

GLOBAL LINK

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SOSA WINNERS CELEBRATED IN PERSON AND IN PRINT

On December 6, 2005, over 100 people—AAFSW members, notable State Department representatives, members of the press, and award recipients' family and friends—came together to honor the winners of the 2005 AAFSW/Secretary of State Awards for Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA). The event not only recognized the SOSA winners, but stressed the important contribution of Foreign Service volunteerism to American diplomacy. In fact, the *Washington Post* ran a lengthy article on the event in its December 15 edition: "Six Are Honored for Volunteer Work Overseas; State Dept. Lauds Unofficial Diplomats" by Christopher Lee. View the article online at www.aafsw.org.

Attendees gathered in the State Department's 8th floor Benjamin Franklin Room where the Vienna-Falls Chorus of the Sweet Adelines International opened the program with seasonal favorites sung in beautiful barbershop harmony. Ginny Taylor, SOSA Chairwoman, offered opening remarks about the founding of SOSA in 1991 by then Secretary and Mrs. James Baker and the substantial financial contribution made this year by the Green Family Foundation. She then introduced the Honorable W. Robert Pearson, Director General of the Foreign Service, who presented to each winner a certificate signed by the Secretary of State, a commemorative pin, and a check for \$2,500.



At the awards were, from left, W. Robert Pearson, Director General of the Foreign Service, with honorees Mark Wilson, Sandra Patterson, Jaimee Neel, Robi Keyes, and Robert Blumberg. A sixth winner, Eglal Rousseau, was unable to attend. (Pat Neel)

As reported in the *Washington Post*, "...Pearson...told recipients that they were fine practitioners of 'transformational diplomacy.' The term refers to an approach to international relations touted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that calls for understanding a local culture while putting American ideas and resources to work in making a positive impact on people's lives, Pearson said in an interview.

The volunteers 'represent what we would all say were wonderful American values,' he added. 'To the extent that they can make these efforts in their communities and bring concrete results, I think they do give a softer and more rounded and more authentic view of what Americans are like as individuals around the world. I think that is important for us.'

The SOSA winners spoke briefly about the work for which they had been honored and expressed their surprise and gratitude for being recognized. Honoree Robi Keyes told AAFSW, "Winning SOSA is humbling and amazing. I have had people ask questions about NightLight and that

has led to two new volunteers at our center. The monetary award is just enough to renovate one room in our building..." Honoree Mark Wilson added, "It was a wonderful ceremony and...an incredibly emotional and moving experience for me that I will never forget. Many thanks to everyone involved."

This was the first time AAFSW has hosted its own ceremony to honor SOSA winners. AAFSW thanks Director General Pearson, the *Washington Post*, the Green Family Foundation and other contributors, and the SOSA winners for making it all possible. Turn to page 6 for more on the SOSA winners and volunteerism in the Foreign Service.



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Member Updates

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Charles S. Ahlgren
Robert Blumberg
Ceres Busa
Susan Marie Carl
Ann Greenberg
Robi Keyes
Kathryn Koch
Jaimee Neel
Sandra Patterson
Dirk S. Rettberg
Eglal Rousseau
Trina Saha
Mark A. Wilson

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Sandra Brew
Ceres Busa
Anna Marie Butler
Pamela Pelletreau
Rose Tom

WHAT'S NEW FOR THE NEW YEAR

Judy Felt, President

Happy New Year everyone! With the holidays behind us, AAFSW now looks to 2006 and our goals for the year:

More funds. We always hope to have enough money to expand our contributions to FS youth scholarships and SOSA and to provide educational grants to FS spouses and family members. In addition to fundraisers, we gratefully accept monetary donations, which can be made at www.aafsw.org. We also sell used books throughout the year at our BookRoom in Main State. If you or someone you know has quality books or old collections to donate, contact Robin Jones.

More outreach. We want to reach FS family members through Livelines and our website, AAFSW Post Representatives, coordination with the FLO, and every other means available. We must be able to tell family members how we can help make FS life easier, and they must be able to tell us their concerns so we can address their needs. AAFSW's longtime goal has been to function as the Washington, D.C. CLO.

More members. We hope to convince FS family members that they need to support AAFSW by becoming a member and renewing their memberships regularly. It is easy to do with our online membership form at

www.aafsw.org. You save money by (re)joining for two to five years.

More volunteers. This is always a struggle due to the demands of paid work and family. To increase participation, AAFSW will try to appeal to those who have recently returned to D.C. from overseas and those who have recently retired in the area. How can you help now?

- Membership Chair, Joan Walsh, needs help. This job can be done from home even if you have small children.
- President Emerita and new SOSA Chair, Terri Williams needs a few people to help manage the 2006 SOSA.
- Treasurer, Lucy Whitley, seeks an assistant.
- BookRoom at Main State could use a few more hands.
- The AAFSW Housing Office at Main State also needs help. Parking is provided for Housing Office and BookRoom volunteers.

I am convinced that AAFSW will have an outstanding year, but we cannot do it without you! Please join our group of volunteers. We have a lot of fun, always see old friends, and make new ones. You can reach me or anyone mentioned here with the AAFSW contact list on to the back page. We look forward to hearing from you!

A GLASS OF FINE WINE, ANYONE?

Lisa Wilkinson, FBS Group Co-chair

A AAFSW's Foreign Born Spouses Group joined members of DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) in the Newberry lecture and wine tasting, "Armchair Tours of the French Wine Country," on November 16. The lecturer was William S. Shepard, former U.S. Consul General in

Bordeaux, France; author of *Shepard's Guide to Mastering French Wines*; and wine columnist for *Bonjour Paris*, www.bparis.com.

Mr. Shepard took us from Bordeaux northeast through the Médoc region and then east from Dijon toward Burgundy's Côte d'Or along the Route des Grands Crus. We tasted a Monsieur

Tonton 2004 Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc before lunch and a Réserve Perrin 2003 Côte du Rhône with our delicious *coq au vin*. The lecture cum lunch was very educational. For a more on the event and Mr. Shepard's food and wine pairings, visit FBS Group webpage at <http://www.aafsw.org/aafsw/fbspouses.htm>.



THOUGHTS ON BOOKFAIR 2005: An open letter to younger members and friends of AAFSW

Dianne Bodeen, Art Corner Co-Chair and 65 year-old member of AAFSW

I have had some time to recover from BOOKFAIR 2005 and reflect on what is or is not happening with AAFSW.

BOOKFAIR 2005 was a decent event, helped along considerably by the almost daily presence of President Judy Felt. As usual, it was tiring to be at Main State for almost two weeks straight to oversee the Art Corner, even with a couple of very good helpers.

But most of all, I am perplexed. Where were the volunteers? Where were you of the younger generation? I believe a look at the volunteer sign-ins would verify that the average age of this year's volunteers was between 65 and 70.

The generation gap

There are at least three generations within AAFSW, and each brings to it a different experience of Foreign Service life. No longer is AAFSW the primary philanthropic or social activity of FS spouses as it once was. No longer is AAFSW the primary advocate for FS families; that role has been overtaken by the other organizations that AAFSW helped make possible (like FLO, OBC, and FSYF). Nor are spouses looking for useful things to do while in Washington, D.C.; many find themselves in the workforce.

Yet as I read Livelines, AAFSW's email discussion group, I note its growth, high level of activity and interest, and ability to fulfill an important need. There are also other groups within AAFSW that meet the needs of our younger members. Thus, I am persuaded that there is a reason for AAFSW to exist.

BOOKFAIR's importance

AAFWS, however, has to be supported financially. That support, in part, comes from the annual BOOKFAIR. It appears that we have not made our case strongly enough that this event relies on the participation of as many men and women who can volunteer some time.

It occurs to me that there are many among you—perhaps the majority—who have never been to a BOOKFAIR. It has gone from being a family event, complete with dinner and clowns for the kids, to something that somehow just “happens” at Main State every October. All the same, BOOKFAIR needs volunteers to make it work. There were a couple of days this year when there were almost no volunteers on the floor. More importantly, there was no Volunteer Coordinator(s); one or two people in that role may help get more volunteers.

Youthful creativity and energy

If a couple of people could help advertise BOOKFAIR more widely, the effort may attract more customers. You, the younger generation, would bring that kind of expertise and enthusiasm to this and other tasks. We have seen what you do at your overseas posts, not to mention the experience and skills you have brought with you to the Foreign Service.

How you can help at BOOKFAIR

If you are a member of AAFSW who works during the week, perhaps you can volunteer on one of BOOKFAIR's busy weekend days. If you are at home with children, maybe you can find a friend or colleague to watch your kids for a couple of hours. Most of us have been assigned to D.C. with children, and we too found ways to make some BOOKFAIR time. If the continued life of AAFSW is important to you, we simply must have your help. I do not know how to put it plainer. We older women cannot do this without your help!

Book Corner is a new permanent column that will periodically highlight efforts at BookRoom and the annual BOOKFAIR, AAFSW's most important fundraiser. Please send your comments to bookroom@aafsw.org.

FRENCH GROUP UPDATE

Recent French Group meetings have been greatly enriched by reports from French Group members who are currently assigned to foreign countries (Africa and Asia) and have sent us their impressions so that many of us can relive vicariously our own Foreign Service experiences. Evacuees from French-speaking posts are always welcome to join us. We will resume our activities on Friday, January 6, and January 20, 2006, and continue every first and third Friday of the month, from 10:00am to noon, at the home of one of our members. If you are interested, contact Christel McDonald, French Group Chair at 703-525-9755 or frenchgroup@aafsw.org.

NEW PASSWORD FOR AAFSW WEBSITE

Like every year, AAFSW has changed the password to the members only section of www.aafsw.org. Email office@aafsw.org to get the new password and access the Global Link online, board meeting minutes, membership directory, program RSVP, and other useful items.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

The George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center (or FSI) offers training for all foreign affairs employees and adult family members. These courses are offered in Jan. and Feb. 2006:

Jan. 3 Advanced Security Overseas Seminar

Jan. 9–10 Security Overseas Seminar (SOS)

Jan. 23–24 SOS

Jan. 25 Emergency Medical Trauma

Jan. 25 Rental Property

Jan. 27 Explaining America

Jan. 28 Protocol

Feb. 4 Communicating Across Cultures

Feb. 4 Youth SOS (for grades 2-12)

Feb. 6–7 SOS

Feb. 8–10 Presentation Design & Delivery

Feb. 11 Singles in the Foreign Service

Feb. 13–14 SOS

Feb. 13–15 Regulations, Allowances & Finances

Feb. 21 Advanced SOS

Feb. 22 Tax Seminar

Feb. 25 Protocol

Feb. 28–March 3 Retirement Planning Seminar

For more information and to register, contact the Transition Center at 703-302-7268 or FSITCTraining@state.gov. For a full listing of classes, visit <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6950.htm>.

HELP WANTED: AAFSW MEDIA DIRECTOR

A AFSW 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 until **January 31, 2006**. Please email them, along with any questions, to office@aafsw.org.

NEW BLOGS PAGE ON WWW.AAFSW.ORG

A AFSW is pleased to announce another interesting feature to the website. Visit www.aafsw.org to see our new **Foreign Service Community Personal Websites and Blogs** page to read first-hand accounts of FS life and work and personal and professional pursuits.

This growing list of websites demonstrates just how important the Internet is to people in the FS to communicate with friends, family, clients, and colleagues back home and all over the world. Personal blogs (or “weblogs,” which serve as electronic journals) and websites are filled with interesting photos, anecdotes, and news and offer a slice of life at post. They are not only a great resource for loved ones, but

also those in the bidding process or simply considering joining the FS. The professional websites show just how enterprising FS spouses are and that businesses always have a permanent address in cyberspace even if we do not.

Any member of the U.S. Foreign Service community can contact webmaster@aafsw.org to list their blog or website on this page. The website may be a personal or professional home page. However, we do ask that it contain some personal information—in other words, it must be more than just an advertisement. Please include your name and agency affiliation for verification purposes, along with a URL and a brief description of the website.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS AND SERVICE AWARDS AVAILABLE

Organizations are once again offering educational scholarships and community service awards to the children and grandchildren of Foreign Service employees—active duty, retired or deceased. Help YOUR kids be recognized for their academic achievement, volunteering efforts, and international experiences. Visit www.aafsw.org for more details and application and nominations procedures on:

AFSA COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Since the 1960s, AAFSW has raised funds to aid college-bound FS youth. In 2005, AAFSW gave \$11,500 to the AFSA Scholarship Program through generous AAFSW member donations and BOOKFAIR proceeds. College scholarship applications for the 2006/2007 school year are available on the AFSA Scholarship Program web page (www.afsa.org/scholar/index.cfm) or by contacting 1-800-704-2372 ext. 504. Awards range from \$1,000-\$3,000. The application deadline is February 6, 2006.

THE DREYFUS AWARDS

The Dreyfus Awards are given by the DACOR Bacon House Foundation to encourage the study of international relations. Several scholarships and fellowships are available in academic year 2006-2007 for children and grandchildren of U.S. Foreign Service Officers, active or retired, for study at the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, CT and Yale University. For more information, contact Sherry Barndollar Rock of the DACOR Bacon House at 202-682-0500 x. 17 or 800-344-9127 or prog.coord@dacorbacon.org.

SDFCU COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The State Department Federal Credit Union Annual Scholarship Program is for college students who have a SDFCU account in good standing. They will distribute \$20,000

among applicants selected by the Scholarship Committee. Past winners may apply this year. The competition begins in February. For more information call 703-706-5019, email marketing@sdfcu.org, or go to <http://www.sdfcu.org/youth>.

2006 UNA CHAPMAN COX AWARD FOR FOREIGN SERVICE YOUTH

This award, offered by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF), honors FS youth (grades 7 to 12) who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer efforts either in community service or in service to their peers related to the challenges of an internationally mobile lifestyle while living in the U.S. The top award includes a certificate of recognition and a \$2,000 U.S. Savings Bond to be presented at the Youth Awards Ceremony in the Department of State this summer.

2006 HARRY M. JANNETTE INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR FOREIGN SERVICE YOUTH

The FSYF offers this overseas community service award to two Foreign Service youth (grades 7 to 12) who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer efforts either in community service or in service to their peers while facing the challenges of growing up in an internationally mobile lifestyle. Each winner will receive a certificate of recognition and a \$3,000 U.S. Savings Bond to be presented at the Youth Awards Ceremony in the Department of State this summer or at post.

Nominations deadline for both FSYF awards is April 14, 2006. For more information on either award, please email fsyf@fsyf.org or call 301-404-6655.

SAVE THE DATES

AAFWS's guest speaker program series continues in spring 2006. Time flies so mark your calendars now for **March 21**, **April 18**, and **May 16**. We look forward to seeing you in the 8th floor reception rooms of Main State soon! If you have any questions or comments, please contact the main office or email programs@aafsw.org.

REAL KID REPORTS

Visit Tales from a Small Planet, www.talesmag.com, to read the winning Real Kid Reports from the website's recent contest. The competition asked young people living outside their home countries to write essays about "what it's really like to live there." Three of the five winners are FS kids, and locations covered include Beijing, Addis Ababa, Riga, Paris, and Brussels.

Although the contest has ended, FS kids are still encouraged to contribute a Real Kids Reports. For more information or to submit a report (kids or adults), e-mail Real Post Reports Editor Terry Anderson at realpostreports@talesmag.com.

Volunteer Spotlight

2005 SOSA WINNERS

Robert Blumberg, Colombo, Sri Lanka (SA), organized animal vaccinations after the 2004 tsunami and helped found the Tsunami Memorial Animal Welfare Trust.

Robi Keyes, Bangkok, Thailand (EAP), helped found and raised funds for NightLight, a non-profit organization that helps bar girls quit prostitution.

Jaimee Neel, Sao Paulo, Brazil (WHA), brought together the Casa do Menor Youth Home and U.S. Consulate community in various fundraising and volunteer projects.

Sandra Patterson, Lusaka, Zambia (AF), provided fundraising and job training to HEAL, a support facility and school for kids who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS.

Eglal Rousseau, Rabat, Morocco (NEA), advocated for parents of sick children at a local hospital by serving as French-language interpreter and raised funds for other projects.

Mark Wilson, Skopje, Macedonia (EUR), started Computers to Classrooms to improve the technology resources available to residents of local mental health facilities.

JUST DO IT: VOLUNTEERING IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Leslie Ashby, Media Director

Recently, AAFSW sat down in cyberspace with the six winners of the 2005 Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) to learn their thoughts on volunteering in the Foreign Service. They drew from their own experiences to offer advice on getting and staying involved in volunteer efforts.

Getting involved

While many in the Foreign Service volunteer their time and energy to worthy causes, many do not. "I think most people want to give back to their community, but they are not sure what to do or how to start," says Mark Wilson. "My advice would be to find something that you enjoy doing and seek out opportunities to help." He suggests doing research online or talking to USAID and Peace Corps colleagues.

Jaimee Neel believes a perceived lack of time can hold people back from volunteering. "Some may feel that two years at a post is not long enough to make a difference," she states. "It doesn't matter how much time we have but what we do with that time that matters." Neel decided she could best make an impact in her community by working with an organization that was already in operation rather than build one from scratch as other SOSA winners did. One of them, Robi Keyes, nonetheless reveals that this is the first time she has been able to volunteer full time because her children are older. Before, she volunteered at her children's schools or for short-term projects.

Sandra Patterson, who believes fear stops many from volunteering, encourages people to get past worries of not being able to do enough, reluctance to develop personal contacts with people in difficult situations, or guilt about having so much while others have so little. "I try to let people know that no matter in what capacity they are capable of connecting with a

less fortunate person, they will make a difference in that person's life," she states. "No one alone is going to solve the overwhelming problems of a third world country but they can touch another human being." Robert Blumberg agrees and advises, "Learn to accept that in many overseas situations, obtaining an 80% solution may be the most efficient cost/benefit point."

Staying involved

Sticking with a volunteer activity can be difficult when obstacles seem insurmountable, progress is sluggish, or enthusiasm wanes. For SOSA winners, motivation and rewards come in many forms.

Keyes urges volunteers to "follow your heart and don't quit!" She faced considerable opposition from Bangkok bar owners and businessmen who benefit from the trafficking and prostitution that Keyes and her organization, NightLight, are trying to combat. She admits to having gone into the project rather naively, but despite unforeseen difficulties and tediousness, Keyes says, "the girls who come to the NightLight Center have kept us motivated. Their gratitude has been abundant and has kept us going."

Wilson shares a similar experience: "After setting up the first computer lab at a mental health facility in Demir Kapija [Macedonia], I will never forget the look on the faces of the residents as they typed on computers for the first time in their life...and the laughter. It was an indescribable feeling—incredibly rewarding—and something I will never forget." Patterson adds, "Every hour I spend at the school I am regenerated. The children, the caretaker, teachers, and community show me the resiliency of the human spirit and remind me to be grateful for things big and small."

Beyond the intangibles, volunteering is a way to meet and work with local colleagues, as well as representatives of international NGOs.

Volunteer Spotlight



1. A finished pit latrine is celebrated in Zambia.
2. Residents of a mental health facility in Macedonia enjoy their new computer lab.
3. The vaccination effort after the tsunami in Sri Lanka.



Volunteers can also gain marketable skills from their experience as Neel discovered. Not only did her Portuguese vastly improve, she learned about grant writing, the operation of non-governmental organizations, and intricacies of building and running an orphanage/youth home.

Blumberg also points out that the mobile Foreign Service lifestyle affords us the unique opportunity to “accumulate and share lessons learned from other places and introduce new approaches.” While this can greatly benefit projects, Blumberg stresses the importance of listening to the guidance of your host country colleagues about local ways before offering input. Just because an idea worked in a previous post, does not mean it will in the current one. Others agree that volunteering has given them a deeper appreciation of their host country. “...I feel an instant connection to our host country nationals, and I better understand the culture, as well as the challenges the host country faces,” Patterson says.

Support system

Eglal Rousseau also believes volunteering is intrinsically rewarding and educational, but credits her husband and her hospital colleagues—doctors and other volunteers—for helping her create and sustain an enjoyable experience. “Volunteering also gives us the

opportunity to meet wonderful people who have a lot of love and care to give. I am surrounded by a great group of women who share the same objectives. Our friendship is fantastic because it is built on a shared ideal.”

All agree that a support system is critical. Wilson says he could not have made Computers to Classrooms a success without the support of his wife and the other volunteers. “It was truly a team effort,” he says. Patterson says her husband and four children inspire her to be a good role model, and she is grateful that “they are willing to share their mom with so many children.”

Volunteerism has been an important aspect of Foreign Service life from the beginning, and organizations like AAFSW have been founded on the very principle. It is something we can all do regardless of time, location, or resources. “Even volunteering for a few hours each month might just empower, educate, and inspire community activism in others,” says Wilson. “As they say in the Nike ads, ‘Just Do It.’”

GALLERY TOUR WITH FBS GROUP

AAFSW’s Foreign Born Spouses Group will meet at 11:00am on Friday, January 20 at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian for a guided tour of “Style and Status.” If you would like to join us to view this special exhibit of imperial costumes from Ottoman Turkey, please contact Chairwoman Lisa Wilkinson at 703-356-9233 or fbspouses@aafsw.org. The gallery is located at 1050 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. See you there!

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY ONLINE

It is easy to find your AAFSW friends with the online membership directory. Go to <http://www.aafsw.org/members/directory.htm>. Need the new password? Email office@aafsw.org.

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