

# Global Link

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## WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

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## SOSA AWARDS

Read profiles of the winners on pages 4-7 of this issue. Reserve your seat for the December 8th awards program on page 7 or online at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

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## Many Thanks!

On Sunday, October 25th, AAFSW's 49th annual Art&BookFair came to a close. This year the fates cooperated and there was no major disruption of the event, despite the looming H1N1 flu pandemic. We have had close calls in the past, including a save in 2001 by Secretary of State Colin Powell, who kept the BookFair open during heightened post-9/11 security. Another year, a helicopter installing statuary into the courtyard threatened to blow the tents away! And, in 2002, fear of the DC sniper reduced attendance because people were afraid to leave their homes.

This year, the weather started out badly, but it seems to have helped rather than hindered us. With the economy showing "green shoots" people also seemed somewhat more willing to spend money. In fact, our gross profits of \$71,644. exceeded earnings from 2008.

It is astounding to note that next year, 2010, AAFSW will present its 50th annual Art&BookFair. This half-century run is a tribute to the many volunteers and AAFSW staff who have worked throughout every year to make it possible. They are the soul of the event, working for months to collect, sort, price and, and organize books. Robin Jones, the BookRoom Manager works to build up our stock of donations and with the volunteers to produce the event. Contributions to the Art Corner need to be appraised, priced, repaired and cleaned. The volunteers seek to identify the provenance and use of a wide variety of unusual items. For years, the volunteers of the Stamp Corner have contributed their efforts. And Margaret Teich, the AAFSW Office Manager, provides administrative support to the whole undertaking.

AAFSW receives crucial support from the Department of State. We very much appreciate that Ambassador Nancy Powell, Director General of the Foreign Service, was willing to open the Art&BookFair this year. Department support includes Diplomatic Security providing appropriate security; the General Services Office providing logistics support; and the Office of Real Property generously offering the use of their facilities to prepare publicity. In addition, SDFCU assisted us by distributing publicity in 25,000 mailed bank statements. We received donated publicity from several additional sources: USAID distributed information as did DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired). *The Foreign Service Journal*, *State Magazine*, and *DSSAA World* donated advertising space.

Volunteers serve for a variety of reasons. Some are happy just to promote reading and to give good books a second life. Others enjoy the camaraderie. Underlying the whole effort is the conviction that the AAFSW and its activities are well worth supporting. An enormous thank you to everyone!

Mette Beecroft  
*Art&BookFair Chairperson*



## From the President's Desk

The dust is settling on Art&BookFair 2009 and the good news is that profits are up slightly over 2008 and 2007. Mette Beecroft

our Art&BookFair Chair has prepared a detailed article and I wish to add my sincere "thank you" to all the volunteers who gave so generously of their time. As Mette indicated, AAFSW could not do this event without you. In addition to the volunteers who worked the Fair, how could we have an event of this magnitude without all of your wonderful donations and treasures from abroad! Thank you for your donations and your purchases!

While naming names can be dangerous, I feel that I must acknowledge the following who make up the backbone of Art&BookFair:

A special thank you goes to BJ Harrick, AAFSW member and a retired FS Nurse Practitioner who served as the Volunteer Coordinator this year, and set up a well-organized roster of helpers which will be useful to us in the future as well.

Cheers for Art&BookFair stalwarts who have given years of service: Mette Beecroft, an AAFW icon, has ably served as the Chair of this event for several years; Dianne Bodeen and Marion Rondon, two talented veterans set up and operate the successful Art Corner; Richard Livingstone and his colleagues attract philatelists to the Stamp Corner; Barbara Butcher, a loyal AAFSW member who treks in from Colorado annually and lends her experience as the defacto floor coordinator; Judy Felt, daily volunteer room manager; and Robin Jones, BookRoom Manager who is responsible for overall management and logistics. And of course, since this is a fundraiser, hail to our trusty treasurers, Anna Dworken and Lucy Whitley who were at the Fair every day, making sure our accounting was on track.

We are now on track for our awards and holiday program December 8<sup>th</sup>. This program is free to all members but make sure to reserve with all your required details for security. A coupon can be found on page 7 of this issue, or reserve your seat online at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

I also wish all of you a happy holiday season as we close out 2009. Looking ahead, next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AAFSW and while planning is at the embryonic stage, we anticipate commemorating the anniversary throughout the year with special programs and events. We are fortunate because many of AAFSW's early members are still with us, and we would like to honor you and the organization that you helped build. If you have AAFSW memories you would like to share with us please call the office at 703 820-5420 or email us at office @aafsw.org.

Happy holidays!



## Creative Holiday Giving

Here in the U.S. we are just days away from the Christmas shopping season, and it isn't even Thanksgiving yet! Overseas, Foreign Service families don't usually have to contend with Christmas trees looming over our heads and Santas ho-ho-hoing in department stores the same day the jack-o-lanterns are packed away. Nevertheless, those of who celebrate Christmas have to get our act in order a little on the early side to make sure gifts get there on time.

Of course, we can always fall back on an Amazon gift certificate emailed on the 24th, but if you did that last year and would like to be a bit more creative this time, here are a few ideas for unique gift-giving that won't break the bank, whether you are at home or abroad.

### Buy gifts all year around

Vacations, especially overseas, are a great opportunity to pick up inexpensive but truly unique items to add to your gift stash. I am always on the lookout for earrings for my grandmother, who loves to have a pretty conversation piece dangling from her earlobes at church. Or if a friend or relative has a collection of some kind--I have relatives who collect stamps, rooster motif items, angels, and penguin statues--don't pass up an opportunity to make a unique contribution to a beloved collection.

### Give the gift of food

Who doesn't like to eat? If you can make something--anything--especially well, then it can be a gift. Of course, when you are overseas, shipping has to be taken into account. Your grandmother's famous strawberry jam might not be a good choice for

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mailing, but gingerbread men or peanut brittle would pack and ship well. And make the jam for your friends and neighbors at post! I made apple butter at one post for hostess, teacher, office, friend and neighbor gifts. It was not a product that could be purchased locally, and so it was a big hit. I used local canning jars, tied a scrap of Christmas fabric around the top with a ribbon, and used an ordinary gift sticker for the labels.

### Re-gift

Seriously, who back home will know that you received that local knick-knack as an office gift? We in the Foreign Service will never tell. And no one at post needs to know that your Secret Santa office gift was actually sent to you last year by your mother-in-law. Really - you can trust us.

### Give pre-owned gifts

Not to be confused with re-gifting, and of course, used goods can be a touchy subject for some people, and in some families. But if an item is clean, in new or like-new condition and given for the right reasons, does it matter whether it cost \$30 or \$3? Thrift stores, yard sales, and eBay can be a great source of unique and affordable gifts, especially collectible or decorative items (see collections, above), books, music, and movies. Children's books are an especially good secondhand buy, and make wonderful gifts for kids, who couldn't care less if their books come pre-loved. And, of course, it's very "green" to buy secondhand!

### Get crafty

You don't have to be all that "crafty" to come up with creative handmade gifts. You can even recycle while you are at it. One simple item I gave my brother, for example, was a pair of trivets made of wine corks that I had been collecting for years with an undetermined craft project in mind. The trays cost \$1.99 each at Michael's, and I arranged and attached wine corks to cover the bottoms with a glue gun. This type of project falls well within the skill set of just about anyone old enough to handle hot glue.

For the new, tentative, or impatient crafter, large craft stores (or websites) such as Michaels.com or allcraftsupplies.com are loaded with kits to make various handmade items, from soaps and candles to scrapbooks. eHow.com is also a great source of simple tutorials on handicrafts (click Hobbies, Games & Toys, then Crafts).

### Give virtual gifts

Of course, an online gift certificate is the quick and dirty solution to any gift-giving dilemma. Take it

a step further and give a virtual gift. iTunes.com and Rhapsody.com, the two major music subscription services, offer gift cards and memberships. Book lovers might appreciate a gift membership to Audible.com. For movie lovers, Netflix.com is always an option. Or, as a completely free option, I recently noticed that Pandora.com has a feature for creating a personalized radio station that can be sent as a gift!

### Support other people's creativity

The internet is a wonderful place to find unique, handcrafted items. eBay features many crafters and artists, of course, but Etsy.com is like an online crafts fair! Individuals sell everything from jewelry to quilts. You can even have items custom-made to order. Click Shop Local to find artisans in your neighborhood.

### Support creativity and help poor people

A Greater Gift, operated by SERVV International, is one of several "fair trade" cooperatives that pay workers and artisans in the developing countries a fair wage for their handcrafted goods ([www.agreatergift.org](http://www.agreatergift.org).) Ten Thousand Villages offers both a website and a chain of retail stores that operate on the same principle ([www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com).) If you are posted overseas, look for local opportunities to patronize artisans and pay them a fair wage for their goods. Your Community Liaison Office Coordinator may have some ideas for where to start.

### Give the gift of giving

For the person who truly has everything, a donation to a cause that is close to their heart might be the best gift of all. Heifer.org is a popular option, especially for kids. Donate a cow, rabbit, llama, pig, or one of a variety of virtual gift baskets. Tisbest.org takes this one step further by offering donation gift cards. Purchase a customizable gift card that can then be "spent" by donating to one of 250 charities listed on the site. Kiva.org also offers gift certificates that can be used to fund a micro-entrepreneurial project of the gift recipient's choice.

Start planning now and have a happy, creative, and inexpensive holiday season!

*Kelly Bembry Midura is AAFSW's Creative Director and enjoys writing about all things thrifty and creative in her spare time.*



# 2009 Recipients Of The Secretary Of State Award

## Erin P. Sweeney – Lagos, Nigeria (AF)

Consular Officer Erin P. Sweeney is an unstoppable humanitarian advocate in Lagos, one of the most difficult posts in the AF Bureau.

In March 2008, Erin helped establish the Consulate Community Service Program (CSP). Recruiting both American and Nigerian staff at the Consulate, she built a leadership team that will keep CSP sustainable.

CSP's volunteer endeavors directly impacted the Pacelli School for the Blind, the Ife Oluwa Maternity Clinic, and the Nigerian Anti-Trafficking in Persons Shelter. CSP volunteers cleaned dorms and common rooms at the school, hosted a Thanksgiving celebration, and coordinated a Braille books and games drive to resupply the library.

Erin obtained a J. Kirby Simon grant of \$3500 to fund completion of the surgical wing of the maternity clinic. CSP volunteers made several trips to the shelter with donations of books, clothing, and food. Teaming with other Harvard Kennedy School alumni living in Lagos, she coordinated a renovation program at the Lagos State Girls Correctional Center funded by a \$2500 Kirby grant. Erin has made a tangible difference in the lives of marginalized Nigerian women and children.



## JanMarie Flattum-Riemers – Jakarta, Indonesia (EAP)

While providing tireless dedication and service to the Embassy community, RMO Dr. JanMarie determined to help the poorest and most disadvantaged in Indonesia.

JanMarie provided much-needed medical services at the Bakti Luhur Orphanage which is home to disabled children. Creative solutions are a hallmark with the doctor as she established an Embassy program which provided employment opportunities for the mentally disadvantaged adults of the orphanage. She also implemented an innovative program to help treat neglected children in scavenger communities.

Knowing she could not personally visit these communities, JanMarie obtained a J. Kirby Simon grant to purchase traveling occupational therapy kits for Indonesian caseworkers who service the scavenger communities. She trained caseworkers in patient assessment and occupational therapy techniques. From photos documenting the needs, she designed patient care plans specific to the children's needs.

The scope and reach of JanMarie's volunteerism is amazing. She conducted family planning services for Indonesian women and provided caretaker training at a local nursing home. She taught hygiene to school children and coordinated with a local charity to provide medical assistance to another 300 families.

JanMarie has saved lives and changed lives, and inspired other members of the Embassy community to engage in charitable work.

# ard For Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad(SOSA)

## Lara L. Center – Luxembourg (EUR/IO)

Family member Lara L. Center utilized her M.A. in Museum Studies and demonstrated the highest volunteer commitment in her service with the National Military History Museum in Luxembourg.

The museum focuses on the Battle of the Ardennes and highlights the role the U.S. military played in liberating the country 65 years ago. Laura has developed innovative ways to expand outreach to the younger generation. Her volunteer activities contribute directly to the U. S. Mission strategic plan.

Lara created a mobile museum that can travel to classrooms and share the museum's history with the younger generation. She is a mentor to university interns, exposing them to the American community and providing a unique insight into Luxembourg-American cooperation. Her innovative outreach strategy includes upgrading the museum webpage and creating a new component, the "Treasure Trove," which highlights new items in the museum collection. She also serves as the museum's liaison with the US National World War II Museum in New Orleans on several collaborative projects.

Most recently, Lara invited American Forces Network TV to film a documentary. Lara's dedication to the museum honors the "Greatest Generation," and continues the memory of their valiant service with the youth of today.



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**Bernadetta J. Ruch – Dushanbe, Tajikistan (SCA)**

One of five 35 per cent differential posts in the world, Dushanbe is an isolated post in an extremely poor county. Despite this challenging environment, Marine Sergeant Bernadetta Ruch has made an indelible contribution to the morale of the Mission community.

Sgt. Ruch expanded Detachment fund-raising activities to include American and local staff along with expatriates living in Dushanbe. She organized and cooked Thanksgiving dinner for over 100 people.

To celebrate Cinco de Mayo, she orchestrated a Mexican food night in a city where staples such as milk and chicken are hard to find. At her request, incoming military personnel hand-carried supplies including precious avocados. Staff and community members were stunned at the quality and quantity of dishes served.

Spearheading the annual Marine “Toys for Tots” drive, Sgt. Ruch discovered that in previous years, orphanage directors often pocketed donated funds and sold toys. To prevent a recurrence, she organized a holiday event at the Mission which brought 140 children to the Embassy grounds to enjoy games and activities as well as 150 meals donated from local businesses. Sgt. Ruch organized all these activities despite serving in a detachment consistently understaffed for her entire tour.



**Joseph A. Taylor – Baghdad, Iraq (NEA)**

Joseph “Jay” Taylor’s assignment at Embassy Baghdad is to manage the Fulbright Exchange Program. However, his drive to help others does not stop when he leaves the office.

Life in Bagdad is extremely stressful with ever-present security threats and the monotony of living in close quarters surrounded by barbed wire, concrete walls, and guard towers. For the past 14 months, Jay has devoted his off-hours to teach adult swimming classes to a diverse community within the Embassy. These



classes include combat military troops, translators, senior FS officers, as well as women from Ethiopia, the Palestinian territories and Iraq, countries where physical activity for females is highly discouraged.

Jay’s students include those with a life-long fear of swimming as well as those with disabilities. The classes mix empowerment with sports. Over 60 swimmers from 18 countries have participated in Jay’s swimming program. For some, the swimming lessons could mean survival. For others, the lessons reduce stress, build confidence and create a sense of community amidst the challenges of living in a war zone.

Jan Irene Miller – Panama City, Panama (WHA)

Family member Jan Irene Miller demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation in support of the Panama Chamber of Commerce project to resolve metropolitan transportation issues.

The Panama Chamber president sought assistance from the Embassy to identify the best urban transportation solution for Panama City. Trained as an executive coach with 20 years of managing global technology projects, Jan agreed to meet with the Chamber’s Transportation Commission and quickly became a key member and advisor. She coordinated the many ideas generated by public and private stakeholders and read hundreds of research reports, studies, and manuals from global expert sources. Jan then built an effective website as a repository of the information and enabled Commission members to stay informed.

Not content with merely posting the information, Jan analyzed the data and gave it relevance in terms of assessing proposals and their impact on environmental protection, labor skills, world class technology, and infrastructure challenges. Armed with this data and analysis, the Commission prepared a summary presentation to the Panama Presidential candidates and the Chamber’s Board of Directors. Following the May elections, the Commission met with the incoming government who responded by establishing a cabinet level position to lead the multi-billion dollar, five year mass transit solution promulgated by the Commission.

Tirelessly leveraging her skills as a team builder, Jan organized and analyzed data, developed ideas, and produced substantive changes that served both Panamanian and American interests.

Learn more about the 2009 SOSA recipients and view slide shows of their projects at [www.aafsw.org/sosa](http://www.aafsw.org/sosa).

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*Don't miss the AAFSW Awards program on Tuesday, December 8 in the Ben Franklin Room. The program will begin promptly at 10:15 a.m. and refreshments will be served afterwards. Barring unforeseen events, the Secretary of State is scheduled to make a brief appearance to present the 2009 SOSA and Tragen awards. Reserve your seat with the coupon below.*

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**DECEMBER 8 PROGRAM:  
AAFSW AWARDS CEREMONY**

Please reply no later than Tuesday, December 1st, 2009. The event takes place on Tuesday, December 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Department of State (C Street Entrance.) Refreshments will be served after the program from 11:30 to noon. 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 8 PROGRAM**

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

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Date of Birth and Passport or Driver’s License Number

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Telephone

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