

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# STATE

JUNE 2009



# KOLKATA

City of Joy

# JUNE 2009

STATE MAGAZINE | ISSUE 535

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## Rock of Jakarta

Embassy welcomes band after U.S. tour.

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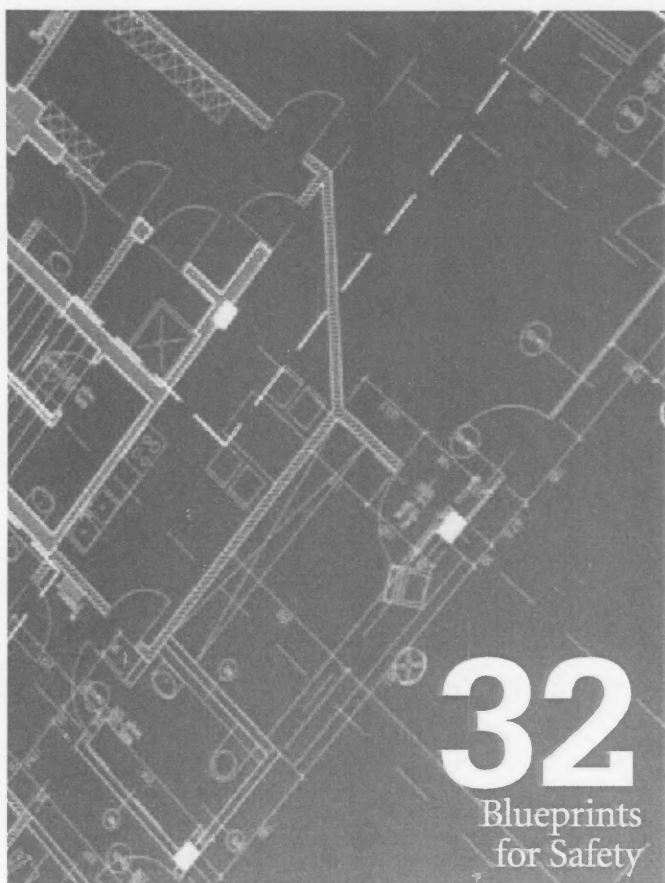
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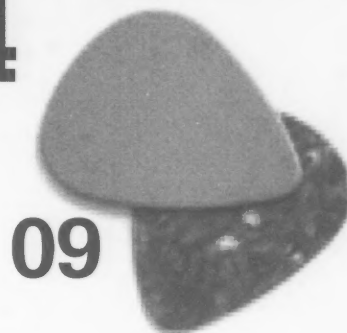
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### ON THE COVER

The U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata includes 12 states, one territory and some of the world's most dramatic scenery.

*Photograph by Corbis*

D.G. HARRY K.  
THOMAS

## Remembering Our Brave Foreign Service Colleagues

On May 25, I had the honor of joining fellow members of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, and Department of State employees and relatives at the DACOR Memorial Area of Rock Creek Cemetery for the DACOR Memorial Day Ceremony to remember the fallen members of the Foreign Service and their families. Since 1984, this annual ceremony has included a short ecumenical service with an invocation, the playing of "Taps," remarks and a wreath-laying. DACOR hosts a reception afterwards in the nearby St. Paul's Parish Hall.

Located at Rock Creek Church Road, N.W., and Webster Street, N.W., in the Petworth neighborhood of Washington, D.C., Rock Creek Cemetery is an 86-acre burial ground that is adjacent to the historic U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the Soldiers' Home Cemetery. Because of the inspiration of Winifred Hunter (Foreign Service staff officer of Class 11) in 1957 and the dedicated work of the Graves Commission established by the Board of Governors of DACOR in 1964, we now have a special place of rest for those in the Foreign Service on land donated to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1719. Any DACOR member may purchase a burial plot or columbarium niche from the cemetery.

As Americans across the nation honored the brave men and women who fought to defend our nation, we gathered at Rock Creek, the oldest cemetery in Washington, to pay tribute to the men and women of

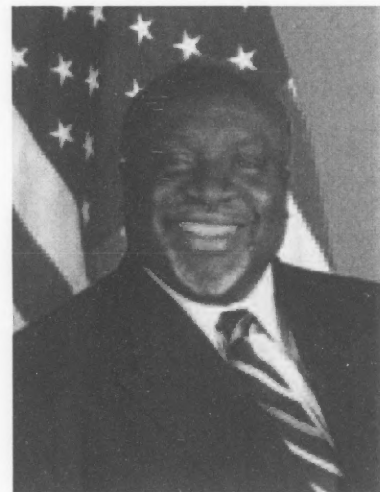
the Foreign Service and Department of State who preceded us. In my remarks, I paid tribute to cherished colleagues, such as Brian Adkins, who made the ultimate sacrifice while overseas. On January 31, Brian was killed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he was serving his first tour as a Foreign Service officer in the embassy's consular section.

Brian's untimely death reminds us that ours is a hazardous profession, requiring extraordinary dedication and commitment. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at her nomination hearing, "These public servants are too often unsung heroes. They are in the trenches putting our policies and values to work in an increasingly complicated and dangerous world. Many risk their lives, and some lose their lives, in service to our nation."

That is why one of the Secretary's highest priorities is to make sure that the men and women of the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development have the resources to succeed. The support of the American people and the Congress is essential to our success.

All members of the State Department family—active and retired—can make a difference by continuing to educate the American public about the importance of diplomacy and the work of the Department.

I encourage all of you, as often as you can, to talk about our efforts to advance security, democracy and prosperity around



the world. I can imagine no more fitting tribute to those whom we gathered to honor at Rock Creek Cemetery.

The officers and governors of DACOR note with deep regret in the monthly *DACOR Bulletin* the deaths of Foreign Service officers and employees of the Department of State, and other foreign affairs agencies and their families—DACOR members and nonmembers. If you would like more information about DACOR, its Web site is at [www.dacorbacon.org](http://www.dacorbacon.org). If you have any general comments or suggestions, you can send them to me via unclassified e-mail at [dgdirect@state.gov](mailto:dgdirect@state.gov). ■



## Letters



### Compassionate Heroes

The puppies story from Tashkent (April) is heart melting! What a wonderful example of compassion! I'd love to send all my respect and admiration to Mr. Norland, Mrs. Hartnett and guards Khashimov, Zakhrudinov, Magdiev and Khusainov. They are heroes!

**Carla Furlan**  
*Health Unit*  
*U.S. Embassy in Brasilia*

#### Satellite Imagery

Your March story about the Geographer's Office mentioned the work of the Humanitarian Information Unit. After reading several speculative news accounts about the desperate circumstances of the estimated 150,000 Internally Displaced Persons in the so-called "Safe Zone" in the Mulattivu District in northern Sri Lanka, where IDPs were shelled by both government forces and Tamil rebels, I suggested that the Geographer's Office be contacted.

I wanted to know if any unclassified, commercially available satellite imagery might be available to better monitor the situation on the ground.

Dennis King, whom you mention in your article, and analyst Arand Arun, who is responsible for Sri Lanka, responded immediately, locating satellite imagery collections. These images were shared over a several-week period with Bureau of South

and Central Asian Affairs officials and with the post overseas for any outreach or diplomatic effort.

SCA Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Michael Owen used two of the unclassified images during a press roundtable on the IDP situation in Sri Lanka. The *New York Times* used four satellite photos to illustrate Owen's comments, as did the *Washington Post*, *Washington Times* and several other news outlets.

In 2002, I was the public affairs officer in Colombo and was asked to go to the Jaffna Peninsula to do press advance for Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's visit. I worked with a Sri Lankan television crew. We did interviews with IDPs, Sri Lankan army officers and others. These interviews were part of a planned television documentary on demining operations. The video showed firsthand the destruction the region experienced as a result of 26 years of war.

What sparked my interest again in the use of satellite imagery in areas of conflict was reading your article. For a long time, I have been an advocate of using imagery in public diplomacy.

**William B. Reinckens**  
*Strategic Communications Coordinator*  
*Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*

#### A Good Look

The colors, layout and use of photography really make the issues of *State Magazine* pop so much more. We look like a 21st-century organization: outgoing, cheerful, serious and hopeful. Congratulations to your publishing team.

**Chantal Dalton**  
*Public Affairs Officer*  
*U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa*

### Let Us Hear from You

**Via E-mail:** statemagazine@state.gov // **Phone:** (202) 663-1700 // **Fax:** (202) 663-1769  
**Mailing Address:** 2401 E Street, NW, HR/ER/SMG, SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. All letters become the property of *State Magazine*. Letters will be edited for length, accuracy and clarity. Only signed letters will be considered.

# news

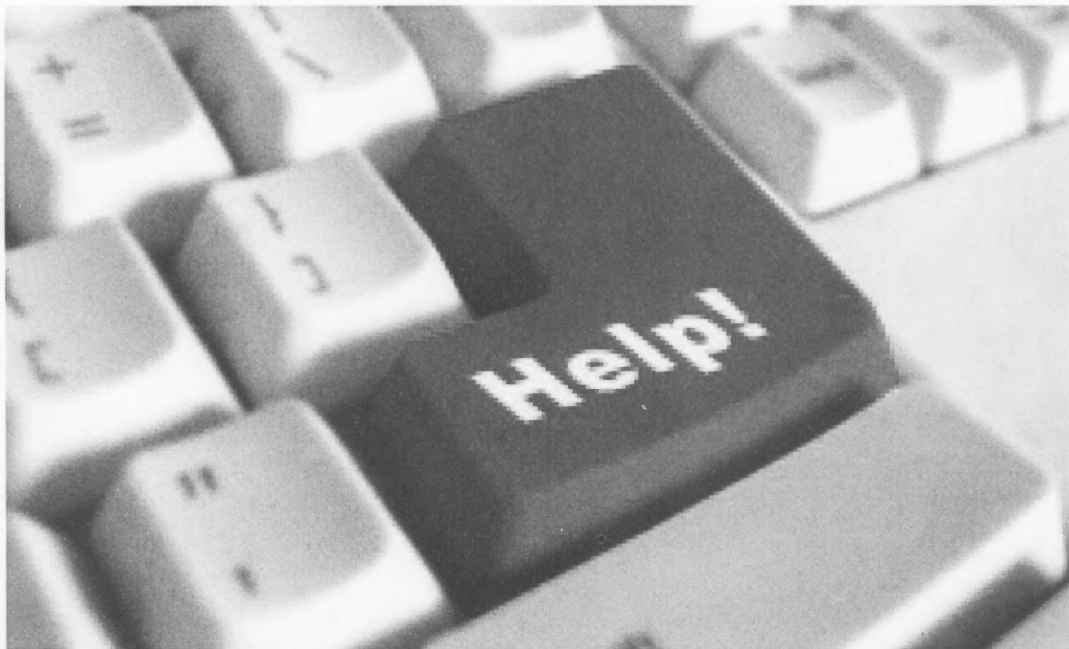
## HR Launches Electronic Service Request System

In April, the Bureau of Human Resources' Executive Office launched HR Electronic Services, an online application that allows the bureau's offices to request HR general services from the Executive Office. This replaces the manual process, making it easier for customers to create and track their requests and enabling the Executive Office to improve accountability for services.

With eServices, direct hires and contract employees can create and submit online an HR service request, such as for badge access or labor services, to their supervisor/approving official. The approving official then reviews and submits the approved

request to the Executive Office. The application allows users to track an HR service request's status and assess the effectiveness and timeliness of services provided.

The eServices platform has been in use by posts worldwide since 2008 as the one-stop, automated online request system. The bureau's recent customization of this resource will provide it with the metrics to increase efficiency and improve customer service. More information and access instructions are on the HR Initiatives Web site. More information and access instructions are at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/ex/hreservices.cfm>.



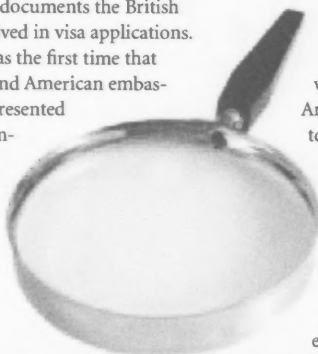
# U.S.-U.K. Partner on Anti-Fraud Training

The U.S. Embassy in Muscat, Oman, as part of an ongoing effort to increase its anti-fraud capacity, hosted a briefing in March on detecting fraud in visa applicants' supporting documents. In attendance were 22 Oman-based consular staff members from eight European and Latin American countries.

Two United Kingdom Border Agency officers, heads of the British Embassy's risk assessment unit for the Persian Gulf region and Iran, led the briefing, which focused on examining banking statements, employment letters, diplomas and language certificates. The briefing also covered handwriting analysis and open-source fraud detection

resources, and included hands-on exercises involving suspect documents the British embassy had received in visa applications.

The briefing was the first time that Muscat's British and American embassies have jointly presented an anti-fraud training program, and this new connection has led to increased information sharing on suspect visa applicants.



Embassy Muscat's consular and regional security office staff improved their fraud-detection skills and exchanged information with their European and Latin American counterparts. They learned to look more critically at supporting documents and identify paperwork inconsistencies, such as irregular and overstated salary deposits. Although fraud is minimal and unsophisticated in Oman, vigilance is necessary because of the regional terrorist threat and global economic downturn.

## Secretary Announces Greening Diplomacy Initiative

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton used the Department's Earth Day commemoration in April to announce a new Greening Diplomacy Initiative in which she said the Department will lead by example and challenge employees to engage in environmental stewardship at work and at home.

"I think we can set a real example," Secretary Clinton told a full Dean Acheson Auditorium audience, which included 95

members of the Washington diplomatic corps. "This should be a global effort, where we all try to have the symbols of our national presence in each country represent the best technology we can put together in retrofitting buildings and building new buildings."

The initiative's Greening Council, chaired by Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy, will coordinate management, policy and public efforts worldwide,

and conduct a global sustainability survey of the Department's facilities and operations to measure its environmental footprint and guide future greening objectives. The initiative also seeks employees' suggestions on reducing the Department's environmental impact. The initiative's Web site on the Intranet is <http://m.state.sbu/sites/pri/GDI/default.aspx>.

Under Secretary Kennedy cited other recent environmental strides, including the fact that three-quarters of the materials from the Main State renovation are recycled.

Earlier that day, Main State's Exhibit Hall was filled with displays of various Department bureaus' efforts to promote environmentalism and efficiency. For instance, the Bureau of Administration's Office of Real Property Management displayed its new office lighting at a booth decorated with an architect's rendering of the Department's newest Washington, D.C., annex, being constructed just south of Main State.

The light fixtures being installed there, which will also be installed in Main State as it's renovated, adjust their output according to changes in the amount of natural light during a day, saving 30 percent over similar overhead fixtures, said Kitt Alexander, a bureau representative at the booth.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presents the Department's new Greening Diplomacy Initiative at the Earth Day ceremony.





## Portsmouth Passport Center Expands

The National Passport Center in Portsmouth, N.H., has prepared for the next phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative by expanding its personnel and relocating to a new, larger facility (shown at left). Under the initiative, on June 1 U.S. citizens will be required to present a single document that denotes citizenship and identity, such as a passport book or passport card, when entering the United States at land borders and sea ports of entry.

The first phase of the initiative, which required U.S. citizens to present a passport book when traveling by air, sparked a big surge in demand for passports in 2007. Applications nationwide grew from 12.1 million in 2006 to 18.4 million that year, so Passport Services needed a larger work force to tackle anticipated increases in the workload.

In response, the Portsmouth center enlisted more than 150 Foreign Service officers from all around the world, plus Career Entry Program employees, Presidential Management Fellows and Civil Service staff.

“Every seat was filled, with three shifts running daily and two shifts on weekends,” said Peter Laing, one of the assistant regional directors at the center. The passport task force addressed more than 300,000 cases in a two-month timeframe and reduced the backlog of applications there to less than 80,000—two or three days of receipts, he said. Overall, the Portsmouth center processed almost five million passport applications in 2007.

The center more than doubled its number of passport adjudicators to 315 by the end of 2007, and another 75 joined in 2008. This put the total work force at just under 500 government employees and 330 contractors by the start of 2009.

Needing more space, the center’s director, Tyrone Shelton, began the search for a larger facility. Thanks to work by the Office of Real Property Management, the center in November moved into a four-story, 75,000-square-foot facility, almost twice the center’s original square footage.

## Secretary Clinton Helps Consulate Celebrate Anniversary

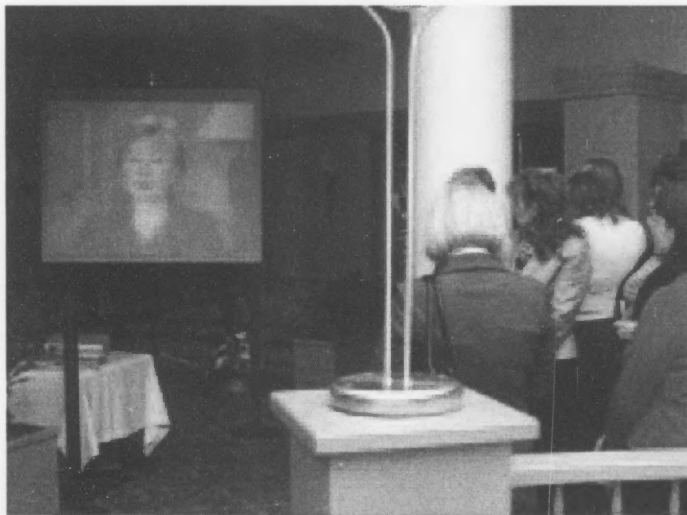
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton “visited” Yekaterinburg, Russia, by video in March, greeting Ambassador to Russia John Beyrle, Consul General Tim Sandusky and their guests at the celebration of the consulate general’s 15th anniversary.

On March 31, 1994, the first foreign diplomatic mission in the Urals and Western Siberia—the U.S. Consulate General in Yekaterinburg—was inaugurated by Jack Segal, the first consul general, and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown.

The consulate general’s anniversary reception included such guests as the mayors of Yekaterinburg and Perm, and other leaders of governmental, political, cultural, religious, nongovernmental and business organizations. Deputy Chief of Mission Eric Rubin represented the embassy, while Consul General Tim Sandusky was joined by former Consul General Jim Bigus, who served from 1999 to 2001. Jack Segal, the first consul general in Yekaterinburg, and his wife, Karen Puschel, the first political officer, sent video greetings, as did former consul general Dale Eppler (2001-2003) and Scott Rauland (2002-2004).

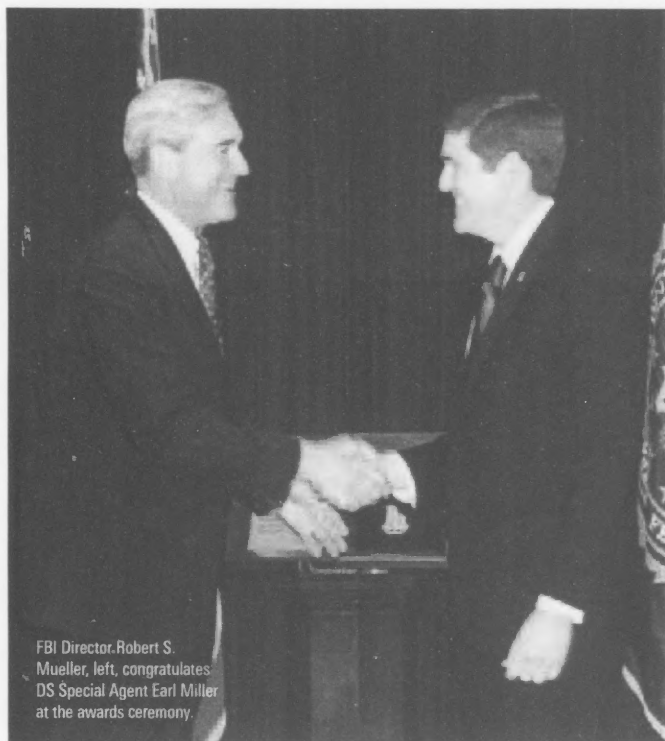
The reception’s highlight was the live remarks, via video on a large screen, of the Secretary of State, who offered her greetings and those of President Obama and warmly remembered her prior visit to Yekaterinburg in 1997 as First Lady.

The Secretary spoke of the dynamic vitality of the Urals and Western Siberian consular district, a region the size of India with a population of more than 25 million people, and remembered her visit to a medical center where American and Canadian doctors still perform surgeries for children. She expressed confidence that U.S.-Russian relations would deepen and encouraged the people of the Urals to continue prospering.



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivers her greeting to the consulate general’s anniversary celebration via videoconference.





FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, left, congratulates DS Special Agent Earl Miller at the awards ceremony.

## FBI Honors RSO for Disrupting Terrorism

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Earl R. Miller recently received the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Shield of Bravery from FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III in recognition of exceptional courage in the line of duty. Miller, the regional security officer in New Delhi, was honored with several FBI special agents in a ceremony at FBI headquarters in March.

While serving as regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, Miller worked with FBI agents on a four-year investigation leading to the arrest of 12 terrorists responsible for a 2002 ambush that left two Americans and one Indonesian dead, and eight other Americans, including a child, severely wounded. Director Mueller said Miller and his FBI counterparts "successfully executed a highly complex ruse that disrupted the terrorist group" without the benefit of modern police technology and tools.

"This investigation is a good example of inter-agency cooperation between DS, the FBI and host-government law enforcement, but it is not unique," Miller said. "DS agents around the world work every day with their FBI and local police colleagues on major terrorism investigations."

On hand from the Department of State at the awards ceremony were Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy, Diplomatic Security Service Director Greg Starr, DS Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlene Lamb, DS Assistant Training Director Mark Hunter and others.

# STATE

MAGAZINE

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*State Magazine* (ISSN 1099-4165) is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C St., N.W., Washington, DC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing locations.

### Change of Address

Send changes of address to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108.

You may also e-mail address changes to [statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov).

### Subscriptions

*State Magazine* is available by paid subscription through the U.S. Government Printing Office by telephone at (202) 512-1800 or on the Web at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

### Submissions

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request our guidelines, "Getting Your Story Told," by e-mail at [statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov); download them from our Web site at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov); or send your request in writing to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., HR/ER/SMG, SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108.

### Deadlines

The submission deadline for the September issue is July 15. The deadline for the October issue is August 15.

### Environmental Notes

*State Magazine* is printed in the USA using soy-based inks on recycled paper that contains 10% post-consumer waste and is SFI-certified.



## DIVERSITY NOTES

From John Robinson

# Bullying: The “B” Word That Won’t Go Away

Remember the bully on the playground who hustled you for lunch money or made fun of your pigtails—the one who made others cry, feel scared or intimidated, and made school a miserable place to be? Unfortunately, bullies and bullying behavior find their way into the federal workplace, and we must cope with it as adults. The discomfort and intimidation can be irritating or devastating. Although bullying may be evidence of other unlawful behavior, there is currently no specific federal law prohibiting bullying. Nevertheless, this type of behavior should not and will not be tolerated at the Department of State.

The phenomenon of workplace bullying is a rising concern in the public and private sectors. According to the 2007 Zogby International Survey, 37 percent of American workers, an estimated 54 million people, have been bullied at work. Workplace bullying is defined as using persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior against a co-worker, most often a subordinate. The behavior can take on many characteristics—angry outbursts, persistent antagonistic criticism of co-workers, biting sarcasm and humor designed to humiliate, screaming, yelling and belittling others’ opinions. The effects can be psychological and physical. Some bullied employees call in sick to avoid the bullying, which over time affects the productivity of an entire office. Many workers become unmotivated and stressed, lose sleep, fear going into the office and exhibit symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or hypertension. A bullied office may lose engagement because its workers have lost the motivation to produce work for the bullying boss.

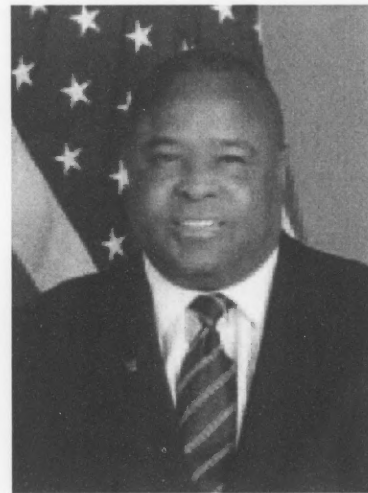
The topic was raised when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke at the Depart-

ment’s Women’s History Month program in March. She explicitly stated that bullying will not be tolerated. Whether or not bullies are bad people is not the question. Bullying is about behavior, and that is what must change. And such habits can be changed with feedback, continuing education, counseling and training. Often, bullying is the result of poor communication skills and a lack of acknowledgment by management. It may be leftover aggressive styles no longer proper in a civilian setting or an inability to manage anger.

The Foreign Service Institute offers a variety of courses to improve communication and interpersonal skills with a focus on team building. The courses below would best benefit employees who might be labeled as bullies. If you have characteristics of a bully or feel that you might be perceived as one, please sign up for a class as soon as possible. It’s never too late to become a better employee and create a positive workplace for your co-workers.

- Customer Service Training (PA143)
- Effective Speaking and Listening Skills (PK240)
- Leading in a Diverse Workforce (PT 218) for managers
- Valuing Diversity in the Workplace (PT 225) for employees who are not managers; and
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (PT 216)

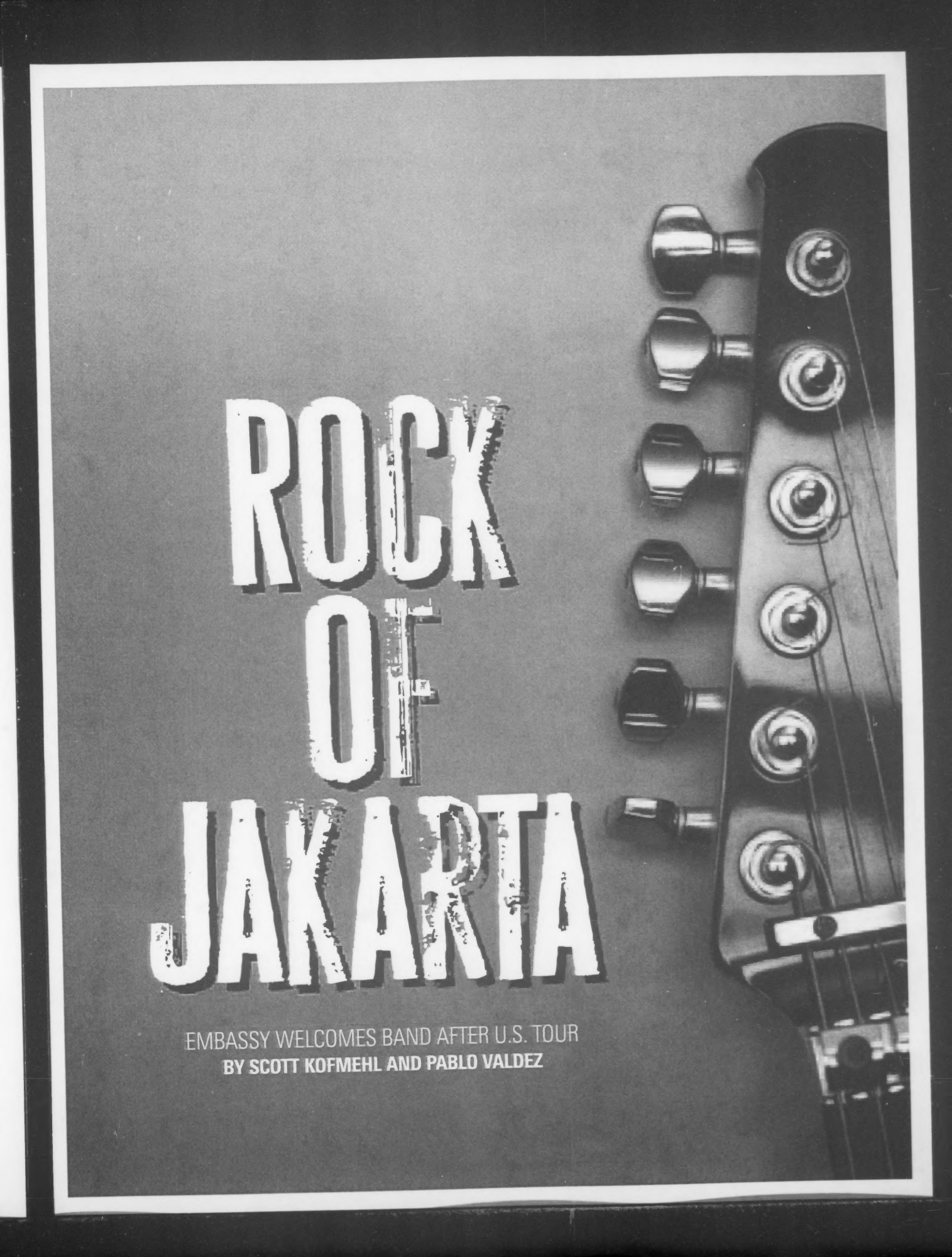
While bullying itself does not automatically violate Equal Employment Opportunity laws, bullying behavior can lead employees to bring EEO claims. Our analysis of multiple complaints of discrimination in the Office of Civil Rights has found that many



bullied employees allege that they’ve been subjected to a hostile work environment in violation of EEO laws. Managers, be aware: If someone in your office has the characteristics of a bully, it is your duty to counsel that person before his or her behavior creates an uncomfortable situation for your other employees, harms others, leads to workplace violence or subjects the Department to legal vulnerability because timely action was not taken. Finally, ask yourself (or, better, ask others who will be honest with you) if you yourself rely on intimidation or scare tactics in your leadership style as a form of workforce control.

Everyone deserves to work in an environment that is safe and bully-free. After raising more awareness on the issue of workplace bullying and increasing the avenues for improving communication and team-building skills in the Department, bullies will hopefully only remain on the playground of our childhoods and stay out of the office forever.

For more information about workplace bullying, visit our Web site: <http://socr.state.gov> or <http://bullyinginstitute.org>. ■



# ROCK OF JAKARTA

EMBASSY WELCOMES BAND AFTER U.S. TOUR  
BY SCOTT KOFMEHL AND PABLO VALDEZ



Slank's lead singer, Kaka, takes a solo.

**SCREAMING FANS, A POPULAR ROCK BAND AND A CONCERT  
BROADCAST NATIONWIDE: THIS IS NOT YOUR AVERAGE  
EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONAL EVENT.**

However, that's just what happened when Ambassador Cameron R. Hume invited Indonesia's top rock band, Slank, to perform a "welcome home" concert at his residence after the band's 15-city U.S. tour.

This meant the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta had to organize a rock concert for 500 guests.

Blending the musical style of Aerosmith with the positive social messages of U2, Slank is widely popular in Indonesia and supports causes ranging from combating corruption to environmental awareness, making it the perfect fit for underscoring embassy priorities.

"We are always looking for partners to advance our priorities," said Ambassador Hume. "Slank reaches communities that we do not."

## CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

The concert promoted the embassy goal of increasing youth participation in politics and highlighted cultural links between Indonesia and the United States. "Music can change people's perceptions," said Peter Gontha, a prominent Indonesian businessman who supported Slank's U.S. tour.

"We were curious to see if the American public would welcome our music—the response was amazing," Slank member Abdee Negara said.

In 2008, the Grammy Award-winning American band Ozomatli toured Indonesia as part of a State Department-funded "Diversity Rocks" tour. At its concert in Palembang, Sumatra, Ozomatli performed in front of thousands of fans—and Slank was an opening act. The concert established a relationship that led Ozomatli



The band members react as their music drives the crowd wild. Below: Kaka meets with students from Paramadina University.

to invite Slank to perform with them in the United States during Slank's 2008 U.S. tour.

The concert at the Ambassador's house engaged key mission constituencies that are working on anti-corruption reform, which is a top mission

priority. Before Slank took the stage, Corruption Eradication Commission Chairman Antasari Azhar told the crowd, "Everyone must be part of the fight against corruption."

The embassy also invited more than 200 university stu-

dents from a range of Muslim, Christian, private, public, elite and state-funded institutions. In addition, the embassy invited civil society leaders and high-profile entertainment figures engaged in social causes. Several civil society members said the

event allowed groups from a variety of backgrounds to meet, exchange ideas and unite around a common theme.

"This was more than a concert: it was an opportunity to highlight the importance of youth participation in the political process," said Cholil Mahmud, lead singer of the Indonesian band Efek Rumah Kaca, which means "greenhouse effect."

## UNUSUAL MISSION

Putting on a major rock concert is unusual work for most diplomats. The principal officer of the American Presence Post in Medan, Sean Stein, had the original idea for the concert, and he pitched it to Deputy Chief of Mission John Heffern. Entry-level generalists and specialists and eligible family members worked with Heffern on planning. The general services office team did the heavy lifting and built a professional-quality stage, and the regional security office managed the entry of 500 guests into the Ambassador's residence within a 30-minute window and oversaw the concert's preparations.

The public affairs section worked with 20 national media outlets to cover the show, which was broadcast live on Indonesian radio and then rebroadcast three days later on primetime television.

"We reached millions of Indonesian youth with an important message: Politics rocks!" said embassy Public Diplomacy Officer Tristram Perry. ■



*The authors are economic officers at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta and members of the embassy's entry-level professionals group.*

# Watchful Eyes

OFFICERS IN THE SINAI HELP ENFORCE PEACE TREATY /// BY ZOJA DERETIC

Every other Sunday morning, members of the Civilian Observer Unit, which monitors compliance with the security arrangements of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace in the Sinai Peninsula, gather for breakfast and then head out on a verification mission. Over the next four days, their off-road vehicles will travel across the four zones established by the treaty. In

six teams of two, the observers will work with Egyptian and Israeli military liaison officers to count each side's personnel and equipment, including tanks and artillery, to ensure they do not exceed treaty limits.

The Sinai, approximately 60,000 square kilometers of Egyptian territory adjacent to Israel and the Gaza Strip, is a partially demilitarized zone following the 1973

war between Egypt and Israel. The treaty ending the war established four security zones in the Sinai, and there are limitations on military forces and equipment within each zone. After Israel withdrew in 1982, the Multinational Force and Observers began monitoring compliance with the security provisions of the treaty and its limitations.



An Israeli military officer guides observers through the site of a historic battle along the Israel-Syria border during professional development week.

PHOTOGRAPHS (LEFT), STRIP, LESLIE; OBSERVERS (PAGE LEFT), ZOJA DERETIC; (RIGHT), CLIFF BAZANIK

The Multinational Force and Observers also provides a military liaison system between the Israeli and Egyptian defense forces and since 2005 has monitored the deployment of a force of Egyptian border guards along the border in the Rafah area. The organization involves military personnel, equipment and financial

## Professional Unity

"Some people may find it surprising that we work together as well as we do," said Jenny Becker, an FSO from the public diplomacy cone. "We come from different backgrounds and spend so much time together. It is a testament to the professionalism of the observers."

The observers develop new skills through

actually implement a peace treaty.

"Dealing with Israeli and Egyptian officials, and watching them deal with each other, was a great vantage point to see how the Camp David treaty actually worked," said Ambassador Ronald Schlicher, head of the Civilian Observer Unit from 1991 to 1992.

He said that was his first experience in



Left: Observer Marina Cobbs, a former U.S. Army captain and Black Hawk pilot, briefs French Air Force pilot Second Lieutenant Antoine Maury prior to a mission. Above: Members of the 2008-2009 observer unit stand before a French Air Force plane used for reconnaissance missions.

donations from 18 nations, including the United States, which also provides military personnel and civilian observers.

"The Civilian Observer Unit is one of the smallest contingents within the Multinational Force and Observers, but we play a prominent role in three of the four major operations," said retired Lieutenant Colonel Norm Rudd, the Civilian Observer Unit's longest-serving member.

The Civilian Observer Unit, which offers Department officers an opportunity to serve alongside members of the U.S. military (*State Magazine*, June 2008), is the only nonmilitary operational unit of the Multinational Force and Observers. The unit's 16 members conduct aerial reconnaissance and ground-based verification in each treaty zone twice monthly and report their findings to both parties to the treaty.

All members of the unit are Americans; seven are Foreign Service officers and the rest are former U.S. military officers.

their work. Observer Chris Leslie, an economic officer, said he liked the experience of operating in a multinational environment. "It is a key skill as the Department gets more involved in working with foreign military forces and international organizations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere," he said.

FSOs bring the impartial Multinational Force and Observers diplomatic skills, familiarity with working on the ground in foreign countries and language skills, said consular officer Erin Sawyer.

They also bring dedication and a focus on detail.

"In preparing for a ground-verification mission, I always look at what the last team did," said Becker. "I see if there was anything unusual, or a large exercise. I prepare the vehicle to make sure we have the essentials: fuel additive, toilet paper... I'm careful to make sure everything works—you don't want to get stuck out in the desert."

Sawyer said she enjoys getting out and seeing the Sinai—and understanding how to

working in a multilateral context. "Working with my military colleagues was also extremely valuable since cooperation with the Department of Defense is becoming a central feature of the way the Department needs to do business," he said.

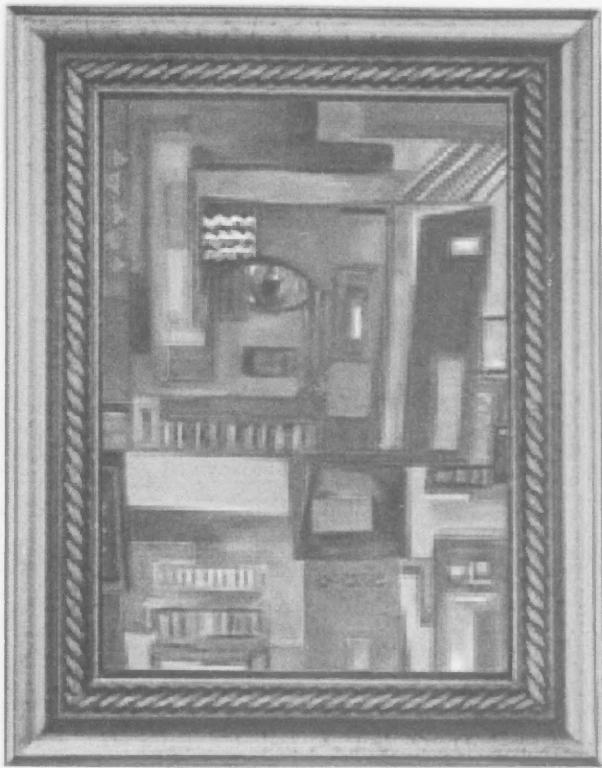
In 2007, the Multinational Force and Observers marked its 25th anniversary with the establishment of an award honoring those who contributed a lasting legacy to the organization. Among the 14 recipients of its Distinguished Service for Peace Award are the group's first director general, Ambassador Leamon Hunt, and Ambassador Peter Constable, Robert Gallucci, Ambassador Frank Ricciardone, Ambassador Arthur Hughes and Robert Krantz.

Foreign Service officers interested in working as civilian observers should contact Adam Vaccaro at (202) 647-2520 or e-mail him at VaccaroAM@state.gov. ■

*The author is an observer with the Civilian Observer Unit.*







# Spotlight Time

PRT HELPS FEMALE ARTISTS FIND THEIR VOICE /// BY AARON D. SNIPE



In Muthanna Province, Iraq's second largest, agriculture defines the everyday life of many. Beyond the edges of the Euphrates, which meanders through this dusty land at the bottom of Iraq, much of the landscape is barren and colorless.

But during three weeks this spring, the citizens of Muthanna were treated to an unusual splash of color from an unexpected source. The Provisional Reconstruction Team in Muthanna and a local nongovernmental organization helped 40 local women display their paintings and sketches in the province's first

exhibit highlighting the art of Muthanna's women.

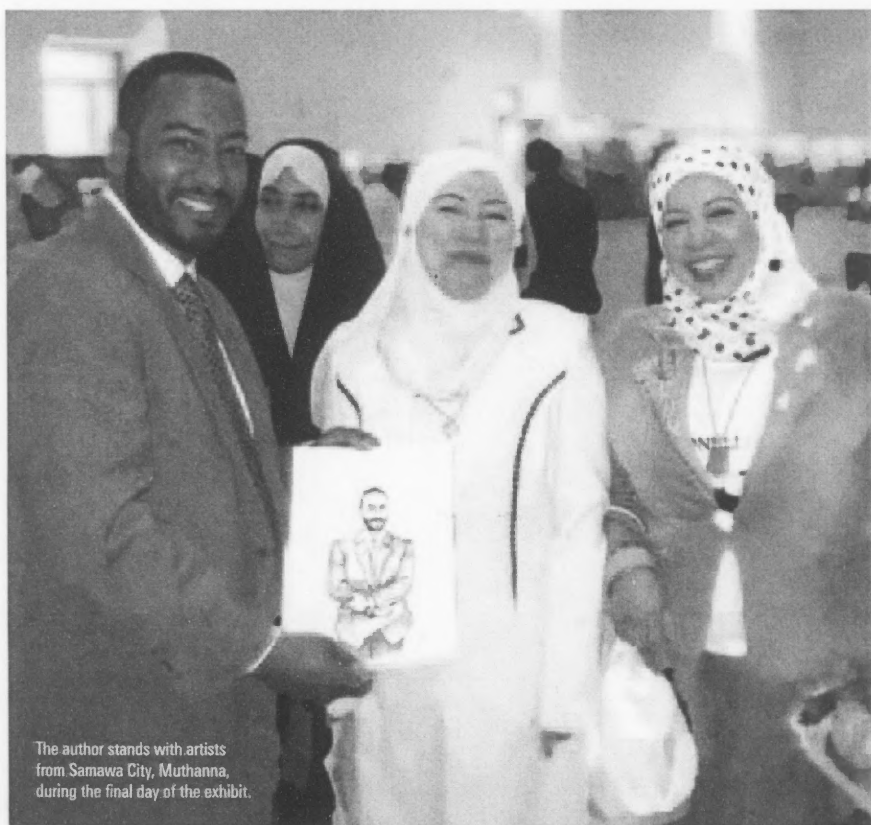
The art project began in November 2008 with a meeting between representatives of the Provisional Reconstruction Team and local artists. Seeking to engage a segment of the population it seldom had contact with, the team's public diplomacy staff arranged a meeting and small gallery showing for local artists in downtown Samawa, Muthanna's provincial capital. The initial event offered the artists, many of them teachers and homemakers, an opportunity to display their work for the first time outside their homes.

The team subsequently met with members of Muthanna's Provincial Council, professors from Muthanna University and the artists to discuss holding a larger showing.

### Obvious Talent

"As the relationship between the United States and Iraq normalizes, we are placing a greater focus on English language teaching programs, exchanges and, of course, cultural programs," said PRT Team Leader Brad Lynch. "We met with the artists, could immediately see their talent and decided that helping them display their work was a way to help them tell their story, which is really the story of Iraq."

The title of the exhibit, *The Colors of Warka*, comes from the local name of the ancient Sumerian goddess of beauty.



The author stands with artists from Samawa City, Muthanna, during the final day of the exhibit.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT) HAYDER MUSSAWI; (OPPOSITE PAGE) AARON SNIPE



An Iraqi reporter interviews one of the Muthanna artists.

Through a grant from the public affairs section at the U.S Embassy in Baghdad, the team and the nongovernmental group, the Public Awareness Organization, provided art supplies and an easel to each program participant. The artists had just over a month to paint submissions for three gallery events in Muthanna's largest cities: Samawa, Rumaytha and Khider. They had free rein to paint without limitations on content.

In the months leading up to the exhibit, Ambassador Ryan Crocker made his first visit to Muthanna Province. He attended a special gallery showing for the artists and spoke with all of them about their work. During the visit, many of the artists gave their first on-camera television interviews, speaking with members of the Iraqi and Western press.

## Big Opening

The exhibit's opening in March was attended by residents from all sectors of the area's civil society and government. At one of the gallery events, a professor from Muthanna University who had brought 30 of

his male students there on a field trip said the exhibit was excellent.

"It is nice that the Americans are sponsoring such an event," he said "It shows things are changing. We hope for more of such cooperation."

The project's kick-off event succeeded on many levels. It engaged an often-ignored part of Iraqi society and amplified women's voices in Muthanna by supporting creative expression.

"Today was the biggest day of my life," artist Samira Jabr told Ambassador Crocker during his visit. "To have an opportunity to present my art to such an audience was something we women thought impossible."

Ali abd Al-Razzaq, the director of the nongovernmental partner for the exhibit, said the group helped bring women's talents into the open for all to see.

"We are grateful for the help from the PRT but even more grateful to the artists who shared their art with the people of Muthanna," Al-Razzaq said.

At the event's close, one artist whispered

to the woman standing next to her, "Through our paintings, everyone will know our stories. They will know we are here."

## Subtle Message

While the citizens of Muthanna celebrated *The Colors of Warka*, the exhibition conveyed a more subtle message. When members of the PRT first met the artists in November, almost all were hesitant to be photographed or speak publicly. Some would not make eye contact. Five months later, with cameras flashing and tapes rolling, the women of Muthanna stood proudly next to their paintings, telling local and national media of the importance of art and the role of women in Iraqi society.

Far more than just an exhibit of art, *The Colors of Warka* brought the hopes, struggles, dreams and visions of Iraq's future into full view for the residents of Muthanna Province. ■

*The author is the public diplomacy officer at PRT Muthanna.*

# More than Books

AMERICAN CORNERS PROGRAM THRIVES IN SLOVAKIA /// BY EDWARD KEMP

When students from an art school in Kosice, in eastern Slovakia, wanted to contribute to a digital videoconference with Harvard University experts on preserving indigenous culture, they launched into a fast traditional dance of their Roma ethnic group. The American Corners—a Department-supported resource center at the State Scientific Library in Kosice—rocked with the music's rhythm. And video-conferrees in three locations learned a library can be about more than books, newspapers and computers.

In March, Slovakia's American Corners—or InfoUSA, as they are called in Slovakia and other post-Communist countries—celebrated the fifth anniversary of their founding. The first was launched in Kosice, followed by Bratislava in western Slovakia and then Banská Bystrica in the central region. From 2006 to 2008, the number of visitors to InfoUSA in Slovakia doubled to 6,000.

At the celebration, the deputy mayor of Kosice, Slovakia's second largest city, joined Chargé d'Affaires Keith Eddins, other embassy officers, local employees and more than 100 guests for a gala afternoon program on two floors of the library. One highlight was the American historic speeches and gospel songs, performed by a local secondary school's English drama club.

## Access to America

The 412 American Corners worldwide offer access to information about American society and values, and are supported by information resource officers from the Bureau of International Information Programs and regional bureaus.

In Slovakia, InfoUSA coordinators are employees of the host libraries but work closely with the embassy on gaining additional resources and developing their audiences and

programs. The U.S. Embassy in Bratislava's resource specialist Paula Holotnakova and her assistant Lubica Koskova order books and periodicals and arrange programs. The public affairs section contributed \$30,000 worth of books and other stock to InfoUSA, and annually updates the collections and purchases new computers and other equipment from the post's budget and Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs funding.

Circulating its books and audio materials is the core InfoUSA mission—especially in a country like Slovakia, where often neither English-language students nor teachers can afford to buy books. All three centers also host traditional library functions such as literature clubs, movie showings and readings, and are platforms for the embassy's public outreach efforts.

In establishing the corners, "We had to figure out how to create a thriving organism that would have a life of its own," said former Public Affairs Officer Barbara Zigli. She credited her staff, in particular former Deputy Public Affairs Officer Lora Berg and Paula Holotnakova, with developing a steady flow of creative programs in those early days.

## Nonstop Activities

Today, the centers' nonstop activities include exhibits of Slovak and American student art on social problems and informal talks for students by embassy officers and visiting American experts. There is also one-on-one advising by Fulbright Commission representatives.

Former Ambassador Rudolphe Vallee speaks with secondary school students at the InfoUSA in Banská Bystrica.



PHOTOGRAPHS: IGOR SCHNEEWEISS



Via a digital videoconference, the coordinators of the three Slovak InfoUSA centers brief Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Public Diplomacy Director Lea Perez, center at lower right, on their progress.

"The majority of the InfoUSA visitors participate in official events with noted representatives of U.S. social, political and cultural life," said Kosice Library Director Jan Gaspard. "Thanks to this department, we can offer readers information about real life in the States."

The morning after the U.S. presidential election, for example, a student and business audience at InfoUSA-Kosice joined other embassy guests via videoconference for a breakfast forum. For President Barack Obama's inauguration, the Bratislava center hosted an exhibit about the campaign produced by two Slovak photojournalists and provided a live viewing of the swearing-in.

When the centers were established, the embassy, libraries and private-sector partners began by renovating historic properties and furnishing them with the technology and resources.

"The real American Corner work starts after the ribbon-cutting," Holotnakova said.

"What helped the program succeed was a lot of communication between the center coordinators and the host libraries' management, plus training and coordinator participation in the International Visitor program."

To help the coordinators feel they are part of the embassy family, the post invites them to its annual 4th of July party and other embassy events.

One key to InfoUSA Slovakia's success has been its sensitivity to the interests of the Slovak host libraries. The public affairs section's programs have brought media attention to the libraries, which helps them compete for state funding. The embassy has also offered its staff professional training opportunities and involved them in discussions on contemporary American library science.

### Excellent Programs

The libraries' coordinators initiate excellent programs, such as a recent series of videoconference-based discussions on international

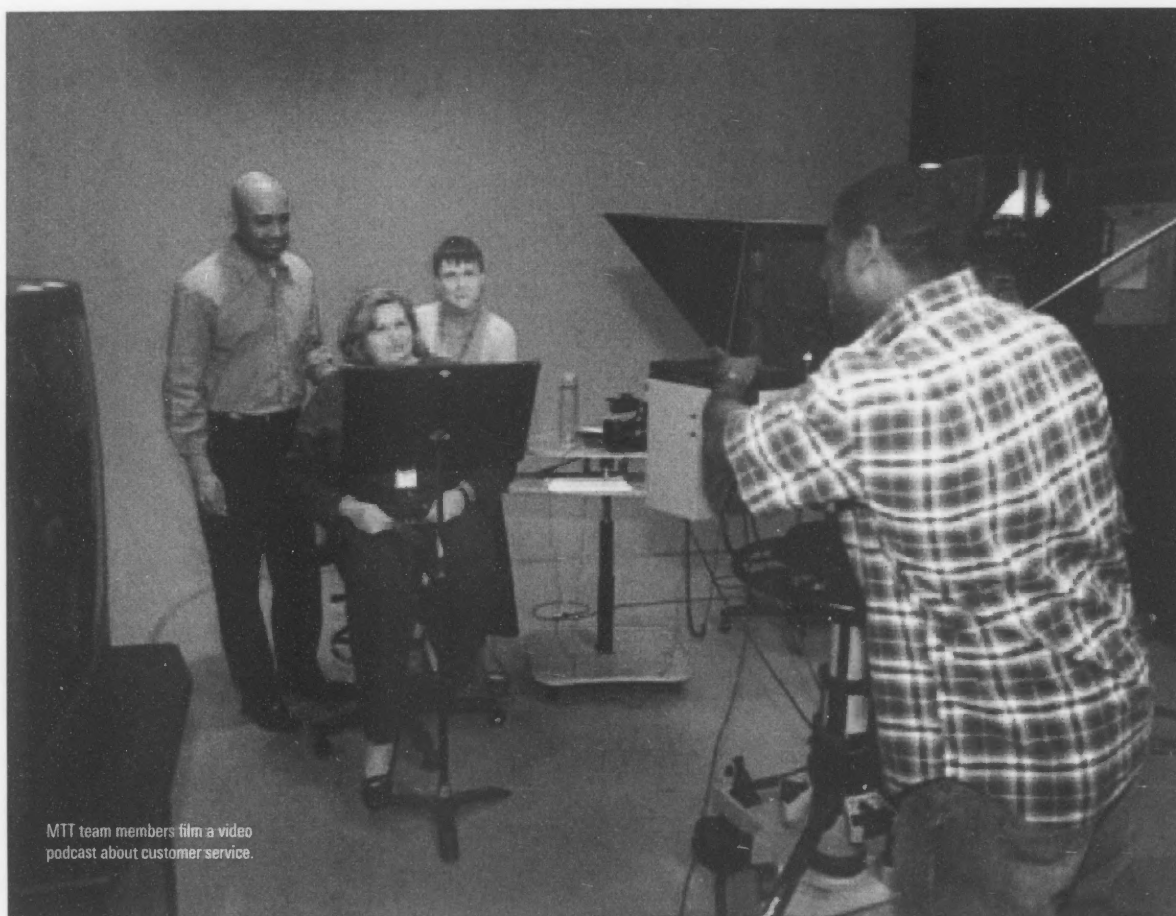
affairs topics chaired by the chargé d'affaires.

"Direct support by American officers for our activities makes the whole difference," said InfoUSA-Kosice coordinator Jozef Fabrici. "InfoUSA-Kosice has delivered many highly regarded programs, thanks to open-minded U.S. guests who came to talk with our audiences."

The InfoUSA Corners in Slovakia give the embassy new ways to present U.S. policy and values to younger audiences and help recruit for embassy-sponsored exchanges.

"Some of the best questions about U.S. policy and life come from the young audiences I have spoken with at InfoUSA," said Chargé d'Affaires Eddins, a regular visitor and digital video guest for InfoUSA programs. "They connect us with the Slovaks we most want to reach, and we are reaching them outside the official embassy environment—in the more relaxed atmosphere of InfoUSA." ■

*The author is the public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava.*



MTT team members film a video podcast about customer service.

# Managing Change

The Department's management operations worldwide are growing more complex and sophisticated. In response, the Administrative Management Training Division of the Foreign Service Institute has changed its name to the Management Tradecraft Training Division and dramatically improved its training by eliminating curriculum barriers, implementing Web-based solutions, working with partners more closely and taking new approaches to learning.

For instance, instead of having some classes for Foreign Service officers and others for

Locally Employed Staff, the division's integrated curriculum focuses on managers who oversee work units or sections and on practitioners who perform specific tasks in those sections, such as processing personnel actions or clearing shipments. This structure introduces appropriate technical knowledge at either level and progressively builds management skills as employees rise in their careers. It also recognizes the role LE Staff managers play and addresses their training needs with the same course materials used by their American counterparts.

## Online Solutions

Recognizing the need to improve the manageability of its course materials, the division uses an online solution for its information management challenges. The Web site <http://fsi.m.state.sbu/sites/SPAS/AMT/default.aspx> began as a link to course schedules and materials to provide updated source material to students and employees for the classroom and workplace. Now, the Web site features discussion boards, provides course-content coordination between the subject-matter experts and regional centers, and includes

FSI DIVISION ADOPTS NEW TRAINING METHODS  
BY CHERYL JOHNSON

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT) JOHN HEYN; (OPPOSITE PAGE) CHERYL JOHNSON



Left: Instructor Adam Lamoreaux, standing at upper left, teaches the General Services Tradecraft class about acquisitions. Below: Human Resources course instructor Cassandra Hamblin, left, tells class members Liv Kilpatrick, center, and Shwe Yee Win "Goldie" Lei about recruitment and employee retention.

logistics information for students at remote locations. The Web site has also helped the division disseminate materials for a basic human resources course that can be offered regionally to LE Staff for FSI credit.

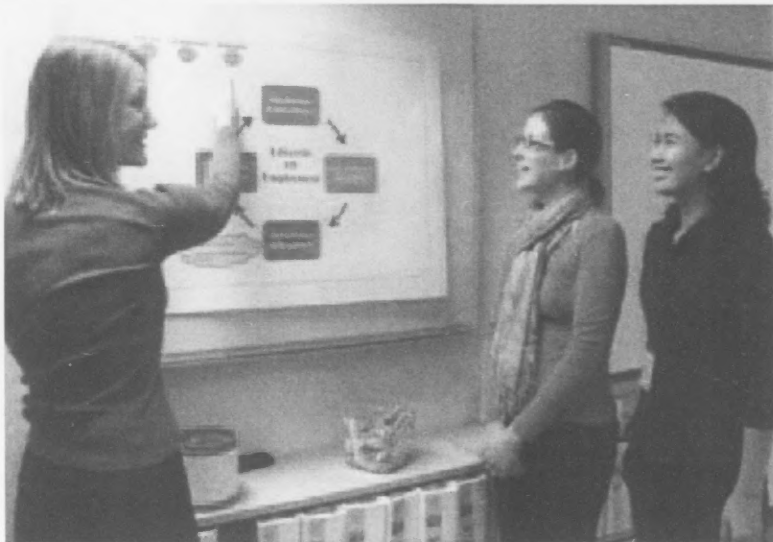
FSI Director Dr. Ruth Whiteside said the division "has done a wonderful job exploring how we can apply new technologies and incorporate best practices in our training."

By placing all of its course materials in a central, visible location, the division was able to identify areas that were missing from its curriculum and create new courses to fill the gaps. In fiscal year 2008, the division premiered a budgeting course, an advanced version of the financial management course and a Senior LE Staff Seminar that builds resource management skills. This year, the division will present the first classroom-based course at FSI for facility managers.

The division is also gaining regional bureaus' input into training and seeking new ideas by sending staff to management and financial workshops.

### **New Managers**

Since the division's audience is wider and more diverse than ever, its newly hired "knowledge manager" will improve the accessibility of materials and help make the information searchable on its Web sites. The division's new distance learning manager will assess online courses and boost the division's capacity for offering online and virtual classes through the Institute's distance-learning catalog and new delivery methods such as Adobe Presenter and podcasts. This will benefit employees who do not have the time to go to FSI.



The division has also deepened its ties with partners and identified ways to work with Department colleagues outside its usual scope of operations. The division's human resources staff is seeking collaboration opportunities at the Department's regional training centers, such as that in Charleston, S.C., and its financial management staff is working closely with the Charleston center to extend FSI credit to the first tranche of the center's courses.

The division is also assisting the Bureau of Resource Management in developing training for the new financial software application and is developing train-the-trainer materials with the Bureau of Human Resources for its new ePerformance software. It is also advising the Bureau of Overseas Buildings

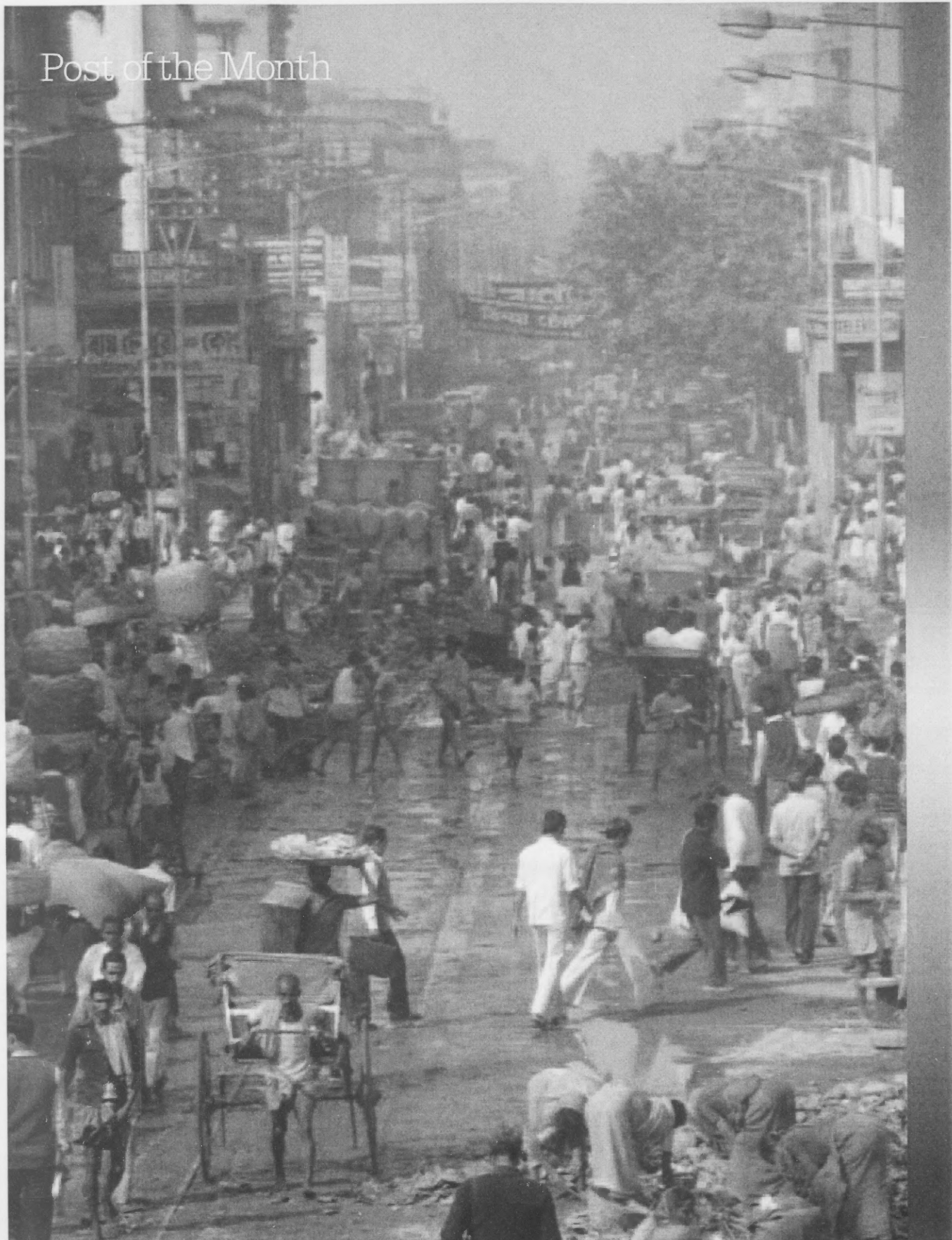
Operations on how to turn a classroom-based course, Work Orders for Windows, into a distance-learning course and is assisting the Office of Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation with the rollout of the Collaborative Management Initiative by designing the training for the initiative's leaders in the field.

In sum, the division is listening to feedback and seeking to provide Department employees with the knowledge and skills to translate ideas into reality.

Put another way by the division's director, Alaina Teplitz, "Our training is all about working smarter." ■

*The author is a course manager in the Management Tradecraft Training Division.*

Post of the Month





# Kolkata

From mountains to swamps,  
consular district teems  
with diversity

BY DOUGLAS KELLY AND MOULIK BERKANA



# Post of the Month



1



2



3



1

Political/economic officer Matthew Asada visits the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, Bihar, where Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, attained enlightenment. *Photo by Tinku Roy*

2

The Nakhoda mosque is one of the most important in Kolkata. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

3

Foreign Service National employee Nilotpala Sin assists a new member of the American Library. One of Kolkata's most popular institutions, the library hosts seminars, workshops and debates throughout the year. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

4

Kolkata is the only city in India that features trams as part of the daily commute. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

5

Consul General Beth Payne meets students at the Badshah Khan Girls' High School. *Photo by Rafique Anwar*

6

Public Affairs Officer Doug Kelly stands near the Howrah Bridge, which spans the Hooghly River. Much of the daily life of the city—commerce, transport and even worship—centers upon the river, a branch of the Ganges. *Photo by Melissa Pitotti*

Kolkata, India, a dynamic metropolis of more than 15 million people that sprawls for more than 20 miles on both banks of the Hooghly River, defies every effort at categorization. A relatively new city in an ancient land, Kolkata (or Calcutta, as it was known until 2001) was the capital of the British Empire in South Asia from 1772 until the early 20th century, when the capital was shifted to New Delhi. When India and Pakistan came into being after the Partition in 1947, Kolkata found itself cut off from much of its hinterland, which became East Pakistan and, in 1971, Bangladesh.

Kolkata is now the capital of the state of West Bengal and the main urban center for all of eastern India, an area that is home to 300 million people. The grand architecture, replete with seemingly countless buildings in varying states of repair dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, makes for a fascinating cityscape and reflects Kolkata's past importance as the center of British power in Asia. Today, Kolkata is again on the move, with a growing information technology sector and an active effort by local governments to seek foreign investment.

While most of the inhabitants speak Bengali as their mother tongue and follow the Hindu tradition, there are also significant numbers who hail from nearby states and speak different languages. Muslims are estimated to be 26 percent of the city's population and there is a small number of Christians, many from areas bordering on Burma and Bangladesh. Until recently, Kolkata had a

## Post of the Month



thriving Jewish community; most came during the British era from Baghdad, but their numbers have dwindled due to emigration to Israel and other countries. Adding to the cultural mix, Kolkata is the only Indian city with a substantial number of Chinese.

The city's name may have come from the name of one of the villages, Kalikuta, near the famous Kali Temple in the southern part of the present-day city. The Hindu goddess Kali has a special place in the heart of Bengali Hindus.

Local religious observances are colorful. The Christians of the Bow Barracks neighborhood celebrate Christmas with outdoor lights and dancing. Muslims parade with great fanfare during Muharram. During Durga Puja every autumn, Hindus construct thousands of temporary shrines out of bamboo and other materials to honor a goddess.

The consular district of the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata includes 12 states and one territory in eastern and northeastern India with about as many people as the United States. From the highest mountains in the world—the Himalayas on the border with Tibet—to the tiger-filled mangrove swamps in the Ganges delta region, the Kolkata consular district has some of the world's most dramatic scenery.

Geographic, cultural and religious diversity are hallmarks of this part of India. A significant portion of the population in the hill states along the border, such as Mizoram and Nagaland, is Christian, a legacy of missionaries who arrived during the 19th

century. The Buddha attained enlightenment in the state of Bihar. Assam is home to such wildlife as the rhinoceros and elephant and, along with Darjeeling in West Bengal, is famous for its tea gardens. Jharkhand lies in India's steel-making region, and the state of Orissa has exquisite temple architecture.

Kolkata is a literary capital. Perhaps the most renowned Bengali artist is the writer and poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Asia's first Nobel laureate and the only author to have penned two national anthems—India's and Bangladesh's. The rich literary heritage of the region is celebrated each year at the end of January with the 10-day Kolkata Book Fair, one of the world's largest.

The United States has had a consulate in Kolkata since 1792, making it the oldest U.S. post in India and one of the oldest in the world.

The U.S. complex includes the consulate, a small apartment building, a swimming pool and gym, and the consul general's residence. Because of recent growth in staff, some officers now live outside the consulate compound. The American School of Kolkata, which is located on the complex, opened in 2007.

A half-mile from the consulate is the American Center, which houses Kolkata's public diplomacy offices, the American Library and the eastern India office of the United States-India Education Foundation, which administers Fulbright-Nehru grants and offers educational advising to students. The center is also home to the regional office of the Foreign Commercial Service.

# Post of the Month



1



2



3



1

An example of British monumental architecture, the Metropolitan Insurance Building sits in central Kolkata. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

2

Consular Section Chief Deborah Miller and some of her staff pose in their recently renovated spaces. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

3

Public Affairs Officer Doug Kelly and Kathleen Coughlin, a nongovernmental organization leader, visit students at Malancha High School north of Kolkata. *Photo by Rafique Anwar*

4

Vendors at the flower market open packages full of mangold garlands. *Photo by Melissa Pitotti*

5

Members of the programming section at the American Center in Kolkata carry out programs throughout eastern India. *Photo by Pankaj Dutta*

6

During Durga Puja, an annual religious festival, Hindus in Kolkata construct elaborate temporary shrines such as this one. *Photo by Beth Payne*

The Consulate General is active in reaching out to the people of eastern India. Whether in Kolkata or traveling in the district, the post's officers engage communities in programs on such topics as wildlife conservation, Indo-U.S. relations and avian influenza. The Micro-Access scholarship program has allowed hundreds of area students to develop better English-language skills. Officers are also involved in reporting on political and economic developments throughout the states of eastern India, and the consular section has recently expanded its visa and American citizen services offices to meet a growing workload. The Foreign Commercial Service promotes the export of U.S. goods and services and represents U.S. business interests in eastern India.

For recreation, some employees join one of the local clubs with sports facilities. Popular weekend getaways include Darjeeling and its tea estates in the Himalayan foothills, the tiger sanctuary of Sundarbans in the Ganges delta and the beaches of Puri in the state of Orissa. Kolkata has a vibrant arts scene with many musical, theatrical and dance performances, especially during the cooler months of November to February.

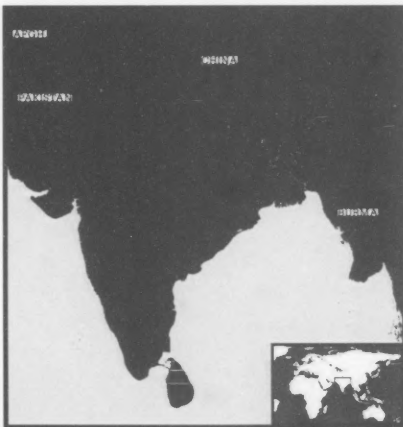
An assignment to the "City of Joy," as Kolkata is sometimes called, has much to offer the adventurous officer, professionally and personally. Buoyed by its rich heritage and history, Kolkata and its people are poised to play a prominent role in the India of the 21st century. ■

*Douglas Kelly is the public affairs officer and Moulik Berkana is the assistant public affairs officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata.*

## Post of the Month



## At a Glance



**Country name:** India

**Capital:** New Delhi

**Government type:** federal republic

**Area:** 3,287,590 sq. km.

**Area - comparative:** more than one-third the size of the United States

**Population:** 1.14 billion

**Ethnic groups:** It is estimated that there are more than 2,000 ethnic groups in India

**Languages:** Hindi, English and 16 other official languages

**GDP - per capita:** \$909

**Religions:** Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi

**Export commodities:** engineering goods, petroleum products, precious stones, apparel and textiles

**Import commodities:** petroleum, machinery, transport equipment, electronic goods and edible oils

**Major trading partners:** United States, China, EU, Russia and Japan

**Currency (code):** Indian rupees (INR)

**Internet country code:** .in

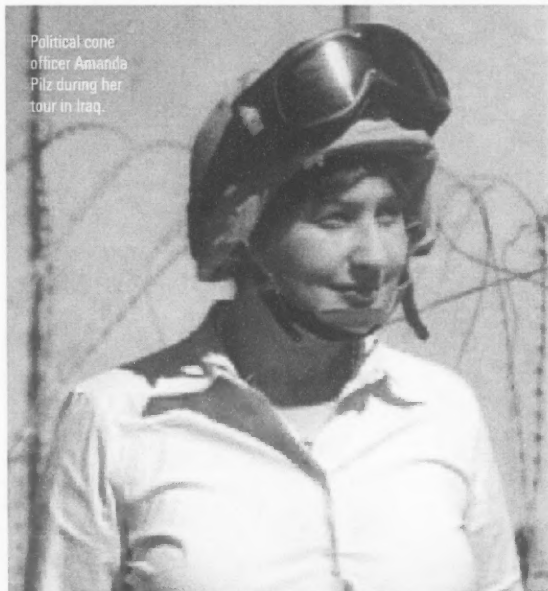
Source: Country Background Notes

# Consensus Builders

POLITICAL CONE ADJUSTS TO MEET NEW REALITIES /// BY JEFFREY COLLINS

The purely analytical political officer of lore, likely to be promoted fastest and drive policymaking most, no longer exists. Today's 24-hour news cycle and increasingly complex and dangerous international environment mean political officers must develop broader skill sets, work in an integrated fashion with the military and other agencies, and accept increased personal risk, or else fade into irrelevance. Service in the political cone of the Foreign Service remains highly stimulating and rewarding by most accounts, though it is no longer the fast track to the top.

The State Department created the system of cones in December 1963. Taking its cue from numerous reports and studies that had recommended increased specialization by Foreign Service officers, the Department announced the creation of a new career management program, an undertaking it said was demanded by the United States' increasingly complex role in international affairs. The program mandated establishment of a number of well-defined career management fields: administration, commercial, consular, economic, labor and political, as well as specialization in geographic areas, language and a large number of highly technical skills.



Political cone officer Amanda Pilz during her tour in Iraq.

As the program was implemented, officers began to refer to the identified career fields as cones, a term that is thought to have been used because the graphics depicting decreasing numbers of officers at successively higher ranks in each field resembled cones.

## Managing Relationships

Political officers in broad terms manage the United States' bilateral political relationships. The Department's career Web site captures the essence of a traditional political officer's tasks well, saying, "As a political officer, you'll keep a trained eye on the political climate at your foreign post and decipher events as they relate to U.S. interests, negotiations and policies" and "communicate with foreign governments to seek support for shared goals."

Political officers' primary tasks are to develop foreign contacts in and out of politics and government to advance U.S. political interests, assess the impact of political developments on the United States and recommend actions. They also support high-level visits and advise policymakers on how to communicate with foreign governments.

Strong fundamental skills remain vital to success in the political cone. Recently retired Ambassador Ronald Neumann said he feels strongly that reporting still counts. Neumann recently said that, despite increasing pressure on political officers to stay behind

their desks when not escorting or handling official U.S. contacts, political officers must develop and deep insight into governments and societies and use those insights to provide the in-depth reporting that is essential to policymaking.

According to Neumann, achieving this expectation under time pressures requires officers to have support from their superiors, work overtime to build contacts, conduct representational work to cultivate contacts and gain agreement up and down the chain of command on where to focus.

Political Officer Jack Doutrich supports this view and said the ability to write well and to concisely craft messages to Washington remains paramount for political officers.

## Hectic Environment

While core political functions remain the chief tasks of the political officer, the changing nature of U.S. policymaking and increasingly hectic overseas environments have led to dramatic changes in the work.

Increasingly, political officers find themselves doers, not just reporters, Ambassador Neumann said. In his recent tours as ambassador in Afghanistan and political-military counselor in Baghdad, Neumann said he saw political officers daily working cooperatively with the military, U.S. Agency for International Development and myriad other agencies to solve crises and complex problems.

Political officer Tyler Allen

entered the Foreign Service in 2002.

"I was a little jaded when I learned that political officers talked to people and wrote cables and reports, but didn't do things, like influence decisions being made and work being done," he said. During his seven years in the field, he spent two years researching the trafficking of persons in the Eastern Caribbean and ensuring the funding for such programs there. Now stationed in Busan, Korea, Allen said he has concluded that the job of a political officer today is much more than writing reports.

"We get much more involved with concrete issues, especially in smaller, developing countries where the United States provides aid and assistance," he said.

### No Biases

In her tours in Iraq and as a political officer and political advisor to the military, Amanda Pilz found that it is critical for today's diplomats and military officers to put aside institutional biases about what each side brings to the table. She said the caricatures of the Foreign Service officer as a culturally expert linguist and the military officer as a hard-driving kinetic warrior are outdated. Both military officers and diplomats possess cultural and political knowledge but bring profoundly different talents to U.S. efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, she said.

Pilz said she believes the State Department and Department of Defense are ripe for further cooperation. In her tours, she said she found enthusiasm at all levels of the military services, on the battlefield and in training, for greater involvement of the Department's political officers in supporting the military's combatant commands.

She said there are unprecedented opportunities for political officers to gain experience in military matters and that the military is ready to provide these officers opportunities to study at the traditional and new war col-



The author and Iraqi workers have lunch after laying sandbags at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in 2004.

leges, such as the Joint Advanced Warfighting School.

### Scope Widens

The growing number of issues that U.S. embassies must address and the increasing number of U.S. agencies represented at many posts have broadened the scope of the traditional political officer's job. To stay relevant, political officers must develop expertise in areas beyond the political realm, according to Lane Bahl, coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Singapore for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization. Bahl said she sees a growing overlap between political and economic matters—three of her posts had combined political and economic sections.

The political cone has developed many subsets, including political-military, labor, human rights, intelligence and research. The cone's breadth allows for the success of different kinds of officers: those who are analytical-minded as well as those who thrive on interacting with contacts and building relationships,

said Doutrich, a political officer currently working as the economics/commercial chief at the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Most political officers, Doutrich said, feel the often close relationship of an embassy's political section when the front office puts political officers at the heart of the embassy's policymaking.

### Close Relationship

"The political section is frequently seen as an extension of the front office, especially when front-office leaders have a political background," Doutrich said, citing his experience at posts in Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan and Uruguay. Doutrich believes this close relationship means political officers often have key input on the accuracy and tone of an embassy's statements.

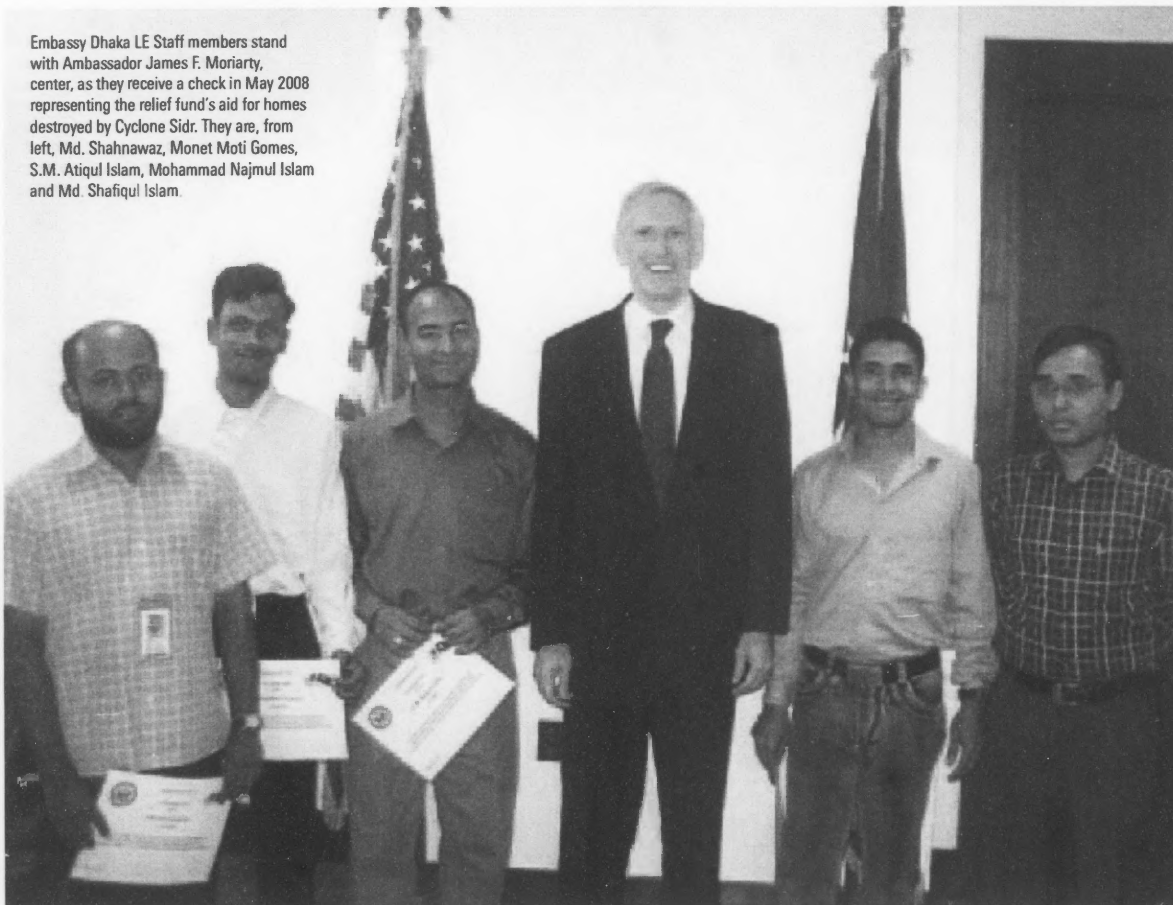
While some believe political officers have had a near-monopoly on shaping foreign policy and an advantage over officers from other cones in becoming ambassadors, all is not perfect, according to Dan O'Grady, political counselor in Ankara, Turkey. O'Grady said, "the political cone is wonderfully rewarding for anyone who lives and breathes politics but can be a place where promotions are sluggish."

Serving in the political cone, despite its changing nature and increasing challenges, provides a rewarding career. Its opportunities range from serving alongside the military in dangerous environments to helping create assistance programs with other agencies to advising aboard U.S. Navy ships performing humanitarian missions. The cone places great value on strong analytical and writing skills and gives officers an ever-increasing chance to dive into action and have a real impact on policymaking. ■

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*The author is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. This is the fourth in an occasional series of State Magazine articles on how the career cones are changing. Our next article will look at the management cone.*

Embassy Dhaka LE Staff members stand with Ambassador James F. Moriarty, center, as they receive a check in May 2008 representing the relief fund's aid for homes destroyed by Cyclone Sidr. They are, from left, Md. Shahnawaz, Monet Moti Gomes, S.M. Atiqul Islam, Mohammad Najmul Islam and Md. Shafiqul Islam.



# Real Help in Hard Times

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND AIDS LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF /// BY RONDA HARVEY

After the earthquake, military operation, fire, cyclone, hurricane or chaos of civil unrest, families sift through the debris and consider what can be done to rebuild their lives. Once damages are assessed or dependents grieve the injury or death of their caretaker, where can Locally Employed Staff of any agency turn for the help local governments cannot provide?

The answer is the Foreign Service National Emergency Relief Fund, established by the Department in 1983 following the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and given its

present name in 1994. Unlike other appropriated activities, the relief fund is based completely on donations from the foreign affairs family. The fund has no administrative costs, so 100 percent of every donation is disbursed to LE Staff at U.S. posts around the world.

The fund receives requests to provide financial support to employees who have been devastated by natural disasters, political unrest and serious injuries or death occurring in the line of duty. The aftermath of a catastrophe can be especially devastating for LE Staff, once

they realize the enormity of the disaster. In the past 26 years, approximately \$651,000 has been disbursed among the regional bureaus.

## Broad Duties

The fund is one of 83 gift fund programs administered by Donna Bordley, the director of the Department's Gift Fund and "K," or emergency, Fund. The four members of her fund-related staff perform full budget execution—from collection to disbursement—for these programs. The Relief Fund's staff, for instance,

solicits contributions, collects donations, advertises, speaks at conferences, disburses funds to post and undertakes other actions.

The FSN Relief Fund has grown in prominence in recent years, and it now also receives support from employees of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Ronna Pazdral, deputy director of the Office of Overseas Employment, said the fund has been a lifesaver for many LE Staff who have suffered extreme hardship.

The stories of those who receive assistance are inspir-



ing. Faisal Rawda, an employee of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut since 1981, has suffered through numerous medical treatments after being shot while on duty. Since 1986, he has undergone 14 surgeries, including several in the United States. Rawda's incidental travel expenses for these treatments have been costly, and during his last trip to Washington, D.C., the Relief Fund Committee agreed to compensate him for these costs.

"I thank every single person... in your office whom I met," he said. "God bless you all and God bless America."

## Victims Assisted

Since the 1983 Beirut embassy bombing, the fund has assisted many families of employees at posts attacked by terrorists. Jennifer McIntyre, a supervisory post management officer in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, said the fund means a great deal to her colleagues.

"The bureau's most compelling need this year was a payment to the family of a local guard force member who was killed while defending the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a against terrorists," she said. "We cannot overemphasize our appreciation for the employees and private donors who contribute to this important fund."

Requests for disaster assistance from the fund are most common. In May 2008, Cyclone Nargis destroyed the homes and property of 281 LE Staff at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. The government of Burma provided no public assistance, and most of the affected individuals had to buy imported high-cost building materials to rebuild. After reviewing each case, the fund disbursed \$34,400 for property claims.

Each time a cable calls on employees to replenish the fund, contributions pour in. The fund receives routine requests for as-

sistance throughout the year, but those associated with large-scale disasters like Cyclone Nargis in Burma can be overwhelming, and the office must perform reviews quickly.

In recent years, support for the fund has come from Foreign Service officers who named it as a beneficiary in their wills or from requests that donations be made to the fund in lieu of gifts at weddings or flowers at funerals.

"The generous contributions of so many employees reflect their deep appreciation and gratitude for the valuable contribution their colleagues make to our foreign policy objectives," Pazdral said.

## Positive Feedback

"The feedback [on the fund] I have heard from staff and students has been positive," said Cassandra Hamblin, a course manager at the Foreign Service Institute and a member of the Relief Fund Committee. "We have

spread the word on how to apply for funds, but the students are most interested in how to donate, and my colleagues know Foreign Service National employees who have benefitted and have shared those stories with their classes."

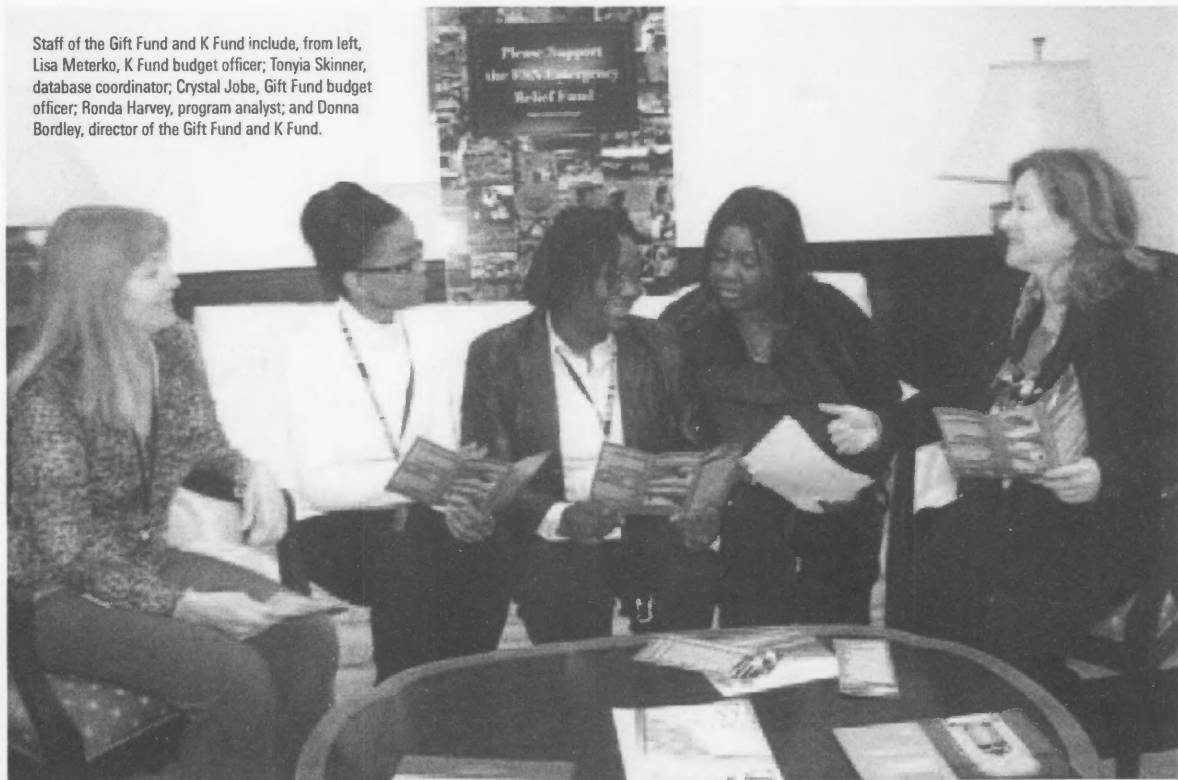
Donations also come from LE Staff themselves.

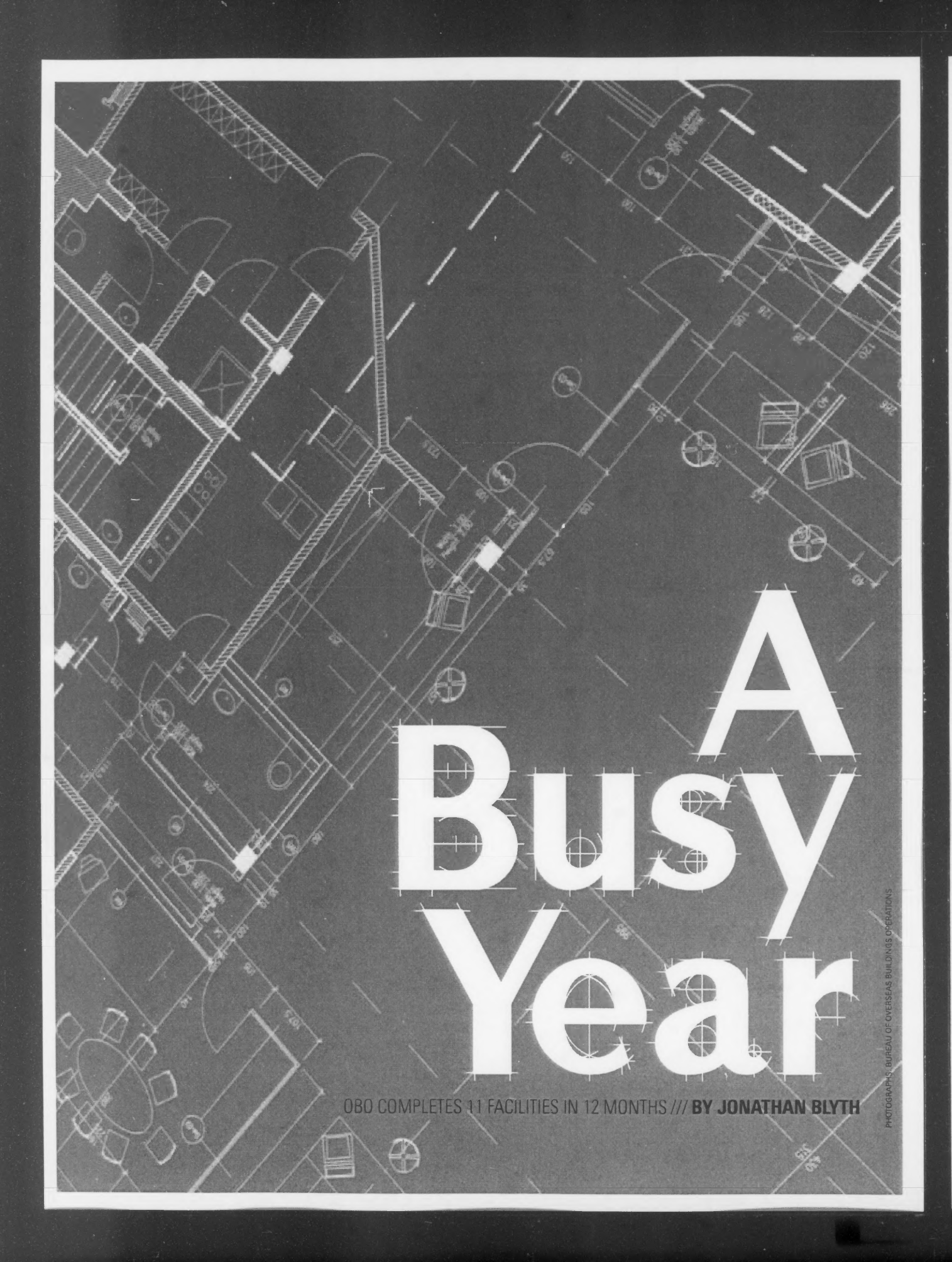
"It is particularly gratifying to see how previous recipients return the favor and donate their own scarce funds to assist others in need," Bordley said. "When the 1998 Nairobi embassy bombing victims needed assistance, our office received crumpled money that had been dug up from the backyards of the LE Staff of the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia—examples of the helping hands that are also on the fund's logo."

Information on the fund is at <http://web.rm.state.gov/indexrm.cfm>, and Bordley's e-mail address is [BordleyDS@state.gov](mailto:BordleyDS@state.gov). ■

*The author is the program analyst for the Gift Fund and K Fund.*

Staff of the Gift Fund and K Fund include, from left, Lisa Meterko, K Fund budget officer; Tonyia Skinner, database coordinator; Crystal Jobe, Gift Fund budget officer; Ronda Harvey, program analyst; and Donna Bordley, director of the Gift Fund and K Fund.



A detailed architectural floor plan of a large building, rendered in white lines on a dark background. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements, with some areas highlighted in a lighter shade. The drawing is oriented diagonally, creating a sense of dynamic movement and complexity.

# A Busy Year

OBO COMPLETES 11 FACILITIES IN 12 MONTHS /// **BY JONATHAN BLYTH**



One of the missions of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations is straightforward: to move individuals into secure, safe and functional facilities. To that end, the American flag was raised in April above the new U.S. Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia, marking a significant milestone in the bureau's mission by moving the 20,000th U.S. employee into a new facility.

The opening of the Skopje embassy arrives 10 years after the devastating terrorist attacks on U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which killed 225 people and injured 4,000. These attacks sparked a renewed commitment by the Department and Congress to expeditiously build security-driven facilities across the globe.

Since 2001, OBO has completed 68 projects, which include 49 full embassies and the construction of 19 office annexes. Since July 4, 2008, the bureau has completed 11 new facilities. Here is a summary of these key projects:

### Berlin, Beijing, Koror and Kolonia

With fireworks and speeches from former and sitting U.S. presidents, the Department opened the U.S. Embassy in Berlin on Independence Day and the U.S. Embassy in Beijing on the morning of the opening ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympics (*State Magazine*, February 2009). While these embassies were significant projects in scale and location, the bureau is equally proud of opening two smaller embassies in the island cities of Koror, Republic of Palau, and Kolonia, Federated States of Micronesia.

Although the average cost of building a new embassy compound is more than \$100 million, the bureau wanted to move slightly more than a dozen individuals in Koror and Kolonia into new facilities for less than \$15 million per post. The bureau's innovations included constructing one-floor office buildings with pitched roofs to handle the more than 150 inches of rain that fall annually in both locations. The new buildings replaced the deteriorating facilities that once had been single-family homes.



Kingston



Tbilisi

PHOTOGRAPHS: BUREAU OF OVERSEAS BUILDINGS OPERATIONS

## Africa

In Africa, the bureau has constructed 22 new facilities, more than on any other continent. This year, projects in South Africa and the Republic of the Congo added to the total.

The Department opened a new consulate facility in the heart of the premier financial and business district in Johannesburg, South Africa. Constructed in the area of Sandton, the new consulate is close to the largest stock exchange in Africa, top investment banks and one of the biggest convention centers on the continent. Due to the shortage of available land in Johannesburg's "Wall Street," the bureau architects had to fit the consulate onto a compact site at the intersection of two major highways.

In the Republic of the Congo, 10 years of civil war left the nation's infrastructure in shambles, with no reliable way to transport materials from its port to the capital. During construction of the new embassy, the project director's team confronted labor strikes, a cement embargo and obstructions in the customs-clearance process—again proving there is a lot more to building an U.S. embassy than merely construction. Despite all these impediments, the project finished three months ahead of schedule.

## Western Hemisphere

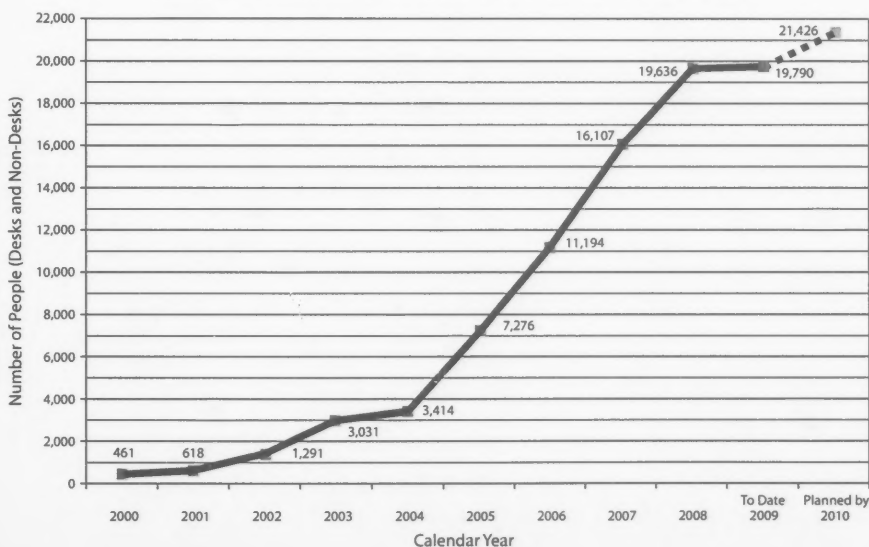
In the Western Hemisphere, the bureau completed the new consulate facility in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and the new embassy in Quito, Ecuador.

In Ciudad Juárez, the area around the new consulate facility, locally known as Zona Dorada (Golden Area), has become the city's exclusive area for hotels, shopping centers and restaurants. As one of the largest U.S. visa-processing centers in the world, the consulate holds the record for the number of visa windows ever constructed for the bureau (109) and serves an average of more than 1,500 clients daily.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito is 9,300 feet above sea level in the second-highest capital city in the world. The four-story chancery, clad in stone quarried from the Andes, has a panoramic view of the capital, and embassy employees can see seven volcanoes in the distance.

Sometimes, years after a new embassy is opened, additional mission requirements are placed on the post. The solution is often to build an office annex. This year, the bureau completed two new office annexes. In Kingston, Jamaica, the two-story annex allows the post to accommodate 77 additional desks. In Tbilisi, Georgia, the annex accommodates 83 desks and was opened less than two weeks before Russian troops invaded the country and came within a mile of the embassy.

## Number of People Moved into Safer Facilities from 2000 to Present



## The Future

These 11 projects accounted for more than 25 million hours of construction work and more than \$893 million worth of contracts. However, with 29 projects now in design or under construction, the bureau is focused on the future. Scheduled to be completed in the coming year are projects in Jerusalem, Suva, Mumbai, Ouagadougou, Abuja, Khartoum, Sarajevo, Valletta, Tijuana, Addis Ababa, Riga and Karachi. The bureau's mission is furthered each time an American flag is raised over a new facility. ■

*The author is the director of external affairs at the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations.*

Office of the Month:  
Recruitment, Examination  
and Employment

# The Heart of Hiring

OFFICE RECRUITS THE FUTURE FOREIGN SERVICE

BY JEAN NEITZKE

A pair of black-rimmed glasses is positioned over a newspaper. The newspaper has several articles and advertisements. A prominent white rectangular sign with the words "NOW HIRING" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters is placed over the right lens of the glasses. The background text on the newspaper is mostly out of focus, but some words like "Controls", "65th Ave.", and "emailed to" are visible. A large number "860" is also visible on the right side of the newspaper.

**NOW  
HIRING**

# “WOW! I just got your e-mail and had to call right away to thank you. I am so excited!”

This is a typical response from an ecstatic Foreign Service applicant to the news that he or she has been offered a place in a Foreign Service orientation class. For Shirley Wimberly, a 34-year veteran of the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment, and her staff in the Employment Division, those calls encapsulate their job satisfaction.

More often than not, the job-notification call is only the latest in the series of contacts with an applicant, so the conversation when the applicant is notified feels like a celebration among friends and family. The division's hiring specialists—Pat Evans, Tamale Walton, Wanda James and Janice Barnett—say they form lasting relationships with job candidates and sometimes remain the applicants' point of contact until they leave for their first post overseas.

Wimberly also recalled the outpouring of goodwill her staff routinely receives from new FS employees.

“We get everything from fruit baskets and flowers to photos of weddings and new babies, all enclosed with personal notes,” she said. “It means a lot to know we've been able to help them get started properly in their Foreign Service careers.”

Hiring Foreign Service employees is a complex, multistep process, and the office's Employment Division and Evaluations Branch are at the heart of it. The

division's 15-person staff handles 19 specialist skill groups and five generalist career tracks. The division may hire between 600 and 700 Foreign Service employees annually—out of about 2,000 applications.

The Employment Division is one of four divisions in REE. The others are Student Programs, Recruitment Outreach and the Board of Examiners. Under the leadership of Director Luis Arreaga and Deputy Director Bruce Cole, the divisions are the

first face of the State Department seen by student employees and Foreign Service hopefuls. REE's mission is to recruit, evaluate and hire the best and most diverse group of Foreign Service employees and to attract student interns and part-time employees who may later choose diplomacy and the Department as careers.

REE's Student Programs and Recruitment Outreach divisions provide the pool of candidates. Student Programs gets the word out about Department of

State careers and Recruitment Outreach dispatches interns and student employees domestically and overseas.

“Students of all levels find the Department a rewarding place to work where they gain skills that will last a lifetime,” said Tamara Brooks, head of Student Programs. “We have a variety of programs that allow students from high school through the postgraduate levels to participate in projects vital to U.S. foreign policy.”



Staff members of REE's Registrar's Office gather to review files. They include, from left, Nakita Smith, Michelle Postell, Daphne Featherstone and Megan Brooks.

## Office of the Month



The Recruitment Outreach Division is the Department's lead talent scout. Together with the Foreign Service officers who serve in the Diplomats in Residence program and Department volunteers, the division's recruiters fan out across the country to identify, inspire, inform and encourage students and professionals to pursue State Department careers. They also develop strategic partnerships with professional associations and affinity groups to help the Department attract the best candidates from a variety of backgrounds.

The Board of Examiners consists of experienced FSOs and specialists who administer the oral exam to thousands of candidates a year and select the next generation of Foreign Service employees from a very competitive applicant pool. The

27-person examining staff, which is augmented when necessary by annuitant assessors, conducts oral assessments year-round for generalists and specialists and prescreens for the Qualification Examination Panel, which determines the generalist applicants who are qualified to advance to the oral assessment.

The board has additional responsibilities before and after the oral exam, including managing the contract for the Foreign Service Officer Test, coordinating overseas testing and conducting final suitability reviews for all Foreign Service hires.

The path to the Foreign Service starts this way for specialists: The Evaluations Branch, under Darlene Whitlock, conducts a credentials-based review of applicants, inviting the best qualified to the oral assessment. For generalists, the process starts

with the written Foreign Service Officer Test, continues with a review by the Qualification Examination Panel and culminates with the oral exam.

After a candidate passes the oral exam, the Employment Division assembles the file, adds to the conditional offer list, updates the file in the tracking database and adds to it the candidate's language scores from the Foreign Service Institute. Candidates look to the registrars for updates on their status, such as where their security and medical clearances stand, and they inform the division of changes in their address or family status. When all clearances are received, the division forwards the file for a final suitability review.

Successful candidates are notified that they are now on the rank-order register and eligible for a confirmed job offer. The

applicants still typically call to ask where they stand on the register, how to defer a job offer or if their family members need medical clearances.

When a confirmed offer is made, the candidates keep calling to learn about training and benefits, schedules and lodging. Now, the division's staff meets with incoming job-orientation classes, instructing new employees how to register for benefits. They now also share responsibility with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security for producing badges for new Foreign Service personnel.

The division remains involved during the new hires' first 60 days of employment, processing personnel actions and facilitating the transfer of paperwork from other federal agencies. Many candidates continue to turn to the division for help, even after they've been assigned to





**Left:** The REE/Evaluations staff includes, from left, Barbara K. Stevenson, Susan Barth, Megan Brooks, Darlene Whitlock and Philliss Wong. **Above:** Members of REE's Student Programs Office include, front row from left, Ebony Smith, Valencia Ford, Tamara Brooks and Odale Charles. At rear are, from left, James K. Simmons and Justin Underwood. Not shown is Deborah McNeill. **Below:** Luis Arreaga is the director of REE.



another bureau, because they know Wimberly and her staff always answered their questions and will cheerfully keep doing so.

"The division does outstanding work," Arreaga said. "I think it is fair to say that they are at the core of 'Diplomacy 3.0,'" the Department's new hiring effort (*State Magazine*, May 2009).

No less crucial to the office's mission are Webmaster Lorelei Bassi, recruitment marketing consultant Rachel Friedland and database administrators Marvin Moore and Oliver Smith. The office's award-winning Web site, [www.careers.state.gov](http://www.careers.state.gov), has interactive features and is updated frequently, particularly in response to the new hiring effort.

"Employing an integrated recruitment marketing campaign with defined strategies, creative tactics and effective tracking capabilities contributes to our continuous recognition as a top-ranked employer," Friedland said. "As we strive to enhance our recruitment communications efforts, we also recognize that our greatest success hinges on fostering personal relationships with

Americans having diverse ethnic, educational and professional backgrounds. That's why we integrate word-of-mouth advertising via social networking."

Smith and Moore say they are constantly barraged with requests for statistics and information from within and outside the Department. These include tracking candidate demographics to learn whom the Department is attracting and hiring.

"With the hiring effort under way, we are tracking more closely every step of the application process" Moore said. "The challenge is to produce accurate counts for all categories of Foreign Service applicants at each stage of their candidacy—from the conditional offer stage through language testing and the clearances."

When considering how many steps it takes to hire a new Foreign Service employee and the size of the applicant pool, the employees of REE can seem like miracle workers. Just ask any candidate who's gotten *the call*. ■

*The author is a project manager in REE.*



# Safety

## Abroad Rules

PLAN AHEAD FOR YOUR NEXT TRIP /// **BY DAVID DUNHAM**

It's spring again, so summer vacation can't be far behind. Here are some tips for traveling safely if you are traveling abroad.

You should have a safe, incident-free trip if you take time to plan ahead. We know we need to take along airline tickets, passports, immunization records, appropriate clothing and prescription medications. But first consider the packing process. Packing lightly will be one key to your trip's success. You will not only be able to move around more easily, but you can also keep better track of your luggage during transit stops and avoid musculo-skeletal injuries. Lifting heavy luggage can result in back injuries, shoulder strains or other injuries. Remember, heavy packers rarely use half of what they pack.

Next, ask yourself: Are your documents in order? Make sure your tourist passport is not about to expire, and see whether you will need a visa for the countries you plan to visit. Make copies of all important papers you're taking: passport, medical insurance cards, driver's license and credit cards. You might consider scanning them and e-mailing them to yourself so that, if your things go missing and you can find Internet access, you will still be able to access important documents. Leave a copy of your itinerary with family and friends, and consider registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> so that the Department can contact you if there is a family emergency at home or a crisis where you are visiting. Have your legal documents in order and leave them with your family. Consider advising your credit and debit card companies of the countries you will be visiting so they won't close off your account while you're traveling.

Probably the best sources of safety-related travel information are the Department's country-specific

information, travel warnings and travel alerts. You can access this information at <http://travel.state.gov>, by telephone (Overseas Citizens Services, 1-888-407-4747) or in person at any U.S. embassy or consulate.

Find out if your personal property insurance covers you for loss or theft abroad. Put your name, address and telephone numbers on the inside and outside of all your baggage. Large, bright, unique name tags will make it easier to identify your bags.

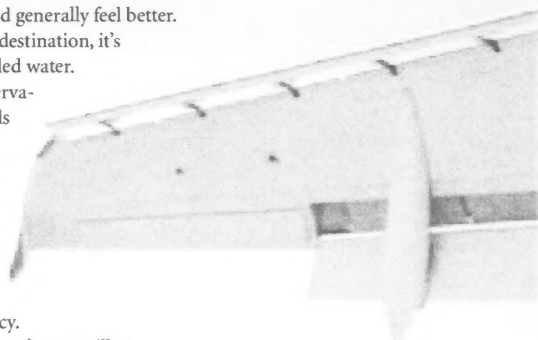
Some other tips:

- While making long trips by air, get up and move around the aircraft periodically to stretch muscles, alleviate stiffness, reduce the chance of blood clots and generally feel better.
- After you arrive at your destination, it's safest to drink only bottled water.
- When making hotel reservations, stay in larger hotels that have higher safety standards. Book a room from the second to seventh floors—high enough to deter intruders from the outside but low enough to escape in an emergency.
- If you need information or become ill or injured and need a physician or medical facility, have the phone number of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate available. Consular officers will help you contact family or friends and can assist in getting funds transferred.

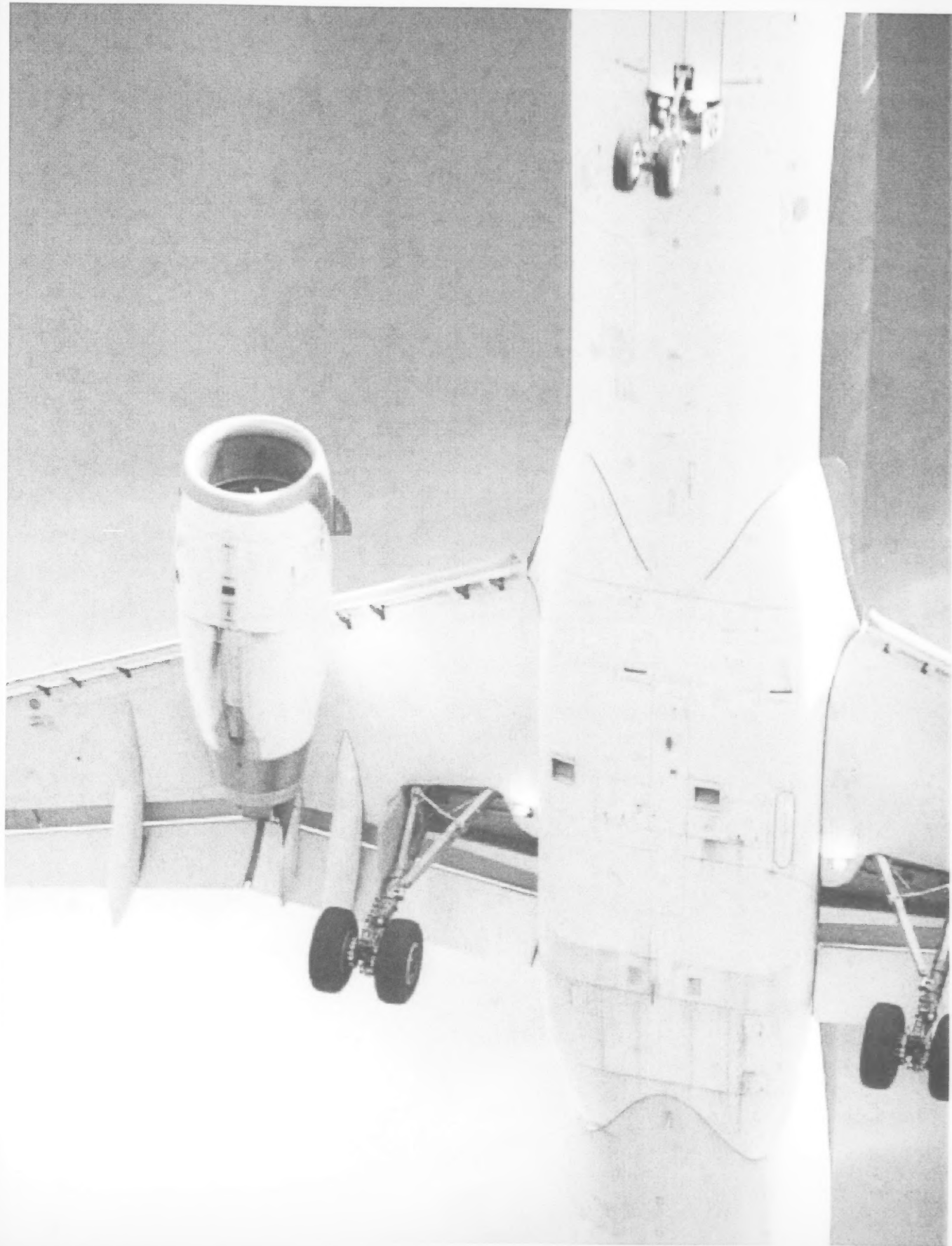
Safe travel requires some planning, which will make your travels more enjoyable and a lot safer.

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*The author is an industrial hygienist in the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management.*



PHOTOGRAPH: IMAGE BANK



The Active Years

# Another Planet

RETIRED COUPLE SPENDS A SEASON IN ANTARCTICA /// BY ANNE BOHNET



PHOTOGRAPHS: DWIGHT BOHNET

Anne and Dwight Bohnet smile for the camera at McMurdo Station.



As our military aircraft made its descent, I awoke with anticipation, observing my co-passengers stuffing their belongings into government-issued orange duffel bags and bundling up in extreme-cold-weather gear. We were about to land on the ice runway near McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

The wind chill was well below zero as we made our way down the steps and toward the waiting bus. Dressed in super-insulated clothing and heavy boots, I gazed through my ultraviolet goggles in wonder. I felt like an astronaut stepping onto the moon.

I had been hired to spend the 2008–2009 austral summer, October to February, working for the United States Antarctic Program, which is administered and funded by the National Science Foundation. My employer, Raytheon Polar Services, provides

the program with administrative, logistical and technical support.

The United States maintains three permanent research stations in Antarctica. The largest, McMurdo Station, is the gateway to mainland Antarctica for most personnel and cargo. Robert F. Scott's ill-fated journey to the South Pole began nearby in 1911. The remote South Pole Station, at an altitude of 9,300 feet, sits atop almost two miles of ice at the geographic South Pole. Palmer Station, the smallest, is on the Antarctic Peninsula.

### Broad Research

The focus is science and the range is broad, from the microscopic (rock-eating bacteria on Mt. Erebus) to the astronomical (the South Pole telescope's search for dark energy in deep space). New marine species are being

discovered in the waters around Antarctica. A neutrino detector is being built in the clear ice more than a kilometer below the South Pole station. Studies under way here are also providing new insights into climate change, geology, the history of our planet and life itself.

After retiring from the Foreign Service and reading an article about the United States Antarctic Program, my husband Dwight—who worked as a communications specialist—and I were fascinated with the possibility of working in Antarctica. Dwight applied first and was hired. When he returned home in February 2008 after his first season working as a communications coordinator at South Pole Station, his excitement was infectious. Since family members are not allowed to accompany

employees, I realized the only way for me to get there was to apply and hope to get hired. I received a job offer in July and, after almost two months of paperwork and stringent physical exams, left for the “ice” in late September.

Dwight had arrived in McMurdo a week earlier and was working in Mac Ops—the Voice of Antarctica—helping to maintain round-the-clock radio communications between McMurdo, the South Pole, numerous field camps and people on expeditions away from McMurdo town. I came to work in administration for the Engineering and Construction Department.

People who work in Antarctica are generally intelligent, creative and interesting. As in the Foreign Service, we discovered it is the people who make the difference. They come to the ice for many



A C-17 jet prepares for takeoff at Pegasus Airfield.

**Some people are willing to do almost anything for the chance to experience this amazing continent.**

reasons, but money is usually not one of them; wages are relatively low and the hours are long. The typical work week is nine hours a day, six days a week, with no overtime.

### **Flexibility Needed**

Everyone who works here needs to be flexible and have a sense of humor. Living in a dorm with two or more roommates and sharing a bathroom with 20 others puts everyone on a level playing field. The person washing dishes, shoveling snow or mopping the floors might be an engineer, corporate lawyer or marine biologist back in the "real world." Some people are willing to do almost anything for the chance to experience this amazing continent.

In spite of extreme temperatures, long hours, spartan living conditions and lack of places to

go, a season on the ice isn't all work and no play. At McMurdo, there are numerous recreational activities to satisfy athletes, musicians and artists, as well as an extensive book and DVD library. World-renowned scientists give lectures twice a week. We were fortunate to be there while people with the British Broadcasting Corporation TV show *Planet Earth* were working on their next TV project, *Life*. They presented two slide shows during their monthlong stay.

Adjusting to a harsh environment can be challenging, but our years in the Foreign Service taught us to be adaptable. We learned how to live and work with diverse situations and groups of people and often heard the phrase "Bloom where you're planted." That maxim also applies when your new home is a frozen continent.

After we retired, someone asked if anything could compare to our adventures in the Foreign Service. I think we found it. We went to another planet called Antarctica.

To learn more about the United States Antarctic Program, visit [www.usap.gov](http://www.usap.gov). ■

*The author is the wife of retired Foreign Service officer Dwight Bohnet.*

This is the first of an occasional series on how our retired colleagues are spending their retirement years. If you are retired from the Department and doing something unusual and interesting, please let us know via e-mail at [statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov).



## Cultural Series Features Harp Ensemble

By John Bentel

The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and State of the Arts Cultural Series recently featured pianists, classical singers and harpists.

George Stone II is a gifted piano and keyboard player. Autism makes it difficult for him to communicate with words, but he speaks the universal language of music. As part of the Department's Black History Month celebration, he performed his own rendi-

tion of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which was a real crowd pleaser.

Alina Kirshon Goldman presented a program titled "Treasures of Israeli and European Music." A soprano who has dazzled audiences across the United States, Israel and the Czech Republic, she graduated from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Drama with degrees in vocal performance and viola performance. She sang arias and art songs by Robert Schumann, Giacomo Puccini, Jules Massenet and Paul Ben-Haim. Her talented piano accompanist, Gala Gurinovich, played Mily Balakirev's rarely performed *Concerto No. 1, Opus 1* dramatically yet sensitively. The audience gave the duo a standing ovation.

The 12 performers of the American Youth Harp Ensemble, led by Artistic Director Lynelle Ediger-Kordzaia,

dazzled the audience. Known for their musical sophistication, rich sound, emotional power and imaginative repertoire, the harpists presented a wide array of selections: from Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Variations on a Theme of Paganini* to John Lennon and Paul McCartney/Park Stickney's *Beatles Tribute*.

Kyra Koh, a classically trained coloratura soprano and a member of the Loudoun Lyric Opera, presented a program of opera selections, including Puccini's *O Mio Babino Caro* and Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliette*. In addition to her wonderful voice, she displayed an amazing stage presence. As an encore, she performed a song from Jacques Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*. Koh is a program analyst with the Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. ■

*The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.*



### Coming Events

<b>June 17</b>	Flutist Mary Matthews and Guitarist Todd Holcomb, Tango Music
<b>July 1</b>	T-Tones
<b>July 15</b>	Piano Prodigies
<b>August 5</b>	Nicholas Simon, Popular Piano Classics
<b>August 19</b>	Winner of the Young Artists' Piano Competition

Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium



## Obituaries



**Edwin M. Adams Jr.**, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 17 of lymphoma in Potomac Falls, Va. He worked for the Department's World Trade Intelligence Division before joining the Navy during World War II. After the war, he served in Rome and Washington, lastly as associate dean of the Foreign Service Institute. After retirement, he went to Hollywood, where he hosted radio and TV shows, appeared in 24 movies and wrote

TV scripts, poetry, a novel and memoirs.



**Dennis Askey**, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 1 of prostate cancer in Washington, D.C. He served in the Army in World War II and joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1956. He wrote and designed a book on Afghanistan and launched a quarterly magazine that was distributed throughout sub-Saharan Africa. He joined the Foreign Service in 1969 and served in Japan, where he started another magazine, and Trinidad

and Tobago. He loved tennis and jazz and spent years compiling a discography of Duke Ellington's recordings.



**Vincent William Brown**, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 11 in Laguna Hills, Calif. He served on submarines during World War II, worked on the Marshall Plan in Paris and managed U.S. assistance programs in Tunisia, the Congo, South Korea, Pakistan and Afghanistan. After retirement, he was an international development consultant. His son Christopher and daughter-in-law Betsy are retired Foreign Service officers.



**G. Michael "Mickey" Coughlin**, 64, a retired construction superintendent and husband of Foreign Service specialist Ann Coughlin, died Jan. 2 of cancer in Charleston, S.C. He accompanied his wife on assignments to Abuja, Yaounde and Geneva.



**Katya Dmitrieva**, 34, a Foreign Service officer, died March 14 of cancer at her home in Arlington, Va. She joined the Department in 2004 and served in Belgrade and Islamabad. Most recently, she served in the Office of the Americas in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. She had a wry sense of humor, enjoyed her dog and cats, and loved to study, read and learn languages.



**William W. Gonz**, 82, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died Sept. 9 in Dallas, Texas. He served in the Army during World War II and joined the Department in 1958. His postings included Germany, Guyana, the Netherlands, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Mauritania, Sri Lanka and Cameroon. He retired in 1990 to St. Louis, Mo., and was active in the St. Louis Genealogical Society.



**Leona M. (Olson) Haase**, 78, a retired Foreign Service employee, died Nov. 13. She lived in Accident, Md. After 30 years with the Department, she retired to Florida for about 20 years before returning to family and friends in Maryland.



# Obituaries



**Gertrude "Trudy" Hampson**, 92, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died Nov. 21 in Norwich, England. She joined the Department during World War II and was assigned to Paris. She resigned following her marriage, but rejoined the Department after her husband's death and served in Turkey, Germany, Afghanistan, Syria, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. She moved to England in 1975. Her sister, brother and currently her

niece have served in the Foreign Service.



**Lee E. Metcalf**, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 26 in Arlington, Va. He joined the Department in 1940 and served in Budapest, Lisbon, Istanbul, Bucharest, Karachi, Athens, Lahore and Dhaka. He was consul general in the latter two posts. He ended his career as a senior inspector and retired in 1973.

**Edwin "Ed" Pancoast**, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 13. He had Parkinson's disease and lived in Chevy Chase, Md. He served in the military in World War II and joined the Department in 1949. He also worked for the U.S. Information Agency and Voice of America. He was posted to Bremen, Naples, Trieste, Bonn, Dusseldorf, Accra and Munich. He retired in 1986.

**Joan Segerson**, 58, a State Department employee, died March 4 in Arlington, Va. She also worked at the Organization of American States and National Organization for Women. She mentored many young people.



**R. Bruce Soelberg**, 75, a retired Foreign Service diplomatic courier, died Feb. 27 of cardiac arrest in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He served multiple tours in Panama, Frankfurt and Bangkok. After retiring in 1991, he was reemployed as a When Actually Employed annuitant. In recent years, he was engaged in farming and ranching in southeastern Idaho.

**Hope Helen Stille**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 16 of pneumonia in Woodland, Calif. She joined the Department around 1939 and was posted to Brazil, China, the Middle East, Paris, London and Mexico. She loved to travel.

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## retirements

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### FOREIGN SERVICE

Barchers, Lloyd N.  
Felt, Walter G.  
Huffaker, Thomas Keith  
McLaurin, Hermenia I.  
Moore, Alex Randall  
Oliver, Anna Louise Vietor

Sharp, Joseph G.  
Silverman, Victoria Harris  
Skoog, Randall P.  
Stillman, Christopher L.  
Van Eck, Peter N.

### CIVIL SERVICE

Bell, Jean S.  
Chase, Dale J.  
Flores, Lilian C.  
Hathaway, Christine P.

Keeling, Gail E.  
Maestri, Joseph C.  
Schofield, Patricia F.  
Wertman, Douglas A.

## “They will know we are here.”



Provincial Reconstruction Teams always look for new ways to promote stability over extremism, peace over violence. While much of the day-to-day life in Muthanna Province revolves around agriculture, the PRT in Iraq's second-largest province has consistently found innovative paths to those diplomatic goals. For example, last fall the team partnered with a local nongovernmental organization to promote an art project for provincial women.

Working with the Muthanna Provincial Council, professors from Muthanna University and the artists, and with a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the partners provided art supplies to program participants and arranged for the province's first exhibit—called *The Colors of Warka*—highlighting the art of its women. The three-week, three-city exhibit tour attracted residents from all sectors of the province's civil society and government. For the artists, it was more than an exhibit.

“Through our paintings, everyone will know our stories,” said one artist. “They will know we are here.”

The mission for the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations sounds simple enough: Move individuals into secure, safe and functional facilities. Accomplishing that mission is anything but simple.

Sparked by the 1998 terrorist attacks on embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the Department and Congress jointly agreed on the need to quickly build new security-driven facilities around the world. OBO responded with dispatch. Since 2001, the bureau's professionals have completed 68 projects, including 49 full embassies and 19 office annexes. Since July 4, 2008, the bureau has completed 11 new facilities. When the new embassy in Skopje opened in April, OBO had moved 20,000 U.S. employees into

new facilities since 1998.

The Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment has a big job—find and hire up to 700 Foreign Service employees every year. Divided into four divisions—Employment, Student Programs, Recruitment Outreach and Board of Examiners—the office recruits, evaluates and hires the best and most diverse group of Foreign Service employees and attracts student interns and part-time employees who may later choose diplomacy as a career.

And while hiring for the Foreign Service is a complex and multistep process, one office veteran says the ultimate reward is helping new employees get a proper start in their Foreign Service careers.

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Edwin M. Adams Jr.; Dennis Askey; Vincent William Brown; G. Michael “Mickey” Coughlin; Katya Dmitrieva; William W. Gonz; Leona M. (Olson) Haase; Gertrude “Trudy” Hampson; Lee E. Metcalf; Edwin “Ed” Pancoast; Joan Segerson; R. Bruce Soelberg; and Hope Helen Stille.* ■

*Rob Wiley*  
Rob Wiley  
Editor-in-Chief

## Coming in July/August

- U.S.-Lebanon Sister Schools Exchange Students
- Executive Corps Maximizes LES Talent
- Civilian Response Corps Meets Austere Challenge
- ... and much more!

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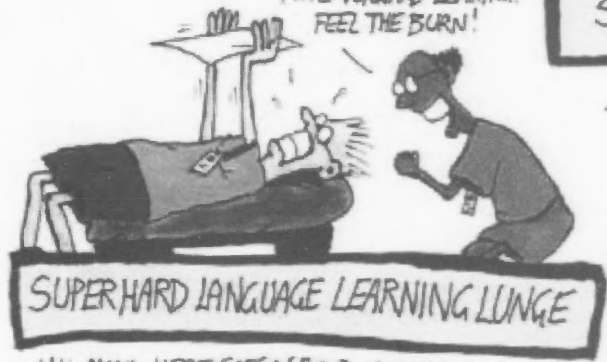


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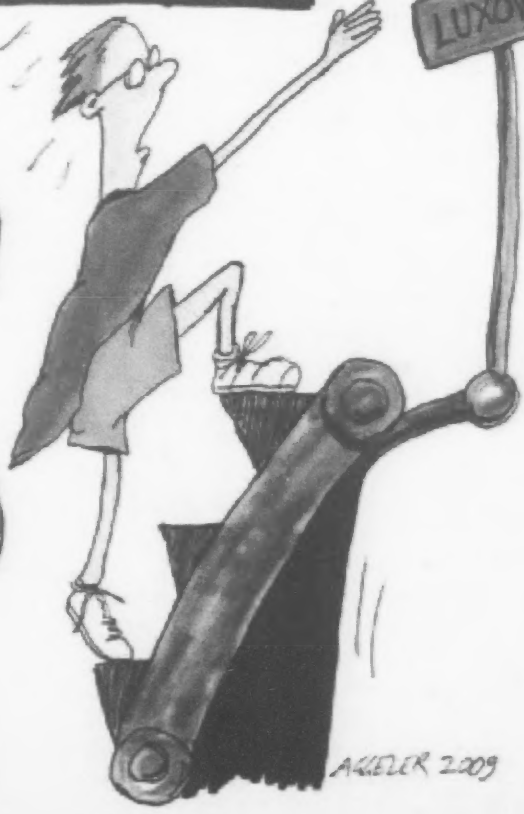


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UH, OKAY - HERE GOES: (GOOD MORNING! MAY I FILIBUSTER YOUR MONGOOSE AT THE HOOTENANNY??)



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AGELER 2009



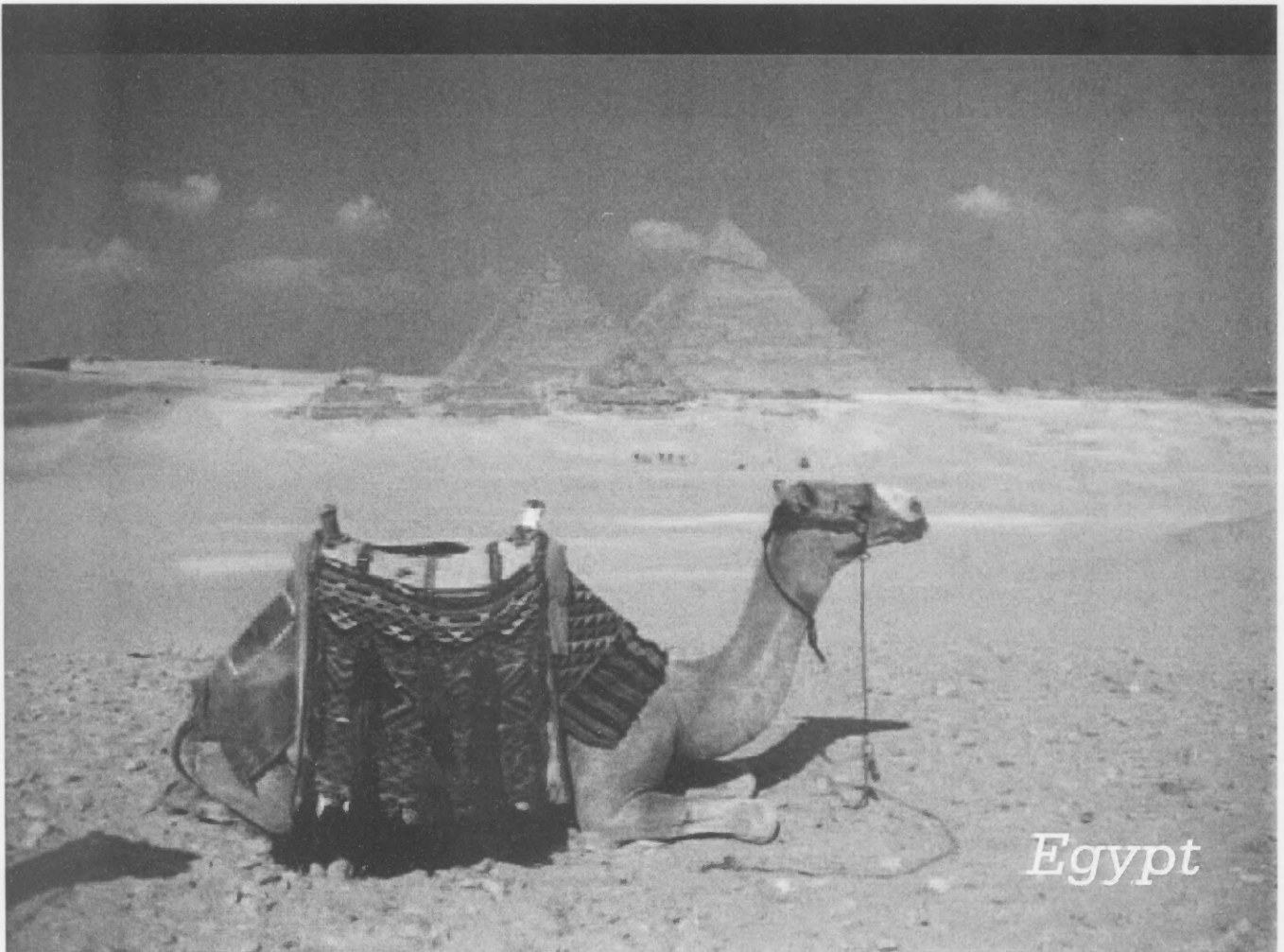
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