

## THE REMARKABLE WINNERS OF THE 2008 SOSA AWARDS

AAFSW's annual SOSA awards recognize those who perform outstanding volunteer efforts for the Mission community, for the local community, or in cases of severe emergency situations. Each of the 2008 SOSA recipients demonstrates the extraordinary power of volunteer service. Their ingenuity, leadership, and tenacity have resulted in improved quality of life for a vast number of people.

Reaching out to the local community, AF recipient Sherilynn R. Tounger has touched the lives of an entire village outside of Ouagadougou. Channeling her efforts through education, Sherilynn is providing a more promising future for the children of Nioko.



Two schoolboys making the "helping hands" United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees symbol, in support of Bridget Guerrero's Ankara Refugee Support Group.

EUR recipient Bridget L. Guerrero established a free lunch program for the large number of refugees at the UNHCR processing center in Ankara. The American face on her efforts has directly impacted thousands of refugees from Iraq, Iran, and Somalia.

EAP recipient Amy E. Robinson went into action immediately after cyclone Nargis hit Burma this past May. She and her team of volunteers responded to the needs of several rural villages when outside humanitarian efforts were prohibited by the Burmese government.

NEA recipient Susan C. Mattes and SA recipient Calvin L. McQueen focused their leadership and organizational skills in their Mission communities. Their efforts have indelibly improved the morale of a war zone post (Baghdad) and a post that lives in lockdown (Karachi).

*Continued on page 2.*

### WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Charles Ahlgren  
Elizabeth Essex  
Patricia Hemphill  
Natsumi Westenhofer  
CLO Abu Dhabi

### THANK YOU TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS

Teresa Banyas  
Margaret R. Bennett  
Judee Blohm  
Hakan Evin  
Kathryn Krubsack  
Nicole Pierre-Posivak

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# News to Use



## From the President's Desk...

Many of AAFSW's seasoned members can remember hearing President John F. Kennedy's call to service for America

back in 1961. His election and inspirational inaugural speech ushered in a new era of volunteerism.

Our new President-elect, Barack Obama, also speaks eloquently of the need to serve and to give back to our country and our communities. With this backdrop of hope, renewed vigor and enthusiasm, I appeal to AAFSW members to get involved and to volunteer for our organization.

Last month I indicated we had two Board openings for volunteers: one as the organization's archivist and another as liaison to the Foreign Service Youth Foundation. We have not been overwhelmed with requests to serve in either capacity! I encourage you to think about these positions and other openings on the board. If you are interested in learning more about them, please email me at [president@aafsw.org](mailto:president@aafsw.org) or email the office at [office@aafsw.org](mailto:office@aafsw.org)

AAFWSW is fortunate to have volunteers who are loyal worker bees! Elsewhere in this issue of *Global Link* you will read about Book Fair 2008, our annual fundraiser, made possible by loyal AAFSW volunteers who commit annually to solid weeks of work to make this event happen. Robin Jones, our Bookroom Manager is the key person behind the scenes, picking up and sorting books all year long, while organizing, and planning the logistical details required.

Mette Beecroft, former President, has served superbly as BookFair Chair for several years working with Robin, and her committee, putting together the final details and the all important promotion.

Lucy Whitley, Treasurer, and Anna Dworken, Assistant Treasurer, spend countless hours making sure finances and billing are straight.

Diane Bodeen and Marian Rondon put together an exquisite Collector's Corner.

And Sheila Switzer and Carmen Geis of the Foreign Born Spouse group organized a lovely Wine and Cheese preview event the eve of BookFair.

Thank you to all of you and to the volunteers who make this an annual commitment.

I wish you and your families a happy holiday season and I hope to see many of you at our splendid annual awards event, the Secretary of State's Volunteerism Awards (SOSA) on December 9th.

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### SOSA Winners continued from page 1

WHA SOSA recipient Ellen J. Brager reached out to hundreds of young Dominican, Peruvian, and American children through the gift of classical music. Her "Traveling Notes" music festivals reach across cultures and socio-economic backgrounds to bring joy to both musicians and audiences.

The greatest success story in each of these volunteer projects is sustainability. What each of the 2008 SOSA winners has put into place, will continue after his or her departure from post. That sustainability is the greatest gift to those who benefit.

Photos and profiles of the winners will be featured in the January issue of *Global Link*. See the new SOSA section of our website at <http://www.aafsw.org/sosa.htm> for profiles and photo slideshows of the winners and their projects.

Finally, don't miss the opportunity to meet the 2008 SOSA recipients and to hear their stories in their own words. Please join us at the annual AAFSW awards program on December 9, 2008 in the Ben Franklin Room at the Department of State.



## SHOP TO BENEFIT AAFSW!

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BOOKFAIR '08



## BOOKFAIR WRAP-UP

It is unlikely that any comments about BookFair can do justice to what it actually takes to make it happen. BookFair requires the cooperation, hard work and good will of a large

group of people, both from within AAFSW and the Department of State.

Throughout the entire year, volunteers collect books, sort and price them, pack them up in categories and position them so that they can be retrieved, displayed and sold at BookFair. In the same way, items which will become part of the Art Corner are collected, appraised and priced, cleaned and repaired and put away for subsequent sale. Displaying all the Art Corner objects in an attractive and appealing way is also a huge challenge—not to mention learning about the provenance and use of a wide variety of items.

Closer to the opening of BookFair, the pace quickens. A much larger group of volunteers has to be identified. We need to get information on every person which is then forwarded to Diplomatic Security. And the volunteers themselves need to be scheduled to provide coverage whenever BookFair is open.

People have to know that BookFair is taking place. This involves including announcements in newspapers, magazines, various websites and in various types of Department publications and announcements. It also involves creating flyers, bookmarks and postcards to use in providing publicity within the Department and for the public.

The Treasurers, who always have a demanding job, get even busier during BookFair because every day the funds need to be counted, recorded and deposited. BookFair expenses have to be paid along the way.

BookFair logistics would be absolutely daunting were it not for the expertise of Robin Jones, the BookRoom Manager, who deals with a huge array of concerns--tents, power sources, telephones, sufficient lights, tables, book cases and even barrels to fill with water to anchor the tents—to mention just a few.

For three years, we have also added another feature, a “Wine & Cheese” to start things off the evening before. With this event comes a whole other group of concerns.

This year’s BookFair was characterized by the presence of new group of vendors and authors. In addition to the lovely items which Kathy Krubsack has presented for many years, Michelle Urbancic brought her Silk Road Imports and Hakan Evin his superb oriental carpets. Ms. Urbancic and Mr. Evin donated a portion of their earnings to the AAFSW Spousal Fellowship Fund. Wendy Welsh’s on-line children’s bookstore, the “Swimming Lizard,” contributed undesignated funds to AAFSW. In addition, we were pleased to support a number of Foreign Service authors who sold and signed their books--David and Teresa Jones, Alan Hansen, Ted Mason, “Tom” Tuch, and Clyde Kopp.

Volunteers serve for a variety of reasons. However, underlying the whole effort is the firm conviction that AAFSW should contribute what it can towards scholarships for Foreign Service children. This year, we managed to gross \$63,270. Additionally, we will be receiving money raised throughout the year by the Stamp Corner volunteers who for 25 years have faithfully supported AAFSW.

When one reviews totals in years past, there was often a reason if our take was below (or above) the average. It is difficult to assess just how much the beautiful weather and the Marine Marathon influenced our final take. Similarly, because of the economic situation, people may well be cutting back on expenditures they do not absolutely have to make. Ultimately, though, many people enjoyed BookFair and they will be back next year.

No remarks on BookFair would be complete without acknowledging the crucial role of the Department. AAFSW greatly appreciated that Under Secretary for Management, Patrick Kennedy was willing to open BookFair '08—especially because he has long understood and supported us. Diplomatic Security and GSO have always been willing to work closely with us and for many years, Real Property has generously permitted us to use their color copier.

To everyone who supported us, AAFSW extends an enormous “thank you.”

*Mette Beecroft – AAFSW BookFair Chair*

# BookFair '08



BookFair '08 Chairperson Mette Beecroft makes her remarks at the opening ceremony.

AAFSW President Faye Barnes, Under Secretary of State Patrick Kennedy, and Mette Beecroft perform the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy makes his remarks.



## CULTURE SHOCK IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

“What’s the most positive thing you can say about living abroad?”

New technologies have had a major impact on the way the traditional stages of culture shock play out. Technology can, in fact, delay the process of working through these stages in order to come out the other side.

In the early stages of your transition, the Internet and cell phones can be a lifesaver for parents. An American spouse living in Korea with young children told me she was grateful when, soon after arrival, her new caregiver, using her own cell phone, connected her with a local play group. A local chatroom helped this spouse discover the next meeting of a women’s club as well as find information on much-needed goods and services. When used locally, digital connections can be immensely helpful.

When the messaging goes global, though, a false sense of connection is enhanced. This can be especially true for children who are text messaging or chatting online with friends back home. Adults, too, with family and old friends just an easy click away, may falsely feel rooted in communities that are not nearby.

These types of connections—as comforting as they may be—are nevertheless virtual. They are not happening in real time in a family’s new real world. A lot of e-mail is done while wearing a bathrobe. Would anyone go out to meet new people wearing their pajamas? Distracting yourself by sitting at a computer “talking” with a friend thousands of miles away may fill the day, but it can create a dreamlike state that won’t help you settle into your new locale.

One longtime French expat spouse, a veteran of multiple overseas moves, wrote to me from Indonesia that while her family enjoys the expat network they have built and maintained via the Internet, she believes cautionary words about e-mail should be offered to any family moving abroad. “E-mail contact probably has some bad sides to it,” she wrote. “The contact is great, but it can postpone the time when we actually feel settled. E-mail contact can be artificial and move us away from settling down where we are actually living.”

Barbara Schaetti agrees. In her work as a transition coach for expatriate families, she has seen the Internet become a hindrance rather than a facilitator

when people rely on absent friends and family to the exclusion of peers in the new locale. It is the crisis stage of culture shock that has the biggest potential to be affected, Schaetti says.

“During the honeymoon phase, you’re out in your new location checking things out, seeing all the commonalities. Your reports home are likely to be relatively happy ones, and you’re not as likely to be glued to the computer waiting for a response as if you’re feeling miserable and miserably misunderstood. But when people are in the crisis or flight stages, they’re less likely to leap away from their computer, given the illusory appeal it offers of home community connection. Cultural learning won’t happen, and they could get stuck in the crisis stage of culture shock. And without cultural learning,” asks Schaetti, “why bother to have packed up your house and family in the first place? If there’s no gain, it sure isn’t worth the pain!”

Children raised on text messaging, instant messaging, and cell phones may have a hard time breaking the digital umbilical chord with home or their last posting. As parents, you naturally want your children to breeze happily through the early days of relocation. If communicating with friends back home pacifies them, it’s hard to take that away. But a friend over the computer or a cell phone is not a friend in the here and now.

A fellow Canadian spouse, a veteran of multiple moves around the world, thinks e-mail is “both a godsend and a curse, allowing the family to stay in touch with their friends but definitely hampering the settling-in process.” She recounted a particularly difficult time with her then fifteen-year-old daughter, who fell in love four weeks before the family was moving halfway around the world.

“She carried the virtual relationship on for months, making both herself and the rest of the family miserable,” this spouse remembers. “As mothers, we sometimes have to resort to extremes, and having access to her e-mails, I was able to at least figure out that this fellow was not a good influence and that her histrionics over him were mainly for effect. Even so, our sensitive child once again pushed us to the limits. This would have been the case regardless of a move or not, but it’s more difficult to find support when you are in unfamiliar territory and your husband is out of town most of the time.”

Take care to see that your children balance the old and the new. Don’t let their technological toys

prevent them from working through the stages of culture shock and, ultimately, from integrating into their new surroundings.

Remember: cross-cultural experiences, growth, and the making of new friends simply won't happen in a cyber bubble. "The more that bubble segregates you from your new cultural environment, the less meaningful ultimately your sojourn will be. It may feel safer at the time, but there's nothing like regrets for missed opportunities upon repatriation," advises Barbara Schaetti.

And those missed opportunities may have long-term ramifications. "There will be all the grief and anger at what was given up (family, friends, career, known world) without any of the appreciation for what was gained, because what was there to be gained was missed altogether or not maximized as it could have been."

*Excerpted from Raising Global Nomads: Parenting Abroad in an On-Demand World by Robin Pascoe, the "Expatriate Expert." Learn more about Robin and her five books on expatriate living at [www.expatriateexpert.com](http://www.expatriateexpert.com).*

## FOREIGN-BORN SPOUSES HOLIDAY PROGRAM

The Christmas celebration of the birth of Jesus, the customs of the ancient pagans, and the legends of St. Nicholas - it is the mélange of folkways and religion that make our Christmas holiday season a joyful one.

We cordially invite you and your spouse to join us to celebrate this special holiday by sharing your customs, traditions, and food - please come to a fun Christmas party with music and door prizes, on Saturday December the 6th from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM at the residence of Tere Weinger, 1730 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101.

For more information call Sheila Switzer 703-569-8867, [sswitzer9@verizon.net](mailto:sswitzer9@verizon.net) or Carmen Geis 703-503-9111.



## ANNUAL AAFSW AWARDS CEREMONY

We will welcome the holiday season by recognizing the outstanding efforts of the 2008 SOSA and Dorman Award recipients. What better time or venue to celebrate the season of giving than in the beautifully decorated Benjamin Franklin room at the Department of State, with a vocal performance by AAFSW member Francesca Kelly. Don't miss this opportunity to meet the AAFSW award winners and enjoy a festive holiday program that is sure to lift your spirits! Please use the coupon below to reserve your seat for this program. **AAFSW**

**members may attend free of charge.** For each guest, please enclose \$15. You may also reserve and pay for your seat online at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

### DECEMBER 9 PROGRAM ANNUAL AAFSW AWARDS CEREMONY

Please reply no later than Tuesday, December 2, 2008. The event takes place on Tuesday, December 9th from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Department of State (C Street Entrance.) Please send this form and check made out to AAFSW for \$15 per guest to:

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

You may also reserve and pay online at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

### DECEMBER 9 AWARDS PROGRAM

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

Date of Birth and Passport or Driver's License Number:

Telephone

Name of guest(s), D.O.B.'s and Passport or Driver's License Numbers:

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