

The Making of BOOKFAIR: **AAFSW Goes Into the Closet (and Under the Stairs)**

It is growing in the shadows, lurking behind doors, the unseen presence unnoticed by the unsuspecting bureaucrats walking the bland State Department halls. An Aladdin's treasure trove of words and images is rapidly accumulating in closets and cubby-holes throughout the labyrinthine Foggy Bottom building.

Robin Jones, a grown-up Foreign Service child now serving as the Bookroom Manager, calculates that she has personally moved 10 tons of books over the years. The 50,000 books for this year's BOOKFAIR alone, if piled one on top of the other, would reach the height of the Washington Monument seven times.

Organizing and pricing the books takes place throughout the year, as the "secret" storage places are slowly filled. According to the Bookroom Assistant Manager Paul Crampton, the Wednesday Ladies "take it to the next level", pricing, organizing and clearing the Bookroom of donations at an unbelievable speed.

Nothing is simple in the BOOKFAIR preparations. Some donations require the use of a U-Haul truck. Others take ages to retrieve from the mazes of the steamy parking garage. Everything is recorded by hand (*see Bulletin Board, back cover*). Negotiating with officials over security arrangements, payments and the use of various facilities requires diplomacy of the highest order. An arms treaty might be easier to negotiate than the cost of changing toilet paper rolls!

The week of BOOKFAIR, it takes 12 men and 2 1/2 trucks (has anyone ever seen half of a truck?) two days to set up the BOOKFAIR shelves, kept in storage for the rest of the year. The contents of 1600 boxes are put on display.

When (figuratively speaking) the last

cash register rings, OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP begins. In just a day, Robin has to organize the complete removal of every trace of BOOKFAIR, including the disappearance of around 300 boxes of unwanted books. Talk about a bad Monday morning!

BOOKFAIR is a year-round effort, which reaches fruition each October. When the cashiers take in over \$10,000 per hour - for charity - at the peak of the sale, when a face lights up at seeing a special stamp or a first edition, when long-standing volunteers meet for the first time in a year (one is flying in from Denver this year!), no one needs to spell out why the project is worth every minute of preparation.



Energetic volunteers harvested a new crop of book donations from these produce boxes.

Hot Topics **Nations Focus on Women**

If numerous logistical difficulties do not prevail, the Fourth World Conference on Women will take place in Beijing, China from Sept. 4 - 15, bringing together representatives from 184 Member States in the largest event ever sponsored by the United Nations. Thousands of events involving non-governmental agencies (NGOs) will happen concurrently in Huairou, a site about an hour from Beijing. Over 30,000 women are expected to participate, although in early August the Chinese government said that they would be able to accommodate only 10,000.

At the time of writing, U.S./Chinese relations were looking increasingly shaky, diminishing the probable attendance of Hillary Rodham Clinton, the scheduled conference hostess. Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., was still planning to participate.

Regardless of the political complications, the conference could be important for all women. The Draft Platform for Action included the proposal that the conference be one of commitments: taking into account the fact that different countries are at different stages in the reform process, each government was to identify key obstacles to the status of women in their countries and announce specific strategies to be adopted.

(*See China Conference, page 5*)

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 OBC Security Overseas Seminar
- 13-15 OBC Regulations, Allowances and Finances in the Foreign Service Context
- 26 **AAFSW Oral History Project Benefit Tea**
- 26 **AAFSW Board Meeting**
- 26 Advanced Security Overseas
- 30 AWAY DAY at Camp Hemlock (outdoor activities for ages 10-18 - see p. 7).

OCTOBER

- 10 **AAFSW General Meeting**
- 10-11 **BOOKFAIR Preparation**
- 13 **BOOKFAIR Family Night**
- 14-22 **AAFSW BOOKFAIR**
- 23-24 **BOOKFAIR Clean-up**
- 24 **AAFSW Board Meeting**
- 16-21 OBC Reentry Week (see p. 5)
- 17-19 OBC "Life after the Foreign Service"
- 18-20 OBC Regulations, Allowances and Finances
- 28 OBC **NEW!** Transition to Washington for Foreign Born Spouses
- 30 - Nov. 3 OBC Employment Planning Week
- 31 OBC Documenting Our Mobile Experience

NOVEMBER

- 1 OBC Marketing Our Foreign Service Talents
- 1 OBC Raising Bilingual Children
- 2 OBC Post Options for Employment & Training
- 6-7 OBC Security Overseas Seminar
- 7-9 OBC English Teaching
- 13-17 OBC Introduction to Foreign Service Life
- 14 **AAFSW General Meeting**
- 14 OBC Advanced Security Overseas Seminar
- 18 OBC The Value of Portable Careers
- 28 **AAFSW Board Meeting**
- 27-Dec. 1 Training Skills for Foreign Service Spouses

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AAFSW Membership is open to all employees and family members of the U.S. Foreign Service Community. Annual Dues are \$25.00. Subscriptions to the NEWS are open to the public at \$25.00 per year



Wrought iron lanterns grace the entry.

Benefit Tea Recaptures Historical Splendor

Some members of AAFSW lived through the era of grand entertaining in Washington and abroad. Others have never donned a hat or pair of gloves. For some, gardening means buying a plastic fern. For Mrs. Robert Low Bacon (nee Virginia Murray), it meant planting a 15 ton willow oak tree in her garden the week before entertaining 350 guests.

The Foreign Service Spouse Oral History Benefit Tea, to be held at 4 PM on September 26, will recapture the essence of the past in more than one way. DACOR Bacon House, the site of the tea, is an elegant red brick Federal townhouse imbued with over 150 years of stately living. It was built in 1824 by a close friend of President James Monroe on a lot purchased from the estate of George Washington's private secretary, Tobias Lear, who also served as U.S. Consul and Consul General in Santo Domingo and Algiers.

The house incorporated new standards in convenience, comfort and privacy, including indoor bathrooms and built-in closets - perhaps the reason it attracted boarders such as Supreme Court Justices John Marshall, Joseph Story, William Johnson, Gabriel Duvall and numerous others.

In 1835 the house was purchased by former Maryland Governor Samuel Sprigg; his daughter Sally and her husband, William Thomas Carroll, one of the founders of what is now the George

Washington University Law Department, also resided there. President and Mrs. Lincoln were on the guest lists during this era.

The next owners were another Chief Justice and his wife (Melville Weston Fuller and Mary E. Coolbaugh Fuller). Congressman and Mrs. Robert Low Bacon began living in the house in 1910, renting it from socialite Alice Copley Thaw. They later purchased the property.

Mrs. Bacon was not one to live in her husband's Congressional shadow. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire, the French Legion of Honor and other citations for her relief work in World War II, after her husband's death in 1938. President Eisenhower appointed her, with the Personal Rank of Ambassador, to represent the country at the Silver Jubilee of Emperor Haile Selassie and the Coronation of King Mahendra of Nepal, in the 1950's.

The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 as a Category II Landmark, and was bequeathed to the Bacon House Foundation after Mrs. Bacon died in 1980 at the age of 89.

Parts of the house have been dedicated to providing office space for organizations which seek to advance international understanding and friendship. (There are some spaces presently available). Other parts are inhabited by members of DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired), which merged with the Bacon Foundation in 1985.

The tea will be held in the salons which have been completely restored to their former glory, complete with crystal candelabras, elaborate silver, and exotic artifacts from around the world - including a piano used by Rubenstein on his frequent visits.

Kristie Miller will speak on the "ABC's of Publishing" and several completed

transcripts will be presented to spouses who have participated in the Oral History Project.

Why remember "our" history? Those of us who are new Foreign Service spouses benefit from a sense of wonder at how dynamic our predecessors were - and are - and at the huge obstacles they overcame. Recalling the difficult moments reminds even the most nostalgic among us that not everything was better in the "good old days". We are all part of an onward flow of history in a role which is not our only identity, but in which we can take pride as part of a group of survivors and conquerors.

Invite your friends and bask in the glow of history. Gloves are permitted, but not required.

If you do not receive an invitation to the tea by mail, call the AAFSW office at (202) 362-6514. All proceeds will benefit the Oral History Project, which is now under the auspices of AAFSW.



A nineteenth-century giltwood mirror dominates the east drawing room, where the tea will be held.

Things I wish I'd Known...

Volunteer Work Counts!

Knowledge is power, as they say. We lead a strange lifestyle full of many complications. If you have any tips which you would like to pass on - things you learned the hard way, or discoveries which have made your life easier - please send them to this column, c/o the editor.

Future columns will include: How not voting could cost you money, and What happens if you don't renew your Alaska (Kansas, Ohio) driver's license. Watch this space! This month's topic was suggested by the new AAFSW President, Chris Zarr.

The days of unrecognized service are over! Overseas posts will certify volunteer service upon request (State Airgram A-2023). A statement documenting volunteer activity should be prepared for the signature of the Ambassador or his/her designee. (You will often prepare this as a letter addressed to yourself). Spouses of Chiefs of Mission may have their volunteer work certified by the Director General.

Don't forget to include information such as your job title (if relevant), the organization for which you worked, your duties, the number of hours you worked and the inclusive dates.

For more details, consult with your CLO or read pp. 163-164 in the manual *Employment Options for Foreign Service Family Members*, available from the Family Liason Office.

While in Washington, AAFSW is happy to provide the same service. Prepare a letter with all of the relevant information, and send it to AAFSW President Christine Zarr, c/o the AAFSW office (addresses are listed inside the front cover), along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Make sure you get credit where it's due!

NOTE: Remember that your expenses as a volunteer (not including childcare) may be tax-deductible.

Are You Reinventing the Wheel?

Rumor has it that you're on your own in Washington. No one will help you look for housing, employment, activities for the children, places to eat, bargain hunt or just relax. Sound familiar?

Nothing could be further from the truth! Here are just a few of the services available to you as a Foreign Service spouse:

AAFSW runs a Housing Desk in the main Department of State building. Call (202)647-3573 or 3086 to find out more. Experienced volunteers can help with your housing needs, including short-term or house-sitting opportunities.

The Family Liason Office, also found in the main State building, has a wealth of information about schools, youth programs, employment and so on. There is a bi-weekly jobs listing (Network), and the Skills Bank is an invaluable tool in accessing the kinds of jobs which only come through personal contacts. Call (202)647-1076 for more information, or stop by room 1212A.

AAFSW members have a broad range of information which they would be happy to share. Take advantage of this built-in network! There is an informal "Open House" every day at the AAFSW office from 10 AM to 2 PM. To make the most of your visit, call ahead with your specific questions or interests.

You are also welcome to ask for the names of members who live near you. If you are the shy type, ask that your name be passed on to them instead - if you can remember your new telephone number!

Foreign-born spouses, note that there is an AAFSW group just for you, as well as a new course offered at the Overseas Briefing Center (see related article, page 5).

In general, if there is anything you need to facilitate your arrival to Washington, there is someone who can help you. No need to "reinvent the wheel"!

What to Expect in the Foreign Service Years

How will your two-year-old be affected by your move from Thailand to Tanzania? What can you do about your teenager's involvement in the fast-paced, late night life in Taipei? Are there ever times when you just shouldn't go overseas?

Your parents may not know the answers. Dear Abby doesn't have a clue! Don't despair: *Notes from a Traveling Childhood*, recently published by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, offers insights and practical advice. This anthology of writings by parents, children, educators, researchers and mental health professionals deals with topics such as helping your children to adapt to a new culture; managing stress; recognizing the differing needs of children of different ages; making the most of international schooling; and many more.

There are tips from the real experts: kids advise others, "Watch out because your parents will forget important things, like where the keys or tickets are". There are poems, articles and impressions by people who have "been there": some excellent materials to read with your children - or just for yourself.

The final section of the book contains a bibliography for those people who want to know everything there is to know about the topic of globally mobile children.

Notes from a Traveling Childhood may be ordered for \$5.95 (including U.S. postage and handling; add \$4.50 per copy for international mail). Make checks payable to the Foreign Service Youth Foundation and send to FSYP (Publication), P.O. Box 39185, Washington, DC 20016.

O.B.C. Welcomes New Residents

Remember the cross-cultural adaptation curve which made you feel better when you were overseas? Did anyone warn you that you would experience it again when you came back to the US? If so, you recall that this is normal, expected, and will pass. If not, you may be wondering why an anticipated Washington assignment is giving you and your family a jolt!

Just as your CLO overseas developed programming to orient you to your new assignment, the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) here in Washington is ready to help you pick up the pieces and get adjusted to life in Washington.

The exhilaration of visiting family and friends, placing your shipments in a new surrounding, making new friends in school and activities buoy you through the summer and early fall. But as things slow down in October, you may begin to think that this is a big mistake. So many changes are starting to take their toll.

Some changes are for the good, though. OBC is now located in the wonderful new National Foreign Affairs Training Center (it's GREAT!) and OBC now offers a series of Re-Entry courses to help you get out of the doldrums.

Multiple programs are offered during the week of October 16-21, separated so you can attend those which suit your situation. A new special offering will take place on October 28, tailored to foreign-born spouses coping with their first assignment to the U.S.

In addition, read the fine print on OBC schedules, as Saturday and Wednesday evening programs are now offered, as well as expanded hours to do post research in the Information Center. Take a look at what is new and upcoming! Some changes are just for you!

RE-ENTRY WEEK

"Why does it feel so bad to come home?" - Monday, Oct. 16, Noon-1:30, Room 1205, Main State

"How can I interact with my child's school?" - Tuesday, Oct. 17, Noon-1:30, NFATC

"How to stay safe in Washington" - Wednesday, Oct. 18, 6-8 PM, NFATC

"America: a different world" (for parents of teens) - Thursday, Oct. 19, Noon-1:30, NFATC

"What is the employment scene in Washington?" - Friday, Oct. 20, Noon-1:30, room 1912, Main State

"Getting around Washington", separate courses for adults and children ages 6 and up. SATURDAY! Oct. 20, 9AM-1PM, NFATC

"Transition to Washington for foreign born spouses" - SATURDAY, Oct. 28, 9AM-1PM, NFATC

Call (703) 302-7168 for more information or to register for these courses.

-Overseas Briefing Center

China Conference

(continued from page 1)

The topics are sometimes controversial and provocative: contraception, education and employment opportunities, violence against women - individual and cultural outrages. We might not be obviously better off if women in Nepal had a greater opportunity for education (in 1992, 85% were illiterate) or if more women in Egypt began to enter the workforce (in 1992, only 10% worked for pay). However, whichever "ist" we choose to label ourselves (feminist, fundamentalist, activist, individualist, cookie bake-ist), the opening of dialogue and discussion about issues which affect women can only serve to highlight our own - or our wives' and daughters' - concerns.

If we had a Fourth Conference on Foreign Service Women, what would the agenda hold? Which issues are of greatest concern to you? Or, if you don't like the word "issues", what do you wish could change in your life? Drop a line to the newsletter (faxes can be sent to (703) 255-2798 if you don't believe in "snailmail"); send a cassette tape of your ranting session with your best friend. We want to know!

Editor Leaves for Tiara

It wasn't a bribe or a sudden inheritance. After three years as the AAFSW newsletter editor, Alison Hayes has left in order to work in Customer Communications at TIARA gifts, a specialty shop featuring fine china collectibles.

Alison's dedication, patience, sense of humor and professionalism have been appreciated by all who came in contact with her, both in the context of the newsletter and as AAFSW Office Manager. Alison will continue to live in the D.C. metropolitan area and participate in AAFSW events (much to the relief of other AAFSW members).

Best of luck in the commercial world, Alison! We hope that (the dream of many Foreign Service spouses), you will finally be paid what you are worth!

My Turn

Tales of a Few Dilemmas

"Paper or plastic?" the supermarket cashier asked, as he began to ring up my purchases. "VISA," I replied, smiling inwardly at his quaint version of "cash or charge".

"Paper or plastic?" he repeated, carefully separating each word, while giving me a strange look. "What kind of bags do you want?"

Oh dear! Here I thought that I had a brief reprieve from cultural misunderstandings!

My husband says that I am the only person he knows whose lifestyle became more stable when I "married into" the Foreign Service. I am originally from Columbus, Ohio, but went to graduate school in England, and then stayed to work as a music therapist. After that it was Mexico City, where I worked in a Mexican-run community center in the slums. After meeting my husband there (in the city, not the slums: Junior Officer housing isn't that bad yet!) we married, and two weeks later reported to the Dominican Republic for a two-year assignment.

(In traditional State Department fashion, we were separated for two days as newly-weds, because my travel could only be authorized from the point we had married, even though I was already in Washington from whence the flight would have been cheaper!)

My grocery store troubles perhaps began in Santo Domingo: when I asked for what would have been a "little bag" in Mexican Spanish, I got only giggles and smirks. Those regional idioms!

(I take heart from the fact that worse stories abound. A missionary acquaintance in Spain once thought that she was giving a Bible study on the importance of prayer. It turned out that she had talked about contraception!)

Language is a very important part of local culture, as we all have discovered to our chagrin. Here in Washington, as the new AAFSW News editor, I find myself faced with another language dilemma: what do I call the people about whom I write? The *New York Times* sticks with Mr. or Ms. I am certain that addressing some AAFSW members this way would make them "Ms." erable!

Miss and Mrs. can be equally distasteful: is it necessary for everyone to know our marital status? Furthermore, if I wrote "Mrs. John Doe", would everyone think to associate that formal figure with the friendly "Betty" they met at BOOKFAIR?

Thus, with apologies to Miss Manners (who is herself married: go figure), I have decided to use first names. If anyone finds this policy inappropriate or offensive, I would appreciate hearing about it. Where would we be without those wonderful people who point out our social faux pas?

I'm off to see if I can find a snack. I was invited to a breakfast meeting this morning: there was very little breakfast and a great deal of meeting. (Washington culture strikes again!)

-Jan Fischer Bachman

Complaints are like gasoline. If they spill out just anywhere, they may explode, but if properly harnessed, they can get things rolling!

Oral History Column Returns in October

The Foreign Service Spouse Oral History column will resume next month with a new editor, Liz Allan. Originally from Boston, Liz graduated from George Washington University and remained in the DC area. She has worked for the *Foreign Service Journal* for two years and now will bring her writing and editing expertise to the AAFSW News.

Welcome, Liz!

New Manager Joins History Project

Pam Stratton is new as the manager of the Foreign Service Spouse Oral History Project, but she has a long-standing connection to Foreign Service spouse programs.

In the late 60's, she was a staff member for the Wives' Seminar under the leadership of Dorothy Stansbury. The program was made up of two-week seminars held about six times a year, with the course content based on available guest speakers.

The wives of the Secretaries of State during that time, including Mrs. Dean Rusk and Mrs. William Rogers, took their duties very seriously, and they were always involved.

Pam went on to become the deputy executive director of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. When she recently retired, she came across the Oral History Project position.

Her duties include organizing and maintaining electronic and hard copy files of the Oral History Collection, assembling and sending completed transcripts to three archives, chairing the Benefit Tea, and assisting volunteers and researchers working on and using the collection - all in just four hours a week.

The many AAFSW members who passed through the Wives' Seminar say, "Welcome back!"

AAFSW Recognizes Outstanding Teens

The Foreign Service Youth Award was recently presented to three teenagers in recognition of their outstanding leadership in community service or to their peers. For the first time, AAFSW participated in the selection of the winners, and contributed to the \$200 savings bond which each one received.

Billy Jackson, 15, the son of William and Ann Jackson, helped raise funds for surgeries related to sight and loss of limb, organized the donation and shipment of 40,000 pounds of clothing to Mozambiquans in refugee camps and

organized a trip to a squatter camp, where students painted a nutrition center building. He also wrote grant proposals for several projects.

Cathy Morris, 16, served as a volunteer teacher's aide for the second grade while living in Taipei. In Washington, she assisted in the Security Overseas Seminar in the children's summer session. During her three years at Groton Academy, she has volunteered weekly at a center for children with severe mental and physical disabilities and has worked as a classroom and playground

aide at three other day care centers and schools. Her parents, Marjorie and John Daniel Morris, are now serving at AIT-Taipei.

Katie Rogers, 18, the daughter of Penelope Adams Rogers, has served impoverished children and adults for several years, first in Guinea Bissau, and presently in London. The UNICEF group at the American School in London raised \$2000 for needy children under her presidency.

The following teens received "Highly Commended" certificates:

Wendy Oleson, for a strong record of volunteer work over the last eight years in Guadalajara, Abu Dhabi, Lahore and Washington; Luis Ubilla, for his work with poor children in Managua; and Sarah Marie Wolf, who worked with handicapped children and as a peer helper in Kuala Lumpur.

Honorable Mentions were awarded to 14 other teens living in places ranging from Addis Ababa to Washington.



Foreign Service Youth Foundation Gets Away with It

More obstacles for Foreign Service children? Don't they already face enough?

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation, together with the Overseas Briefing Center and the Family Liason Office, will sponsor an AWAY DAY on September 30. Youngsters ages 10 to 18 (divided into two groups) will participate in an all day series of outdoor activities designed

"When I came to the program, I didn't know anyone. When I left, everyone was my friend."

to build self-esteem through meeting new challenges - ideal for Foreign Service children moving to a new situation.

A recent participant said, "When I came to the program, I didn't know anyone. When I left, everyone was my friend." The cost per child for the day will be \$15. To register, call Karen Pugh, (703) 255-2861.

FSYF was founded in 1989 with the goal of providing for the specialized needs of Foreign Service teens, and has now expanded to include those ages 10-13. It offers social and educational programs, publications and videos, internships and community services awards.

Betty Atherton stepped down in May after three years as President and Chairman of the Board, turning over the leadership to Maryann Minutillo, one of the organization's founders and a former director of FLO.

Those interested in the Foundation - whether in the Washington, D.C. area or abroad - should also contact

Karen Pugh, Administrator
FSYF
P.O. Box 39185
Washington, DC 20016.



Katie Rogers entertains a hospital patient in Guinea Bissau.

BULLETIN BOARD

Have You Had Your Say Today?

Everyone who recently left a post should request a "Returnee Update on Post" form from the Overseas Briefing Center, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, 4000 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22204. This is your chance to tell everyone else all of the things you wish you had known about post! After all of our complaints about how post reports are out-of-date, most of us don't make the effort to do our part in providing accurate information. What are the good and bad points? What is essential to buy before going? Are those 10 pages of car regulations still valid? Should I really have the catalytic converter removed from my car? Is a four-wheel drive necessary? Are family members finding interesting work? What's the scoop on the schools? How formally do people dress? As an extra incentive, one AAFSW member reports that she earned \$75 for a telephone conversation as a "consultant" after someone got her name from the OBC. You don't have to identify yourself, but it could prove advantageous!



Computer Needed

The Bookroom desperately needs to join the 20th century and exchange our handwritten ledgers for spreadsheets and data bases.

If anyone has a computer he or she would be willing to donate, please contact Robin Jones at the Bookroom, (202)223-5796. It doesn't have to be new and fast (although that might be nice). Don't forget, your gift will be tax-deductible.

FLO Welcomes New Education Assistant

The Family Liaison Office is pleased to announce that Jackie Graves has joined the staff as the Education Program Assistant. Jackie, a Foreign Service spouse, returned in July from Morocco where she served as Community Liaison Officer in Rabat. She will be assisting the FLO Education and Youth Officer and serve as the first point of contact for people wanting information on those two programs.

Wanted: Foreign Correspondents



Are you a writer trying to publish? Would you like to lengthen your writing resume? The AAFSW News would like to establish a group of foreign correspondents to gather information about posts and mission group activities, interview active AAFSW members, report on spouse and family issues overseas and so on.

You may be able to build up a pile of published articles, and the News will gladly provide you with references, both of which should help in your future search for (paid) writing work!

Photographs would also be welcome, particularly if they illustrate local activities of AAFSW members.

For more information, please contact the AAFSW newsletter editor:

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Thank you!

AAFSW

Association of American Foreign Service Women

News

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Association of American Foreign Service Women
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