

GLOBAL LINK

Association of American Foreign Service Women

AAFSW: BEYOND THE MILLENNIUM

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We will need a core of guiding committee members who are available for meetings in DC as well as lots of worker-bees at post and in the Washington area. We will develop and implement survey instruments, make phone calls from home, tabulate responses, and who knows what else.

WE ALSO NEED IDEAS

You know what has been working well or has special meaning to you, or what needs to be considered in the future. We need *fresh ideas* as to what AAFSW should be to meet the needs of all of the families of the Foreign Service. Please drop us a letter, note, e-mail, or fax with your written ideas or call to offer to volunteer your time.

WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO AS MANY MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH A WELL-CONSIDERED PLAN. PLEASE JOIN US!

The AAFSW board is beginning a process to take a total look at the organization of AAFSW for the future. This will be a long-range project that will question and review every aspect of the organization to see where we should be headed as we approach the year 2000 and continue beyond.

CHILDCARE ELDER
CARE JOB OPPOR-
TUNITIES SENIOR
SPOUSE GROUP
SOCIAL EVENTS
NETWORKING
SCHOLARSHIPS
VOLUNTEER
RECOGNITION
LANGUAGE CLASS
INFORMATION BOOK
CLUB CRAFTS
COMPUTER
TRAINING
GROUP DISCOUNTS
???????????



AAFSW EVENTS

November

- 2-6 OBC Intro to Training Skills
- 3 **Elder Care FORUM**
- 10 **Program**
- 13 OBC Communicating Across Cultures
- 14 OBC Realities of Foreign Service Life
- 14 OBC Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships
- 17-19 OBC English Teaching
- 18 OBC Dual Culture Marriages
- 24 **Board meeting**

December

- 5 OBC Explaining America
- 8-10 OBC Regulations, Allowances, Finances
- 15 **Program**

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOC.
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OVERSEAS BRIEFING CENTER
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Mary Louise Weiss - 301-664-6744

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WITH APPROPRIATE CHAIR CLEARLY
INDICATED AS FOLLOWS:

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IMPORTANT AAFSW NUMBERS

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AAFSW membership is open to all U.S. Foreign Service employees and family members. Annual dues are \$25. Subscriptions to GLOBAL LINK are available to the public at \$25 per year.

Readers Respond

A Foreign Service Job or a Foreign Service Life?

It is difficult to express my uneasy feelings produced by the article in the October 1998 *Global Link* entitled, "When It Comes to Moving . . . Don't!" by Kelly Midura. I realize that our society is evolving to the point that being self-centered and aggressively self-serving are admirable traits, but sometimes the new mores of our world can be self-defeating.

My husband has been a career foreign service officer for almost 25 years. Life in the foreign service is one of constant adjustments, flexibility, and mutual support. It is a difficult and heartbreaking existence being away from extended families and friends with far too few "pats on the back." Our government leaders ask the foreign service officer and family to endure, with pitiful recompense, more than they would ever consider asking their families to face.

Even though the spouse is not paid, I would remind that our commitment is a family commitment. The demands of the lifestyle are extraordinary. If they are not shared, if the welcome to the new community is not experienced together, if the anger, frustration, and total exhaustion are not shared, then the foundation of the family cannot be one of mutual support, trust, and understanding. Most officers "hit the ground running" at a new post after an exhausting 12 to 24 hours of flying in a cramped cattle-class airline seat. Traditionally, the spouse and children do not fare any better. They have taken the same flight and are expected to quickly dive into the community, learn the local customs, markets and driving habits, unpack, find friends, and rebuild the nest.

If one partner arrives at post first to try to smooth the way for the other, then each person sees the post from a different perspective. If an officer was transferred from Boston to Houston would the family deliberately lag behind to let the work be done by the "guilty party who made them move"? Why would we expect to be less a family team because we move overseas?

The stress of moving has a seriously impact on each family member as well as the family unit. Families must take time to talk honestly and openly about their positive and negative expectations of a new post and then set their priorities. For my husband and me, our first priority is that our family is healthy and together. All else is less important.

*Jan Wiedemann, Foreign Service Spouse
US Embassy-Rangoon*

Don't Miss the Health Plan Open Season!

Are you tired of arguing with your HMO—or of having to translate the names of obscure medications in order to be reimbursed for medical expenses? Perhaps it's time for a change!

Federal employees, ex-spouses, retirees, and survivors have an open season in late November and early December to pick a 1999 health plan. Premiums are expected to go up for 1999 for most plans. See your personnel or admin officer for more details.

Play Group Meets

If you would like to meet other Foreign Service parents while your children have fun, come to the Friday morning play group. Locations vary each week.

See page 2 for information on contacting the Play Group Coordinator. Please note that this is not a babysitting service.

Welcome New & Returning Members

Pamela Ayoung
Joan Chaput-Gray
Rosella Engle
JoAnn Hutcheson
Joyce MacCorquodale
Patricia Norland

Member Notes

Members Welcome Virtual, Entrepreneurial Guests

AAFSW member **Francesca Kelly's** latest venture is co-hosting a Foreign Service spouses' chat on the internet. The chat is sponsored by the Expat Exchange (<http://www.expatsexchange.com>). However, so far the time varies each week.

To find out when you can meet up with friends from around the world, subscribe—free—to Livelines, an interactive e-mail bulletin board. You can do this by sending a blank e-mail message to livelines-subscribe@makelist.com.

You will receive a note regarding the chats before they occur, along with other messages from fellow subscribers.

(You are also welcome to send along your own announcements, questions, comments, and so forth).

Patricia Squire, another AAFSW member, has been involved with the Foundation for International Arts and Education's "Community Connections for Georgia" program, centered in Bethesda, Maryland. The program, founded by a former USIA officer, pro-

vides month-long training programs for entrepreneurs from the country of Georgia. Host families and businesses are needed for the next group, which will arrive in February, 1999.

For more information, contact the Foundation directly at 301-656-6102; fax 301-656-5703.

What's going on where you are? Feel free to send your news to Global Link, contact information on page 2.

AAFSW Lauds Teen Volunteer

AAFSW proudly supports the Foreign Service Youth Awards, which recognize youths for their outstanding volunteer service to their communities and peers. Brief profiles of the 1998 winners will be featured in future issues of *Global Link*.

"Superachiever" was the universal accolade given by the Selection Committee to **Travis Dudley**, age 13, son of State Information Management Officer Randall Dudley and Kathryn Dudley.

The award was given to Travis for his volunteer work in his community in Riyadh over the past two years. Cited

"Superachiever" was the universal accolade given

by the CKI Coordinator for improving the quality of life at post, Travis created a musical group, The American Embassy Youth Ensemble, to fill a need he observed for entertainment at embassy, recreation association, and neighborhood events. Travis also showed initiative by writing to children of newly-assigned personnel, welcoming them to post and providing insights into teen life in Riyadh.

The recreation association manager reported that Travis organized games for younger children, assisted with arts and crafts sessions, performed solo at the children's Christmas party, and even made sure that each "dear Santa" letter that reached the mailroom was answered with a personal touch.

Parents of a fellow Cub Scout at post commended Travis for giving his free time to be the "legs" of their son, who is confined to a wheelchair, enabling him to enjoy activities where a parent would be in the way of the fun.

Travis' generosity and hard work were also praised in separate nominations from the Riyadh Roller Hockey League, Cub Scout Pack 257, the Eagle Patrol, the Riyadh Concert Band, and American Community Services.



Clearing Away Catalog Clutter

*'Twas the night before Christmas, and Mother went wild,
For no one could walk—the junk mail was piled!*

During your time overseas, you may have become a catalog shopper...and you may have discovered that mail order companies can find you when even your own children have given up!

To keep down the number of catalogs and additional mailings you receive, state your preferences clearly whenever you make an order.

If you would like to be removed from mailing lists, send your name, address—and every variation of these that you have seen on a label—to the Mail Preference Service, care of the Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735-9008. The association will contact direct mail and catalog companies and remove your name from their mailing lists, a process that may take several months.

An alternative method is to call the free ordering numbers that come with the catalogs and request to be removed from the mailing list. This may not be effective with very aggressive companies (and is, of course, too expensive to contemplate if you do not have access to toll-free calls).

A reputedly foolproof tip is to send the mailing labels from unwanted publications back to the company with a note that the addressee has died. Most companies do not want to try to do business with the deceased.

If you are swamped with credit card offers, contact the following three companies: Equifax, 1-800-556-4711; Experian 1-800-353-0809; and Trans Union, 1-800-680-7293. A recording will take down information (all of which the bureaus already have), including your social security number—or you may request a form to remove your name from the lists permanently.

As an added benefit, the National Waste Prevention Coalition reminds consumers that stopping unwanted mail can significantly reduce the amount of solid waste going into landfills.

AAFSW Comes Through Again

Dear AAFSW,

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your most generous contribution of \$3,000 for Thea Bowman House.

Your contribution will be used to continue our work of serving the homeless and poor with dignity and respect; it will go a long way toward relieving the hunger and loneliness of the neediest people in Washington.

SOME feeds over 1,200 people each day, and provides other services that meet the basic needs of those who come to us—clothing, medical and dental care, and shelter for the elderly. We also focus our efforts on programs that address the root causes of homelessness and poverty. They include a twelve-week residential jobs program, a socialization program for the mentally ill, affordable housing projects, and addictions counseling.

We are fortunate in having the generous support of people such as you. Without your help none of what we do would be possible: ensuring people's basic survival and helping them overcome whatever keeps them poor and homeless. Thank you again for your gift—for helping us reach out in hospitality to those most in need.

*Fr. John Adams, Director
So Others Might Eat (SOME)*

Networking: Giving Personal Meaning to a New Assignment

By Bea Dixon



Here it is again, the new bid list, a new assignment on the horizon, another transfer! Well, my partners in transition, it's time to get in gear again. You know what needs to be done. Shipment, housing, schools, pet papers. Yes, all this, of course...But have you thought about NETWORKING for yourself? Is that on your list as well? What I mean is this: will you spend all your energy making sure that your spouse and children get the most of the assignment or will you also devote a great deal of your time searching for an opportunity to do something that is meaningful and of interest to you during those years to come?

To find something meaningful to do we have to spend time and energy looking for it. Networking starts the day you get the new assignment, way before the plane touches the tarmac of this new faraway airport.

First, you put together a list of your skills and talents. Looking through your job and personal history, determine what you can do, what you are good at, what your accomplishments are.

Next, visualize your skills as being very precious objects that are on display in a refined portable glass cabinet. I suggest that you do not limit yourself to only one object, like "I'm a dental assistant" or "an accountant." Each profession comprises many skills and by detailing them you maximize your options.

Now the time has come to bring your "showcase" on the road. I proceeded to buy a very large piece of white paper, which I stuck on the wall of our study. It had to be very large because, first, I wanted to keep reminding myself that I was open to many options, and second, I was determined, this time, to get fully engaged in my search, whatever it took.

On the left side of this dreadful blank, I jotted down names of people (friends, acquaintances) whom I thought would know something about this new post. I called them to set up a meeting. I asked many questions and talked about my showcase, which invariably prompted my contacts to think of some other peo-

ple I should meet who might be interested in my skills. I then added those names to my chart, called them, arranged a meeting, and went at it again. After three months my chart has grown into a large mosaic of names, arrows, phone numbers, and collage of business cards. I presently count 126 names on my chart (and I score high on the introversion scale!), representing nine types of industries, from non-profit organizations to pharmaceuticals, oil companies, airlines—AND I am looking at seven interesting options. My chart is my own world wide web.

May I share my enthusiasm and firm belief in this process of networking by listing some of its benefits:

- You meet MANY interesting people
- You realize that there are A LOT of people out there willing to help you
- You learn about businesses, corporations, agencies—things people do that you did not even know about

■ You develop a deeper understanding of the international business world

■ You are surprised to discover how transferable your skills are; you can see yourself fitting in organizations that you never even considered

■ You get to know yourself better; by experiencing other people you clarify who you are, what is of interest to you, what you stand for

■ You develop a network of on-location acquaintances, way before you land in that foreign city that now is not so foreign anymore

■ You will be meaningfully involved

■ The overseas assignment will be yours, too, not just that of your spouse, your children and your dog

AND MUCH MORE!

This article is a condensed version of one that appeared in the December 1997 FLO Focus, the professional journal for Community Liaison Officers.

A Doubter Discovers the Benefits of Networking

It all started during a northern Virginia snow storm. My rarely seen next-door-neighbor and I conversed as we cleared off the sidewalks, using a shovel and a snorkeling flipper respectively (after all, I am a resourceful Foreign Service spouse!)

When he realized that I had played the violin professionally in my previous post, he mentioned that his girlfriend was the administrator of a local orchestra. I had given up on playing the violin in the Washington area after a series of dead-end phone calls. Using this new connection, I arranged for an audition with the orchestra, which turned out to be...a community group that barely paid for gas money. However, I slogged my way through two concerts—the people were incredibly friendly, and we were even invited to a reception at a Congressman's house.

Months later, I received an unexpected call from a string quartet looking for a new player. They had gotten my name from a member of the community orchestra (which I had since dropped). The quartet has provided a fun source of income ever since.

I began to see the benefits of telling people about my skills and interests. When I decided to start my own desktop publishing company, I mentioned the fact to everyone I knew, including my ex-landlord and my quartet companions. As unlikely as it seems, some of my best contracts came through them.

What have I learned? Help may come from a completely unexpected source—tell everyone what you can and want to do. Get involved in anything where you meet a different set of people. And be yourself, even if it means shoveling your sidewalk with a snorkeling flipper!

Jan Fischer Bachman, Editor

1998 AAFSW/Secretary of State Outstanding Volunteerism Awards

BRIAN RUDERT Dominican Republic

Brian Rudert's deep concern for the people and environment of the Dominican Republic is obvious to all who know him. He has become an inspiration to volunteerism for Americans and Dominicans alike.

Early in his career with USAID, Brian served in the Dominican Republic (D.R.), where he met his wife Miriam. Upon returning for a second tour, Brian began looking for the best place to apply his volunteer energies.

The AIDS epidemic has hit the D.R. very hard. HIV infection rates are among the highest in the hemisphere, and AIDS has become one of the leading causes of death in the adult population. Among the most tragic cases are those of HIV-infected mothers passing the infection on to their as-yet-unborn children. One or both of the parents may die soon after the child's birth, and the baby is left orphaned. Other infected babies and small children are abandoned by their parents when they become too sick or destitute to care for them. As in many countries in the world, Dominican society tends to treat AIDS sufferers as outcasts. Only one orphanage in the country cares for children infected with the AIDS virus: Hogar Mari Loly.

Although Hogar Mari Loly operates on a shoestring budget, Brian saw an even greater need: the children's need for love. He visited the home on a regular basis and spent his time playing with and just hugging the children. He began bringing groups of them to his home for days of play in the garden with his wife and his own three children. For these children, some of whom had been found abandoned in garbage cans and all of whom were basically outcasts from society, this kind of contact was a miracle.

Brian's commitment and enthusiasm are highly contagious, and more people, both Dominican and American, began to join him and his family on these visits. One of the volunteers drawn in was Danny Rivera, a very popular Puerto Rican singer with a huge following in the

D.R. Danny has made a major commitment in Puerto Rico in support of AIDS activities, and he responded to Brian's efforts by agreeing to do a benefit concert in Brian's back yard.

The concert was an overwhelming success both in raising money for the home and raising consciousness about this critical issue. Among the several hundred people who made generous contributions to attend were powerful government officials and opinion leaders from the private sector. The most moving aspect of the concert was that for several hours a dozen of the HIV-infected babies from the home were passed around from lap to lap and shoulder to shoulder among the crowd. The event received prominent coverage in the local media, with pictures of Danny Rivera, Brian Rudert, and others holding the children.

For Hogar Mari Loly, a large amount of money was raised, along with the hope of a permanent facility: a government official took the stage at the event to make a commitment that land would be donated for the construction of a permanent, rather than leased, facility. Danny Rivera has promised to do another benefit concert when the new home is inaugurated.

Brian has led a cross section of doctors, lawyers, health professionals, and others to form a permanent, legally-constituted governing body with broad goals: to provide financial support to Hogar Mari Loly and other similar institutions; to push for advances in the prevention of mother-to-child passage of the HIV virus; and to continue efforts to raise the national consciousness about the problem of HIV-infected children.

(See "Volunteer," facing page)

Winner Inspired by Female Ambassador

I was very honored to have been presented by you the AAFSW/Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism. The fact that it was the Secretary of State and a women's organization that selected me for this award is actually very appropriate because of the person who inspired me: Ambassador Donna Hrinak.

Four years ago, an enlightened Dominican social worker started a private home, Hogar Mari Loly, to take in abandoned and neglected AIDS babies. She struggled daily to obtain support to maintain the home. Ambassador Hrinak visited the home in 1995, and a picture appeared in the local newspapers of her hugging these children. This action was instrumental in helping change Dominican attitudes toward these children.

For the 1997 July 4th celebration at the Embassy, Ambassador Hrinak asked invitees to send cash contributions to be used for Hogar Mari Loly, instead of the traditional flowers to decorate the embassy grounds. Over \$5,000 was raised that day. It also helped further focus Dominican attention on a problem that is only growing larger—and the need to do something about it.

What I learned from Ambassador Hrinak is that we, as U.S. diplomats, are held in high regard in the countries in which we serve. It is very easy for us to end up in the society pages of local newspapers. However, it can also be just as easy to use that prestige to draw attention to a local problem that may be either unpopular or frightening, or simply just ignored, and to motivate others to do something about it. I was simply looking for a volunteer activity in which to involve my family: Ambassador Hrinak provided the example of where I could put my efforts and the effect that I could have.

Brian Rudert
General Development Officer, USAID Santo Domingo

Volunteer Makes Significant Impact

(Continued from previous page)

The group is already seeing major progress; there is now a line item in the national budget to provide funding for the care of HIV-infected children. It would be difficult for the voluntary and caring actions of a single person to have a more long-lasting impact than this.

Brian has also been very active in environmental activities. On his own time, on a volunteer basis, he began working with a group of farmers in a small village in the mountains of the D.R., leading

It would be difficult for the voluntary and caring actions of a single person to have a more long-lasting impact than this

them in efforts to create and market a new brand of organically grown coffee. Since no environmentally damaging chemicals will be used, the coffee must be grown in the shade, bringing back critical migratory bird habitat, particularly benefiting the endangered American Redstart. An additional positive outcome will be a new income-producing crop for these farmers.

Brian researched the field of growing, processing, transporting, and marketing gourmet organically grown coffees in the international market. He designed the packaging for the new coffee and paid for the first run of the packages. Details are being worked out to ensure that the coffee meets international processing standards. There are still many obstacles to overcome in this effort, but what Brian has started will continue.

Clearly, Brian Rudert's contributions to improving the human condition and protecting the environment of the Dominican Republic will continue to have an impact long after his departure from the country. For this reason, he has been awarded the 1998 AAFSW/Secretary of State Volunteerism Award.

Christopher Matthews Gives Us His "Personal Views on the Politics of 1998"

In addition to hosting *Hardball*, one of the highest rated programs on CNBC, Christopher Matthews has been Washington's Bureau Chief for the *San Francisco Examiner* and a nationally syndicated columnist since 1987. He's covered the opening of the Berlin Wall, the first all-races election in South Africa, the historic peace referendum in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and three U.S. presidential elections. Two years ago, his digging in the National Archives produced a series of *Examiner* scoops on the Nixon presidential tapes.

Matthews is the author of two best-selling books. One of them, *Hardball*, is a political primer which has become assigned reading at colleges and high schools across the country since its debut on the bestseller list in 1988.

In 1996, he authored *Kennedy and Nixon: The Rivalry That Shaped Post-war America*, which chronicles the early friendship and historical rivalry between these two political giants. The book is now in production as a one-hour documentary to be aired this fall on the television program *Arts and Entertainment*.

A graduate of Holy Cross, Matthews did graduate work in economics at the University of North Carolina and served with the U.S. Peace Corps in Swaziland. He learned politics as an aide to Senator



Edmund S. Muskie, a presidential speechwriter for Jimmy Carter, and long-time administrative assistant to Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, Jr.

There is no doubt that Chris Matthews, though presenting what he considers an honest and balanced perspective, will also arouse a certain amount of controversy at our next Program, to be held November 10 at 10 a.m. in the Benjamin Franklin room of the main State Department building.

Barbara Gordon, Program Chair

Reservations Contact: Pearl Richardson, 202-265-3301, or AAFSW office (page 2)

November Program Coupon - Immediate Reply Requested

Tuesday, November 10, 1998, 10 a.m., 8th Floor, State Department

Name (as you wish it on name tag): _____
 Date of Birth or Social Security Number: _____
 Telephone: _____ New Member? yes _____ no _____
 Name(s) of Guest(s) with DOB or SSN: _____

NOTE: BRING A VALID PHOTO I.D. FOR ENTRY TO STATE DEPARTMENT

Reservations accepted in the order CHECKS are received. Please send form, with check made out to AAFSW (\$6 per member, \$6 per guest), to AAFSW Reservations, 5125 MacArthur Blvd NW, Suite 36, Washington, DC 20016.

REMINDER: Special permission granted members and guests to enter the Department of State building is limited to hours of meeting only.

No refunds can be made nor reservations accepted after November 3.

Elder Care to Be Discussed at November FORUM

Don't forget the Elder Care FORUM, which will be held at the Department of State on Tuesday, November 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you have a diplomatic passport or a badge to enter the State Department building, you do not need to make a reservation to attend (although it is always helpful for the organizers to have an idea of how many people will be there). If you do not have either of these, contact Margaret Teich in the AAFSW office by October 25 to arrange for access to the building.

If you have personal experience with elder care issues, or if you can foresee that these will be of concern to you in the future, please plan to attend—or to send your comments to the AAFSW office before the conference. If you are aware of acquaintances dealing with elder care matters, please ask them to respond or interview them briefly and send along their replies. While many of us will have to deal with these issues at some point, only those currently involved know what is working and what needs to be im-

proved. The inter-agency FORUM provides a fabulous opportunity to identify and define the issues, as well as suggest changes in policies, regulations and laws.

Web Sites Target Overseas Concerns

Foreign Service spouse Kate Goggin has created a new web site for people living overseas, the Art of International Living. The site contains lists of expatriate resources, travel information, a reader exchange, links to international employment opportunities, and more. See <http://www.artintliving.com>.

The Foreign Service Lifelines web site, created by and for foreign service spouses, is still easily accessible at <http://www.kreative.net/fslifelines>.

Books Address Overseas Life

Aletheia Publications, a small publishing company specializing in books for overseas Americans and returnees, has produced two new books so far this year.

Managing Cross-Cultural Transition: A Handbook for Corporations, Employees, and Their Families (Steven Shepard, \$19.95) may not seem directly applicable to Foreign Service life. However, there is an excellent preassessment exercise that might be very useful for families considering their next assignments. Separate questionnaires elicit thoughts and feelings from the employee, spouse, and children. A subsequent synthesis is clearly designed as a basis for productive family discussion.

Welcome Home: Who Are You? Tales of a Foreign Service Family (Gene and Kathryn Schmiel, \$12.95) offers vignettes portraying the life of a Foreign Service family in Sweden, South Africa, Djibouti, Kenya, and Iceland.

For more information about these books, contact Aletheia Publications, 46 Bell Hollow Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579; fax: 914-526-2905; e-mail: AlethPub@AOL.com.

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