

GLOBAL LINK

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2005 AAFSW/SOSA WINNERS CHOSEN

Each year, the AAFSW Secretary of State's Award for Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) is given to six deserving volunteers from overseas posts worldwide. The selection process is extremely humbling and difficult. All the nominations show the remarkable work that volunteers have selflessly put forth, but only one applicant from each regional bureau can win.

The Selection Committee consists of the Executive Directors of each of the State Department geographic bureaus, a representative from FLO, a representative from the OBC, and AAFSW's SOSA Chairs. There were a record 30 nominations: 12 males, 22 females (some nominations included more than one person), 11 of which were employees and 23 family members. Each of these individuals nominated deserves our thanks for showing the

best of the United States' values to the world.

We extend congratulations to this year's SOSA winners, who were honored at AAFSW's award ceremony and holiday celebration at Main State in Washington, D.C on December 6:

Robert Blumberg, Colombo, Sri Lanka (SA)
Robi Keyes, Bangkok, Thailand (EAP)
Jaimee Neel, Sao Paulo, Brazil (WHA)
Sandra Patterson, Lusaka, Zambia (AF)
Eglal Rousseau, Rabat, Morocco (NEA)
Mark Wilson, Skopje, Macedonia (EUR)

Turn to page 6 for a synopsis of the volunteer activity that earned each winner the 2005 SOSA. The December 6 award ceremony will be featured in the next issue of the *Global Link*.

SHOP ONLINE TO SUPPORT AAFSW

As the holiday season approaches, please remember that your Amazon.com purchases can help AAFSW. Simply go to www.aafsw.org, click on the Amazon.com icon on the home page or throughout our website, and then shop as usual. That effortless click allows AAFSW to earn a commission on your purchase at no cost to you.

Link to Amazon.com through the AAFSW website every time you shop. And tell your friends and family! This small action earns AAFSW several hundred dollars a year to support our services and activities. Thanks for helping out!

BOOKFAIR 2005 was another great success! See pages 4 and 5 for a full report on activities and proceeds, volunteer contributions and impressions, and more photos.



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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Kenneth Duckworth
Ellen Aronis Heard
Marilyn J. Holleran
Luz-Marina Kennedy
Liv Kilpatrick
Kerry Lane
Cynthia C. Mariz
Lori Michaelson
Catherine Ostick
Jorge Picon
Elizabeth C. Power
Stephen J. Shaw
Sukyung Weinberg
Claudia Zegarra

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Lillian Ford
Patricia Ryan
Imoi Schlaikjer
Candace Stewart
Genya Valdes

FOREIGN SERVICE TEEN/COLLEGE STUDENT ELECTRONIC FORUM

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation invites FS teens and college students to join a new listserv created just for them: AWALers@yahoogroups.com. Meet other FS young adults, ask about colleges and schools, and make friends overseas and back in the US! Send an email to fsyf@fsyf.org, or sign up for the group at www.yahooogroups.com/group/awalers

HELP WANTED: AAFSW MEDIA DIRECTOR

AAFSW seeks an experienced writer/editor and AAFSW member to serve as the next Media Director. This paid, contract position offers an exceptional opportunity to work part-time from home, earn extra cash, make some valuable contacts in the Foreign Service community, and serve AAFSW in a direct and meaningful way. Responsibilities include:

- Working directly with and overseeing Media Team: Webmaster, *Global Link* Production Manager, Online Advertising Manager, and any volunteers
- Soliciting, editing, and writing content for the *Global Link* newsletter and AAFSW website
- Administrating *Livelines* and monitoring discussions

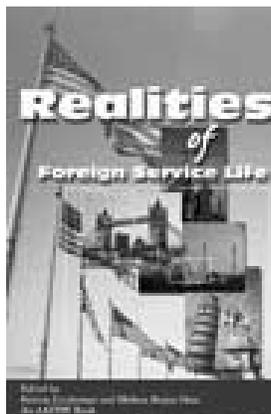
- Coordinating with AAFSW Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, Office Manager, and outside contacts on media projects

This job can be done from anywhere in the world, but computer, high-speed Internet, long-distance phone, fax, and email access are required. Strong candidates will possess excellent written communication and organizational skills and the ability to multi-task, meet deadlines, and work independently without much supervision.

Letters of interest and resumes are being accepted now. Please email them, along with any questions, to office@aafsw.org.

AAFSW AND AFSA GIFT IDEAS

Don't know what to get Mom, Dad, or Uncle Ralph this holiday season? How about a little insight into your life and work in the Foreign Service! Consider adding these two books to your shopping list:



Realities of Foreign Service Life, edited by AAFSW members Patricia Linderman and Melissa Brayer-Hess, gives an honest, balanced view of the realities of living the mobile Foreign Service lifestyle. Writers from the U.S. Foreign Service community

share their views and personal experiences through essays about numerous aspects of

Foreign Service life. To order, go to www.aafsw.org to link to Amazon.com or contact the AAFSW's main office at 703-820-5420 or office@aafsw.org. Proceeds benefit AAFSW.

Inside a U.S. Embassy, AFSA's best-selling book, is a unique introduction to the Foreign Service. The book, which is edited by Shawn Dorman, yet another AAFSW member, takes readers inside embassies and consulates in over 50 countries, providing descriptions of Foreign Service jobs and first-hand accounts of diplomacy in action. Through January 1, AFSA is offering a 30% discount off the regular price of \$12.95 on orders for five or more books. Go to www.afsa.org/inside for more information and to order or call 847-364-1222. Purchase orders can be faxed to 847-364-1268. Email questions to embassybook@afsa.org.

GUEST SPEAKERS GIVE INSIDE LOOK AT “NEO-SOVIET” RUSSIA

Jane McMullen, AAFSW Member

The forty AAFSW members and guests who braved the rain to attend AAFSW’s October 25th program were rewarded for their effort with an eye-opening inside look at Vladimir Putin’s Russia. The guest speakers, married Washington Post correspondents Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, are back after four years as Moscow Bureau Chiefs and paint a sober portrait of a “neo-Soviet” Russia. Co-authors of *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin’s Russia and The End of Revolution*, they expose the Russian president’s true goal of consolidating power back in the Kremlin.



Susan Glasser and Peter Baker

Baker spoke first of how Russia’s economic boom, fueled by \$67/barrel of oil, has given the outward appearance of a modernized, democratic country. Moscow, “a city reborn,” now boasts 400 restaurants opening each year and luxury cars jamming the streets. However, positive political change has not accompanied these economic advances. Instead the State, under Putin, has taken over the only independent television network, rigged elections, gone after oligarchs, and even canceled the election of governors. While Putin may give lip service to democratic reform, our speakers reminded us

that he also called the collapse of the Soviet Union “the greatest geo-political catastrophe of the 20th century.”

To get the story on Russian youth today, reporter Susan Glasser attended a high school history class for most of a year. There she learned that

modern accoutrements like cell phones, Internet access, and rap music can belie reactionary views. Case in point: some young people still admire Stalin as a great leader. During the Q & A, an AAFSW member asked if there were activists among university students. Glasser answered that pervasive corruption in Russia has killed idealism. Another commonly held view is that the Russian people are not ready for democracy. They have been told over and over that it is simply not a part of their culture or tradition. Disturbingly enough, most Russians believe this.

As the program came to a reluctant end, I looked around the stately Benjamin Franklin Dining Hall at people now engrossed in discussion. We came away more informed, more cautious, and more curious about the complex state of Russia today. Baker and Glasser showed us that authoritarianism persists—it is a story we should keep in the headlines.

FRENCH GROUP WELCOMES YOU

If you find yourself in D.C. and speak French, AAFSW’s French Group invites you to their meetings. They meet every first and third Friday, from 10:00am to 12noon. Please contact Christel McDonald, Chair, at 703-525-9755 or frenchgroup@aafsw.org

WOMEN IN TRANSITION HERE TO HELP

Divorce in the Foreign Service is never pleasant. AAFSW’s Women in Transition group can help answer questions and lend support. Please contact Nancy Longmyer at 703-532-4694 or divorce@aafsw.org.

PLAYGROUP FOR TOTS AND PARENTS

AAFSW’s Playgroup for kids 0 to 5 years old and their parents always welcomes new and returning Foreign Service families. For more information, contact Allison Blackman at playgroup@aafsw.org.

ORDER NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

AAFSW is updating its membership directory for publication in the Members Only section of the AAFSW website. We will mail for free a directory to any member who requests a printed copy. Order yours today by filling out the form and sending it no later than **December 30** to AAFSW at the address listed. You may also fax it to 703-820-5421 or send an email with the following information to office@aafsw.org.

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BOOKFAIR 2005: ANOTHER CHAPTER IN 45-YEAR HISTORY

Mette Beecroft, President Emerita and BOOKFAIR Chair

On Sunday afternoon October 23, AAFSW's annual BOOKFAIR closed its doors for another year. Now in its 45th year, BOOKFAIR has become a veritable institution in the D.C. area and Foreign Service community. Many look forward to it with great anticipation and some come from considerable distances to participate—either as shoppers or as volunteers.

As anyone who has been associated with BOOKFAIR knows, it has an enormous number of “moving parts.” Obviously, we need books, art objects, stamps, and coins. However, we also need a tent, water-filled barrels to anchor the tent, the water key to tap the closest water source, “pigtales” for electrical supply, special telephones, adding machines, bookcases, display tables, chairs, boxes for the books, carts, dollies, stanchions, a podium with loudspeaker, blue ribbon, scissors—a wide variety of items both large and small.

Central to it all are the volunteers, some of whom work 12 months a year collecting, pricing, and storing objects. Without this sustained commitment, there would be no BOOKFAIR. The BOOKROOM Manager collects books all year long and then oversees the logistics of setting up the entire BOOKFAIR. Items are also donated to the Art Corner year-round, making for an extensive display during the sale.

Publicity is done in two stages throughout the year—once to request donations and then to announce the event—and for two audiences—Foreign Service “insiders” and the general public. Announcements appear

in some 45 spots within the Department of State and in as many spots in newspapers and other outside publications. We also collect about 800 names each year from attendees who want a reminder postcard mailed to them for the following year's event.

Security liaison is also ongoing. During the year, volunteers often find that they need new identification cards. At BOOKFAIR time, others need special BOOKFAIR volunteer passes provided by Diplomatic Security. Finally, one of the most demanding jobs at BOOKFAIR is that of the Treasurer, who must accurately record earnings at the end of each day and then deposit the proceeds in the bank. In sum, this entire undertaking is not a simple one.

I am happy to report that this year we grossed \$79,783, which is roughly equivalent to earnings over the last five years. BOOKFAIR's respectable proceeds will continue to fund need and merit-based scholarships for Foreign Service students. This year, we were also able to contribute to “Send a Kid to Camp.” A limited amount is used to support AAFSW as an organization. It is a given that expenses associated with conducting BOOKFAIR go up every year. We have tried our best to contain these costs.

None of this would be possible



without the support of numerous individuals and offices within the Department of State. We very much appreciated that Deputy Assistant Secretary (HR) John O'Keefe was willing to open BOOKFAIR this year. We were pleased to learn that he is one of those individuals who look forward to BOOKFAIR and who attend regularly. We also acknowledge with much gratitude the invaluable support of Diplomatic Security, General Services and Real Property, which is graciously provided year after year. Last, but certainly not least, is the continued support of the Stamp Corner volunteers. Over the years, they have generously contributed thousands of dollars to AAFSW.

An enormous thank you to one and all for your dedicated and generous support of yet another BOOKFAIR.

MEANDERING THOUGHTS ON BOOKFAIR

By an **AAFSW Member** and new **BOOKFAIR Volunteer***

As this is my first time living in Washington, D.C., this was my first opportunity to volunteer at AAFSW's BOOKFAIR. What a delight! I hope you can join me next year. As always, the value of volunteering was not in opening a carefully marked box of books and emptying them onto a table, but in carefully observing people and their interactions.

How marvelous to see the talents of so many! Dolls were unpacked from various boxes, and within a short time, the gifted ladies had made a remarkable display. Mixed in with the wonderful collection of fine artifacts was a cheap plastic and metal plaque, gift of the "President of X," but it might just be the perfect item to complete a son's sixth grade geography project.

The unique collection of penguins, gathered from countries around the world, now marched in neat lines across the blue-draped display table while around their ceramic serenity floated endless questions on whether the Japanese mugs should be put with the mugs or with the other Japanese items. And where, oh where, was

someone who had lived in Ghana who could help us put together the collapsed wooden boat sculpture with its standing oarsmen and a seemingly endless supply of extra paddles?

Then there were the countless comments that reveal so much about our personalities and values. One sweeps through the art section and declares all the prices to be too low, and within four minutes another sweeps through and declares all our prices to be too high! We are willing to spend \$39.95 for a decorative bird at the local "From Around the World" shop, but only \$6 for the same thing at BOOKFAIR. Does previous ownership mean value added or value lost?

Moving onto the books, one swift glance around makes one reflect on the hours and hours of work that have gone into organizing the books prior to setting up BOOKFAIR. Our hats off to you, Robin Jones, and all your helpers! Lasting impressions include:

- The fine art books from many eras
- The travel section where we wondered if the Lewis and Clark

Expedition coffee table picture books belonged in "Travel" or "Americana."

- A dedicated volunteer patiently repricing stamps, while another puts out boxes and boxes, and yet more boxes, of books on the subject of war. The Peloponnesian War is still a hot seller today.
- Being surprised at all the self-help books—would that all that good advice could just be put into practice.
- The joy of finding an old book of essays. Do they still read moralizing essays in America?
- Opening a book from a box marked "foreign language" and peering at its oddities and wondering what on earth is this language? Serbian!
- Picking up an old Urdu textbook and sighing, "I remember this!"

But the best find of all was the Polish to Vietnamese dictionary. Now that is a book! What a find! And only at AAFSW's BOOKFAIR.

**Author's name withheld by request.*



WHAT DOES SOSA MEAN TO ITS WINNERS?

Mark Wilson: "It is a great honor to receive the AAFSW/Secretary of State's Award for Volunteerism Abroad, and I sincerely appreciate the recognition...I hope that whatever publicity is generated sparks others to give back to their community."

Sandra Patterson: "I am flattered but also feel very humbled by [SOSA]...I am very grateful, and I look forward to using the cash award to continue the work I have started."

Robert Blumberg: "It is very significant to me that the committee chose to recognize that strong links exist between people and animals...and that volunteering to improve animal welfare can impact all."

Jamie Neel: "While I never set out for recognition when I began my work, it is a wonderful feeling to know that the State Department values volunteer work and seeks to encourage community involvement worldwide."

SIX SOSA WINNERS REPRESENT BEST SPIRIT OF AMERICA

Robert Blumberg Colombo, Sri Lanka (SA)

Robert responded to the needs of the many lost dogs, cats, and other animals that were roaming loose as a consequence of the Sri Lankan tsunami. Robert recognized the danger of rabies that unvaccinated pets posed to the general population. He formed a coalition group, funded with donations, to vaccinate as many animals as they could. They placed a red collar on the animals to indicate that they had been treated, and over 14,000 animals were vaccinated. He went on to found the Tsunami Memorial Animal Welfare Trust to carry on the sterilization program for a longer term, and to help find homes for those animals whose owners were killed.

Robi Keyes Bangkok, Thailand (EAP)

Robi began helping her community by working with a Thai beauty shop that aids bar girls and prostitutes. She went on to found, with three other expatriates and a Thai woman, a non-profit organization called NightLight that provides a program of alternative employment and support to bar girls who want to leave prostitution. Robi encouraged girls to quit working at bars and come to the NightLight center where they learn to make jewelry for a fair wage, speak English, and have a place to heal physically

and emotionally. She wrote a grant proposal for hundreds of thousands of dollars for the growth of the NightLight project, including the development of a children's center. Robi helped write bylaws and plan for long-term funding and leadership of NightLight. In addition, Robi ran a small bi-weekly health counseling clinic for girls. By using her nursing skills to recognize physical symptoms of illness and reaching out to the medical community for needed assistance, Robi has also helped save lives.

Jaimee Neel Sao Paulo, Brazil (WHA)

Because of her background in inner-city school teaching, Jaimee was deeply touched by Sao Paulo's endemic problem of 4,500 homeless children. Channeling her enthusiasm for work with an at-risk population, Jamie brought together the FSNs and FSOs at the Consulate General, which is situated in a mixed-income neighborhood, and the Santa Amaro Youth Home, a home for street children that teaches professional skills. In doing so, Jaimee not only helped this struggling organization, she also helped bridge the FSO-FSN divide, long a source of tension in the consular section, by inspiring them to lose themselves in service to others.

She applied for and received a J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust grant to implement her vision, and used that as a catalyst for improvement. The Youth Home has received a dental clinic, a computer lab, two washing machines, a small adjacent house, and countless toys and supplies due to the snowball effect of Jaimee's fundraising efforts. Morale is soaring in the Consulate, and the Youth Home is prospering, all thanks to this volunteer.

Sandra Patterson Lusaka, Zambia (AF)

Sandra became deeply involved with the local HEAL project, a support facility and school for over 60 children who have lost one or both parents through the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She uncovered an unusual need in a neighborhood where most families have no electricity or access to water, transportation, and other services: no nearby toilet facilities. Sandra applied for and was awarded a grant from the J. Simon Kirby Trust. She then administrated the grant, which involved the planning and construction of a borehole well and toilets. She helped raise necessary funds, championed solicitors, and made pleas for donations for the improvements.

Sandra has also supported the HEAL project by transporting ill children to clinics for treatment and

enrolling them in appropriate HIV/AIDS programs, including testing and ARV treatment. In addition, she created a project called HEALING STITCHES, after soliciting and receiving a donation of sewing machines. Not only did Sandra teach women to sew, she encouraged the marketability of these skills by helping set up a booth for them to collect money and provide receipts for purchases. Sandra helped raise money for wheelchairs for young children and hosted a “moms and tots” play-day, assisting orphans, widows, and others particularly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Eglal Rousseau
Rabat, Morocco (NEA)

Eglal recognized the needs of the children's hospital, Centre Hospitaliere Universitaire, and the families that used it. Many of the patients and their parents could not communicate in the common business language used at the hospital, French, and the high rate of illiteracy further diminished their access to information and assistance. Eglal served as an advocate for countless parents of sick children and used her language skills to bridge the gap. In addition, she helped renovate an activity room and formed a partnership between the hospital and an association that will care for children beyond the capacity of orphanages. Eglal also helped hearing impaired young adults through the El Nassr Association. She was able to

forge a bond between the group and the American International Women's Association, which resulted in the donation of badly needed land to construct a professional/social center.

Mark Wilson
Skopje, Macedonia (EUR)

Mark showed extraordinary personal concern for improving the lives of hundreds of residents of Macedonia's mental health facility in Demir Kapia. He started a volunteer effort called Computers to Classrooms to improve the technology resources available to these residents, as well as disadvantaged children attending rural schools. He solicited donations of new and used Information Technology equipment, and spent hundreds of hours of his own time collecting, refurbishing, setting up, and networking the many different types of IT equipment he received. He even used his own funds to purchase needed equipment and repair parts. As a result, the mental health facility now has two fully-equipped computer labs with Internet connectivity.

Mark built the foundation of a digital culture among the students to help them realize their dreams of technical literacy. They can acquire computer knowledge and skills that will enable them to be productive members of the community and enthusiastic employers or employees.

The volunteer activities of the other SOSA nominees are equally impressive, and they are to be gratefully commended for their work. These Honorable Mentions include:

Cleo Appleton, Prague, Czech Republic

Romi Ballesteros, Manila, Philippines

Liz Blair, Bucharest, Romania

Luisa Bonaguro, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Shirley Connuck, Vienna, Austria

Janae Cooley, San Jose, Costa Rica

Alan Elrod, Sarah Erdman, Jack Swope & Michael Scanlon, Dublin, Ireland

Debi Fairman, Bogota, Colombia

Fatima Goodspeed, Amman, Jordan

Ivy Gordon, Oslo, Norway

Leslie Harnish, Baku, Azerbaijan

Deby Harrison, Pretoria, South Africa

Gerard Imbaking, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Ginger Kopp, Monterrey, Mexico

Jim Landherr, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Laurie Louis de Villa, Warsaw, Poland

Debra McFarland, Sofia, Bulgaria

Annie Milstead, Bangkok, Thailand

Mari O'Connor, Lisbon, Portugal

Harold Price, Lima, Peru

Robert Raines, Guangzhou, China

Kevin Rubesh, Muscat, Oman

Stephanie Tansey, Tel Aviv, Israel

Nelda Villines/Fernando Bermudes, Mbabane, Swaziland

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