

Global Link

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WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

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REMINDER

Don't miss AAFSW's October program: a discussion of U.S.-Egyptian relations with Egyptian Ambassador Sameh Shoukry. Places are still available for this October 20th event. Reserve your seat online at www.aafsw.org or call the AAFSW office at 703-820-5420.

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 '09 is Coming Up!

As you have undoubtedly noticed, the AAFSW Annual BookFair has a new name this year: Art&BookFair. The fair is in its 49th year, and as with any recurring event, it has evolved over time. Thus, to reflect the increased importance of the Art Corner, the event has been renamed "Art&BookFair."

Art&BookFair '09 will be officially opened on Friday, October 16th at 2:00 p.m. in the Diplomatic Exhibit Hall. For this "in-house" opening, State Department employees, retirees and escorted guests are welcome until 5:00 p.m. From October 19th through October 23rd, Art&BookFair is open from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., again for State Department employees, retirees and escorted guests.

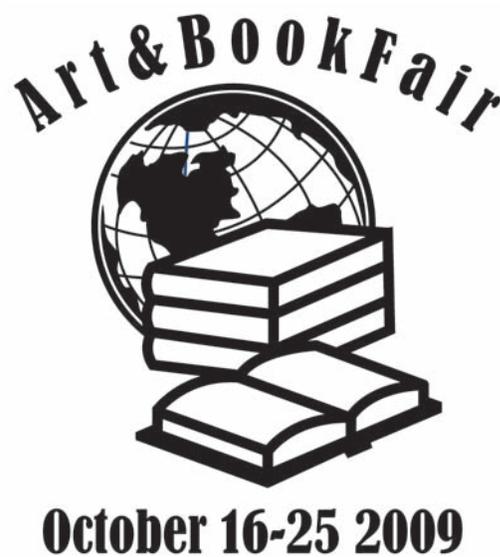
On the weekends of October 17/18 and October 24/25, the general public is cordially invited to attend Art&BookFair from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please bring your neighbors, friends and colleagues.

Enter The State Department through the "Diplomatic Entrance" on C Street between 21st and 23rd Streets. The Foggy Bottom Metro stop is within easy walking distance.

In addition to the usual excellent selection of books, Collectors' Corner and stamps and coins, the Art Corner has some highly unusual items. One of our contributors is an explorer and scientist who has spent time in Antarctica. He has contributed an extraordinary collection of penguin statuettes in a variety of sizes and materials.

There will be an assortment of marvelous items from India, including a few objects made by the Tibetan community there. Wall hangings will include several examples of the padded and sequined Burmese type as well as an antique embroidered silk wall hanging. There will also be stunning fabrics from the markets of West Africa and Indonesia.

Since the winter holidays are fast approaching, this would be a good time to make your gift list. Here is an opportunity to purchase some truly unique items and to support an organization which has a long list of accomplishments to its credit. Since the Art&BookFair is AAFSW's only fundraiser, its success is crucial to our existence. We hope to see you there!



Mette Beecroft
Art&BookFair Chair



From the President's Desk

School is back in session and summer tans are fading. This means that our annual BookFair, now renamed

“Art&BookFair” is just around the corner. After 49 years of being known simply as BookFair, why did we change the name? One reason is accuracy: we have been selling more than books for some time! In addition to the Stamp Corner and the Collectors Corner, the Art Corner, consisting of art and artifacts, has been expanding and is a big draw for many of our visitors. Where else can you pick up exquisite treasures (or in some cases, tchotchkes) from Asia to Africa, Europe to South America, all in one place? The name change has one other advantage: there are other book fairs out there and now our unique name distinguishes us from the rest.

Regardless of the name, we still need volunteers for this event and that means all of you who are in living in the Washington, DC metropolitan area! Your summer *Global Link* included a sign-up form. If you no longer have it, you can find the *Global Link* online at www.aafsw.org in the Members section. You can print out the form and mail it in, or just send an email to office@aafsw.org with your preferred shifts. The Art&BookFair will open on Friday, October 16th and it runs through Sunday October 25th. For more details, see page 1 of this issue of *Global Link* or visit www.aafsw.org.

Please note that the September AAFSW program is being held one week later than usual, on September 22 at 10:30 a.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room. This musical performance was originally planned for April 2009. The recital will feature the gifted International Ukrainian Pianist Oksana Skidan, who will perform a duet with Dmitri Nazarene, including the music of Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc, Manuel de Falla, and Franz Schubert. Anne Foley, a brilliant music director and pianist, will be accompanying Erik Foley, who will be singing “Every Day is Ladies’ Day with Me” by Victor Herbert and “Santa Fe” by Alan Menken. We will also enjoy the performance of a trio of accomplished students from Rockbridge Academy in Millersville, MD. Sign up today at www.aafsw.org or call the office at 703 820-5420.

New Honorary President

AAFSW warmly welcomes our new Honorary President, Lisa Carty.

Lisa is Deputy Director and Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ (CSIS) Global Health Policy Center. She has devoted most of her career to international health and humanitarian issues. Prior to joining CSIS she served as UNAIDS’ Country Programme Coordinator for the Russian Federation. From 2002 to 2007 she worked for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Health Program, as a Senior Policy Officer and then as Deputy Director for Public Policy. Prior to joining the Foundation, she served in a variety of positions as a Foreign Service Officer with the United States Department of State, including assignments as Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Global Affairs with responsibility for Afghan humanitarian relief, Deputy Director of the Office of Europe, Near East and South Asian Refugee Assistance, and Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State.



Overseas, Ms. Carty has served with the U.S. Agency for International Development in Moscow, Russia, as Senior Women’s Health Advisor from 1994 to 1996. From 1998 to 2001 she worked in the Middle East, first as Health Advisor to the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees and then as the U.S. Government’s Regional Coordinator for Refugee Affairs with responsibility for Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Ms. Carty is a native of New York City. She graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, studied at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and received her Masters Degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. She is married to Bill Burns, a career Foreign Service Officer. (Ambassador Burns is currently serving as Under Secretary for Political Affairs-Ed.) They have two teen-aged daughters.

Volunteers Wanted!

Re-entry getting you down? Your spouse's retirement getting in your way because he/she is now hanging around the house and you need your own space and focus? And besides, you married for love, but not for lunch! Are you finding that your neighbors don't understand you and the Foreign Service lifestyle? Don't despair, you can find your niche with AAFSW.

If you are searching for a way to stay connected to the Foreign Service, AAFSW has a few suggestions. Get involved and volunteer with us. We have a few positions we would like to fill with energetic members who are Foreign Service spouses, family members or employees. We are seeking the following volunteers for the following positions:

Archivist

If you are interested in history and preservation, the archivist's position may be a good fit for you. AAFSW is looking for a volunteer archivist to be responsible for the organization and retention of the Association's archives, historic memorabilia, photo collection, audio-visual material and library material. This volunteer position requires computer literacy since the archives are no longer kept in hard copy. All materials must be filed on line including photos. This work can be done from home (or from your office if permitted.)

Liaison to the Board of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF)

Are you the parent of a TCK(s)? Have you raised children abroad, experienced the frustration of uneven schooling, and lack of support for special needs kids? And, now that you are back in the USA, do your kids feel that they don't quite fit the mold? If so, this position is a great fit for you. The Foreign Service Youth Foundation supports FS youth in the Washington area with programs and activities. This AAFSW board position requires attending FSYF meetings and reporting concerns and issues back to AAFSW.

Overseas Representative Liaison

The AAFSW overseas representative works with the post CLO to ensure that AAFSW material is available at post; works to increase AAFSW membership by marketing services overseas; and gives the board feedback on issues overseas.

CLO Association

The CLO Association in Washington, D.C. provides support and networking opportunities for former CLOs who have returned to the D.C. area. The Chair maintains a list of members and liaises with the CLO Support Officer in FLO to organize activities and events for returning CLOs.

Call Margaret Teich at the AAFSW office (703) 820-5420 or email Faye Barnes at president@aafsw.org if you are interested in helping AAFSW and getting involved in relevant programs. Come join us in keeping AAFSW the organization where the Foreign Service becomes a community.

Eldercare Support Group

The Employee Relations Office of the Department of State, Work/Life Programs Division is hosting a monthly support group for those caring for elderly relatives. Share resources and information from 12 noon to 1 p.m. on the first Friday of every month in the Employee Relations Conference Room (H-236, SA-1). These sessions are open to all employees at the Department of State, including contractors. For more information, contact Ellen Millner, Employee Consultation Services (ECS), who will also be facilitating the sessions. Tel: 202 736-7010.

November Program

AAFSW's November program will feature native dancers from Mexico and Bangladesh. It will be held in the Dean Acheson Auditorium of the State Department on Friday, November 6th, at 10 a.m. Light refreshments will be served. Check the AAFSW website later in October for more details, and to reserve your seat online, or contact the AAFSW office at office@aafsw.org, or 703-820-5420.



Volunteer for Change!

With the arrival of autumn, AAFSW is sending out its annual call for the volunteers who make our organization's valuable work possible. In my own case the opportunity to make an impact came about unexpectedly when I returned to Washington in 1978 after many years abroad.

The Forum Report on the Concerns of Foreign Service Women and Families in 1976 unearthed a major problem for older Foreign Service wives. (Until 1972 women in the Foreign Service were required to resign if they married, so in those days there were only female spouses.) Because of new "no-fault" divorce laws, these women, like many other divorcées in America, were being kicked to the curb. Lacking any meaningful work history, and with rusty skills and outdated credentials they had trouble finding jobs. In short, these Foreign Service spouses were uniquely imperiled by their husbands' career choice.

The real financial crunch awaited these wives down the road. For their "golden years," they had little hope of accruing a pension. Social Security, which provided some protection for divorced spouses, did not cover U.S. Government employees at that time. Any alimony which they might have received would terminate on the death of the employee. No former spouse was legally eligible to receive the survivor benefit in any of the government retirement plans.

Moved by the distress of these women, I volunteered to chair an AAFSW committee that dealt with the issues confronting divorced Foreign Service wives. Their condition resonated with me because my widowed maternal grandmother, who had only a tiny annuity, was dependent on my father for the last thirty years of her life.

It was clear that the only remedy for divorced wives was to seek legislative change. While I was always interested in politics, I had no knowledge of legislative processes or the arcane government retirement system. But it wasn't brain surgery, after all. After researching the legal issues, I persuaded the Board to register AAFSW as a lobbying organization and accepted a newly-created Board position as Legislative Liaison.

To assess the size and the details of the problem, I joined a group of divorced Foreign Service wives

who met regularly. We expanded the circle of affected wives in order to share much-needed information. In addition to emotional support, the group provided facts about strategies, regulations, good/poor lawyers, and technical information.

Publicizing the plight of these divorced women was vital. The President of AAFSW, Lesley Dorman, and I wrote testimony which she presented with her usual enviable panache at a House hearing on the difficulties facing women in mid-life. I gave several interviews to the *Washington Post* and took part with other Board members in a radio interview. AAFSW held a press conference in the Capitol under the aegis of our special angel, Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, Democrat from Colorado, at which several of the divorced spouses presented their stories.

We received invaluable support from President Carter's Office of the Status of Women and from the United Methodists' Church as well as numerous women's organizations, including the National Organization for Women and the Older Women's League. I convened and chaired frequent meetings with representatives from these organizations, many of which made submissions on our behalf to Congress.

In mid-1979 Congress undertook a complete overhaul of the laws relating to the State Department's personnel system. It was the ideal moment to lobby for statutory guarantees for the continuation of the Family Liaison Office, for authority for the government to support spouse employment, and especially for changes allowing pension-sharing and the extension of the survivor benefits to former spouses.

This advocacy entailed extensive dealings with Hill staffers. We wrote position papers outlining our issues and the changes we were seeking, and arranged meetings to explore these points. President Dorman and I wrote testimony which we delivered in both House and Senate hearings.

We encountered considerable opposition from the Office of Personnel Management's retirement experts and from some legislators whose pensions would be affected if the changes we sought were extended to the Civil Service system (as indeed they eventually were.) The State Department was uneasy about the issue as was the American Foreign Service Association. However, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance provided decisive support.



After lengthy and contentious negotiations, the bill passed. It provided the presumed right to pro-rated shares of the pension and survivor benefit for a spouse married for ten or more years while the employee was in the Foreign Service.

This provision caused a seismic shift in divorce law, not only for the Foreign Service, but in all existing pension law, within and outside the Government. Today, employer pensions are widely regarded as a shared marital asset.

Subsequently, we collaborated with Central Intelligence Agency, Civil Service, and military spouses, who all saw eventual improvement in their access to pensions. I also consulted with the State Department's Retirement Office as they wrote implementing regulations.

After my husband and I went overseas again, the baton passed to other AAFSW members. They obtained further amendments to compensate wives who had divorced before the pension legislation had passed.

After my years of making meatloaf and school lunches, I found that I was able to make a real difference. Who knew? So can you. There are still many areas in which change is needed. Volunteer today!

Patty Ryan is a longtime member and current AFSA Liaison of AAFSW.

Virginia Voter Information

Virginia will elect a new governor on November 3, 2009. If you are a legal resident of Virginia, whether you are currently resident there or overseas, you can find the information you need to get registered and vote at the Virginia State Board of Elections website: www.sbe.virginia.gov.

Overseas absentee voters should download the Federal Post Card Application. This application must be received by the Tuesday before election day (October 28, 2009) at your local registration office in order to receive a ballot back by mail.

The VBE website offers a search function that will help you find your registrar, and a contact form to request further information. A "Tips to Get Your Vote Counted" page lists answers to the most common questions. Or, call the Virginia State Board of Elections at 804 864-8901 or toll-free 800 552-9745.

"Accompanying Spouse" Shock Sets In...

There are emotional forms of culture shock which know no boundaries, can occur anywhere in the world, and seem to cut across nationalities, writes Culture Shock! author Robin Pascoe who takes a look at the shock of being an accompanying expatriate spouse.

When I first moved abroad to Bangkok with my diplomat husband, nobody warned me about the culture shock I would experience as an 'accompanying spouse'. Of course, that was almost twenty years ago and nobody was telling spouses much of anything by way of preparation for an overseas assignment, notably the fact that you would have to give up your career and drink a lot of coffee in organized venues.

Times have changed. With the help of the internet, a spouse can now easily learn well before she leaves home all sorts of information about the country her family is headed for: customs, history, what foods she will feed her family, or what clothes to bring.

What the internet can't tell her is how she is going to feel about living abroad for the sake of a partner's job. It can be especially challenging for the spouse when the day arrives that her husband (or wife) disappears into an office or out of the country on a road trip at the same time her children vanish with the school bus. Depending on where in the world she is assigned, she could be left like me on that long ago first posting, blankly staring at my Thai maid blankly staring back at me. As I lamented in *Culture Shock! A Wife's Guide*, I couldn't even crawl back into my bed because she had already made it. I felt my life wasn't unfolding quite the way I had planned.

I was in the throes of accompanying spouse culture shock though I didn't know it at the time. Naturally I was experiencing some physical culture shock waves from moving to a very hot climate, with spicy food, and massive traffic jams. I expected to feel discombobulated over those changes. I didn't anticipate the swell of emotions that were washing over me in what seemed like half hour increments, highlighted primarily by resentment towards my husband because he got to walk out the door and have a working day ahead of him. I certainly didn't expect to feel so desperately insecure of myself that I wanted to hide under the bed all day.

There were three major precipitating factors behind this form of culture shock, which continue to push many expat spouses well beyond their comfort zones:

A career had been abandoned and work permits unavailable; financial independence (that is, a paycheck) was now replaced by an allowance and total dependence on my working partner; self-confidence and self-esteem, typically bolstered by a professional identity and feedback from friends and family, caused a host of symptoms, notably anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia, and deep anger and resentment towards my working partner.

It wasn't enough that my professional foundations had crumbled. I was now without family and friends. The typical 'honeymoon' stage associated with ordinary, straightforward, country culture shock, ended very quickly for me as it still does, sadly, for many accompanying spouses.

"Women are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of stresses associated with an international move," says Dr. Anne Copeland, founder and director of The Interchange Institute, a nonprofit organization based in Boston that studies and supports families and individuals who have moved from one country to another.

In addition to the challenges which threw me into an emotional tailspin, Dr. Copeland's research also points out other emotional stress points for accompanying spouses: the loss of the ability to communicate, loss of mastery, loss of social support network, and the stress of being misperceived.

"The accompanying spouse has a particular vulnerability to these stresses," says Dr. Copeland. "Women have many roles—daughter, mother, friend, career woman, sister—and these are all affected by the international move. The employee has the continuity and social connectedness of the job," she says, adding, in fairness to the employee, that he also has the responsibility for having uprooted his family which "can be very heavy indeed."

So what's a spouse to do to combat the shock of being known as Mrs. Husband's Job and be identified to this day by the none too flattering term 'trailing spouse'?

The first and most important lesson I pass on to spouses presently in this situation is this: You are absolutely not going crazy. This spousal shock is real and the bad news is that it doesn't ever go away. The good news is that it does lessen over the first six months to a year, and eventually most women adjust—until the next move! They figure out how to work around it, lead satisfying lives, and most important of all, they learn how to laugh about it.

Not all women verbalize their distress (at least not outside the home; inside, to their partners, is another

story altogether but you need to be a fly on the wall to know this). However, when I visit expat communities to speak about it, I find it's like opening floodgates. Everyone has an experience to share. How could women talk so much about something that doesn't exist?

Absolutely everyone feels culture shock in some way. For many spouses (not all, it should be noted), this unique sub-shock can be even more challenging than learning a foreign language.

The career issue remains a thorny one. With limited support or understanding from companies or governments who send families abroad, it remains up to the accompanying spouse to sort this one out for herself. That requires tapping inner resources like motivation and self-discipline to figure it out solo. The internet and globalization have opened up a whole new world of opportunity for global entrepreneurship and telecommuting that conveniently by passes work permit issues.

Expectations also need to be managed within reasonable limits. There are still too many expat 'superwomen' trying to live up to standards that are not realistic in the expat life of constant visitors, traveling, home leaves, cultural differences, logistics and any number of factors too many spouses conveniently ignore when beating themselves over perceived failures.

Finally, while this form of culture shock is all too real, so is the privilege of living abroad. In the depths of this shock, spouses must try to remind themselves on a daily basis of their good fortune to be leading a life others can only dream about.

This article was originally published in The Weekly Telegraph by Robin Pascoe, the "Expat Expert." Learn more about Robin and her many books on expatriate living at www.expatexpert.com.



AAFSW Membership Renewal and Update

You can update your member profile, pay membership dues, and make financial contributions to AAFSW in two ways:

1. Go to www.aafsw.org and click the membership renewal reminder on the left side of the page. Your AAFSW username and password are required to access the renewal page. Contact office@aafsw.org if you have forgotten these! After filling out the renewal form, you will be directed to a page where you can pay dues with PayPal or a credit card.
2. Complete this form and send it with your check (made out to AAFSW) to:

AAFSW Membership
4001 North Ninth Street, Suite 214
Arlington, VA 22203

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Membership Dues	Tax-Deductible Contributions
One-year membership \$40.00	Scholarships \$ _____
Two-year membership \$80.00	Headquarters \$ _____
Three-year membership \$110.00	Volunteerism \$ _____
Four-year membership \$135.00	Family Member
Five-year membership \$160.00	Professional Fellowships \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____	

Are there changes in your life to report? Help keep our database current!

Address: _____

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Children names and DOBs _____

Been evacuated recently? Where and when? _____

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Been involved in AAFSW activities? _____

Ever been a CLO? _____

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October 2009

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