

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEBRUARY 2004

State

MAGAZINE

with
Distinction



2003
DEPARTMENT
AWARDS



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

The Flying Tigers

State

MAGAZINE

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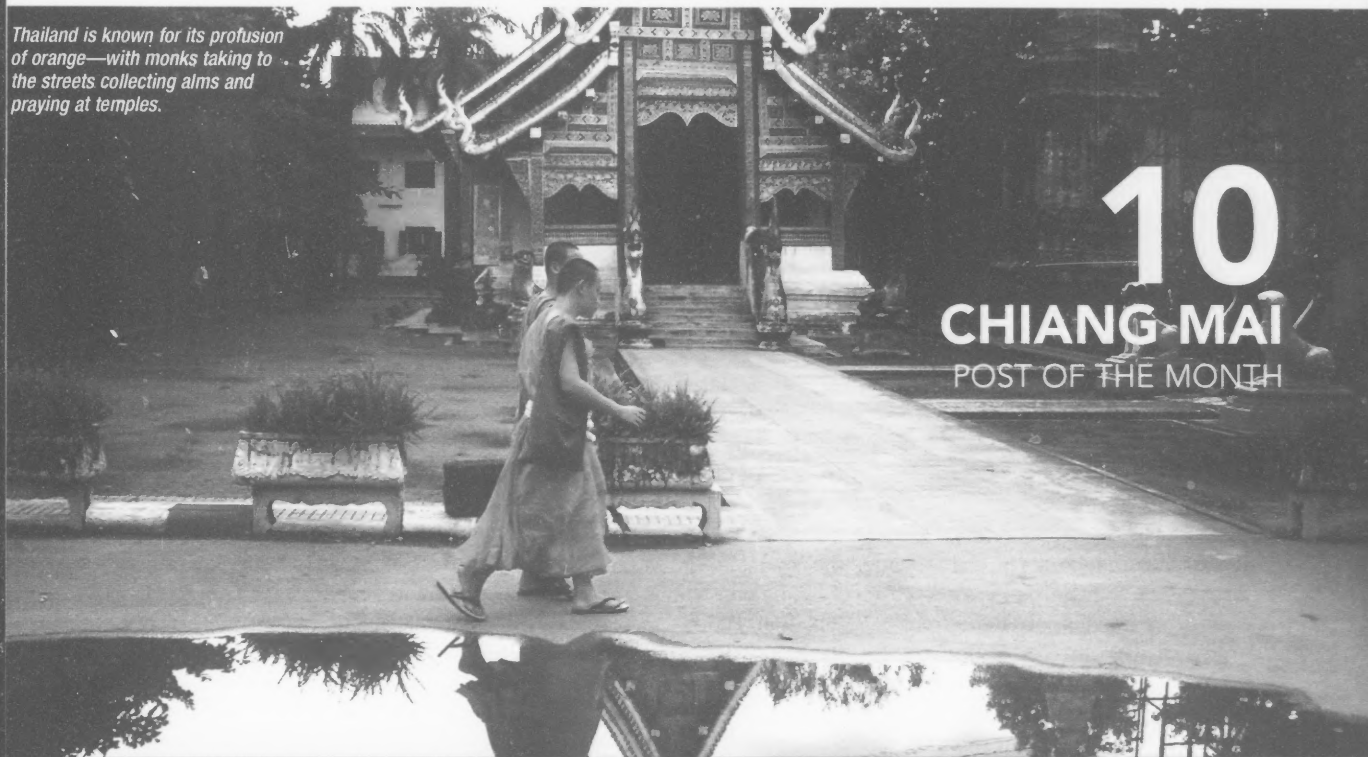
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FROM THE SECRETARY

SECRETARY COLIN L. POWELL



The 2004 Agenda

In 2004, in the final year of the present Administration, President Bush is as resolved as ever to promote freedom, prosperity and peace. That is our agenda for the new year, and I look to the dedicated men and women of the Department of

State to advance it.

2003 was a good year for freedom, and you can be proud of the contributions that American diplomacy made on freedom's frontlines. A free Afghanistan gathered its strength. The aspirations of a free Iraqi nation began to take wing. In this still new year, the State Department will take the lead role in Iraq as the Coalition Provisional Authority closes its doors, and we will advance further our goal of a free and democratic Middle East.

We will continue to work for a free Cuba, and toward democratic reform in other countries whose people are denied their rights. We will buttress new democracies in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, for in doing so we ensure that the 21st century will be a century of global liberty.

In 2003, President Bush led the worldwide effort to restore personal freedom to many thousands of individuals by combatting trafficking in persons. In partnership with other nations, we will strive in 2004 to eradicate this modern form of slavery. We will also launch the President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS relief to free millions from this terrible disease. In all such efforts, the role of the Department of State has been, and will remain, critical to success.

As to prosperity, a new international consensus is helping poorer countries develop through good governance, sound trade and environmental policies and wise investments in their people. The new Millennium Challenge Account, a pathbreaking incentive system for economic freedom, is the centerpiece of our effort. All of our bureaus and posts can help make the MCA a success by

showing the world's poorer nations the way to eligibility for MCA support.

We achieved in 2003 a freer trade and investment climate, signing trade pacts with Chile, Singapore and Central America. In 2004 the President will advance free trade through the World Trade Organization as well as through regional and bilateral agreements. The State Department has a crucial role to play in this effort along with the Office of the Trade Representative and other agencies.

On the security front, Americans are safer today than they were a year ago. Afghanistan is no longer a devil's playground for terrorists, nor Iraq an incubator for weapons of mass destruction. Thanks to the intensified international cooperation we have fostered, terrorists are increasingly on the run, in hiding, in jail or dead, their finances and communications severely disrupted.

The war on terrorism remains our highest priority, but success in that war—and more besides—depends on constructive ties among the major powers. These ties we pursue without respite. Our relations with Russia, China and India all improved in 2003, and we will strive to improve them further in 2004. Ties with our allies remain strong, despite the pains of adjustment to a new era. Both NATO and the European Union will expand this year, and that's good news for international security.

As our partnerships remain strong, so do the institutions of international cooperation that the State Department has labored to develop over many decades. The United Nations will help Iraqis rebuild their country. NATO is supporting the Afghan people as they chart their future. With China, Japan, Russia and South Korea we will tackle North Korea's dangerous nuclear weapons programs. With our Quartet partners we will seek an Israeli-Palestinian peace. We will also share the burden of bringing longstanding conflicts in Sudan, Liberia and Northern Ireland to an end.

Freedom, prosperity and peace are not separable policy goals. Each reinforces the other. The same may be said for our diplomatic efforts. To succeed we must work together: with our allies, within our own government, and, of course, within the Department of State. I look to each and every one of you to help me advance the President's agenda of freedom, prosperity and security in 2004. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Watch Where You Point

I'd be surprised if you haven't already received a tip or two regarding AK-47 rifles and their proper handling. Although his hand is wrapped around the magazine, that "young rebel soldier" from Monrovia in your December



article on "What a Difference a DRI Makes" should be told to kindly point the business end of the weapon downward and to the side for everyone's safety.

Robert C. Jennings
Information Systems
U.S. Embassy Santiago

Whose Cafeteria?

Whose cafeteria is pictured on page 29 of the December issue? It's not State's.

Steven Pike
PA/PRS

It's the cafeteria in SA-1, Columbia Plaza, where the magazine staff refuels regularly. Come visit. The Editor

An Ambassador's Legacy

The obituary of Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Sr. in the December issue gave the necessary facts but missed some essentials.

For one thing, Ambassador Ryan was an outstanding leader among American ambassadors in the Africa of the 1960s. His staff, the government of Niger, a passel of Peace Corps volunteers and the community of dependents admired and respected him. The ambassador made all of us feel like a close family, with few of the squabbles and

bickering often associated with neighboring missions.

For another, he stimulated high professional performance among the staff and was undoubtedly a significant role model for his two Foreign Service sons and for the numerous young officers who served with him and went on to become ambassadors and senior Department officials in their own right.

His is a proud legacy, indeed.

Joseph C. Guardiano
Retired FSO
Fort Myers, Fla.

A Good Laugh

Kudos to cartoonist Brian Aggeler for his hilarious and clever "New This Season on State TV" in the October issue.

As a former Foreign Service officer and television producer, I totally enjoyed it. I look forward to more.

Alice F. La Brie
New York City

FROM THE EDITOR

Ben Franklin has seen many award ceremonies in the room named for him. The David Martin portrait on the room's east wall gazed proudly once again on the latest group of employees to be honored by their peers and the Department for their contributions to the nation's diplomatic mission. In this issue, we have devoted 17 pages to the awardees so our readers everywhere can share their stories and successes. Our coverage starts on page 20.

Obesity is at record levels in this country and elsewhere and the Office of Medical Services is actively promoting behavior that embraces a healthy diet and appropriate exercise. Education is at the core of the initiative. The goalposts that used to measure blood pressure and cholesterol have been moved—much to the surprise of employees at risk of heart disease. In

the final analysis, health promotion supports diplomatic readiness. Check with the doctors on page 44.

Janice Whittingham has seen it all. The chief of passport processing at the San Francisco Passport Agency began her federal career there 32 years ago as a clerk-typist. During the three decades since, she has used manual typewriters, cash registers and noisy flexowriters. What she remembers most vividly are the irons. That's right, irons. Throughout the 1970s, ordinary household irons were used to attach passport photos to booklets. Today, the photos are digitized. Meet Janice and her colleagues in our Office of the Month feature that starts on page 16.

Cheer

HOLIDAY

A holiday package worth more than \$3,000 was sent to staff working in war-torn Iraq. The 80-box shipment contained products useful to those living in the harsh desert climate. Disposable wipes, sunglasses, sunscreen, dried nuts and fruits and beef jerky topped the donations.

Crossword puzzles and paperback books were also included.

Dozens of volunteers raised funds or gift wrapped the merchandise that was accompanied by a large banner filled with personal greetings from employees.

Even the kids at the Department's child care center got into the act with a card-writing project.

Steve Seche, a senior adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad, reports the package was a big hit and the banner became the main attraction "on the wall outside the cafeteria for all to see."

Another Baghdad employee wrote, "I hope you will convey my thanks to all who had the idea and made it happen. Their thoughtfulness made a big difference to us here."



IN THE NEWS



Top: From left, Zita Meagher, Ellen Prespare and Bernadette Cole, who work in Human Resources, inspect the holiday banner before shipping it to Iraq. Left: Building Manager Barbara Martin helps package holiday gifts. Above: Maggie Morse, employee services specialist, pitches in.

Employees Give Toys to 2,100 Tots

For the third straight year, the Bureaus of Administration and Diplomatic Security have sponsored the Department's Toys for Tots campaign, bringing happiness and toys to children who might otherwise go without both during the holiday season.

Chief campaign organizer Jonathon Myers, a special projects officer in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and a major in the Marine Corps Reserve, served on

active duty as a Marine Corps major in Iraq until October 2003. So this year's drive was launched a little later than usual. Nevertheless, it quickly gained momentum and raised as many toys and half the cash of last year's campaign.

At the end of the campaign on Dec. 19, Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage stood in the Treaty Room stacked from floor to ceiling with toys and presented more than 4,200 gifts

to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation on behalf of State Department employees. "Thousands of children who otherwise don't have reasons to smile at Christmas will... have a little warmth in their lives," he said.

Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Matthew T. Cooper, Marine Toys for Tots Foundation president and CEO, received the gifts and thanked Department employees for their generosity. "Anything we can do to have a positive impact on the development of those children is an investment in the future, and you are making an investment in their future," Gen. Cooper said.

The program reaches approximately one-third of the 15 million children living in poverty in the United States. "I am happy to report that we've got the most extensive coverage we've ever had," Gen. Cooper said. "We have local campaigns this year in 456 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.... We have more than doubled the reach of the campaign in the past 10 years."

According to the organization's CEO, two toys are typically given every child. That means 2,100 children in the Washington, D.C., area, who might otherwise have gone without, experienced the joy of Christmas because of generous Department employees.

"We are really indebted to them and we appreciate their support," the official said.



More than 4,000 toys fill the Treaty Room in preparation for the official donation ceremony.

46 slices Amount of pizza the average American eats per year.

Cafeteria Adds Food Stations

The North Servery in the Harry S Truman Building cafeteria reopened Nov. 3.

There are now nine food stations. They include the Crystal Bay Grill (oysters Rockefeller, clams casino, shrimp, mussels, calamari, perch, grouper, stuffed crab and crab cake and perch sandwiches); the Branding Iron (grilled burgers and chicken); the American Smokehouse (sliced roast beef and ham); the Portabella (pasta); Noble Roman's Pizza (pizza and stromboli baked in a brick oven); the Farmer's

Table (pot pies and oven-baked casseroles); Malibu Wraps (assorted folded sandwiches); Stacker's Deli (assorted sandwiches on specialty breads); and the Mediterranean Terrace (gyros, souvlaki and Greek salads). Starbucks coffee as well as cookies and desserts at the Baker's Street food station are also available.

The North Servery is open weekdays from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., with limited service to 3 p.m.



PHOTOGRAPHS (ABOVE): BRIAN BUCKWALTER; (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP): HANY REYAD; (BOTTOM): U.S. EMBASSY IN ZAGREB

Motor Pool Hosts Iftar in Cairo

Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns attended an Iftar in Cairo, where they were welcomed by Motor Pool Supervisor Tareq Nour.

Each year the Cairo motor pool employees host an "Iftar," or breaking of the Ramadan fast, for the mission's employees and their families. They erect long communal tables in the embassy parking lot and decorate them with bunting and traditional colored-glass lanterns. Participants dine on soup, chicken, kabobs, salads, yogurt, hummus and bread.

The communal meal allowed the officials to relax and thank the Foreign Service National employees for their long hours in the world's most congested traffic. They also re-affirmed the U.S. government's respect and admiration for one of the world's great religions.

Ambassador David Welch, Deputy Chief of Mission Gordon Gray and their wives also attended the event.

Embassy employees donated more than \$1,000 to the Community Liaison Office to purchase Ramadan meals



Motor Pool Supervisor Tareq Nour, center, greets guests at the Iftar. They are, from left, Assistant Secretary William Burns, Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, Ambassador David Welch and General Services Officer Tom Palmer.

for the mission's local guard force and for the poor, who often eat at "sponsored" tables near mosques.



Zagreb Opens New Embassy

Employees at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb have a new embassy. The embassy, which replaces a 150-year-old building in the city's center, is on a 6.5-acre site south of the city near the airport.

The official opening last June followed 18 months of planning and attracted Croatian President Stjepan Mesić, senior government and business officials and Director of Overseas Buildings Operations Charles Williams.

The following day, the mission hosted an open house for all employees and their families.

While employees no longer enjoy the convenience of working in the center of the city, they have an attractive and secure facility surrounded by cornfields and farms.



Afghan girl uses donated wheelchair.

Project Afghanistan Provides Wheelchairs

ing facility the Bureau of Diplomatic Security operates near Kabul. Many of the recipients were land mine victims, a leading cause of disability in developing nations.

David Sedney, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, described the project as part of the "American spirit of giving and sharing." Abdullah Wardak, Afghan minister of martyrs and disabled, and Kenneth E. Behring, founder of the Wheelchair Foundation, joined him at the ceremony.

The nonprofit organization seeks to provide a wheelchair to anyone in the world who needs but cannot afford one.

The State- and Defense-supported initiative was developed, organized and implemented by the Bureaus of Public Affairs and South Asian Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. The U.S. Agency for International Development also provided support.

"You have changed my life...I now have freedom and mobility," said one grateful Afghan recipient. "It's comfortable. It's easy to steer. My life will be much easier now," said another.

The statements came from disabled Afghans during a ceremony in Kabul highlighting Project Afghanistan. More than 200 people attended the heavily covered event at Camp Watan, a secure counterterrorism train-

Food Drive Meets Its Goal

The Department's holiday season Food Drive for 2003 was judged an overwhelming success as generous Washington-area employees contributed a total of 8,629 pounds of food and other household items to the Capital Area Food Bank of Washington, D.C., exceeding the "pound per person" goal set for the drive.

Contributions more than doubled last year's total, with donations of cash and gift cards adding another \$881. Employees attending one holiday office party donated \$400 to purchase gift cards for the food bank.

The drive would not have succeeded without the help of scores of utilities crew employees who, in addition to their regular duties, volunteered to collect donations from receptacles scattered throughout the Department's many annexes.

The Capital Area Food Bank is the largest public, non-profit food and nutrition education resource in the metropolitan area. The network of more than 750 member feeding programs distributes millions of pounds of food and educates thousands of local residents on hunger, poverty and nutrition.

Mark Mitchell, food resources coordinator at the food bank, said, "You folks at the State Department pull more than your share of the load. Your time and efforts are appreciated greatly."

While officials look forward to the 2004 food drive, they remind employees that the Capital Area Food Bank and others across the country need donations year-round. To learn more about the organization's programs, visit www.capitalareafoodbank.org.

DIRECT FROM THE D.G.

AMBASSADOR W. ROBERT PEARSON



Our Service to You

One of the things that struck me most when I came into this job is that 400 Bureau of Human Resources employees support 40,000 Department of

State employees with a broad range of services. The volume of transactions HR processes is remarkable. In 2003, for example, the bureau processed 103,866 personnel actions. Serving you is what we do and our goal is to do it better each time.

Here are some highlights:

Staffing. With support from the Secretary and Congress, the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative allowed us to hire 759 Foreign Service and Civil Service employees above attrition. This translates roughly into a 10 percent plus up and the staffing of hundreds of positions in every bureau. As a result, we are expanding training, particularly language training for new employees, addressing staffing gaps and meeting our critical new requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Training. By now, 1,690 employees have benefited from the mandatory leadership and management training offered at FSI. Junior employees are benefiting from this training at the outset of their careers and that training will be updated as they move into the mid- and senior-levels. The goal is for us all to become more aware of how we work with one another. As the Secretary has said, we are all leaders regardless of our position or our rank. Leadership is about a mindset and the Department as a whole stands to benefit as our employees become more proficient in leadership.

Employee programs. To help ensure that the State Department remains an employer of choice (State was named a Top-20 employer by college students in an annual survey that included multi-national firms and Fortune 500 companies) we are making sure we have programs that qualitatively affect the lives of our

employees. Last year, we made child care available to low-income employees through subsidies benefiting 111 children. We have the federal government's largest and most successful student loan repayment program and provided payments averaging \$4,700 to 660 qualifying employees. With more than 165 fellows, we also have a fair claim to the government's largest Presidential Management Fellows program. These colleagues bring us their energy and enthusiasm. We, in turn, have the responsibility to mentor them and ensure meaningful professional opportunities and rotations.

But mentoring is something we can all do. Anyone who's been a mentor or protégé can vouch for how rewarding the experience is. While the relationship doesn't have to be formal, our new Civil Service mentoring program already has involved 188 employees at all levels. In distinguished U.S. law firms, senior partners devote significant time to recruiting and mentoring young associates. Why? They represent the firm's future. Those who come after us are the Department's future and your participation in their professional development only makes our firm stronger.

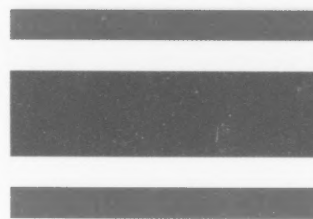
Everyone has benefited from the Secretary's commitment to improving the Department's use of technology. We now have access to the Internet on our desktops. In keeping with technological advancements and HR's efforts to improve services for all employees, we are making basic documents and services available to employees online. Examples include eBid, eOPE, earning and leave statements, employee profiles and a retirement estimator. We hope you will find these helpful as we work towards our goal of making your personnel information available to you securely and directly.

This is just a snapshot of some of the things we are doing to serve you better. Why not take a minute to let us know what you think? You can do that through the Customer Service Survey at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/cf/CSsurvey/survey.cfm>. ■

*Buddhist monks enter a temple
in Chiang Mai*



POST OF THE MONTH



Chiang Mai

By Linda Santitharangkul
and Henry V. Jardine



A historic royal residence
surrounded by the
exotic bustle of a 700-year-old Asian city is the
unique setting for the U.S. Consulate General in
Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand.

The visually jarring mix of ornate temples and palaces sharing space with severe modern office buildings and hotels offers an always interesting and challenging environment for the consulate community living and working in Chiang Mai. With 28 U.S. employees and 45 local employees, the U.S. Consulate is a big, little post that, like the city at large, finds its own balance in having a close, tight-knit community with diverse offices and different responsibilities.

At the consulate office compound, once the home of the last prince of Northern Thailand, officers deal with the typical consular matters, visas and needs of American citizens. Others track issues important to a

consular district one-third the size of Thailand and bordering Burma and Laos. Issues include Burmese refugees, trade in illicit narcotics, trafficking in persons and international terrorism.

Situated on a historic compound, the consulate is ready to share its scenic grounds and buildings with the local public by opening its doors to the community for special events. A Chinese-style pavilion, or sala, usually serves as the waiting room for visa applicants and con-

verts easily to a stage for an a cappella singing troupe from Yale, an Elvis impersonator from Northern Thailand and a visit from Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Thepa Rattanasuda.

Across town, Drug Enforcement Agency agents assist Thai law officers in curbing the rampant drug smuggling that makes the district's Golden Triangle border so infamous. Last August, Thai and U.S. authorities located more than one million methamphetamine tablets buried in six underground caches near the Thai-Burmese border.

In another part of town, and at the foot of Chiang Mai's grand temple mountain, Doi Suthep, are the offices of U.S. Air Force Detachment 415. The detachment is located on a local Thai Navy installation. The idea that a navy post would be so far from the ocean certainly raises eyebrows, but so does the detachment's mission of monitoring seismic activity from nuclear tests. The detachment's 600 miles of cables and sensors help monitor compliance with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

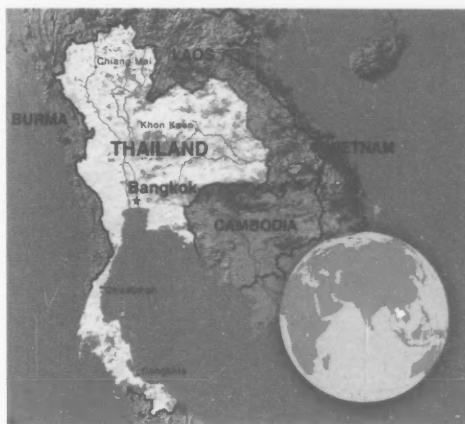
Air Force personnel can see the golden spires of the ancient temple Wat Doi Suthep on the mountain and Chiang Mai in the valley below. Housing developments, shopping centers and malls surround the ancient city of crumbling walls and moat. Starbucks coffee and Aunt Annie's pretzels are readily available. Growth and change, however, have come gradually and the city's small lanes strain to accommodate the increasing number of sport utility vehicles. One consulate couple copes by means of an adapted three-wheeled scooter, or tuk-tuk.

The region's attractions and growing conveniences have been drawing more Americans. At present some 5,000 registered Americans live in the consular district, mostly near Chiang Mai but also scattered throughout the North. Historically, many Americans have been involved in missionary work. The first missionaries came in the 1850s, but as businesses grow and services improve, more Americans have been coming to work and retire.

Attractions include a thriving furniture and home décor industry. This area is home to the most prolific handicraft trade in the country. As luck would have it, the new housing compound is convenient to the source of woodcarvings and furniture that makes Thailand so famous.

The hills north of Chiang Mai stood in for those of Cambodia in the recently released film *Beyond Borders*. Indeed, Thailand represents many Asian countries because it's relatively film friendly. People also head for

AT A GLANCE



Country name: Thailand

Capital: Bangkok

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Year founded: 1238

Population: 64.3 million

Religions: Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism

Land mass: Over 319,000 square miles

Approximate size: More than twice the size of Wyoming

Languages: Thai and English

Currency: baht (THB)

Per capita income: \$6,900

Population below poverty line: 12.5%

Natural resources: Tin, rubber, natural gas, tungsten and tantalum

Exports: Computers, transistors, seafood, clothing and rice

Television stations: 5 (all in Bangkok)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook 2002



Top left: The new housing compound south of town offers a country-like atmosphere. During Easter 2003, the kids on the compound hunted for eggs. Chiang Mai children affected by HIV/AIDS were invited to the party. Top right: A city of dichotomies of all shapes and flavors, Chiang Mai has new hotels that dwarf ancient temples and modern office buildings built along the ancient city's moat. Bottom: A bullock cart, some oxen and one consul general make a great photo opportunity.



the hills on weekends, since pockets of diverse cultures can be found all over the North. Six major hill tribes can be visited in a half-day tour and all their crafts can seemingly be found in one place—the city's bustling Night Bazaar, open year-round.

Considered a breath of fresh air when compared to Bangkok, Chiang Mai has more than its share of detractors who comment on the growing traffic and pollution. The consulate—wedged among bustling markets and overshadowed by a high-rise condominium—is confronted daily by the surrounding clash of the new and

old. Yet within the consulate, a balance is found among the classic teak buildings, standing testaments to the spectacular history of Thai royalty. ■

Ms. Santitharangkul is the assistant community liaison officer and Mr. Jardine the management officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai.

U.S. Consulate General Is Rich in Royal History

The U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai is among a diminishing number of historic properties serving as U.S. diplomatic posts. In an era of nondescript office blocks, the consulate evokes an earlier time of overhead ceiling fans and arbors draped in bougainvillea and frangipani. Once the royal residence of the last prince of Northern Thailand, Chao Kaew Nawarat, the history of the consulate gives staff the right to say they work in a special place.

Previously known as the Chedi Ngarm, or Beautiful Pagoda Palace, the consulate compound encompasses many historic buildings, some more than 100 years old. The first notable royal to reside here was Chao Dara Rasmi, princess consort of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V. In 1914, four years after the death of Rama V, the princess returned to her family home of Chiang Mai and lived in a teak house on the compound. When she moved to the nearby village of Mae Rim, her brother Maj. Gen. Chao Kaew Nawarat, the ninth and last prince of the Northern Thai Lanna Chuen Jet Ton dynasty, moved into the royal compound, where he built a house in 1923 as a wedding gift to his daughter, Chao Siriprakai Na Chiengmai. In 1926, Princess Siriprakai hosted the visit of the ill-fated King Prapokkalo, who was deposed in 1934, and Queen Ram Pai Panni. Today, the consulate's communications staff occupies the former royal residence.

The joy of the king and queen's visit would be soon forgotten in 1933 because of the death of Princess Dara Rasmi. Her coffin lay in state at the

Chedi Ngarm Palace from December 1933 to April 1934. Later that same year, Prince Kaew Nawarat would replace the old teak residence with a new home, now the consul general's residence. The house, designed by an Italian architect, was built in the then-popular Anglo-Burmese style. A Chinese-style sala, or pavilion, was also built at that time. The sala now serves as the consular section's waiting

room and offices.

Prince Kaew Nawarat enjoyed his new home for only five years. He died in June 1939. His body lay in state in the sala from June to July 1939 in the same place where today's visa applicants and citizen services customers wait.

The death of Prince Kaew Nawarat closed a chapter on the history of the royal residence. The government of Siam no longer recognized the semiau-

tonomous principality of Northern Thailand, once part of the great kingdom of Lanna founded in 1269 by King Mengrai. The central government established direct control from Bangkok and the Chedi Ngarm property was sold to the Office of the Royal Crown Properties.

On Sept. 1, 1950, a new chapter in the history of the property opened when U.S. Ambassador Edwin F. Stanton and the Thai deputy minister of finance signed a lease for the palace and grounds. The consulate still maintains that lease with the Office of Royal Crown Properties.

The compound became a U.S. Consulate General in 1986 and it continued its close association with the Thai royal family. In January 2003, the consulate hosted the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn. —*Henry V. Jardine*



Chao Kaew Nawarat, the ruling prince of Chiang Mai, built the present consul general's residence around 1934. This is the residence as it stands today.



OFFICE OF THE MONTH

San Francisco Passport Agency

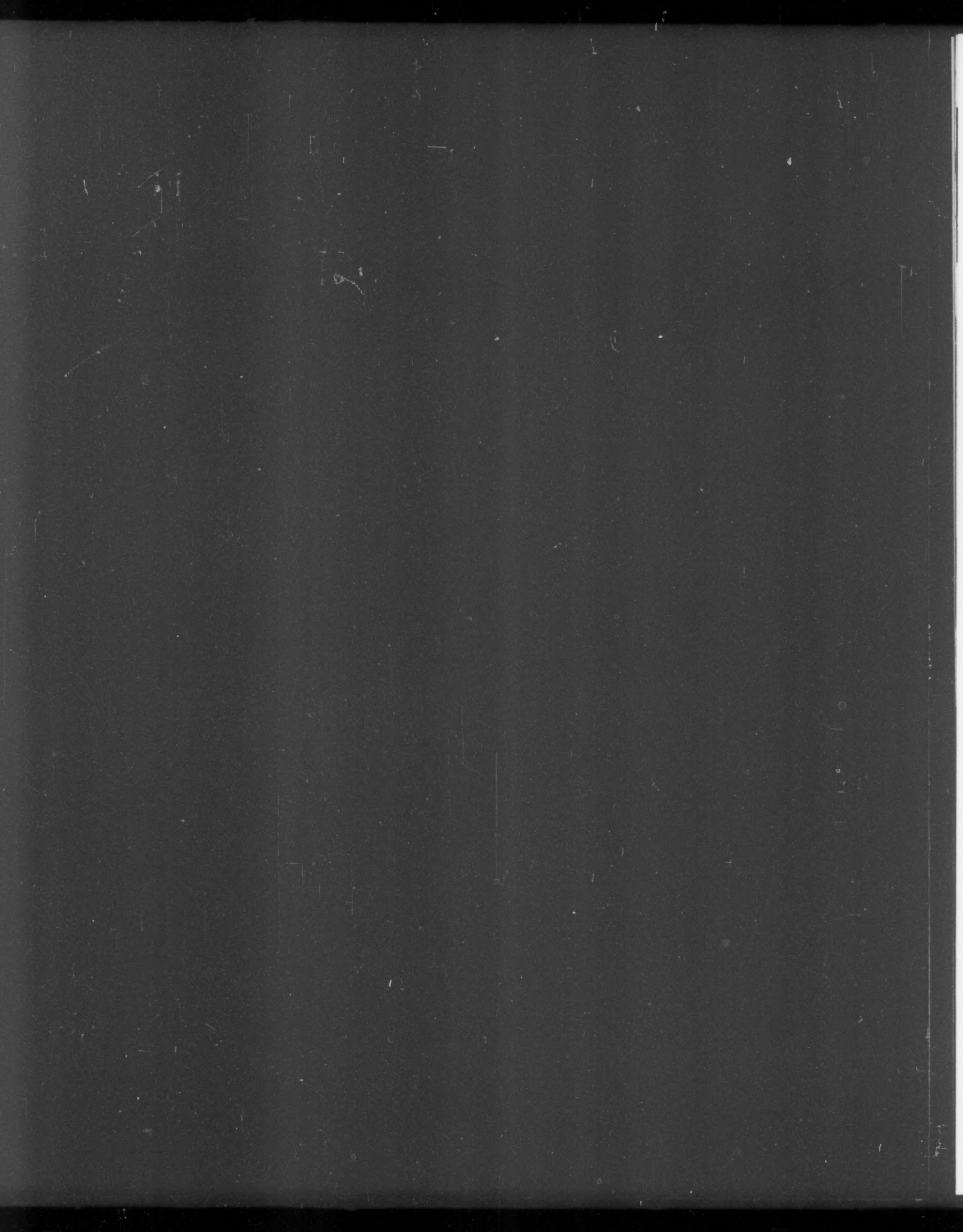
Story by Kate Styrsky

Photographs by Wah Tom

San Francisco is a city that looms large in the public imagination. It's where Mark Twain reported spending the coldest winter of his life one August evening. It's where visitors are encouraged to wear flowers in their hair. It's where Tony Bennett left his heart and the classic local treat Rice-a-Roni was born.

It's also home to several State Department entities, including the San Francisco Passport Agency.







Left: Public entrance to the San Francisco Passport Agency. Below: Cashier Elsa Laoeng rings up passport fees and begins the issuance process by assigning each application to a numbered batch box.

San Francisco has had a federal presence since the 1840s. The State Department arrived around World War I. Yellowing old telephone directories document that a San Francisco Passport Agency has existed at least since 1956. Old-timers reminisce about two earlier homes: a narrow basement office in the city's Federal Building and a sleek modern office in the heart of the Market Street financial district. Since February 1997, the agency has occupied a five-story concrete building it shares with the Environmental Protection Agency, the asylum office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services and several nonfederal entities.

Currently, 49 employees work in the agency, each trained to handle a variety of tasks to meet the agency's mission of providing travel documents, information and assistance to the American public. Like the grizzled '49ers who panned for ore during the Gold Rush, the staff spends long hours in patient, sometimes intensive labor—though their "golden" goal is exceptional customer service. The agency's automated appointment system focuses its frontline interviewers on serving U.S. citizens who plan to travel in two weeks or sooner. As a result, essentially every counter interview presents a need for expedited service. A typical interview begins: "Ah, you have airline tickets for

overseas travel tonight. We'll have to work fast!" Passport specialists and processors, with their managers and supervisors' support, meet their customers' needs. In fiscal year 2003 alone they issued 294,749 passports.

An ever-expanding network of outside acceptance facilities—including U.S. Post Offices, county clerks' offices, colleges and libraries in Northern California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah—also provide customer service. There are now close to 400 such convenient facilities, 120 of them in the Bay area. In 2003, approximately 500 outside acceptance agents attended training classes the agency conducted. Volunteer passport specialists also attend local naturalization ceremonies and those in San José. As hundreds of eager, newly naturalized citizens surge forward, volunteers accept application packages hand over fist. The applications are forwarded to passport processing centers immediately afterwards. The naturalization outreach program brings in more than 11,000 applications annually.

The staff also supports the agency's fraud prevention program and security procedures. "Eternal vigilance" is the watchword among passport specialists and processors: all are alert to security issues regarding applications, documents and supplies. Monthly training ses-



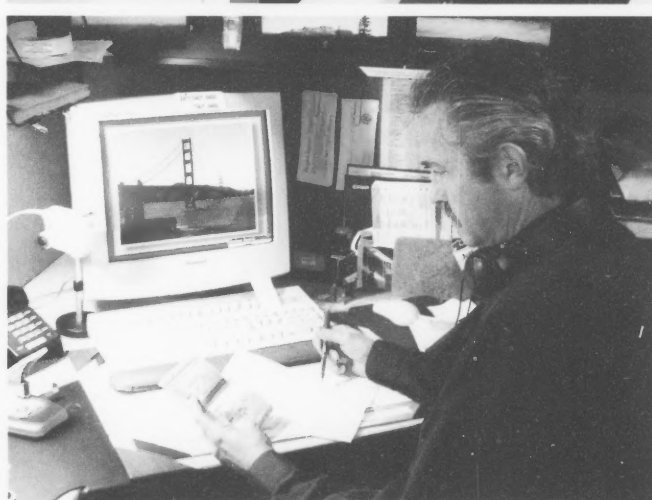
sions provide up-to-date information on fraud concerns. The agency maintains a steady flow of fraud referrals to Diplomatic Security's field offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The passport agency takes pride in demonstrating an adventurous approach to change and to new ideas. The agency has integrated major technological upgrades such as a photodigitization system that scans the applicant's photograph, prints the image directly onto the passport book and seals it with a silkscreen process. Most recently, the adjudication and processing teams have tackled the new Passport Records Imaging Management System that prepares an electronic image of each completed passport application. By making complete visual data readily available throughout the global passport system, PRISM has enhanced both security and customer service.

A fresh developmental activity or distant tour of duty always draws a healthy list of enthusiastic volunteers. San Francisco's adjudicators have taken their expertise to the clearance office in Washington, D.C., and to consulates in Dubai, the Bahamas and Rio de Janeiro. Three specialists have participated in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Executive Leadership Program and two in USDA's New Leader Program. Closer to home, specialists traveled to nearby Oakland to participate in a newly instituted outreach program for grammar school children. Two specialists and one adjudication supervisor have served as loaned executives to support the Combined Federal Campaign.

The agency has experimented successfully with a number of on-site developmental sessions for the entire staff, fostering esprit de corps as well as individual development. To enhance quality of life, the agency offers alternative work schedules such as compressed work schedules and flexitour.

With the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Yerba Buena Cultural Center, the Comic Art Museum and a private art academy nearby, the agency naturally partakes of a spirit of creativity. On their



Top: Regional Director James Griffin at his desk. Center: Processor Sandy Bedford captures an image of an application in the database. Bottom: Passport Specialist Jeff Doyle reviews applications to determine eligibility.



From Ironing to Digitizing, She's Seen It All

"I'm glad that I like change!" says Janice Whittingham of the San Francisco Passport Agency. During her 32 years of service as clerk-typist, team leader, cashier, computer operator and processing chief, she has experienced enough changes to satisfy the most relentless thrill seeker.

The deaths of her parents in the early 1970s rushed Janice into the working world to support three adolescent siblings. Eager for regular, full-time work, she aced her typing test. The passport agency hired her as a clerk-typist soon after her interview.

Recalling her most vivid memories of those early days, Janice exclaims, "The irons!" Throughout the 1970s, an ordinary household iron was part of the "technology" for gluing the passport photo on the identifying page. Janice recalls mastering data entry on the noisy flexwriter and learning to decipher its tickertape-like strips. She painstakingly processed passport amendments on the bulky special typewriter. As cashier, Janice handled yet another piece of

now-extinct equipment—the manual cash register.

Among the career changes she most appreciates are the personal ones. "Before I worked here, I was a really shy, really quiet kid," she says. Becoming a team leader demanded a lot from a shy and quiet person, but Janice is grateful that she had supportive supervisors who urged her beyond her comfort zone. She soon enjoyed her new responsibilities.

In 1983, computerization brought more changes. Good-bye, flexwriter. Hello, mainframe. The huge computer, roughly the size of a toolshed, was enclosed within a chilly, climate-controlled room of its own. As a computer operator, Janice diligently tended to all its needs.

In 1990, Janice was promoted to processing chief, managing all passport processing functions. While she enjoys her independence, she believes a manager must be part of a team, too. "It's important to be involved in the daily work, not separate from other people."

Her goal for employees: Work independently and love what you do. —*Kate Styrsky*

own time, employees engage in a variety of activities—from playing the saxophone, acting and pastry-baking to writing and attending theatrical productions and sports events. Some collect books, antique political buttons or model airplanes. The conservatively groomed individual who greets the public at the information desk may have just spent the previous weekend at a Star Trek convention.

San Francisco well deserves its reputation as a scenic, creative city with a personality of its own. It's "The City That Knows How." With or without flowers in their hair, the San Francisco Passport Agency and its staff fit right in. ■

The author is a supervisory passport specialist at the San Francisco Passport Agency.



SERVING with Distinction



Story by
Dave
Krecke

Photos by
Michael
Gross

2003 DEPARTMENT

It was a ceremony befitting the honorees' distinctive service. While the Air Force Brass Quintet played the music of Bach and other baroque composers, more than 30 awardees, their families and co-workers gathered beneath the chandeliers of the ornate Benjamin Franklin Room. The nation's preeminent 18th-century diplomat seemed to peer approvingly from the David Martin portrait on the room's east wall.

A W A R D S





Left: Awardees and their invited guests smile at an amusing remark by Secretary Powell during the Department's 2003 awards ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room. Above: The Secretary joins award winners for a photo beneath the portrait of Benjamin Franklin in the 8th floor reception room named for the 18th century diplomat.

After the Armed Forces Color Guard presented the colors, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of the Bureau of Human Resources W. Robert Pearson congratulated the recipients and welcomed their guests and families. He expressed thanks to the many donors who have sponsored the Department's most prestigious awards, including the late Ambassador Luther I. Replogle, the Vincent Astor Foundation, Ambassador Charles E. Cobb Jr., the late Ambassador Herbert Salzman, Ambassador Swanee Hunt and former Under Secretary for Global Affairs Frank E. Loy.

The director general recognized Grace Watson, sister of the late Barbara Watson, former assistant secretary for Consular Affairs, for whom the highest consular award is named. He also introduced Mrs. Katharine Frasure, wife of the late Robert Frasure. "Bob was a very dear friend," the director general said, "and one of the giants of his Foreign Service generation. It

is an honor to present the award, in his name, that represents the highest ideals of service for which he stood." He then introduced Secretary Colin Powell.

The Secretary noted that the awardees were selected from each of the Department's employee groups—Foreign Service, Civil Service and Foreign Service National—from all levels and job specialties, and shared a deep commitment to excellence in service to the United States, each making a major contribution to the nation's diplomatic relations.

Turning to the awardees' families, he said the country owed them a debt of gratitude as well for their sacrifices—missed soccer games, holidays and anniversaries—while family members served in faraway places, often in dangerous assignments. The Secretary sat for a photo with the gathered awardees, and then Under Secretary for Management Grant Green presented their plaques as the director general read their citations.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year

Ghulam Sakhi Ahmadzai, building maintenance supervisor at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, is the Foreign Service National Employee of the Year for 2003. He is recognized for his exceptional efforts in Afghanistan during the 13-

year absence of American employees and following the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul in December 2001. His loyalty to the U.S. government and to maintaining the integrity of the embassy during that absence, despite personal risk, cannot be repaid. He provided leadership, continuity and the expertise to help the United States achieve its goals.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of African Affairs

Tabotu Woldemichael, information assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, earned the award for her tremendous efforts and dedication to the public diplomacy unit in Addis Ababa. She

proved indispensable in promoting U.S. objectives through the press and broadcast media, especially in Ethiopia's growing Islamic press. The mission has extensively relied on her advice and counsel on how to adapt its message to the Ethiopian cultural context. Her contacts are outstanding and have opened doors previously closed to the embassy.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Rachma A. Jaurinata, political/administrative assistant in Medan, is recognized for her outstanding performance, demonstrated initiative, compassion and dedication to the

highest levels of service on behalf of U.S. in Sumatra, Indonesia, in the finest tradition of the Foreign Service.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Edmond Hajrullaaga, a financial assistant in the U.S. Office in Pristina, earned his award for developing ViewROLLS, a financial management software application that has

resulted in multiple benefits to the Department. His concept and design work led to the implementation of a new financial reporting mechanism that is less cumbersome and more user-friendly. The new program has increased productivity by substantially reducing the time involved in reconciling accounts and determining the status of funds. He is commended for his outstanding initiative and dedication to improving financial services.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Samir M. Jarandogha, security investigator at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, is recognized for his outstanding dedication, loyalty and extraordinary contribution to

the security and well-being of mission employees and their families. At great personal sacrifice, he has maintained the highest performance standards.



Foreign Service National Employee of the Year Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

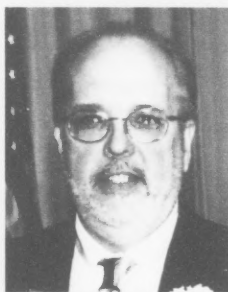
Naveed Iqbal, information manager at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, earned his award with his innovative contributions to the U.S. Mission in Canada's information systems

and the Department's enforcement of homeland security. His exceptional contributions and advancement of the Department's strategic information technology to combat terrorism have had a significant impact on the mission's ability to meet its goals and objectives.



**Chief Financial Officer's
Award for Distinction in
Public Finance**

Janis Cook, budget specialist in the executive office of the Bureau of African Affairs, was recognized for exceptional performance in public finance that greatly benefited the entire Department. She was commended for her significant contributions and accomplishments.



**Human Resource Officer
of the Year**

Robert R. West, chief of the division of human resources management in the Office of Overseas Employment, is Human Resource Officer of the Year for 2003. He earned the award for his energetic and innovative management and implementation of new human resources programs such as Computer-Aided Job Evaluation and Personnel Services Agreement Plus, programs that have significantly improved the Department's management of Foreign Service National employees, locally employed Americans and family members at Foreign Service posts.



**Award for Excellence in
Labor Diplomacy**

John W. Chamberlin, labor attaché in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, earned the award while serving as labor officer in Beijing. He was recognized for his creativity and dedication in advancing the cause of worker rights in China. He developed wide and warm relationships and launched cooperative programs that built a strong fabric of mutual understanding and contributed to the development of a more multifaceted, mature and stable U.S. -China relationship.



**James A. Baker III—
C. Howard Wilkins Jr.
Award for Outstanding
Deputy Chief of Mission**

Frank C. Urbancic, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, is recognized for his extraordinary leadership in putting the embassy on a war footing on the eve of Operation Iraqi Freedom by expanding and protecting the physical plant and staff of the mission while closely coordinating with military units and host country officials. He has demonstrated dedication to mentoring junior officers, improving the morale of the mission family and sensitively orchestrating the ordered departure of dependents, all in an exemplary fashion.



**Charles E. Cobb Jr.
Award for Initiative and
Success in Trade
Development**

Michael E. Guest, U.S. Ambassador to Romania, earned the award for his outstanding work in establishing the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest as a proactive platform for U.S. businesses in Romania.



**Charles E. Cobb Jr.
Award for Initiative and
Success in Trade
Development**

Ramin Asgard, former economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, is recognized for promoting commercial opportunities for U.S. firms and enhancing bilateral trade and investment levels in post-conflict Afghanistan.



Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs

Andrew T. Wyllie, a program officer in the Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration Affairs, earned the award for his outstanding creativity and resourcefulness in

responding to humanitarian challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan. His determination, leadership and teamwork were key factors contributing to U.S. success in minimizing injury to the peoples of both countries.



James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence

Jeffrey D. Feltman, acting principal officer in the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, earned the award for finding creative ways, under extremely difficult conditions, to advance the President's two-state solution

to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while meeting critical management and security needs.



Director General's Award for Impact and Originality in Reporting

Leslie M. Tsou, former Libya desk officer, earned the award for the exceptional candor and clarity of her reporting and analysis of developments and trends in Libya. In the absence of a U.S. Mission in

Libya, she developed unique contacts and sources from her Washington position and drew upon them in presenting persuasive proposals to policymakers. Her research and writing exemplified the highest standards of reporting and analysis.



Diplomatic Security Employee of the Year

Michael T. Evanoff, former regional security officer in Islamabad, is recognized for his superlative performance and many accomplishments during a period of daunting security challenges after the Sept. 11 attacks. He effectively

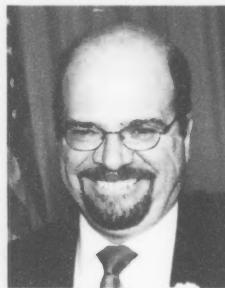
protected a busy, high-threat embassy and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional security office, providing security to more than 7,000 temporary duty visitors and preparing for the war in Iraq. His performance throughout this extraordinary period is a credit to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and to the Department of State.



Equal Employment Opportunity Award

Mae R. Whitehead, a management analyst in the Bureau of Administration, earned the award for her exemplary leadership as president of the Department's Foreign Affairs Chapter of Blacks in Government employee organization;

her commitment to developing an organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of and valuing cultural diversity in all employees; and her service as a collateral duty senior mediator.



Robert C. Frasure Memorial Award

Christopher W. Dell, U.S. Ambassador to Angola, is recognized for his personal intervention, extraordinary ability and hard work in the negotiations between the Angolan government and UNITA, which brought an

end to one of Africa's longest civil conflicts. He was the driving force in a long and complex process, demonstrating exceptional negotiation skills, broad understanding of conflict resolution and commitment to democracy and national reconciliation in Angola.



**Leamon R. Hunt Award
for Administrative
Excellence**

William H. Moser, former management officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, earned the award for his outstanding skill, judgment and dedication. His comprehensive plan to improve working conditions and his direction of the pilot program for an off-shore pension plan and new health insurance contract for local employees have strengthened morale, enhanced customer service and improved life and work at the embassy in Kiev.



**Swanee Hunt Award for
Outstanding Achievement
in Improving the
Status of Women
Globally (Foreign Service
employee recipient)**

Donald K. Steinberg is recognized for his strong commitment to incorporating women's issues into U.S. foreign policy deliberations by ensuring that women were involved as implementers and beneficiaries of reconstruction and governance programs in Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq and beyond; for encouraging the participation of women in post-conflict deliberations; and for aggressively recruiting women for key positions in the Office of Policy Planning.



**Swanee Hunt Award
(locally employed spouse
recipient)**

Sarah M. Jackson, a locally employed spouse, earned the award for her outstanding work in organizing programs and securing financial support for Omani women's organizations while serving as the democracy programs coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Muscat. Through her efforts, creativity and perseverance, she identified strategies to promote the visibility and voice of Omani women at all levels.



**Innovation in the Use of
Technology Award**

Thomas D. Smitham, former economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in London, is recognized for creating the pioneering London classified web site. As a result of his initiative and creativity, the "CONSULATEVIRTUAL" will serve as a model for other posts worldwide as they make their reporting available to millions on SIPRNet.



**Linguist of the Year
Award**

Michael Gfoeller, currently on temporary duty in Iraq, earned the award for superb use of his unique linguistic abilities and area expertise in the promotion of U.S. national interests while serving on the front lines of diplomacy in Iraq.



**Frank E. Loy Award for
Environmental
Diplomacy**

Jonathan A. Margolis is recognized for his exceptional leadership, diplomatic accomplishments and dedication in crafting and pursuing U.S. goals in a series of meetings, culminating in the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As the Department's special representative on sustainable development, he consistently displayed innovative thinking, keen political judgment and good humor in his efforts to build domestic and international consensus for a shared and forward-leaning vision on sustainable development.



**Thomas Morrison
Information
Management Award**

Barry R. Peterson, information management officer at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, earned the award for his sustained exemplary performance and lasting contributions despite a challenging local infrastructure, chronic understaffing and dangerous security environment. His proactive approach resulted in the creation of embassy off-site command and control centers to establish and maintain mission communication and computer support in emergency situations.



**Edward R. Murrow
Award for Excellence in
Public Diplomacy**

Philip T. Reeker, former deputy spokesman in the Bureau of Public Affairs, is recognized for serving in the best tradition of the Foreign Service and upholding the high journalistic principles of Edward R. Murrow. He personifies integrity of character and adherence to firm standards of truth and principle, outstanding performance, good judgment under stress and commitment to resourcefulness and courage both as a leader and manager. As the first public diplomacy officer to serve as deputy spokesman, he brought a wealth of overseas experience—from Budapest to Rambouillet—to communicating directly, sensitively and honestly with foreign audiences.



**Arnold L. Raphel
Memorial Award**

Nancy J. Powell, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Pakistan, earned the award for her unique ability to balance employee development and morale issues with an intense policy and program agenda so that all members of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad feel they are making a difference. Through her dedication, concern, compassion and competence, she has inspired a new generation to be more effective professionals and more compassionate human beings.



**Luther I. Replogle
Award for Management
Improvement**

Kathleen T. Austin-Ferguson, executive director of the Bureaus of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, is recognized for her extraordinary preparation and management of three key presidential initiatives—reestablishing the U.S. diplomatic presence in Baghdad, establishing the Middle East Partnership Initiative and supporting the President's new envoy to the region—while providing exceptional leadership in managing support for U.S. embassies and consulates in two crisis- and war-torn regions, the Near East and South Asia.



**Herbert Salzman Award
for Excellence in
International Economic
Performance**

Thomas P. Kelly, former economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Quito, earned the award for his exceptional contributions in advancing U.S. international objectives and, specifically, for helping the United States become an influential, effective advocate of positive economic change in Ecuador.



**Civil Service Secretary of
the Year Award**

Colleen A. Greer, a secretary in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, earned the award for the flexibility, calmness and good humor she demonstrated in maintaining high morale in an office that handled an array of complex issues at the top of the foreign policy agenda, from Iraq to North Korea and Liberia. Her extraordinary dedication and professional achievements reflect the highest ideals and traditions of the Civil Service.



**Office Management
Specialist of the Year
Award**

Laura E. Craynon, office management specialist at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, is recognized for her tireless efforts and initiative to help achieve critical consulate goals and enhance morale, overcoming understaffing, cramped quarters and constant and random acts of violence. Her extraordinary dedication and professional achievements reflect the highest ideals and traditions of the Foreign Service.



**Barbara M. Watson
Award for Consular
Excellence**

Ronald J. Kramer, Consul General in Lagos, earned the award for his outstanding leadership, guidance to local and more junior staff and commitment to public service at the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos.



Foreign Service National Employees of the Year gather for a group photo following the awards ceremony. They are, from left, front row: Rachma Jaurinata, Medan, Indonesia; Ghulam Ahmadzai, from Kabul, Afghanistan; Naveed Iqbal, from Ottawa, Canada; Tabotu Woldemichael, from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and, left, back row: Samir Jarandogha, from Amman, Jordan; and Edmond Hajrullaaga from Pristina, Kosovo.

2003

FSNs of the Year

Story By Dave Krecke



Ghulam Sakhi Ahmadzia

U.S. Embassy in Kabul

The Foreign Service National Employee of the Year for 2003 is Ghulam Sakhi Ahmadzia, who, in the absence of American staff, supervised 60 others in protecting the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for almost 13 years. Mr. Ahmadzia's efforts and those of his stalwart colleagues ensured that the embassy's buildings and contents were undamaged throughout the difficult period of Taliban rule.

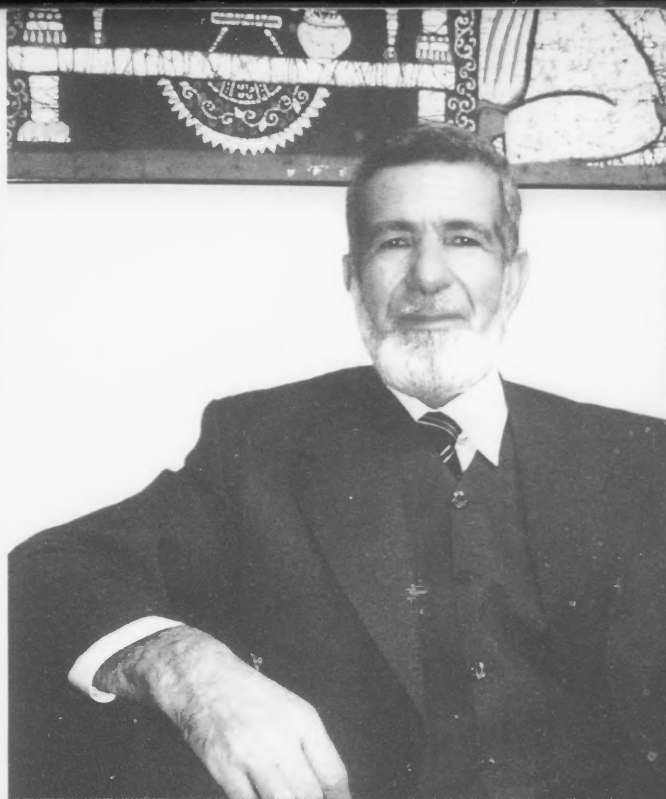
Once U.S. forces had ousted the Taliban from power in the fall of 2001, Mr. Ahmadzia and his FSN colleagues miraculously readied the abandoned embassy to reopen before Christmas. They assisted a Marine antiterrorism unit in securing the embassy grounds, renovated and equipped a "bunker" on the grounds to house the Department's advance team and organized a flag-raising ceremony. U.S. Special Envoy James Dobbins presided over the ceremony, attended by high-level Afghan officials and flag-waving FSN family members. Mr. Ahmadzia simultaneously translated the special envoy's remarks at the event.

He accompanied CENTCOM Commander in Chief General Tommy Franks to the inauguration of the interim Afghan administration and briefed the U.S. delegation on the complex relationships within the new government. He served as an effective adviser and translator for the *chargé* during early meetings with Afghan cabinet members.

Mr. Ahmadzia, a graduate of the Afghan Institute of Technology in building construction and vocational training, oversaw and coordinated the renovation of the chancery. Unused for more than a decade, the building's plumbing, electrical and heating systems desperately needed overhauling. Working closely with American facilities managers and with skilled Afghan staff, he made the building usable for 150 employees.

International journalists and network correspondents sought out the Lincoln-esque Mr. Ahmadzia, with his neatly trimmed post-Taliban beard and his fluent English. They wanted to hear the story of loyal FSNs steadfastly standing watch at the abandoned embassy and his own story of 10 years of imprisonment by the Soviet puppet regime on trumped-up charges of smuggling explosives through the embassy pouch.

Mr. Ahmadzia assisted with the crushing load of VIP visitors during the early months of the reopened mis-



*"Today, Ahmadzia remains
an essential leader and adviser
of the U.S. Mission."*

sion: one-third of the U.S. Senate, dozens of House members, military top brass and the Secretaries of State and Defense. These visits were important in sealing the bilateral relationship during the first weeks of the Afghan transitional administration, and Mr. Ahmadzia played a central role in each of them.

"I'm a jack-of-all-trades and master of none," Mr. Ahmadzia proclaims with a modest grin. It's the same grin that lights up his face when he shyly informs a listener that he and his wife have 10 children: three boys and seven girls. "Just think how many we'd have if I hadn't spent 10 years in prison," he says.

The nominating cable credits Mr. Ahmadzia with providing vital continuity to a mission staffed mainly with Americans on temporary duty during 2002. He supported dozens of projects: providing security for the Afghan president, arranging housing for 150 American employees, hiring nearly 70 new FSNs, upgrading security and electricity and constructing the new \$120 million embassy. The cable sums up the continuing contribution of this extraordinary employee with these words: "Today, Ahmadzia remains an essential leader and adviser of the U.S. Mission."



Tabotu Woldemichael

U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa

Tabotu Woldemichael is an information specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa and the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of African Affairs.

For more than 10 years, this experienced and respected former journalist has given the embassy's public affairs section complete and comfortable access to the Ethiopian government and private media. "Over the past decade," the nominating cable states, "she has been the single most important reason that our public diplomacy efforts have been successful."



"She has been the single most important reason that our public diplomacy efforts have been successful."

When Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld traveled to Ethiopia, the accompanying American press needed extraordinary access to the Prime Minister's office, access seldom granted to non-Ethiopian press. After exhaustive negotiations with the Prime Minister's protocol and security officials, Ms. Tabotu succeeded in gaining permission for the traveling press to enter. When the press arrived at the special entrance, however, security guards—all former guerrilla fighters—appeared not to have been informed of the agreement and barred the press from entering. Tempers flared on both sides. Ms. Tabotu's intervention by mobile phone with the chiefs of protocol and security quickly resolved the situation.

Ethiopia's food crisis has resulted in a steady stream of high-level, official U.S. visitors, including the secretary of the Treasury, the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the deputy secretary of Health and Human Services and several congressional delegations. Ms. Tabotu's wise counsel in briefing these visitors was important in shaping their message and helping them avoid potentially embarrassing pitfalls with the press.

Fluent in English and Amharic and with some knowledge of Tigrinya, Ms. Tabotu has reached out successfully to Ethiopian journalists and earned their trust through office visits, discussion groups and representational events. She is a gifted teacher who enjoys strengthening the professional skills of press colleagues by conducting seminars on journalistic techniques and ethics. Over the years, Ms. Tabotu has also mentored a number first-tour information officers, explaining the Ethiopian cultural environment and coaching them in how to approach the nation's media.

"Her range of contacts is outstanding," the cable asserts. "She is on a first-name basis with the minister of information, his deputy and all decisionmakers in the government media." When the ambassador wanted to discuss U.S. misgivings about the draft press law, Ms. Tabotu arranged an appointment with the minister. Because she is respected inside and outside of the Ethiopian government, the embassy continues its dialogue on the importance of a free press in a democracy. She has also built bridges to the Islamic press, gaining an unprecedented hearing for U.S.-Iraq policy in the Muslim community.

Born in Addis Ababa, the daughter of a businessman, Ms. Tabotu was educated during the Hailie Selassie era in one of the capital's premier private schools. She graduated from Hailie Selassie I University with a major in English and taught for a year of national service in the eastern province of Harrar. Ms. Tabotu worked for Radio Ethiopia from 1970 to 1991. She resigned to become a freelance journalist. When her husband Tafari Wossen left his job in the embassy's public affairs section a year later to found his own media consultancy firm, Ms. Tabotu applied for his position and was hired. The couple has two children. Their son, Sawrawork, 27, lives and works in Addis Ababa and their daughter, Winta, 25, is a junior at the University of Maryland.



Edmond Hajrullaaga

Bureau of European & Eurasian Affairs

"My job," says Edmond Hajrullaaga, Foreign Service National Employee of the Year for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "is to make things easier for others." Guided by that credo, the financial assistant and skilled software designer at the U.S. Office in Pristina designed a user-friendly computer application that has found universal acceptance throughout the Department and saved financial managers worldwide countless hours by producing faster, more accurate reports.

Though he had an advanced degree in computer software design, Mr. Hajrullaaga struggled to reconcile the post's financial accounts using electronic reports called ROLLS, sent from the Financial Service Center in Paris. It took weeks to produce the required reports and by the time they were submitted, the tardy reports no longer reflected the true status of the post's accounts.

Convinced that there must be a better way, he examined the computer code behind ROLLS and discovered that all the information he needed to produce more efficient reports was in the 20-year-old system waiting to be revealed. So he designed a tool called ViewROLLS that enabled financial managers to view in a matter of minutes what had previously taken days or weeks to see.

Once he worked out the wrinkles, Mr. Hajrullaaga began sharing the tool with other posts. He was anxious to learn what other financial managers in the region thought of his new tool. "This is great," was the unanimous response. Soon, ViewROLLS was accepted at every one of the bureau's nearly 40 posts.

But, at the same time, the Department's global financial management system was being consolidated. Financial services were phasing out in Paris and moving to Charleston, S.C., and Bangkok. Each of these centers used different software. Mr. Hajrullaaga's useful tool appeared destined for the electronic dumpster.

Fortunately, in the spring of 2002, the Bureau of Administration's Center for Administrative Innovation scheduled a Good Ideas Workshop in Hong Kong on the topic of the electronic financial management center. The workshop organizers invited Mr. Hajrullaaga to present ViewROLLS to the 25 workshop attendees. After reviewing copies of the files from the FSCs in Bangkok and Charleston, he discovered that with a little "tweaking" they, too, would work with ViewROLLS.

Following the Hong Kong workshop, senior managers in the Bureau of Resource Management asked a team of software developers to incorporate ViewROLLS into the new Department-wide financial reporting system, resulting in huge labor savings and increases in productivity, accuracy and timeliness.

Edmond Hajrullaaga has come a long way from the day in the early spring of 1999 when former President Milosevic's ethnic cleansing forcibly expelled him, his physician wife and their two young children from an apartment in their hometown of Pristina and shipped them by freight car to the Macedonian border. In one frightful moment shortly after their arrival at the collecting point, as they and thousands of other displaced and disoriented people were looking for someplace to go, their tiny family was separated. Fortunately, Edmond and his wife had agreed that if anything happened they would meet at the home of a cousin in Kumanovo, near the Macedonian capital of Skopje. Two days later, the four were happily reunited.

The Hajrullaagas returned to Pristina in the summer of 1999, when hostilities ended. Edmond heard from a colleague working there that the U.S. Office in Pristina was looking for an accountant with computer skills. He has been working there ever since and his wife has been practicing medicine in Pristina as well.

Mr. Hajrullaaga has contributed more than ViewROLLS to the U.S. Mission in the intervening years. The nominating cable credits him with arranging to replenish euros directly via electronic funds transfer, saving the office more than \$10,000 monthly. It is just another example of how this productive employee has been making things easier for others, including the U.S. taxpayer.



"My job is to make things easier for others."



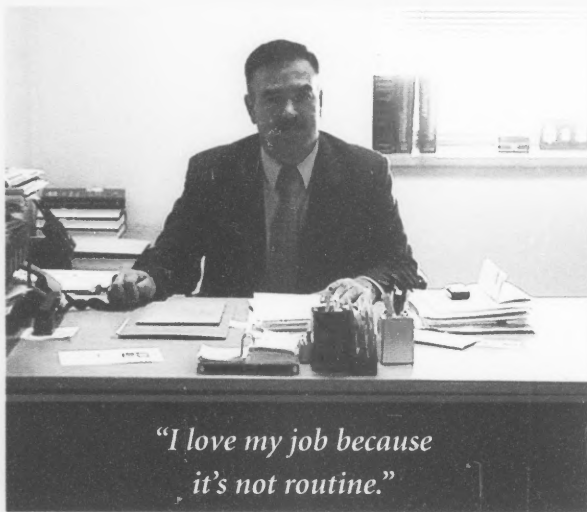
Samir Jarandogha

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

"I love my job," says Samir Jarandogha, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' choice for FSN of the Year for 2003, "because it's not routine."

The embassy in Amman admits in its nominating cable, "Perhaps it simply took an extraordinary year for the mission to fully appreciate the talent and dedication" of this security investigator, who "...distinguished himself during this difficult period."

The principal link between the embassy and the Jordanian police, Mr. Jarandogha disseminated relevant and timely security information when a Jordanian police intervention resulted in hostilities in southern Jordan. During the height of street unrest, Mr.



*"I love my job because
it's not routine."*

Jarandogha relocated his office to the police operations center so he could provide timely reports on the demonstrations and the violence.

He was at the forefront of an embassy investigation that caused two FSN employees to be fired for visa malfeasance.

When a group of West Bank Palestinians, traveling to Jordan on a public diplomacy section program, arrived at the Jordanian border unannounced, Mr. Jarandogha took the after-hours call and "worked his magic" with border security forces to gain entry for them without incident.

He made arrangements with Jordanian officials to ensure that consular officers get quicker and more regular access to incarcerated U.S. citizens. He intervened with immigration officials to legitimize a work permit for an American family.

But Mr. Jarandogha's most significant and tangible contribution was his tireless effort in the aftermath of the assassination of an embassy employee. Working around the clock, he mobilized Jordanian police to provide 24-hour police protection at every embassy residence. He advised the police in overcoming the logistical and operational challenges of deploying more than 250 police officers on this security detail. His immediate and effective response to these challenges was the single most important factor in reassuring the American community that measures were being taken to ensure their safety. While the mission was ultimately approved for authorized departure, not a single employee opted to participate, a powerful tribute to Mr. Jarandogha's work as the architect of that security plan. He was also instrumental in helping the Jordanian government search for the assassins. Thirteen suspected Al Qaeda operatives have been arrested.

Modest and respectful, he establishes comfortable relations with people at all levels, from the royal household to Bedouin desert police. "He is an easy person to like," the nominating cable says, "and ultimately a hard person to say no to."

Samir Jarandogha is a professional accountant who worked for the American construction firm Bechtel after completing his mandatory four years of military service. He was a supervisor on the construction site of the King Khalid Airport in Riyadh when all non-Saudi workers were released from the project. Samir returned to Jordan and worked at a bank for a year.

A cousin, who was operations manager of the private security firm that handled the embassy guard force contract, told Samir there was an opening for a security guard. He worked as a guard for six months and was promoted to supervisor. He took another step up the ladder six months later when he became the receptionist in the embassy's security section. Soon, the regional security officer asked Samir to be a backup bodyguard for the ambassador and later the backup to the security investigator. When the chief security investigator resigned in 1996, Mr. Jarandogha stepped into the position and has held it ever since.

He and his wife Suad have five children, three girls and two boys.



Rachma A. Jaurinata

U.S. Embassy in Jakarta

Rachma A. Jaurinata, an administrative-political assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, is the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs FSN of the Year for 2003. The nominating cable calls her the mission's "eyes and ears" in Sumatra, the second most populous island in Indonesia. For months, she single-handedly managed a portfolio that had belonged to the former U.S. Consulate General in Medan.

The ordered departure of October 2002 left the embassy with half its American employees, straining resources and leaving Ms. Jaurinata more on her own than ever.

She is intimately familiar with the separatist movement in Aceh province that has long threatened Indonesian unity. Her political reporting has contributed to many of Jakarta's cables on the issue. She arranged a number of visits to the province, including two ambassadorial trips, and scheduled critical meetings in some of the region's most remote areas. With little advance notice and no more guidance than, "Please put together three days of appointments in Aceh," she plans sessions with key leaders.

A professional architect, Ms. Jaurinata skillfully oversaw five renovation projects worth more than \$60,000 and managed the renovation of the last remaining U.S. government-owned property in Medan.

So broad and deep are Ms. Jaurinata's contacts within the Indonesian community that she is able to match the interests of the ambassador, embassy officers or visiting dignitaries with guests who can discuss key issues in great depth. Almost on her own, she handled every aspect of the visits of two congressional delegations.

In the consular sphere, the nominating cable says Ms. Jaurinata provides "compassionate, caring services to U.S. citizens and people of general interest to the government, be they citizens or not." Her expertise and contacts were critical in the case of a high-profile arrest of an American citizen in Aceh province. "When the detainee's whereabouts were unknown for five days, Rachma put in 15-hour days working the phones to track her down." When the consul general needed to meet the detainee and needed a doctor to assess her condition, Ms. Jaurinata made all the arrangements for the meeting and the medical examination.

The close professional relationship she has developed with police officials has resulted in rapid responses by Indonesian police to increased threat levels and security concerns of the embassy. The police now alert the embassy in advance to demonstrations and, if necessary, provide protective details for visitors.

Ms. Jaurinata's broad contacts within Acehnese society keep her well informed about human rights abuses and other significant events there, greatly extending the embassy's reporting reach in this crucial region of the country.

Born and raised in Medan, Rachma Jaurinata spent her high school years in the Pittsburgh area, where her doctor father and dentist mother were on academic fellowships. She speaks unaccented American English. After graduating, she won a scholarship to pursue a pre-medicine course in the United States but turned it down because, she says, "I hate needles." She returned to Indonesia, earned a degree in architecture, met her future husband, fellow architect Julesta Putra, and joined a state-owned construction firm. The Indonesian economy and government construction were booming. In 1998, Southeast Asia's economic bubble burst and construction came to a near standstill. Laid off, Ms. Jaurinata became a freelance architect.

About a year later, she saw a newspaper advertisement for a position at an unidentified embassy and applied for the job. She was hired by the U.S. Embassy a week before her wedding in Medan and received a call from local police the next day saying that a U.S. citizen had died. Ms. Jaurinata spent the day after her wedding visiting the local morgue and arranging for the shipment of the body back to the United States. It was on-the-job training at its most intense, and Ms. Jaurinata definitely passed the test. She, her husband and their two-year-old daughter, Dasha, divide their time between Medan and Jakarta.



*"She is the eyes and ears of the
U.S. Mission in Sumatra."*



"The mission in Pakistan's loss became the mission in Ottawa's gain."

"If you're not interested in a project," says Naveed Iqbal, 2003 FSN of the Year for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, "don't agree to take it on. But if you're interested, give it 110 percent."

Clearly, Mr. Iqbal, an information technology manager, has been interested in most of the projects he's undertaken since he began working at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa in 1997. The savvy computer expert has risen to the post-9/11 challenge of balancing visa issuance with national security by developing a visa fraud prevention database to help stop suspected terrorists and organized criminals in their tracks.

The post's nominating cable calls Mr. Iqbal's Intranet application "a vital resource for protecting the 5,500-mile Canada-U.S. border." The application gives the mission's eight consular offices the capability of sharing detailed information on businesses and individuals suspected of engaging in visa fraud. It also detects visa fraud trends, visa shopping, fraudulent businesses and immigrant smuggling through a sophisticated database that incorporates photo capture and information search technology.

The database has already yielded dividends, documenting and detecting many possible fraud cases. Mr. Iqbal's database was used to identify the names of trucking companies suspected of having terrorist connections. This information could be the critical element in thwarting the issuance of visas to terrorists and added significant and unprecedented capabilities to the mission in Canada's homeland security efforts.

When Secretary Powell announced his ambitious goal to put the Internet on every desktop, the mission in Ottawa turned to Mr. Iqbal to develop an implementation strategy. As Mr. Iqbal discovered, the challenge of transforming the concept into reality was daunting. He methodically documented more than 800 pages of technical, operational and security standards. His work on the sensitive but unclassified contingency plan, a Diplomatic Security-mandated document, now serves as the standard throughout Canada and has become an invaluable tool for more than 63 posts worldwide. The



Naveed Iqbal

Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

Bureau of Diplomatic Security was so impressed with Mr. Iqbal's work that it incorporated his contingency plan as a sample into its information systems training curriculum. He also developed other basic documents essential to OpenNet Plus connectivity.

Another morale-boosting project Mr. Iqbal tackled was improving the distribution of the mission's weekly newsletter. He streamlined distribution of the newsletter by creating an electronic PDF version that is distributed to its 500 readers with a couple of computer clicks, eliminating the cumbersome and costly printing and distribution of hard copies. Now, the Community Liaison Office in Ottawa can concentrate on the newsletter's content instead of its production and distribution.

Largely because of Mr. Iqbal's expertise, the mission in Ottawa has become an important testing ground for many of the Department's new information technology initiatives. Recognized for his technological contributions beyond Canada's borders, he routinely receives requests for assistance from other posts and praise from users of the Ottawa Intranet site.

Mr. Iqbal has the somewhat rare experience of having worked as an FSN at two U.S. Embassies. After graduating with a master's degree in computer science, he began working in 1989 at the embassy in Islamabad. He worked as a deputy operations manager there for eight years and then, in 1997, applied for Canadian immigration offered to computer scientists. "I haven't lost a first-rate computer specialist," the chief of the administrative section in Islamabad said when he learned of Mr. Iqbal's intention to leave. "I have lost my right arm."

The mission in Pakistan's loss became the mission in Ottawa's gain. The embassy in Ottawa learned of the availability of the computer expert from Pakistan already familiar with State Department procedures. Without any gap in his U.S. government service, Mr. Iqbal began work the next week in Ottawa.

Predictably, he and his family found Ottawa's weather the most difficult adjustment. "It's a beautiful city, not at all crowded and with almost no crime," he says of his new hometown. "But that first winter was a tough one. I was expecting it to be cold, but not that cold." Now that they've survived several winters, Mr. Iqbal and his wife are Canadian citizens and so is their young son. ■

Getting It Right

DEPARTMENT WORKING TO CUT OVERSEAS COSTS **BY PAUL KOSCAK**

Rightsizing.

What those lunchtime wobblers need instead of those fried chicken wings, you say.

Maybe you've heard the term, particularly if you work overseas. It's a way to save money by sharing costs and realistically gauging the resources and people needed to run a post.

The General Accounting Office defines rightsizing as "aligning the number and location of staff assigned overseas with foreign policy priorities and security and other constraints."

The mission is the first priority, noted Bill Duffy, a management analyst in the Office of Management, Policy and Planning. "If there's no reason to be there, all the security and costs don't matter. It's expensive to have Americans assigned overseas. Many agencies don't have any idea of what it takes."

Until those agencies start paying for the security and services once offered free by the post, that is. After that, the move is sometimes reconsidered, he said.

Rightsizing isn't downsizing, as many employees assume. It "may result in the addition or reduction of staff or a change in the mix of staff at a given embassy or consulate," according to the GAO. State and the Office of Management and Budget agree, Mr. Duffy said.

While rightsizing is being heavily promoted under the President's Management Agenda, an overall strategy to improve government efficiency, the concept isn't new. Overseas staff was eliminated under President Lyndon Johnson. Operation Reduction, under President Richard Nixon, imposed a 10 percent cut. In 1974, Congress mandated a 2 percent worldwide reduction. President Jimmy Carter directed the 1980 Sahara exercise, a review of 12 large missions. Another review under President Reagan resulted in a 4 percent overseas staff reduction.

But don't look for a rightsizing formula. In early 2000, an interagency committee looked at embassies in Jordan, Thailand, Mexico, India, France and Georgia, trying to find some common guidelines. They could not. Each embassy has unique geopolitical issues preventing a broad-brush approach, according to State's report to Congress this year.

"When the Soviet Union broke up, we had new embassies," Mr. Duffy recalled. "There was a shift in posi-

tions, but not a lot of hiring."

Figures offered by the Office of Management, Policy and Planning show the United States opened 50 new posts since 1990, but closed more than 40. And the number of Americans working at embassies and consulates remains at the 1990 level. What's more, two-thirds of the Americans staffing overseas missions are not State Department employees. They're from Defense, Agriculture, Health and Human Services and numerous law enforcement agencies.



Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs officials discuss rightsizing issues. They are, from left, Carolyn Smith, Will Moser, Bill Duffy and Jay Anania.

So where does rightsizing begin?

It starts with the mission performance plan where each chief of mission evaluates the operation. Resources and funds must be justified by the mission's role.

"It's a decentralized process, where the chief of mission makes the decisions," Mr. Duffy said. "But don't think they can pad their reports. After the mission reviews the plan, it's reviewed by the bureau and finally the deputy secretary."

Having regional centers, such as Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Charleston, S.C., and Frankfurt, Germany, provides support and personnel services and is another rightsizing technique. Plans call for expanding the regional centers with an eye to transferring many tasks to the United States or to the larger centers. ■



Peter Dees, left, and Mike Jakub from the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism inspect an electronic device that helps combat chemical and biological agents. About 5,000 units have been sold to first-response teams nationwide.

State Funds Creative Research

Story and Photos by Paul Koscak

Who could imagine the State Department heading a research and development business? We're not talking about think tanks contemplating esoteric theories or rarified hypotheses for the next century. Rather, we're talking about converting ideas into working products within months.

A handheld explosives finder, escape masks to ward off a chemical or biological attack, a sniper detector and a cheap \$5 credit-card-like tag that signals dirty bomb radiation are just some of the gadgets and devices the group is rushing to the front in the war on terrorism.

Other innovations include carbon-fiber armor that deflects rifle bullets and a chemical agent to recover fingerprints. As for the masks, more than 25,000 have been ordered.

Shepherding this effort to harness the creative power of universities, laboratories, corporations and small

businesses is a little-known government partnership—the Technical Support Working Group. The State Department directs the group and the Department of Defense supports it.

In 1986, a cabinet-level task force headed by then Vice President George Bush charged the budding group with developing “appropriate coordinated counterterrorism technological efforts.” But since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the multiagency group has gone from obscurity to overdrive. Members include the Departments of Agriculture, Justice and Treasury along with the Transportation Security Administration and the Public Health Service.

“Anywhere from 350 to 400 projects are going on at once,” states Mike Jakub, the group’s director. “That includes about 100 joint projects where we work with other nations.”

He characterizes the work as "rapid prototyping and development." That means funding the most promising innovations, keeping tabs on their progress and then getting the new products into the marketplace or into the hands of those who need them most—soldiers, the intelligence community, security personnel, firefighters, law enforcement officials and other first responders.

The group's services are now in big demand. A decade ago, about \$8 million was available to fund projects. This year, depending on how much other agencies contribute and Congress appropriates, that figure could soar to \$200 million.

In 2002, the White House directed the group to review more than 200 ideas submitted to the Office of Homeland Security. But that was small change compared to the 12,500 submissions it received that year after soliciting proposals through the Internet. Cooperative research and development agreements are also in place with the United Kingdom, Canada and Israel.

But the money just doesn't flow, cautions Mr. Jakub. First, there must be a need. For example, law enforcement officials or military Special Forces could request that a particular tool or technology be developed to solve a problem or confront a new challenge in combating terrorism. Inventions must fulfill specific needs and customer requests to be eligible for funding, Mr. Jakub explained.

"We have to have a requirement," he said. "We don't do science for the sake of science. The last thing we want to develop is a \$600 hammer that no one can use even if they could afford to buy it."

Getting an idea off the drawing board and into the field is a methodical process that starts each January with "threat day," when the entire group meets for briefings from intelligence officials. Then the nine subgroups of the Technical Support Working Group, each chaired by a federal agency representative, meet to identify what inventions are needed. The decisions are based on feedback from their counterparts doing the day-to-day business of battling terrorism.

For example, TSA manages the explosives detection subgroup and the FBI and DoD

together manage the infrastructure protection subgroup. The other subgroups are: physical security; tactical operations support; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear countermeasures; physical security; improvised device defeat; personnel protection; and surveillance, collection and operations support.

"This is where you'll find the program managers and technical experts that are available from the Department of Defense," Mr. Jakub explained.

The requirements are then published on the Internet and the subgroups evaluate the incoming proposals. The most promising projects are recommended for funding. The finalists are then referred for approval to the group's executive committee, which Mr. Jakub chairs. But there's one more step before a contract is offered.

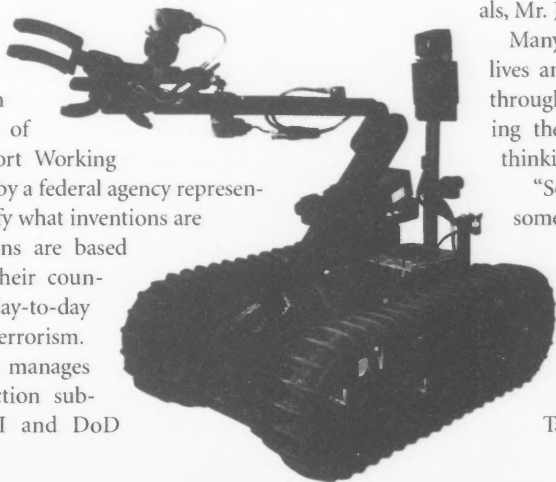
Ambassador Cofer Black, the Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, and Tom O'Connell, assistant secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, must approve the package of proposals, Mr. Jakub said.

Many of the inventions promise to save lives and give military and civilian forces throughout the world an edge in outsmarting the fanatics. But sometimes all that thinking outside the box can go too far.

"Some people come up with novel but sometimes impractical ideas," Mr. Jakub said. "We had one proposal to capture 500 grizzly bears, tag one ear with a GPS, the other with a Minicam and then parachute them into Afghanistan so they'll go into the caves and locate the Taliban. We didn't fund that one." ■



Above: Ambassador Cofer Black studies the chemical-biological escape hood now being stocked at U.S. Embassies in high-risk locations. Below: This remotely controlled robot, used by military counterterror specialists in Iraq and elsewhere, disables bombs.



Ties to Consulate Span Generations

By Paula Ferguson

The Sahakians tend to stay on the job—so far for three generations.

In 1945, Lucy Sahakian started the family tradition by taking a job in the payroll section of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, according to her daughter, Ophelia, a Canadian who's employed at the U.S. Embassy in Vancouver.

"My mother was a very ambitious young Armenian woman who, after losing her father, was determined to help support her family," she said.

Before joining the embassy, her mother worked at a Tehran bank during the 1930s, when it was uncommon for women to work outside the home. There she met her husband, married and had four children, including Ophelia who was born in Iran.

She remembers when the U.S. government distributed films on agriculture and health education. Ophelia's father was showing one of these films outdoors when a group of men wearing white shirts and ties appeared and started throwing rocks.

"The movie was being projected on a building and my father had the projector in a van," she said. "I was very young, maybe four years old."

The audience, mostly Ophelia's neighbors, started running for their homes and Ophelia's father packed up in a hurry and took cover.

When the family sought freedom in Armenia, Iranian officials placed them on a waiting list. The family never reached Armenia. While they languished on the list,

Ophelia moved to England to live with her aunt, then to Los Angeles to attend business school and finally to Canada. Her mother eventually moved to the United States.

Ophelia, who met her husband in Canada, started working in 1974 at the U.S. Consulate General in Vancouver as a summer employee. Today, she's an administrative assistant procuring documents, reviewing cases and processing fiancée visas.

"The happiness I see once the lovebirds know they can be together is very rewarding."

Carrying on the legacy is Ophelia's son, Alan, who joined the consulate in 1996. He works in the American Citizen Services unit as a passport and citizenship adjudicator.

"I think this is it," he remarked about the job. "I think I'm going to be here for a long time."

Alan and his wife recently had a child. Maybe yet another Sahakian generation is poised to make its diplomatic mark. ■

Paula Ferguson is a passport operations officer in Washington, D.C.



Ophelia Sahakian, left, and her son Alan are second- and third-generation employees.

"I recall my childhood as happy—filled with family and friends—but being Christian in Iran meant we rarely interacted outside our tight Armenian community," she recalled. Cultural and religious differences isolated their community and occasionally led to mistreatment.



Ambassador Ronald Weiser, center-left, meets with residents of Sastin-Straze on the final stop of his visit to 138 Slovak cities. Also greeting the students is Slovak President Rudolf Schuster.

Taking Public Diplomacy on the Road

BY BARBARA ZIGLI
AND GREGORY ORR

There is an estimated \$2.5 billion in U.S. capital invested or committed to be invested in Slovakia, the ambassador noted.

Ronald Weiser, U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic, has completed his quest to go where no diplomat had gone before: every one of Slovakia's 138 cities.

Joined by Slovak President Rudolf Schuster, he visited the final city of Sastin-Straze, about 40 miles north of Bratislava, on Nov. 25. They met with the city's mayor, other local officials, businessmen, educators and clergy and toured the famous Basilica of the Virgin Mary of Seven Sorrows. Slovakia broadcast and print media covered the visit.

The ambassador began his journey shortly after presenting his credentials to President Schuster in December 2001.

"When I first came here, I realized it was important to understand the problems and the opportunities of the entire country, not just Bratislava," the ambassador told a press conference in Sastin-Straze. At President Schuster's suggestion, he decided to achieve that by making official visits to all of the nation's 138 cities. "It's been a great honor and opportunity to hear firsthand from the mayors, citizens, corporate and religious leaders and many others in the communities what their issues, problems and concerns are."

To accommodate 138 cities, embassy staff devised a campaign-style approach with visits to several cities in a day. The focus of each visit was to meet the mayor and allow the mayor to expand the visit to include others. In many cases, this resulted in town hall meetings.

Many mayors observed that the ambassador was the highest-level visitor they had ever received.

The embassy developed useful contacts for public diplomacy programs, such as nominees for the International Visitor program, potential Democracy Commission grantees and possible participants in cultural programs. The visits also gave the ambassador the opportunity to talk about democracy-building, economic development, the importance of joining NATO and such policy issues as the war on terrorism.

At his press conference in Sastin-Straze, Ambassador Weiser thanked President Schuster for his steadfast support of the United States, for Slovakia's support in the war on terrorism and for their commitment of troops to Afghanistan and Iraq. ■

Ms. Zigli and Mr. Orr are the current and previous public affairs officers in Bratislava.



Tiffany Murphey, left, Michael Kidwell and David Galbraith are consular officers in Cairo. Ms. Murphey is now on temporary duty in Iraq.

Conference in Egypt Focuses on Careers

By Philip Frayne

More than 90 junior Foreign Service officers from Casablanca to Colombo met in Cairo to share experiences and discuss their futures at the third annual Junior Officers Conference. Career management, assignments, training, bidding and supervision were among the topics discussed at the three-day event.

Several senior officers mentored the newcomers with their own career perspectives and Robert Pearson, the

new director general, shared his plan for developing and retaining junior officers. Secretary of State Colin Powell even offered his insights by teleconference.

David Welch, the U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, ran a session on perhaps the hottest topic in the Foreign Service: public diplomacy. Mr. Welch, a 25-year veteran political officer, urged the junior officers to make public diplomacy part of their jobs, no matter what their specialty. That's especially important in a region hostile to U.S. foreign policy, such as Egypt. Good public diplo-

macy, he said, means meeting many people, building bridges of goodwill and advocating U.S. policies.

"A lot has changed in the 21 years since I was in your shoes," said William Burns, assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, who spoke by teleconference. "There's much greater emphasis on advocacy, on public diplomacy skills, on defining foreign policy and security in the broadest possible terms."

Secretary Powell, in typical fashion, took time away from lobbying foreign ministers to support a Security Council resolution on Iraq, to join Mr. Burns.

Participants offered their views, too.

"There's been a real shift in thinking about training, about mentoring and about how to manage JOs," said Joseph Mellott, an economics junior officer in Dhaka. "Management is looking towards a new corps of FSOs that is adaptable, can be quickly deployed and can solve problems quickly."

**"Our JOs these days are
They bring huge _____, a lot of overseas
and a lot of language skills
when they come in. They have a lot of
and a huge _____ of service."**

Sarah Spodek, a junior consular officer in Damascus, enjoyed the emphasis on management. "The session on managing—managing local employees, managing up—was very useful because it had new officers, veteran officers and local employees."

Dutch Martin, a second tour general

services officer in Rabat, spoke for many in evaluating the event. "This conference reassured me about my decision to join the Foreign Service. I feel reinvigorated. I feel my decision to become a Foreign Service officer was definitely a positive one."

"Our JOs these days are impressive," commented Janet Bogue, who directs the entry-level division in the Bureau of Human Resources. "They bring huge skills, a lot of overseas experience and a lot of language skills when they come in. They have a lot of energy and a huge spirit of service." ■

Philip Frayne is an information officer and spokesman at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.



The new meets the ancient: NEA junior officers visit the Pyramids during the October 2003 conference.

"You're living and working in an area where there are enormous challenges and dangers, but also an area of enormous opportunity," he said. "You're at the point of our spear in terms of our policy. I know who gets the job done. I know who the most important people in the Department are, and they are those folks we've recently brought in and asked to serve their nation. If you do your job well, ultimately I'll be able to do my job well."

The Secretary's recruiting initiative has brought in more than 1,000 Foreign Service officers since September 2001.

The conference wasn't all work. There was an evening cruise on the Nile, a special visit to the pyramids, lighted just for the occasion, and lots of Cairo nightlife.

The Weighting Game

"MY CLOTHES DON'T FIT AND BY THE WAY DOES THAT AFFECT MY MEDICAL CLEARANCE?" **BY BARBARA MAHONEY**

"I've been 30 pounds overweight for years. I can't get my blood pressure under control and my cholesterol is double the price of gasoline. Will I get a clearance to go overseas?"

The answer is, "Probably."

A better question might be, "Am I at increased risk for a stroke or heart attack?" The answer is, "Definitely, and you can take action today to decrease your risk of having one of these events."

The Office of Medical Services is addressing these health promotion needs of the Department's overseas employees and eligible family members through several initiatives that began in September 2003. One is a project with the Washington Exam Clinic that identifies people with hypertension or hyperlipidemia (high cholesterol) during the clearance process. On completion of their clearance exam, those who are going overseas and have these conditions are referred to a Foreign Service health practitioner in Med Services who discusses management strategies for their particular condition.

The session lasts 30 to 45 minutes and focuses on the individual's daily dietary habits, exercise, additional risk factors and motivation to decrease risk of cardiovascular disease. The purpose of the session is for each person to consider doable behavior changes

and come up with a plan to ultimately reduce the risk factors.

The health practitioner's role is to identify those at risk, educate them about healthy eating and

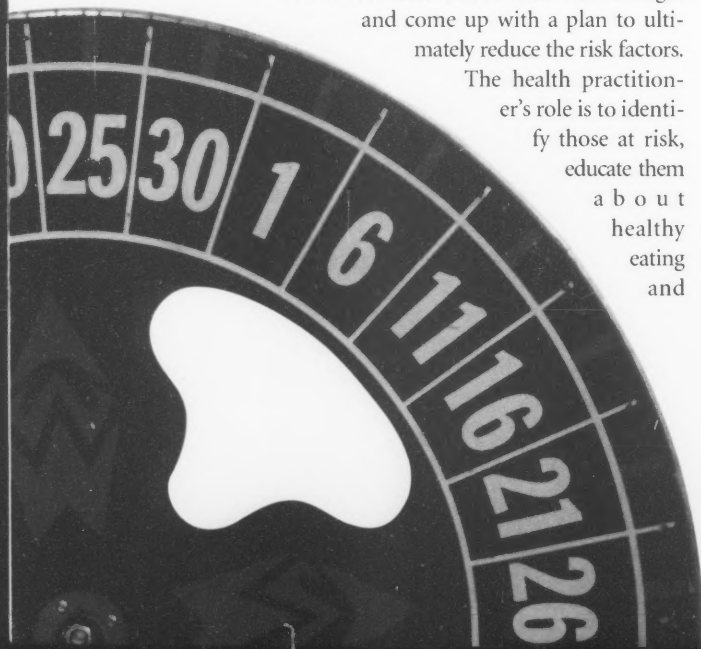
exercise habits and help motivate them to change. The individuals have the responsibility for implementing their plans as they apply to their own circumstances. To decrease saturated fat intake, for example, people might plan to cook with olive oil, switch to skim milk and, if they never met a pastry they didn't like, stop bringing them home.

Another important element of this project is to educate individuals on the latest guidelines regarding normal parameters for cardiovascular risk. For years, clinicians advised patients with blood pressures of 140/90 that they were normal. Now, those patients are shocked when they hear the standards for normal have changed. It is distressing when they learn that they'll require life-long medication to control their blood pressure. The acceptable upper limit for high cholesterol has also changed. It wasn't long ago that a total cholesterol reading under 240 was considered normal.

That's too high by today's standard, which caps the normal at 200. We're also focused on individual components of cholesterol, such as the low-density lipoproteins (also known as bad cholesterol) and the high-density lipoproteins (good cholesterol) as well as the ratio of total to good cholesterol. These components are important because they give a more complete picture of the cardiovascular risk than total cholesterol alone.

Hyperlipidemia often becomes a problem in overweight and obese patients, so remodeling the diet to include less saturated fat and fewer carbohydrates and calories is a priority. Still, some patients will require medication to reduce their cholesterol. The long-term goal of this project is to motivate people to change behavior and improve health outcomes. The short-term goal is to enable everyone to follow up by improving their hypertension or hyperlipidemia while overseas.

Historically, many people did not realize that overseas health unit staff are available and eager to provide health promotion guidance. As a result, they often faced deteriorating health problems when they returned for their next clearance exam. The project's Foreign Service health practitioner jump-starts the follow-up



Feel Like Nothing Fits Anymore? There's a Reason.

Of the 10,000 electronic medical records registered in the Office of Medical Services, the table below illustrates the percentages of males and females who fall into the overweight or obese categories. Adding these gives the percentage of those who are above their ideal weight. The World Health Organization defines overweight in adults as a body mass index of 25.0 to 29.9 and obesity as a body mass index greater than 30. The formula is body mass index = weight in kilograms/height in meters x 2.

| AGE | 20-29 | | 30-39 | | 40-49 | | 50-59 | | 60-70+ | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| # OF PARTICIPANTS | 685 | 751 | 1,470 | 1,488 | 1,474 | 1,319 | 1,330 | 1,157 | 434 | 273 |
| OVERWEIGHT | 38% | 20% | 49% | 22% | 50% | 26% | 46% | 27% | 50% | 30% |
| OBESE | 14% | 10% | 20% | 14% | 23% | 19% | 28% | 25% | 25% | 24% |
| ABOVE IDEAL WEIGHT | 52% | 30% | 69% | 36% | 73% | 45% | 74% | 52% | 75% | 54% |

How do we compare? According to the 1999 to 2000 statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Health Statistics and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 64 percent of the U.S. population between the ages of 20 and 74 is overweight or obese. The percentage of the same group in the Foreign Service is 56 percent. While the U.S. average exceeds that of the Foreign Service population, the U.S. statistics include a broader range of socioeconomic groups. For some age and gender groups in the Foreign Service—males ages 30 to 70, for example—the prevalence of overweight and obesity equals the high prevalence in the general population. The female population in the Foreign Service, on the other hand, is decidedly thinner than the U.S. population at large, with 15 to 20 percent less prevalence of overweight and obesity in each of the age groups.

process by informing the embassy health unit that an individual with a particular health problem has been advised to obtain follow-up care at post. They are given the lab results, some details about the person's medical condition and what follow-up action was discussed at the counseling session.

Periodically, the health practitioner in Washington will contact the health unit staff to find out how the individual is managing the problem. The goal is to prevent these cardiovascular disease risk factors from getting worse, specifically hypertension and high cholesterol. In general, those who have been diagnosed with these conditions require follow-up care and sometimes medication. Although many people have a health care provider in the United States, long-distance follow-up is difficult and continuity of care often fails. This project gives patients a way to avoid falling through the cracks.

Professionals in mission health units abroad provide a variety of services, including acute care, clearance exams, health screenings, education and immunizations. In addition to these more obvious services, they

are prepared to help patients manage a variety of chronic medical conditions. Blood pressure can be checked at any health unit. Necessary lab tests are available locally or in the health unit. The regional medical officer or health practitioner makes regular visits to posts that have no health unit and counsels and advises patients with chronic health problems.

The office's responsibility for health promotion has become an important priority as the parameters for measuring good health have changed. In addition to handling the traditional activities of conducting physical exams, authorizing medical evacuations and granting clearances, health promotion has become paramount to supporting diplomatic readiness.

For a health promotion program to work, individuals must see the benefits of improving their health by actively making sustainable lifestyle changes that go beyond the clearance exam. ■

The author is a Foreign Service nurse practitioner in the Office of Medical Services in Washington, D.C.

O U R T O W N

'Sweet Home Alabama'

Bob Smith and his wife Barbara checked out several communities in the South before discovering Eufaula, Ala. After several days in the picturesque town, they ended their search and put down roots.

It was just the type of community the former U.S. Information Agency employee, who spent most of his career in the Voice of America studios in Washington, D.C., and his wife wanted: mild winters, a population under 15,000 and a place they could be active in civic, church and community activities.

The retired broadcast engineer helped rebuild the local radio station that had burned down and stayed on as its news director. He also served as interim tourism director for the chamber of commerce and wrote historical vignettes and information spots that air on the local radio station. He now serves as public information officer for the VFW post and emergency management office and anchors the mayor's news conferences. Barbara, meanwhile, volunteers in the local literacy program, computerizes book data at the local library and teaches an adult Bible class.

When they're not busy volunteering, they are enjoying historic Eufaula, which sits on a bluff overlooking the Chattahoochee River, separating Alabama and Georgia. Tourists flock to the area during the spring to see the azaleas and dogwoods in full bloom and to tour the historic homes and churches. There's also Lake Eufaula, which attracts boating, camping and fishing enthusiasts.

The city is currently sponsoring the 2020 program, offering its many volunteers an opportunity to determine what the city will look like in the year 2020.

For now, living is easy, taxes are low and housing affordable, according to the Smiths, who live in "an old



Barbara and Bob Smith in downtown Eufaula.

fish camp" overlooking the lake. What's more, you don't have to own a boat to fish. There's a public fishing pier specifically for retirees and others who don't own boats.

The Smiths have three married daughters living in the Washington, D.C., area. ■

Editor's note: Our Town is an occasional feature about retirees and their choice of retirement spots. If you'd like to contribute, please write or e-mail the editor at good-mancw@state.gov.

By George, It's Don!

BRINGING A FOUNDING FATHER TO LIFE **BY PAUL KOSCAK**

George Washington just couldn't be missed.

There he was, resplendent in his general's uniform: the flowing white hair, the chiseled face, the pursed lips, the contemplative gaze. The Father of Our Country was reenacting a summit with Bernardo de Galvez, the provincial governor of Louisiana, to promote a movie portraying how the Spanish helped the colonists win their independence.

It's the kind of event Donald De Haven thrives on. Since retiring in 1996 after 40 years with the State Department, the former deputy executive director for the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad devotes himself to the gospel of George. He's particularly enthusiastic about offering new insights into Washington's legacy, and the movie promotion at the Institute of Mexico in Washington was typical.

"Spain declared war against the British in June 1779," said Mr. De Haven. "That's when Bernardo de Galvez mounted a series of successful campaigns against the British in the lower Mississippi region and along the Gulf coast."

The Spanish campaigns siphoned highly needed British forces away from the colonial army, giving Gen. Washington the edge at Yorktown and America its independence. The movie *Timeless*, expected to be released next year, weaves a story around the events and briefly shows the two commanders together.

Dedicated by King Juan Carlos, De Galvez's statue is located just north of the D Street entrance of the Harry S Truman building. Spain gave America the gift to commemorate the nation's bicentennial.

"I try to educate people, particularly young people, about George Washington," Mr. De Haven said. "Sometimes that's difficult because Washington had a reserved personality."

He ventures further than most reenactors by delving deeply into the former President's journals and other original writings to capture his demeanor and personality. He becomes a histor-

ical interpreter, switching in and out of character as needed.

"Washington wasn't much of a public speaker, but he was a prolific writer," Mr. De Haven explained. "His writings aren't easy to read, but they're worth the effort. Washington was self-educated and well read."

President Washington's 1796 farewell address is a good example of a speech crafted to be read, not delivered. "It was never spoken."

Much of President Washington's politics, Mr. De Haven said, are at odds with today's campaigns. "Washington was against party politics and parties," he said. "He favored the diplomacy of neutrality and felt when you

negotiate you don't give to one country what you withhold from another. One country will take you for granted, the other one will resent it."

During his long Civil Service career, the Winchester, Va., resident advanced from file clerk to management, holding positions in personnel, operations and at the Foreign Service Institute.

Mr. De Haven's George Washington persona came about by accident. A former Alexandria resident, he participated in the annual Birth Night Festival, a tradition since 1792 at Gadsby's Tavern, where Gen. Washington was among the tavern's guests. "Washington was an accomplished dancer," he said.

"The couple running the Birth Night ball tried to improve it by asking participants to take on the roles of those who would have been there [during colonial times]," explained Mr. De Haven, who at 6 feet 2 inches is the same height as President Washington. "When the person who played Washington moved from the area, I asked who would take over. A surprised friend replied, 'Look in the mirror!'" ■



Donald De Haven as George Washington.

O B I T U A R I E S



Charles D. Gallagher, 72, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 20, 2003, of a heart attack at his home in Gainesville, Va. His first posting with the U.S. Information Agency was Manila. In October 1975, while serving as director of the Regional Service Center in Beirut, he and his deputy director were kidnapped and held until February 1976. After his release, he returned to Washington, D.C., where he remained until his retirement in 1981.

Norris Eugene Hammond, 82, a retired State Department employee, died Oct. 24, 2003, in Venice, Fla. He was a communications specialist with the Department for 20 years. Prior to that, he served in the Navy.

Patricia E. Loh, information systems officer with the State Department, died tragically Dec. 6 near Lima when a public bus struck the car she and husband were riding in. He was seriously injured but survived the accident. Ms. Loh joined the Department in 2001 and had served in Kuala Lumpur prior to her Peru assignment.

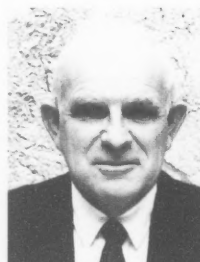


Louise C. Pope, 72, a retired Civil Service employee, died July 12, 2003, in Florence, S.C., of a heart attack from complications due to pulmonary fibrosis. She spent most of her life in Washington, D.C., employed by the federal government. She worked for the Peace Corps in its early days before joining the State Department. Her last assignment was managing finance and accounting for the

Bureau of African Affairs. Known for mentoring young employees and her commitment to church and civic organizations, she retired in 1992.



David M. Ransom, 65, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 4 in New York City following a heart attack. He joined the Foreign Service in 1965 and was posted to Tehran, Beirut, Jeddah, Sanaa, Abu Dhabi, Damascus and Manama, where he served as ambassador to the Persian Gulf island state of Bahrain prior to retiring. In Washington, D.C., he served on the staff of the National Security Council and at the Defense Department. He served in the Marine Corps before joining the Foreign Service. Ambassador Ransom and his wife Marjorie Marilley Ransom, also a retired Foreign Service officer, were one of the Department's pioneering tandem couples.



Paul R. Sweet, 96, a retired historian at the State Department, died Nov. 5 in Philadelphia. He joined the Department after World War II as editor-in-chief of war documents captured from the German Foreign Office. He later served as a Foreign Service officer in Bonn and as consul general in Stuttgart. He retired in 1967. Fluent in German, he volunteered as an intelligence officer with the Office of Strategic Services, following troops on D-Day and working behind the front lines. During the Battle of the Bulge, he was cut off from friendly forces. He received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award for wartime service.

P E R S O N N E L A C T I O N S

FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREMENTS

Casey-De Corcuera,
Maureen
Clark, Sherryl Ann
Crumpton, Sandra A.
Dewindt Jr, Victor G.
Elliott, Deborah Leslie
Erickson, Linda L.
Espejo, Dante U.
Farr, Thomas Franklin
Furgal, Mary Jo
Garcia, Carol S.

Harding, Jamie
Huddle Jr, Franklin
Jeter, Howard Franklin
Krieger, Nanette A.
Matthews, Carl S.
Miles, James W.
Neitzke, Jean Christoff
Patrick, Sue Ford
Payne, Suzanne P.
Pease, Charles R.
Polasky, Frederick

Ramirez, Sonia D.
Rebarick, Thomas A.
Ryan, Douglas P.
Salvaterra, Arthur F.
Sigmund, Anne M.
Smith, Leroy Othello
Smith, Mary Elizabeth
Verble, Joseph L.
Weissman, Philip
Williamson, James H.
Zuccarini, Joseph T.

CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENTS

Bruce, Joyce L.
Buchanan, Bonnie
Burrell, Kay Arey
De Las Casas, Alvaro
Doolan, Kenneth F.
Dowd, Delores D.
Fishenden, James A.
Fitz, Richard B.
Galla, Joseph W.

Gallant, Charlotte H.
Hansen, Robert William
Jackson, Barbara Boyd
Jefferson, Thomas
Provyn, Frank R.
Richardson, Madeleine
Robinson, Harlan D.
Rowe, Joann M.
Ziegler, Diana

NEW EXTREME SPORTS AT STATE!

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DUDE, YOU QUIT DISSIN' US WITH YOUR EXPORT SUBSIDIES AND WE GOT US A SLAMMIN' TRADE AGREEMENT!



EXTREME BUNJEE VISA ADJUDICATION...

OKAY, YOU'LL NEED TO FILL OUT THIS FORM, AND ATTACH A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH, AND— WHOOPS, BE RIGHT BACK!



EXTREME EMPLOYEE EVALUATION REPORTS!

I'M A LITTLE UNCLEAR ON "WENDELL IS ONE STRAIGHT-UP PHAT OFFICE DIRECTOR..."

I THINK IT'S GRIEVABLE, BUT I'M NOT SURE WHY...

YO, GET JIGGY WITH IT!



EXTREME CABLE DRAFTING...

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AND EXTREME STATE DEPARTMENT CAFETERIA!

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