention that, sadly, continues to be paid to their unique challenges.

If anyone has any ideas on how to change organizational attitudes, you know where to find me. I'm still out there, over twenty years later, trying to change hearts and minds.



Robin Pascoe, the "Expat Expert," is the author of five books on international living. Read more of Robin's articles at www.expatexpert.com and also watch "Successful Living Abroad," her new 18-part video lecture series based on her books.

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October 2010
