



DATE CHANGE

Celebrate the Holidays
with Real Americana on December 16th!

**Tell Us What
You Think!**

Contact AAFSW at:
5125 MacArthur Blvd.
Suite 36
Washington, DC
20016
Tel 202-362-6514
Fax 202-362-6589
office@aafsw.org

OFFICE HOURS
Monday-Friday
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

On December 16th, we will be treated to some old-fashioned barbershop singing-and some funky new barbershop! A select group from the Vienna-Falls chorus of Sweet Adelines International will present a program of seasonal old favorites as well as some imaginative new arrangements.

Sweet Adelines International is a worldwide organization of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education and performance. There are more than 600 Sweet Adeline choruses in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, England, Scotland, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands, and at least that many individual quartets. Although no one is quite certain just how or when barbershop style began, there is no doubt that barbershop harmony is an important part of our musical heritage.

Vienna-Falls Chorus numbers about eighty women of all ages from the greater DC area; their members include government workers, lawyers, teachers, homemakers, antique dealers, nurses, administrators, retirees, grandmothers, and new mothers, and our own AAFSW office manager. They have performed either as a full chorus or in smaller groups at the White House, Blair House, Wolf Trap, the Old Executive Office Building, the Mormon Temple Visitors Center in Kensington, for nursing homes, for local business gatherings and parties, and in Fairfax City Fourth of July parade! They regularly compete in regional and international Sweet Adelines events all over the country, and they most recently unveiled their hilarious "pregnancy package" at the International Education Symposium Invitational Harmony Classic competition in Greenville, South Carolina. After hearing the chorus and seeing how much fun they have, if you feel inspired to join in, you are welcome. The chorus rehearses Tuesday nights from 7:00-10:00 PM at Fairfax High School. They are "dedicated to advancing the barbershop art form through education and performance with a commitment to musical excellence and personal growth in a friendly, loving atmosphere."

Vienna-Falls offers a unique holiday gift-a singing holiday greeting delivered live by telephone! For \$5.00 local or \$6.00 long distance (not International) you can serenade your loved ones with holiday song in beautiful four-part harmony (by a quartet)! Contact dcfandee@aol.com or 703-435-9666 to place an order. These phonegrams are available from Dec.12-Dec.16th ONLY!

We will be joined for this program by a number of foreign diplomats and members of T.H.I.S., a private voluntary organization whose members give their time to provide foreign diplomatic families with a friendly introduction to life in the Washington community. After the musical offering, we hope to offer tours of the diplomatic receptions rooms. Regrettably, tour space is limited. We hope to see you there!

Vienna-Falls Sweet Adelines

December 16, 2003

Please reply by December 9nd

Name: _____ SSN: _____
Telephone: _____ New Member? yes _____ no _____
Guests name(s) and SSN(s) _____

Please send form with check made out to AAFSW (\$15.00 per person) to:
AAFSW Reservations, 5125 MacArthur Blvd. NW, Suite 36, Washington, DC 20016.

No refunds can be made or reservations accepted after December 10th.

Holiday Message to All Members

As the traditional holidays approach, I find myself filled with thoughts about the thankfulness and joy I have experienced over the last year with AAFSW. We have had one of our most successful Bookfairs ever (only 5 have ever brought in more money!), and had the pleasure of working with some new volunteers who arrived to help in just the nick of time alongside our fine stalwart volunteers. We welcomed some new members to the AAFSW Board and have benefited from their perspectives. Thanks to our Membership team, we had a terrifically successful thank-you promotion to our new online members by awarding them our 'limited edition' AAFSW Tote Bags and have increased our visibility to CLO's overseas. Our membership has reached out to the newest members of the Foreign Service (of all genders!) with our Livelines conversations and our participation in Post Toasts. We have expanded our outreach to Diplomatic Security spouses.

Our book, "Realities of Foreign Service Life" is selling briskly and our profits have outweighed the expenses, thanks to the generosity of editors Melissa Hess and Patricia Linderman; our website, AAFSW.ORG now can take credit card purchases for membership, renewals and donations, and thanks to our website team of Kelly Midura and Jan Fisher Bachman, we have a section on the website where members can advertise and sell.

I feel that we have much to be thankful for, and I wish the blessings of the holiday season to each and every member, with my gratitude and appreciation.

Terri Williams, AAFSW President

SECURITY ALERT FOR AAFSW VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE "SMART CARDS"

A number of AAFSW volunteers have received "Smart Cards" in order to gain access to the Department of State at points where the new "Smart Card" readers are in place.

For whatever reason, some of you received limited access to the Building—that is on business days only during regular working hours.

If you would like to convert your access to 24/7 which would make it possible to enter the Department on the week-end—as you will need to do for BOOKFAIR '04, please let me know and we will coordinate this "conversion" from limited access to 24/7 access.

What is involved is a "rerun" of what you already have done. You will need a new signed DS 1838 and a memorandum from me. These two documents then need to be taken to the ID Unit at Columbia Plaza.

Mette Beecroft (202 647 4028)
AAFSW Security Liaison

Welcome and Thank You!



Danae Busa

Kenneth Duckworth

Barbara T. Heineback

Kirsten R. Miller

Diana B. Seasonwein

Elizabeth A. Sewall

Dana E. Smith

Alexandra Stabler

Anne DuBois Yap

Passing and Commemoration of an AAFSW Friend

Long-time AAFSW member Kathleen Perkins passed away last May. We received notification from her son, Philip Perkins, who had been born in Shanghai. His letter mentioned that (among other very substantive roles) she had been a researcher and activist with the Citizen's Committee on Diplomatic Immunity (a group whose goal was to pressure the Federal government to increase penalties on diplomats who used immunity to disregard traffic violations and ignore parking fines). Her marriage had ended in divorce, and her son's letter stated "She was especially grateful to the AAFSW's efforts in securing passage of the former spousal pension and benefits act (PL 100-238). She recounted, many times, the efforts made by your organization to aid women who were connected in one way or another with the Foreign Service of the United States Department of State. In her memory I would like to make this unrestricted gift of \$1000 to the AAFSW."

In my letter of response to him, I said, "It is through the generosity of people such as yourselves that the work that AAFSW does is remembered and kept vibrant." We thank you, Mr. Perkins, for your generosity and for giving us permission to publicize your action.

Terri Williams, AAFSW President

UPDATE: PIT BuyBack Program

As most of you are aware, PIT buyback language was incorporated into the State Authorization Bill passed in September 2002. A provision in the bill required the Office of Personnel Management to issue the implementing guidelines but did not include a deadline date for implementation. Subsequently, AFSA drafted amended language in order to facilitate an implementation deadline date. This amended language has been incorporated into the current State Authorization Bill still under consideration by Congress.

A new development is that OPM, on behalf of the Administration, sent a request to the Hill on August 26, 2003 to repeal the PIT provision that was included in last year's legislation. AFSA has developed a point by point response to OPM's request and is working with offices of the sponsors of the original bill on both the Senate and House side to circumvent any legislation repeal.

Family members affected by this legislation should be aware that this is currently an inside legislative battle, requiring no additional action at this time. However, FLO, AFSA and AAFSW will post updates on their respective web sites as information becomes available and will notify family members if events warrant future action.

In the interim, we encourage family members who wish to be kept apprised of updates to send an email to FLOAskEmployment@state.gov as follows:

SUBJECT: PIT Buyback

Please add my name to the distribution list for information and updates on the PIT Buyback

NAME:

CURRENT ADDRESS:

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

PERSONAL EMAIL:

BUSINESS EMAIL:

SERVICE DATES (i.e., 1989-90, 1992-95):

POST OR POSTS WHERE YOU WORKED ON A PIT APPOINTMENT:

BOOKFAIR 2003 IS A SUCCESS!

By the end of Monday, October 27th, the 43rd annual BOOKFAIR of the AAFSW closed its doors on a successful event. The sale of books, stamps and art objects ended on Sunday. On Monday, the BOOKROOM MANAGER and the ever-faithful volunteers cleaned up and moved out of the Diplomatic Exhibit Hall where the BOOKFAIR takes place.

This year, fate was kinder to us. For the past two years, BOOKFAIR attendance was reduced first by the wrenching events of 9/11 and then by the as yet unresolved sniper attacks last year. Both events made people hesitant to leave their houses and to come to a public building. However, this year, we only had to contend with the Marine Marathon—which was expected—and the weather was perfect and people wanted to be outside.

After this year, it is clear to me that BOOKFAIR is “alive and well.” We managed to take in a total of \$82,439 which is \$7,547 more than last year. Especially notable is that during the last 19 years including 2003, WE EARNED MORE THAN \$82,439 ONLY FIVE TIMES. Three of those times were in the mid-nineties when many people thought that the booming economy would go on forever and they were apparently more willing to spend.

As I have mentioned before, a review of the “Washington Post” article on the demise of the Vassar Book Sale yields some interesting figures. **In 1998, the Vassar Sale grossed \$83,000 and all but \$13,000 was eaten up by expenses! In 1999, the last year of the Sale, they anticipated a net profit of \$40,000 on a gross intake of \$120,000.** In comparison to these statistics, we are doing quite well. We too are concerned with the costs of mounting BOOKFAIR. The salary of the mandatory guards has gone up the most steeply while the cost of the movers, advertising and the tent is substantial but has not increased dramatically. Much as we would wish it were not the case, one must be prepared to pay a certain percentage of the proceeds to make BOOKFAIR “happen.”





It is also important to remember that some of the value of BOOKFAIR cannot be measured in dollars and cents. For the AAFSW, for our faithful volunteers and for our customers, BOOKFAIR is a veritable institution. Workers continue because they believe in the cause (scholarships and charitable contributions), because they like books and because they enjoy the camaraderie. And our faithful customers enjoy it as a unique source of interesting books, stamps and art objects from all over the world.

None of this would be possible without the support of numerous individuals and organizations. **We very much appreciate Mrs. Alma Powell's willingness to open BOOKFAIR again this year. And the volunteers appreciated her willingness to spend some time talking with them and having a picture taken of the group.**

Though it is not a very good substitute for personal thanks, as BOOKFAIR Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who worked so hard to make this year's event possible. Much of the hard work goes on all year to collect, price and store books and art objects—all of which is made much more difficult by the split-up locations in which people must now work. Closer to BOOKFAIR, the pace of work becomes much more intense. The logistics of tents, bookshelves, positioning books, setting up the Art Corner or installing extra phone lines demand considerable planning. **We also acknowledge with much gratitude, the invaluable support of Diplomatic Security and General Services—support which they provide graciously year after year. Nor would our acknowledgments be complete without mentioning Bill Littlewood and his STAMP CORNER. For many years, they have worked hard and contributed very generously. We are grateful to you all—staff, volunteers and State Department offices.**

Again, **AN ENORMOUS THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED.**

Mette Beecroft
BOOKFAIR Chair

Spouse Resources : Divorce and Separation



The monthly meeting of AAFSW's Foreign Born Spouse group welcomed a discussion presented by Nancy Dolce of the Family Liaison Office. Nancy brought a wonderful compilation of materials for the women who listened with rapt attention to find out what their rights were in case of divorce.

Nancy distributed a packet of information including a wealth of resources:

1 Information about IQ: Information Quest, a Department of State Resource and referral service available to all permanent employees, Family Member Appointees, and their family members. Info Quest can make searches of information needed in situations concerning family needs, health and wellness resources, education

planning, financial and legal concerns, and issues surrounding the daily lives of mobile Foreign Service employees and families. This is research that saves valuable time and energy for busy people. They are available by phone at 800-222-0364 at any time, or on the web at www.WorkLife4You.com. The Family Liaison Office (202-647-1076) is also available to hook you into Info Quest services.

- 2 FLO publishes the very helpful and inclusive booklet, "The Foreign Service Family and Divorce". Topics covered include; Jurisdiction in Divorce, Departure from Post, Lawyers, Mediation, Children and Divorce, Retirement and Health Benefits (for the divorced spouse), Financial and Privacy Act Considerations, Resources, and a Bibliography. The booklet is available from the FLO office, or at posts abroad in the CLO office.
- 3 Department Notices in the packet include:
 1. Denial of Diplomatic and Official Passports to Individuals Owing Over \$5000 Child Support
 2. Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) Program for Separating Employees and Certain Dependents (Children/Former Spouse) Who Lose Regular Federal Employee Health Benefit Coverage
 3. Collection of Fee for Garnishment of Federal Pay
 4. FLO Frequently Asked Questions About Divorce in the Foreign Service
 5. Former Spouse Benefits Under the Foreign Service Retirement Systems
 6. List of Domestic Relations Lawyers in the Washington area Who are Familiar with the Foreign Service
 7. Publication from the Fairfax County Commission for Women titled "Separation and Divorce Information Fact Sheets"
 8. Washingtonian Magazine October 1995 issue titled "Divorce"

Nancy wisely expanded the discussion to cover spouses' similar needs for information and resources during any kind of separation - be it evacuation, separated home leaves, or separated tours of duty, in addition to the specific need for information in cases of divorce. She also recommended contacting the helpful counselors in the Employee Consultation Services office (ECS) at Columbia Plaza in the State Department.

Her packet also included the very helpful FLO publication What Every Spouse Should Know - Family Documents. This includes a list of 20 pieces of information that all spouses should be able to locate and understand regardless of the situation.

These extremely helpful lists and publications are available from the Family Liaison Office - just call them (at 202-647-1076) - or contact the CLO at post. They also have a host of information on their website: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>.

The AAFSW Foreign Born Spouse group thanked Nancy for her information and knew they had somewhere to go if they needed assistance.

The Perfect Couple

Inside a U.S. Embassy is a look at the reality of Foreign Service work and ***Realities of Foreign Service Life*** is a look inside Foreign Service life. AFSA — representing FS employees — published ***Inside***, while the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide — representing FS family members — published ***Realities***. Both books are unique in their presentation of personal “through the eyes of” views of life and work at U.S. embassies and consulates.

These two books make a great pair, giving the most complete picture of life and work in the Foreign Service available today. They are great resources for anyone considering a Foreign Service career, anyone new to the Foreign Service, and anyone simply interested in learning more about the Foreign Service. At 275 pages, ***Realities*** has seven sections: An Overview of Foreign Service Life, Moving and Adjusting, Views from Abroad, Family Life, Work and Technology, Moments of Crisis, and Returning Home. Issues tackled include evacuations and crisis response, family member work options, educating children abroad, divorce in the FS, medical clearances, as well as food, pet travel and much more.

Inside is the only book that describes what Foreign Service officers and specialists actually do on the job, from Paris to Kabul, from Bogota to Beijing, and places in between. The book includes profiles of 23 of your Foreign Service colleagues around the world, day-in-the-life entries from officers and specialists in 17 different countries and stories of the extraordinary from 26 countries.

To order ***Inside a U.S. Embassy***, go to www.afsa.org/inside or call (847) 364-1222. The price is \$12.95 plus shipping and handling, with a holiday discount available through December. To order ***Realities of Foreign Service Life***, go to amazon.com (preferably by using a link from either the AFSA or AAFSW Web site) or call (202) 362-6514. The cost is \$20.95 plus shipping and handling.

Why not give the gift of Foreign Service knowledge this holiday season? Proceeds from the sale of both books go towards AFSA and AAFSW efforts to support the FS community.



Donate Your Frequent Flier Miles

In September 2003, the Pentagon started giving soldiers stationed in Iraq two-week leaves in the largest R & R program since the Vietnam War. Soldiers on R & R or Emergency Leave are flown by the military to Germany or three airports in the United States, Baltimore/Washington, (BWI), Dallas/Fort Worth, (DFW), or Atlanta, (ATL) for free.

The soldiers have been responsible for flights the rest of the way in the U.S. to their destinations, until Congress provided funding for this purpose on November 3, 2003. However, this funding is not yet available and may not be sufficient for all the troops or troops on "Emergency Leave".

More than 470 soldiers a day are arriving in the U.S. Until the Department of Defense can authorize payment for their connecting flights under the new law, many soldiers often have to purchase high-priced, last minute tickets to get home to their families. The new law does not help soldiers on "Emergency Leave" who still must pay for their domestic travel to get home for the death, illness or birth of a family member.

Many Americans have donated their unused frequent flyer miles to the Department of Defense to help troops travel home and spend quality time with their loved ones, without worrying about how much it will cost. Now is your chance to help a family connect with a loved one again. Donate your miles by logging onto **www.heromiles.com**.

5125 MacArthur Blvd., NW
Suite #36
Washington, DC 20016



NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
MERRIFIELD VA
PERMIT NO. 2711

Address Service Requested

Happy Holidays from the AAFSW Staff!