

STATE

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February 2012

MAGAZINE

Bandar Seri Begawan

Exotic Post a Vital Link in
Asia-Pacific Relations

Wildlife Advocates

Conservation Team Fights
Illegal Animal Trafficking

SKATEBOARD DIPLOMACY

Department Reaches Out
to Tunisian Youth



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February 2012
Issue Number 564

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Brunei, showing a large river on the left, a dense urban area with various buildings, a prominent mosque with a white dome and minaret, and a green sports field. The city is surrounded by lush greenery and a forested area in the foreground.

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Peaceful Brunei

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On the Cover

A skateboarder Ollies atop the portico of an abandoned house in Trabelsi, Tunisia.
Photo Illustration by Isaac D. Pacheco



One Giant Leap

An Ollie is the quintessential skateboarding trick where riders launch off the ground without using their hands to manipulate the board. The technique is the basis for nearly every other trick in the sport, and beginners often struggle until they can master the delicate choreography involved in kicking the back of the board into the ground while simultaneously sliding their lead foot forward to propel the board upward and out.

When I was 15 years old, I attempted to Ollie off a skateboard ramp and jump over a pair of discarded car tires stacked in my driveway. I had become reasonably adept at executing and landing this trick on flat ground, but was entering brave new territory by launching off the handmade two-foot ramp. I built up my courage, double-checked the distance between the ramp and tires and set off to bridge the gap.

Last year, another high school student set out to bridge a much more significant divide—one between cultures—when he hosted skateboard clinics for Tunisian youths to raise money for a sick child’s hospital stay (pg. 28). Jared Gibson, an Eligible Family Member, sought to share his love of a sport that allows its participants to fly, if only for a moment, with young people that have faced a number of seemingly insurmountable obstacles throughout their short lives.

Embassy Tunis built upon Gibson’s work by reaching out to professional skateboarders and corporate sponsors in the United States to create the PUSH Tunisia Skateboard Program. The program established skateboard training clinics throughout the country and launched a grassroots movement to bridge cultural divisions in Tunisia by providing the country’s young people with constructive outlets for their passion and energy.

The positive impacts from PUSH still resonate throughout the country even though

many of the American participants have returned home. The response from citizens has been overwhelmingly positive. Gibson hopes to continue building upon this groundswell, cultivating a burgeoning skateboarding culture among a once-disenfranchised youth, and giving young Tunisians an opportunity to bridge social chasms in their own communities through sports.

While my first attempt at Ollieing over tires in the driveway ended with blood-covered elbows and a trip to the emergency room, I picked myself up and later succeeded (albeit with a helmet and elbow guards). In countries like Tunisia that seek to overcome myriad obstacles in their leap toward democracy and lasting peace, there are sure to be similar setbacks along the path to success.

State Department employees and other dedicated Americans like Gibson have proven that they will continue partnering with people who seek freedom as they get back on their feet. Their work gives determined citizens the confidence to elevate themselves, providing the encouragement to launch into the unknown, and the sustained support they need to soar.



Isaac D. Pacheco
Editor, State Magazine

Corrections

Dec. 2011, pg. 2 – *Post One* incorrectly attributed the *In the News* article “Exhibit highlights DS Partnership with Marines.” Robert Downen wrote the article.

Jan. 2012, pg. 20 – *Post of the Month* courtesy photos should have been attributed to U.S. Consulate General Montreal.



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Arlington Hall Addendum

In John Elliott's history of Arlington Hall (*State Magazine*, January 2012, pg. 32), there was an important omission of previous occupants. For 22 years from January 1963 until December 1984, Arlington Hall was home to the newly-created (1961) Defense Intelligence Agency. DIA later moved to Bolling Air Force Base.

Fred Donner
*Former Foreign Service Officer
Retired DIA Officer
Falls Church, Va.*

Early Native American Recruiting

In the November issue, you had an article from the Office of Civil Rights about American Indians and the State Department. When I was on the Board of Examiners in 1975-76, one of our tasks

was to recruit for the Foreign Service. The emphasis was on recruiting minorities, and I identified colleges where we might go. I tried to find a school with significant Native American enrollment within the contiguous 48 states, and the one I found was Humboldt State College in Arcata, Calif.

I went there and promoted the Foreign Service to the student body. We didn't get any applications, but I think they were pleasantly surprised to be considered. That was probably one of the first times the Department's recruiting reached out to the Native American community.

Norman T. Shaft,
*Retired Foreign Service officer
Falls Church, Va.*

'Article Looks Fantastic'

We wanted to thank you for all your help with the *State Magazine* article

regarding America in 3D. We just saw the new issue this morning, and the article looks fantastic. We really like your edits and appreciate your help coaching us through the process. Good luck with future editions of the magazine!

Joe Tordella
*Assistant cultural affairs officer
U.S. Embassy in Manila*

Sources Sought for CORDS Book

I'm a retired FSO looking for written reminiscences from officers who served with CORDS in Vietnam for inclusion in an upcoming book. Please contact me at brucekinsey@hotmail.com.

Bruce Kinsey
*CORDS I, Long An
1968-70*

Retirees, Are you Active?

If so, how? *State Magazine* wants stories from retired Department employees with:

- Unusual hobbies (Still surfing? Give us a "wave.")
- Special accomplishments (Caught a world-record marlin? Drop us a line.)
- Significant second careers (Just launched an NGO? We want to know.)

Send an email about your special activity to statemagazine@state.gov or call (202) 203-7115.



Volunteers Help Bring Clinic to Low-income Area

Working under a fiery desert sun, a team from the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, is helping to build a medical clinic in one of the city's low-income neighborhoods. Last August, 20 volunteers spent five hours building a wooden roof frame on the clinic. In September, they added a door and began building a bathroom in an adjoining orphanage.

The clinic is part of the Jesus es Mana Christian ministry founded by Jesus and Maria Ruiz, a Texas couple who have fed thousands of school children in Juarez since 1996. The clinic will provide basic medical care in one of the poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods in a city where breakneck population growth has outpaced infrastructure, and rival drug cartels are warring.

The clinic's densely packed neighborhood is home to many factory employees but has no nearby doctor's office, although a doctor from a neighboring community has promised to provide free consultations every weekend once construction is finished.

Until recently, the Ruiz family had only enough funds to construct the clinic's exterior walls. Consulate employees purchased roofing materials with a \$2,335 grant from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust, and in August assembled the wooden frames to support the roof. Volunteers Daniel Strebe and Brian Straight worked atop the roof, while Dylan Fisher and Ken Monteith measured and sawed beams, and Olga Bashbush, Ileen Park, Marlene Phillips and Erika Lewis served pancakes and fruit salad to community members. Geoffrey Benelisha, Hui-chin Chen, Olga Bashbush, Juan Pablo Santana and motor pool drivers Adrian Navarro and Javier Lopez helped paint the church's exterior walls.

Other volunteers included Rachel Atwood, Jake Goshert, Maribel Gutierrez, Charles Hendrix, Tim Lewis, Charles Park, Martin Phillips, Jerome Sherman and Claudia Zamarripa.

Vice Consul Brian Straight removes steel reinforcement bar from the roof of a future medical clinic at the Jesus es Mana Christian Ministry.
Photo by Claudia Zamarripa



Halifax Conference Focuses on Global Security

For the past three years, a November conference on international security affairs in Halifax, Canada, has drawn security practitioners, academics, journalists and pundits. Attendees have included U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Israeli Minister of Defense Ehud Barak and reporters from *Al Hayat* and *Rolling Stone*.

At the most recent convening of the Halifax International Security Forum, attendees were told that power is shifting with demography and growth, change is constant and offers opportunity and peril, sharing the burden of shaping change is essential and nations need to combine forces to be effective and efficient.

"The United States military alone cannot be all things to all nations," Panetta told the conference. "We will sharpen the application of our resources, better deploy our forces in the world and share our burdens more and more effectively with our partners... Our allies need to do the same."

The brainchild of Canadian Minister of Defense Peter MacKay, the forum is the premier international security conference in the Western Hemisphere. Participants typically include representatives from Latin America, North Africa, the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East.

Halifax serves as the conference site in part because it hosts Canada's largest naval base and is near the nation's largest army base and a large academic community. The U.S. Consulate General in Halifax facilitates visits of U.S. cabinet officials and congressional delegations.



Defense Secretary Leon Panetta greets Sen. John McCain at the Halifax conference.

Photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo

Embassy Beijing Honors POW/MIAs

In November, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing held a ceremony honoring U.S. veterans and those who were prisoners of war or missing in action. More than 200 staff members and a full formation representing U.S. Armed Forces heard Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Wang remind them why the ceremony was being held.

"I want you all to think back to July 1, 2009, and everything you have done since that date—your travel, work, family time and holidays," he said. "Staff Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, 25, missed those activities because he has been a Taliban prisoner in Afghanistan since then." In addition, he said, more than 9,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel are still unaccounted for from conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. "This is why we are holding this ceremony."

Major General Stephen Tom, commander of the Joint Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Command, said the United States will do whatever is necessary to account for those missing from the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and plans to send a team to southern China to try to account for 10 Navy airmen lost in 1950.

Marines then raised the U.S. flag, and veterans working at the embassy raised the POW/MIA flag while General Services Office employee Michael Graham sang the national anthem. When the flags reached the pinnacle, *Taps* was played and participants released more than 100 balloons.



The Stars and Stripes and POW/MIA flag are raised together at the Beijing ceremony.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing

Department Lauds Foreign Service Volunteers

Six Foreign Service volunteers, each representing a different geographic region, received the Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) in a December ceremony at Main State. Five were FS family members, including one same-sex domestic partner.

Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns spoke of the positive impact the awardees have had on their host nations' communities and their service as goodwill ambassadors.

Each of the awards, presented by the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW), included an airline ticket to Washington, D.C., a \$2,500 check, a pin and a certificate signed by the Secretary of State. AAFSW President Patricia Linderman spoke about the diversity of this year's volunteer projects. She said awardees recognized a need, identified a project, took personal responsibility for it, persevered and found ways to make the project sustainable.

The winners include:

Edward "Mick" Davis, who supported orphaned children in an impoverished community in Kisumu, Kenya. Davis organized donations and support for more than 450 orphans whose lives had been affected by HIV/AIDS. His work involved helping to build a water purification system, repairing roads and providing food, clothes and medical treatment.

Sean P. Myers, who while an information management officer in Rangoon, Burma, organized the American Burmese Contribution Fund to provide financial assistance to local workers who perform janitorial, house-keeping, yard maintenance and similar duties for the embassy community. Myers recruited an embassy-based group to oversee a \$4,000-plus fund, which helps coworkers or their families who have a pressing medical need.

Chong O. Farquhar, who while in Yerevan, Armenia, organized manpower and resources to renovate dilapidated and dangerous playground equipment and add a sandbox for children in a

government-funded orphanage. Farquhar received a Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust grant to initiate the project and persuaded the renovation's contractor to contribute additional manpower and materials.

Matthew David Meredith, who while in Tunis, Tunisia, helped empower Tunisians to build their democracy. He established a speaker series that led to the formation of two nongovernmental organizations, and worked with the U.S. League of Women Voters on a project to educate women, especially rural women, about the political system and encourage them to vote. The League of Tunisian Woman Voters has continued the work.

Nam A. Nguyen, who while in Chennai, India, promoted pride and empowerment for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community there. As a result, the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai became the first post abroad to organize a comprehensive LGBT Pride Month celebration. The event, now in its third year, includes a pride march and other cultural and outreach events.

Maria Del Carmen Miller, who while in Quito, Ecuador, co-founded Quito Cares, which supports various Ecuadorian charitable foundations and provides mission families with a gateway to community-based service activities at post. She centralized the mission's fundraising and volunteer efforts, helped raise more than \$10,000 and assisted one of the affiliated charities in gaining a Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust grant.

SOSA winners are selected by a panel composed of the executive director or a representative from each of the Department's geographic bureaus, plus the AAFSW president and SOSA chairperson and a representative from the Family Liaison Office. Since the awards program's inception more than 20 years ago, SOSA has recognized more than 400 nominees for outstanding volunteerism in more than 130 countries.

To learn more about the volunteer activity of each 2011 winner, visit AAFSW's website: aafsw.org.

U.S., Canada Conferees Aim to Boost Innovation

Recognizing the potential opportunities in the \$1.1 trillion trade and investment relationship between Canada and the United States, the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa's Environment, Science, Technology and Health team joined forces with public policy think tank Canada 2020 to sponsor a two-day November conference spotlighting the role universities, governments and private industry play in business and technological innovation.

The conference, for which the ESTH team spent a year preparing, also sought to foster collaboration and create jobs and put to use the embassy's power to convene events and Canada 2020's fundraising, logistical and local expertise. The conference reflected the innovation agendas of the two nations' governments and universities, and looked at such topics as financing start-up companies and promoting a culture of innovation within industry.

Speakers included David L. Johnston, the Governor General of Canada, and Michigan Governor Rick Snyder. They emphasized the value of cross-border collaboration and such partnerships as the Pacific-Northwest Economic Regional Forum, which encompasses 10 states and Canadian provinces and territories, and encourages regional collaboration and global economic competitiveness.

Deputy Secretary of State Tom Nides told conference-goers that continent-wide partnership is central to the U.S. economic recovery. He stressed that the United States and Canada can improve cooperation by promoting regulatory harmonization, facilitating foreign investment and securing intellectual property rights protection.

"Innovation can spur new North American ventures that create jobs and sharpen our competitive edge in the global marketplace," said Nides.

The Secretary of State's Science and Technology Adviser William Colglazier told attendees that the United States and Canada should work together more in promoting science, technology and innovation worldwide by encouraging better education and a climate that supports entrepreneurs and democracy.

Other speakers, including Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Glen Murray; Washington State Senator Jim Kastama; and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, added to the discussion about how federal, state, city and regional policies can fuel innovation and support entrepreneurs. The presidents of several colleges discussed the need to expand U.S.-Canada university partnerships.

Several executives discussed the challenges and roadblocks associated with financing startups and the culture of innovation that pervades successful innovative companies. White House Intellectual Property Rights Special Advisor Victoria Espinel spoke about how intellectual property protection is vital to a successful, innovative economy.

Embassy Ottawa launched a series of projects, including an online competition that sought entrepreneurs to attend the conference, a new Fulbright fellowship to study the cross-border innovation ecosystem and a university speaker series on U.S. and Canadian technology commercialization.

Subsequently, President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced several security and regulatory cooperation initiatives, which are listed in more detail online at dhs.gov/files/publications/beyond-the-border. More information is on the conference website at canada2020.ca.

Visa Telethons Reach Thousands of Border Residents

In an effort to reach out to Mexican citizens living near the Texas border, the U.S. Consulate General in Matamoros partnered with Mexican television stations to broadcast two Visa Telethon events in November and December. At each event, Foreign Service officers and Locally Employed Staff from the consular section answered viewers' questions about visas and other consulate services.

During the two live telethons, calls flooded in from both sides of the border. They ranged from general questions about how to apply for a tourist visa to specific questions about ineligibility waivers and other legal issues. Staff members had the resources on hand to answer questions or provide contact and resource information.

"The telethons were a terrific outreach opportunity," said Principal Officer Michael Barkin, who conducted interviews and fielded phone calls at both events. "We personally connected with more than 1,500 people by phone and potentially hundreds of thousands more who saw the news coverage or our website information."

The first event, from 4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., was staffed by five American and LES employees. The call volume was so great that the consulate extended the second event by two hours and increased its staff to two shifts of 12 people each.

"It was truly a team effort," said Consular Section Chief Joe Koen. "We had officers and staff members from every section of the consulate working on every aspect of the events, from logistics and security to fielding phone calls and providing support during the live broadcasts."

The staff members who answered the phones rarely rested between calls.

"Phones rang all night," said Vice Consul Jason Monks. "Many times, the callers not only asked one or two of their own questions but had family members or friends who were asking other questions in the background."

The consulate general also engaged with the public through social media and found that its Facebook and Twitter following increased dramatically during and after the events, according to entry-level officer Andrew Crosson. The telethons also garnered traditional press coverage.

"Thanks to excellent preparation and hard work during the event," Barkin said, "we were able to get our message out to a huge television audience." ■



Members of the consulate staff answer questions from callers about the consulate general's services.

Photo by Laura Garza



The Speed of Trust

Many State Department leaders are familiar with Stephen Covey's book *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*. Most, however, are unaware of *The Speed of Trust* by Stephen M.R. Covey, his son. The premise of *Trust* is that organizations—corporate, nonprofit, government and military—work more efficiently when employees genuinely trust their leaders. When trust levels are high, processes run faster and goals are more easily attained. In such environments, the focus is on the mission instead of self-defense, acrimony and “gotcha.”

How does this premise relate to civil rights and Equal Employment Opportunity? Each year the Office of Civil Rights, commonly known as

S/OCR, receives several thousand inquiries from employees who believe that their civil rights were violated, resulting in more than 200 informal complaints. These informal complaints either are resolved at the informal stage or become “formal” complaints requiring detailed investigations and an eventual resolution or legal finding based on the merits. Some complaints can go as far as federal district court and take years to reach a conclusion.

S/OCR reports the bases and issues of complaints annually to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and posts information quarterly on the Department's public website as part of its “No FEAR” reporting obligation. These complaints may be based on race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, or disability discrimination. However, the underlying cause for many closely mirrors Covey's premise: With the exception of a few chronically cynical, cleverly manipulative and paranoid individuals, employees ultimately file EEO complaints because they do not trust their supervisors.

When ambassadors, Senior Foreign Service officers, members of the Senior Executive Service, managers and supervisors earn the sincere trust of the employees for whom they are responsible, those employees will feel more at ease speaking with their superiors first instead of turning to external parties to resolve problems.

The following practices may help leaders address the issue of trust in their offices:

- **Information Sharing:** When critical information to which leaders are privy is unnecessarily withheld, employee distrust rises. It is important to prevent avoidable surprises by sharing information in a timely fashion so employees can complete their tasks successfully and manage their careers.

- **Listen Actively:** Leaders become so accustomed to talking that, for some, it becomes hard to take in what employees are trying to communicate. Many of S/OCR's mediations are successful because leaders finally stop talking and hear clearly for the first time what their subordinates are trying to say. The Foreign Service Institute conducts a number of courses that include active listening:

Seven Habits of Highly Successful People (PT216), *Effective Speaking and Listening Skills* (PK240), *Interpersonal Communication: Listening Essentials* (comm21a03) and *Listening Essentials: The Basics of Listening* (comm28a01).

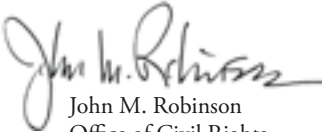
- **Seek Advice:** Refrain from simply being the source of orders and direction. Leaders cannot know everything. Consulting with staff empowers them and shows that their perspectives are valued.

- **Self-Disclosure:** Employees are curious about who their leaders are as individuals. Without making others uncomfortable with too much detailed personal information, leaders should provide the basics. Disclosing information pertaining to one's hometown, education, values, goals, expectations and even fears will prevent employees from resorting to the rumor mill for such information.

- **Admit Mistakes:** Employees will know when leaders make mistakes. What they do not know is whether their leaders have the integrity and humility to admit them.

As to how fast trust should be established, suffice it to say sooner rather than later. There is no magic bullet, but following the advice above will help leaders gain their subordinates' genuine trust.

The Speed of Trust by Stephen M.R. Covey, with Rebecca Merrill, is published by Free Press, a Division of Simon & Shuster, Inc.; 1230 Avenue of the Americas; New York, NY 10020. Copyright 2006 by CoveyLink, LLC.


John M. Robinson
Office of Civil Rights



Claude the chimp after his arrival at the Jane Goodall Institute in South Africa.
Photo by Phillip Cronje,
JGI South Africa

ANIMAL ADVOCATES

*By Daniel Gaush,
international relations officer,
OES Office of Ecology
and Conservation*

Rescuers found Claude, an eight-year-old chimpanzee, languishing in a cage so small he was unable to stand. Claude's parents had been killed by hunters; he had been sold as a pet and, when grown, left at the Bangui Zoo in the Central African Republic.

Claude's situation is not unique. Thousands of young animals sold in the illegal exotic pet trade are abandoned, released or killed once they grow too large or difficult for their owners to manage. There is also growing demand for wild animals for use as food, or "bushmeat," for traditional medicine, as trophies or souvenirs, and in clothing.

Claude's rescuers were staff from the U.S. Embassy in Bangui, including former Ambassador Frederick Cook and his wife Denise, and the French Embassy. They fed and cared for Claude for nearly 15 months. Meanwhile, Embassy Bangui reached out to the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs' Office of Ecology and Conservation (OES/ENC), which enlisted the assistance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the nongovernmental organization Pan-African Sanctuary Alliance to help find Claude a permanent home. Eventually, Claude was transferred to the Jane Goodall Institute's Chimpanzee Eden, a spacious, protected natural environment in South Africa.

Other less fortunate animals are among the thousands that fall victim each year to the illegal bushmeat trade and wildlife trafficking, the global black market for which is valued by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) at \$10 billion to \$20 billion a year. The trade in wildlife attracts organized crime networks that are linked to drug trafficking and the arms trade and has brought the wild populations of some protected species, such as the tiger and rhinoceros, to the crisis point.

Subject matter experts agree that illegal wildlife trade also affects humans because it harms biodiversity if species are removed from the wild faster than they can repopulate. This loss of an ecosystem's resilience affects fresh water supply, food production and climate stability. The trade also has public health implications, since diseases such as avian influenza and the Ebola virus can be spread through human-wildlife contact.



A cheetah seeks prey in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. Since 1975, the cheetah population is thought to have declined by half.
Photo by Brian Allen

OES has reached beyond the conservation community to identify links between the illegal wildlife trade and organized crime. By collaborating with such groups as the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' Office of Crime Programs, INTERPOL and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), OES has helped fight the perpetrators of serious wildlife crimes.

Organized crime is increasingly attracted to wildlife trafficking for its profitability, small risk of prosecution and light fines and jail sentences. In this fight, U.S. diplomatic posts play a crucial role by encouraging host governments to improve law enforcement cooperation, institute tougher penalties and prosecute poachers and traffickers.

OES also supports the expanding set of regional networks that play a key role in tackling cross-border wildlife crime. Governments can coordinate their responses by sharing information and best practices, as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations does within a Wildlife Enforcement Network it established in 2005 in partnership with the Department and USAID.

OES established the public-private Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking in 2005, and in 2008 worked with governments and the nongovernmental Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC) to establish the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network. In 2010, the bureau worked with Central American prosecutors and TRAFFIC on the launch of a Central American Wildlife Enforcement Network. OES is working with U.S. posts in Africa to explore the potential for similar networks.



Skins of the rare snow leopard are sold in a market in Kabul, Afghanistan.
Photo by Wildlife Conservation Society

Beyond regional networks, the Department combats illegal wildlife trafficking through partnerships with such groups as the World Bank's Global Tiger Initiative. Habitat loss and the relentless illegal demand for tiger body parts and products in Asia have precipitated decades of severe population decline, with more tigers now living in captivity than in the wild. World leaders at the 2010 International Tiger Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, pledged support for tiger conservation, and in 2011, USAID and INTERPOL launched Project Predator to target the illegal trade in tiger parts.

While Claude's story had a happy ending, many victims of illicit wildlife trafficking do not get a second chance. Wildlife crime is a global problem, and solutions are possible

only through the combined efforts of governments, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and concerned citizens. OES will continue to mobilize these groups to end the trafficking, so future generations won't have to learn about tigers, rhinos or elephants just from books.

Members of the Department community can help by refusing to buy products of questionable legality. The markets for souvenirs, exotic pets, food, traditional medicines, jewelry and clothing all drive demand for illegal wildlife products. If you have a concern that a product may be derived from an endangered or protected species, contact OES/ENC, local wildlife or customs authorities or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. ■



Cream of the Crop

FSNs of the Year Served with Passion and Pride

By Bill Palmer



Jibril

At the 2011 Department Awards Day, Deputy Secretary William J. Burns stated a truism that all Department employees who serve overseas know: “Foreign Service Nationals form the backbone of our embassies and consulates around the world.” In his remarks, Burns paid tribute to the six Locally Employed Staff members, one from each of the regional bureaus, who were honored as the FSNs of the Year. One of the six, Ibrahim Jibril, was the Department-wide FSN of the Year. Jibril, Burns said, “has been indispensable to our continued effort to promote the Middle East peace process.”

The other winners invested millions of dollars wisely, solved criminal cases, defended human rights and democracy, promoted national harmony and provided keen political analysis, among other achievements. They did their jobs with passion and pride, advancing U.S. interests while serving their own countries.

In a year-long process, coordinated by the Office of Overseas Employment in the Bureau of Human Resources, the winners were selected from among 51 outstanding nominees. The nominees, in turn, represent thousands of other FSNs. “Without their steadfast dedication and hard work U.S. missions could not function,” Burns said.

NEA

Ibrahim Jibril, senior political advisor at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, is the Department-wide FSN of the Year. Nominated by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, he was cited for “outstanding political reporting, analysis and outreach during a critical period of the Middle East peace process.”

In a year that witnessed a breakdown in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and intense speculation about Palestinian efforts to seek membership at the United Nations, Jibril’s analysis of Palestinian decisionmaking was invaluable. His reports went directly to high-level Department and National Security Council officials and were used as the basis for interactions with mediators and leaders in the region.

Jibril grew up in Ramallah, where the Palestinian Authority is based, and his list of contacts was developed over a long time. He says he tries to bridge gaps and find common interests, which is one reason both U.S. and Palestinian officials trust him.

“I’m not hierarchical,” he said. “I share views and exchange ideas.”

The nominating cable cited his encyclopedic knowledge—colleagues in Jerusalem say Jibril is often referred to as a “human Google,” capable

of instantly recalling the minutiae of meetings that took place eight years ago. The nomination also praised Jibril’s “total commitment” to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and called him “one of the most powerful assets in a peace process that is critical to the U.S. national interest.”

The fact that the long process has yet to result in a Palestinian state does not discourage him. In the 1980s, the Palestinians were barely acknowledged, Jibril said, but today “there is a 100 percent commitment by the United States to create a Palestinian state. To me that constitutes progress. I think a breakthrough will eventually happen. This is what keeps me going.”

SCA

Vikram Jit Mahajan, a financial specialist at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, was honored by the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs for “extraordinary financial stewardship of the United States-India Fund for Educational, Cultural and Scientific Cooperation in the furtherance of U.S. policy goals.”

As Mahajan explains it, the fund earns interest, which is used for grants. “The grants are going to projects that are valuable to

mankind and are touching human lives," he said. "I feel my efforts have been worthwhile."

Mahajan has worked at the embassy for 33 years. "I was born there," he joked. For the past 15 years he has provided expert guidance to stakeholders in the fund, "with the result that it flourishes today as a valuable component of Indo-U.S. cooperation," the embassy's nominating cable said. According to the embassy, the fund continues to grow, "contributing significantly to sustaining the U.S. strategic dialogue with India on science and technology, environmental issues, education and development."

Early on, the fund looked more like dead money than a model of investment savvy. "I

more as a ship captain, and hints at how hard it was to change the large fund into a dynamic earner.

"I have taken the *Titanic* in a different direction," he said.

WHA

Justo Martinez, a security investigator at the U.S. Embassy in Asunción, was honored by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs for "outstanding initiative and dedication."

The embassy's nominating cable said Martinez is "not just an investigator, but a diplomat whose expertise and demeanor shine in the tensest moments" and that he "excels

in the administrative and logistical side of his responsibilities." He obtained direct access to the Paraguayan National Police criminal history database, which the embassy said is virtually unheard of worldwide. The access allows the embassy to get results on name checks within hours instead of weeks.

Martinez, who has worked for the embassy for four years, previously served as a policeman for 22 years and was part of a detail that guarded the embassy compound and protected the ambassador. He relies on his former police colleagues for credible and accurate information. His good reputation and interpersonal skills are especially important in a small country of six million people where, he says, "everybody knows everybody."

Drawing on his police background, Martinez solved a fraud case involving a Paraguayan attempting to extort funds from former U.S. employers and led the investigation into the armed robbery of two members of the embassy community that resulted in a rapid arrest and conviction, the embassy said.

He works for the regional security office, but helps other sections as well. For instance, he accompanies consular officers on visits to dangerous prisons. He said they feel safer with him along, and he can help them bypass bribe-seeking officials. One facility didn't have a decent interview room, but Martinez said he knew the director and persuaded him to let the consul use his office to interview a prisoner.

The job can involve long hours. Night or day, Martinez is available to help. He says he feels very appreciated when people in trouble take the time to thank him. But, he adds, the chief satisfaction of the job is simply being respected and knowing that "the RSO values and respects what I tell him."



Mahajan

took money out of bank accounts, put it into government securities and almost doubled the amount," Mahajan said. "My role is to maximize interest, reinvest and reinvest." To take advantage of fast-changing economic currents and get higher interest rates, he said he sometimes had to negotiate with Indian officials to prematurely break investments with lower rates without being assessed the usual penalties for doing so.

The embassy cable said that in 2009 he negotiated a rate for the fund that was 2 percentage points above prevailing rates, netting an additional \$500,000. Again in 2011 he reinvested funds at a higher rate, resulting in a differential of \$400,000 annually. Thanks to his negotiating skills, "the bank continues to allow funds to be withdrawn at any time without penalty," the embassy added.

As one embassy officer put it, "Vikram speaks of these funds with a passion that reflects his dedication and seriousness, quite like a proud parent." Mahajan sees himself



Martinez



Mkrtchyan



Buddhawongsa

EUR

Irina Mkrtychyan, a political specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, was honored by the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs for “demonstrating extraordinary commitment in advancing democratic reforms and defending human rights in Armenia.”

The ambassador and other American officers at post have been recognized in recent years for their work promoting human rights, but according to the embassy nominating cable, “none of Yerevan’s hard-fought victories in democratic reforms or human rights would have been achievable without Irina’s forceful advocacy, exceptional strategizing and sophisticated knowledge of the local environment.”

When she started working for the embassy almost seven years ago, Mkrtychyan was helped by good contacts she had developed while working on a USAID-funded program to strengthen nongovernmental organizations in Armenia and by a growing passion for promoting human rights and democratic reforms. “Once you start working on these issues you cannot become indifferent,” she said.

But she could become frustrated. “Sometimes it is difficult if you care more than those who are directly affected,” she said. She feels lucky, though, to be working for a government and embassy that care. “The U.S. commitment is very important,” she said. “And the U.S. is committed.”

She says she is particularly gratified to help achieve progress in combating trafficking in persons and make a difference in the lives of individuals. “Hearing victims’ stories fills you with empathy,” she said. “Even a single case is important.”

According to Mkrtychyan, the Armenian government “really took ownership of this issue in the last couple of years,” and advances have been made in legislation, investigations and prosecutions. The embassy said Mkrtychyan’s “indefatigable advocacy, reporting and programmatic work” have helped Armenian authorities sustain momentum in this area. They also lauded her advocacy on media freedom, religious freedom, right of assembly and protection for whistleblowers.

EAP

Abhijat Buddhawongsa, a political specialist at the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai, Thailand, was honored by the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs for “bringing together key leaders of different groups and promoting dialogue, understanding and communal harmony.”

According to the nominating cable from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, when Thailand became deeply divided into pro-establishment and populist political factions, “Abhijat not only kept us apprised of up-to-the-minute developments, but himself became engaged

personally in bringing together key leaders from both groups and convincing them they had much to gain through dialogue.”

Buddhawongsa, who has worked at the consulate for 17 years and Embassy Bangkok for six years before that, is a native of northern Thailand and has a broad network of contacts. He began holding regular meetings in his home in August 2009 with interlocutors from the two political factions, “for which he personally covered facilitation expenses,” the embassy noted.

When tensions between the factions threatened to burst into major civil unrest in late 2009, Buddhawongsa asked them to find common ground for the good of the community. He said he worried the conflict could lead to massive violence; already clashes between the groups had led to deaths.

“My mediation role was built on personal relations and trust,” he said. “The political image of the U.S. government and consulate

excellence and courage in political analysis and service as a bridge between Ethiopia and the United States inside the mission and out.”

Ethiopia is in a “rough neighborhood,” Abebe said, “with all kinds of conflict and refugees, compounded by drought and famine” and a suspicious government. Working to promote human rights and the rule of law, he said, “is a juggling act—I have to be very professional.”

And self-effacing. “One of the most important qualities for developing credible contacts is being humble and keeping a low profile,” said the 20-year embassy veteran. “Unless you build trust, nothing is going to happen; people will tell you what they think you want to hear.”

His attitude that “you have to give them credit for the good things they’re doing” helped Abebe keep channels open to the government. He served as a vital liaison with federal, regional and local officials during a wave of terrorist



general as nonpartisan representatives of democracy and human rights also helped me.”

Though one crisis was averted, another loomed several months later when the pro-establishment faction planned a gathering and concert in Chiang Mai, a populist stronghold. Buddhawongsa persuaded them to cancel the event.

“I believe everyone is rational enough, if you know how to communicate with them,” he said.

Buddhawongsa added that he has no appetite for getting involved in politics in a conventional role, but has been working and will continue to work for grassroots democratization.

AF

Girma Abebe, senior political specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, was honored by the Bureau of African Affairs for “sustained

bombings in 2007 and 2008, the embassy said.

“Girma is self-sacrificing and dedicated, particularly in regards to his work preparing several Congressionally mandated annual reports,” the embassy cable said. “His courage and skill were indispensable.”

Abebe is not only a good analyst; he is a teacher, too. Eight ambassadors have praised him for training junior officers to develop political sense and interpret events, an embassy officer said.

Abebe brought his customary balanced perspective to his role as five-term chair of the FSN Committee. According to the embassy, he “helped bridge national and cultural differences between American and local staff.”

“Unhappy employees are not productive,” said Abebe. “I try to listen and present their views to management in a diplomatic way. It’s a community; we should try to help one another.” □



Award Winners

Department Honorees Excelled in 'Complicated World'

Story by Bill Palmer | Photos by Robert Mark Stewart

Outstanding Department employees gathered again in November in Main State's Benjamin Franklin Room to be honored by their leaders, colleagues and families on Department Awards Day 2011. Hours or days later, the boutonnieres and corsages gone from their lapels, they were back on the job, working under often difficult or dangerous conditions to promote American interests and values in what

Deputy Secretary William J. Burns described as "an increasingly complicated world."

"Each of you has distinguished yourself by exceeding the already great expectations that we have of you," Burns told them. "Through your commitment, your expertise and your courage, you have served your country with distinction."

He also thanked Department family members for their sacrifices, which increasingly

include separation from their loved ones.

"By next year, we anticipate that a full quarter of the Foreign Service will have served in unaccompanied war zones," he noted.

After thanking the award sponsors and praising the winners for representing "the best traditions of the Department of State," then-Director General Nancy J. Powell presented the awards.



Deputy Secretary Burns tells the award winners they exceeded high expectations.



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

Matthew H. Tueller

For demonstrating the highest professional and service-oriented values of the Foreign Service through his selfless and consistent pursuit of America's interests in Egypt from 2008 to 2011 and for his inspired leadership of Mission Cairo through the January 25 Revolution.



Robert C. Bannerman Diplomatic Security Employee of the Year

Robert B. Kimbrough

For sustained, superior performance leading the Regional Security Office in Tripoli, including outstanding crisis management during events leading to the suspension of Embassy operations in February 2011.



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

William A. Stanton

For success in leading the American Institute in Taiwan to help increase U.S. exports by more than 43 percent, a significant contribution to President Barack Obama's National Export Initiative.



Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs

Alyce June Tidball

For outstanding contributions to developing and implementing security and rule of law programs in the West Bank, supporting key U.S. foreign policy objectives.



Ryan C. Crocker Award for Outstanding Leadership in Expeditionary Diplomacy

Kenneth H. Merten

In recognition of extraordinary leadership of the unprecedented U.S. government response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake—involving 22,000 U.S. military personnel and thousands of civilians from numerous U.S. agencies—an effort that saved lives and embodies the highest virtues of public service and crisis management.



Director General's Award for Impact and Originality in Reporting

Nell E. Robinson

For exemplary reporting on Balochistan, Pakistan, and illuminating sensitive issues such as gross violations of human rights, the role of nationalist groups and the influence of government security agencies. The reporting offered nuanced policy recommendations firmly grounded in conversations with hundreds of previously unheard sources.



James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence

Angela R. Dickey

For outstanding leadership, integrity and management while serving as the Deputy Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from 2007 to 2011.



Equal Employment Opportunity Award

Mariju L. Bofill

For exemplary leadership and personal integrity in advancing equal employment opportunity for Department employees and tirelessly promoting diversity through activities as Chair of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association.



Award for Excellence in International Security Affairs

Lynn F. Rusten

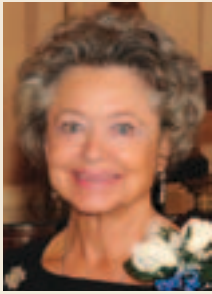
For outstanding leadership during the negotiation and ratification of the New START Treaty. Her experience, initiative, creativity, broad policy perspective and interpersonal skills made an invaluable contribution to the New START Treaty—a top foreign policy priority for the President and Secretary of State.



Award for Excellence in Labor Diplomacy

Roy Albert Perrin

For outstanding efforts in advancing workers' rights in China through innovative programs, deft reporting and astute policy advice.



Robert C. Frasure
Memorial Award

Patricia N. Moller

For outstanding achievements regarding returning peace and inaugurating true democracy in Guinea.



Cordell Hull Award for
Economic Achievement
by Senior Officers

Peter David Haas

For outstanding economic and commercial diplomacy to advance U.S. interests in Indonesia.



Innovation in the Use of
Technology Award

Annette P. Feeley

For leveraging the Department's information technology infrastructure to better educate and mentor entry-level staff. Her innovative efforts combined leadership and sharing of knowledge among peers with the immediacy of social networking. This award acknowledges her vision and leadership as she launched and managed the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs' Entry Level Outreach Project.



Leamon R. Hunt Award for
Management Excellence

Jason Douglas Kalbfleisch

For superior leadership in the consolidation and transformation of management operations at the U.S. Mission in Lusaka, Zambia.



Frank E. Loy Award for
Environmental Diplomacy

Hugo Yue Yon

For advancing U.S. environmental interests in Indonesia through policy advocacy and public diplomacy.



Mary A. Ryan Award for
Outstanding Public Service

Ryan M. Dooley

For exceptional service to the American public through energetic and effective outreach to communities across the United States as their residents face challenges in obtaining appropriate documentation to facilitate international travel.



Thomas Morrison Information
Management Award

Wade C. Martin

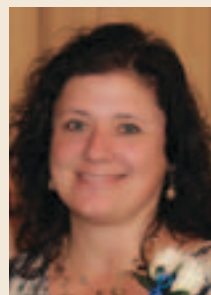
For vision, leadership and creative contributions involving Information Resource Management in support of mission, bureau, and Department objectives, across agencies, as the information systems officer to U.S. Mission Indonesia.



Edward R. Murrow Award for
Excellence in Public Diplomacy

David Bruce Wharton

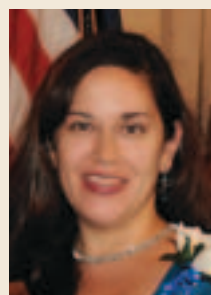
In recognition of the policy-focused, managerially wise and profoundly capable activism, communications and interpersonal skills with which he is leading public diplomacy in Africa.



Office Management Specialist
of the Year Award

Melissa Ann Pousette

For wisdom, deep empathy, boundless support, superb organization and willingness to take on any challenge, which contributed dramatically to Mission Kigali's effectiveness, morale and relationship with the government and people of Rwanda.



Arnold L. Raphel Memorial Award

Heidi N. Gomez

For leadership in preparing a diverse cadre of Department employees for higher levels of professional success and helping to develop a culture of mentorship at the Department.



Luther I. Replogle Award for Management Improvement

Jeanine E. Jackson

For visionary leadership and extraordinary resourcefulness in guiding the transition of the civilian presence in Iraq, 2009-11.

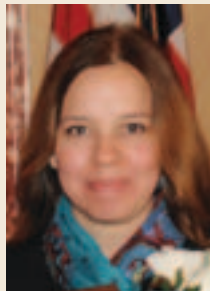


Swanee Hunt Award for Advancing Women's Role in Policy Formulation

American Winner:

Alyson McFarland

For outstanding work and tangible impact in promoting the role of Baghlan Province's women in Afghanistan's nascent democratic process and expanding their capacity to play a larger role in Afghan civil society.



FSN Winner:

Graciela Avila

For commitment and achievement in advancing the role of women and mobilizing activists around policy initiatives of concern to women in Paraguay.



Linguist of the Year Award

Joan Marie Richards

For extraordinary achievement in regional languages and strategic use of communication in local languages in the service of U.S. Embassy Islamabad.



Civil Service Secretary of the Year Annual Award

Lizbeth Gonzales

For her commitment to service, collaborative spirit and in-depth understanding of the Department's procedures and management software. She consistently exemplified the highest personal and professional standards in the essential role of a Civil Service secretary.



Sue M. Cobb Award for Exemplary Diplomatic Service

John V. Roos

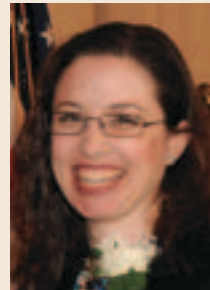
For extraordinary leadership and innovative management of Mission Japan; tireless and effective leadership during the unprecedented disaster following the devastating March 11 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear emergency; and positive impact in strengthening U.S.-Japan relations.



Herbert Salzman Award for Excellence in International Economic Performance

Mary Beth Goodman

For demonstrated excellence in developing and implementing economic initiatives and advancing policies that contribute to the transition to peace and stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which tangibly improved the lives of many in the region while furthering core U.S. security objectives.



Rockwell Anthony Schnabel Award for Advancing U.S.-EU Relations

Lorelei Grayce Snyder

For exceptional vision, dedication and outstanding execution in securing the successful conclusion of the Terror Finance Tracking Program agreement and helping to define new working relationships with the post-Lisbon Treaty institutions of the European Union.



Barbara M. Watson Award for Consular Excellence

Kristin M. Hagerstrom

For being a constructive agent of change in this dynamic work environment, tackling one of the most difficult consular management challenges with outstanding judgment, innovation and initiative. Her combination of a first-rate mind and first-rate heart make her, in the words of her employees, "an amazing consular leader."

UNDERWRITING SAFETY

Initiative fights cartels, strengthens borders

Story by Christopher C. Ashe and Kelsey Smith, Central America Regional Security Initiative action officers, Office of Central American Affairs

Since the dark days of the 1980s and 1990s, when civil conflict churned in Central America, the region has transitioned to democracy. Police and security forces are more firmly under civilian control, trade with the United States has increased and regional integration has led to greater prosperity and social inclusion.

Unfortunately, security and stability are once again under threat, now from transnational drug trafficking gangs and organized criminal groups. Successful anti-cartel efforts in Colombia and Mexico, with significant U.S. assistance, have caused these groups to shift criminal activities into Central America, which now has some of the world's highest murder rates. Between 90 and 95 percent of U.S.-destined cocaine now transits the region.

In response to these emerging threats to peace and stability, President Barack Obama launched the Central American Citizen Security Partnership in San Salvador in 2011. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cuba, the Caribbean and Central America Julissa Reynoso, the United States, Central American partners, donor countries and international financial institutions have deepened their commitment to citizen security in the region through the Partnership.

The Department's chief vehicle for implementing the Partnership is the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). Using \$361 million in foreign assistance funds appropriated between fiscal years 2008 and 2011, CARSI programs are designed to reduce crime, gangs and trafficking. Simultaneously, these programs are rebuilding the region's police, courts and prisons, and addressing the underlying political, economic and social causes of violence and insecurity.

Some of the CARSI programs, especially in El Salvador, Guatemala

and Honduras, aim to assist at-risk youth, while others work to strengthen border security. Central America is a young region (more than half of the population is under 25) and violence and crime are primary concerns.

"To reach youth in at-risk communities, where investments in education and training can change young people's lives, U.S. missions are using CARSI resources to offer young people expanded opportunities to build a more promising future," said Mark Lopez, deputy assistant administrator of USAID for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, awarded nearly \$900,000 in CARSI funds to six of that nation's nongovernmental organizations, including FundaVida. That group focuses on at-risk youth in San Jose, fostering educational commitment and intellectual curiosity through an interactive computer system, and using bilingual programs to train students for career and educational opportunities. The program, Catalyst for Change 2011: Educational Development through Innovative Technological Training, reaches 300 young people every week, including those in the communities most at risk for drug abuse.

"By working with FundaVida and other NGOs, Embassy San Jose hopes to spark and reinforce students' commitment to education,

and provide these youth with the opportunity for employment in the increasingly globalized economy," said U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Anne Andrew.

El Salvador has one of the largest concentrations of transnational gang members in the Western hemisphere, with the notorious "MS-13" and "18th Street" gangs operating with relative impunity in some areas. To counter these criminal activities, the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador uses CARSI funding to implement law enforcement and prevention programs, working with Salvadoran authorities.

A model police precinct, such as that established in Lourdes, El Salvador, uses a community-based policing model to increase public engagement and teach police officers patrol and investigation skills. At this precinct, CARSI and other U.S. assistance programs support law enforcement intelligence collection and analysis, improving the ability of police commanders to direct their assets toward the most violent offenders and neighborhoods.

USAID prevention initiatives in Lourdes have complemented the law enforcement initiatives by targeting at-risk youth with services. In 2009, Lourdes was one of the four most violent communities in El Salvador. In 2010, with U.S. assistance supporting the Salvadoran government, Lourdes was ranked



A student participates in an Integration Border Interdiction Training Course undertaken by Mission Belize's narcotics affairs section and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's International Affairs Office to provide customs, police and immigration officers with the skills to secure Belize's ports of entry.

Photo courtesy of CARSI

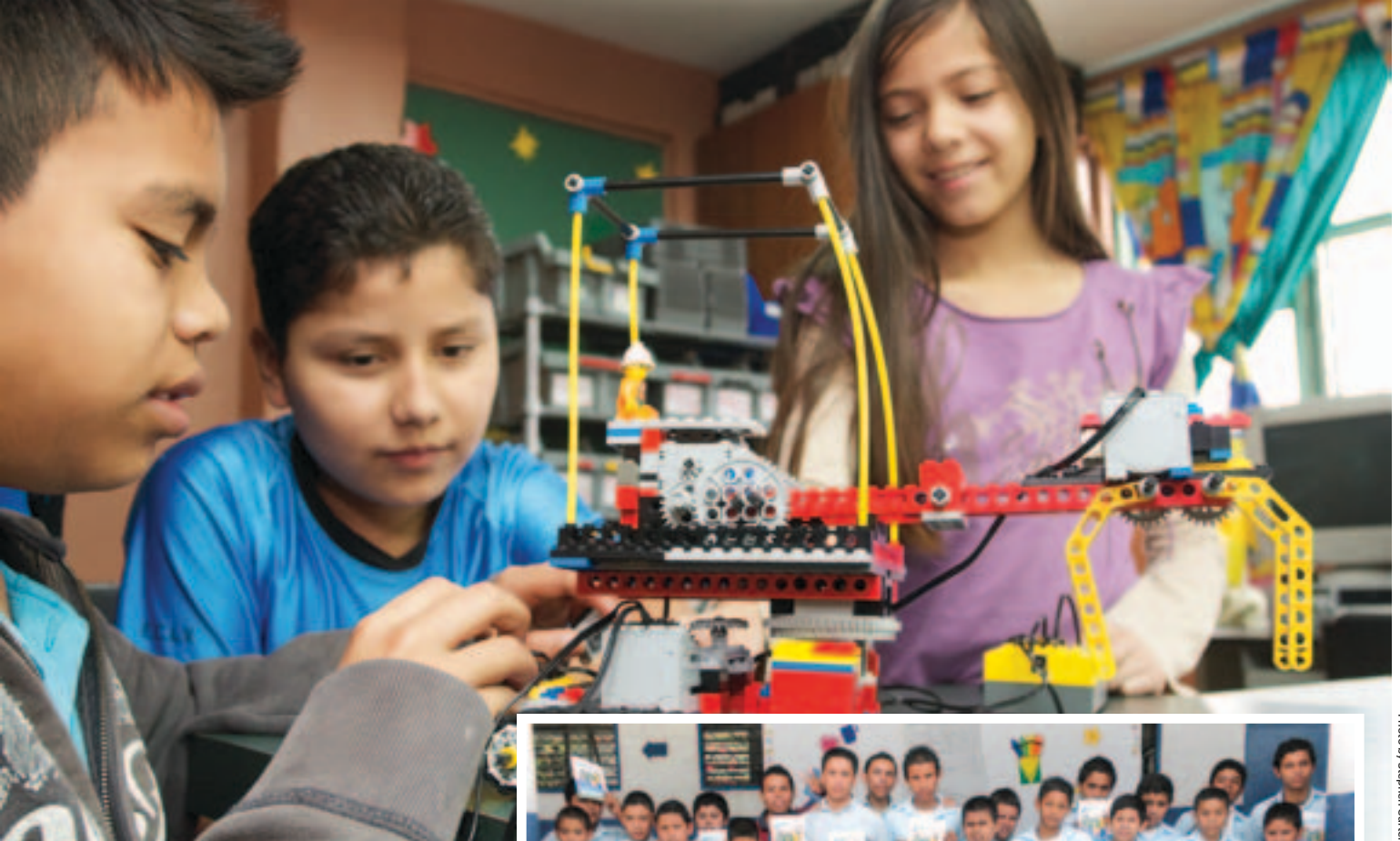


Photo by Stephen Carter

Above: Arnoldo, Josue, and Angel present their backhoe project to the rest of the robotics class at one of FundaVida's project sites. **Right:** In the front row in uniform, Ivan Hernandez of El Salvador, an instructor agent in the Gang Resistance Education and Training program, meets with some of the program's young students.



Photo courtesy of CARS

25th in crime with 40 percent fewer homicides and 48 percent less crime overall.

To address crime in the city of Mixco, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City also supports a model police precinct. This program complements USAID's Mixco outreach center, which assists at-risk youth by creating an environment that reduces crime and develops greater trust in law enforcement among citizens. The outreach center is supported by the mayor's office and the Santo Domingo de Guzman church parish, which donated space for center activities. It also received technical assistance from the NGO Youth Alliance Association. Thanks to these efforts, young people gain models and opportunities to break the cycle of crime and poverty.

Beyond assisting at-risk youth, U.S. missions in the region are countering the transnational organized criminal groups themselves. In Honduras, sophisticated transnational organized crime organizations have taken a devastating toll on citizen security. Smuggling organizations, for instance, have established airstrips and other operations to facilitate the northern flow of cocaine to U.S. consumers. According to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, nearly 33 percent of all cocaine leaving South American production centers first makes landfall in Honduras.

To help the government of Honduras defend its borders, the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, in cooperation with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the U.S. Border Patrol, developed a training, professionalization and mentoring program to bolster the Honduras Frontier Police. Led by staff from the Border Patrol's elite tactical unit, the grueling 13-week program has produced almost 100 graduates and yielded one of the most capable and well-equipped units of the Honduran National Police. The United States trains the Frontier Police in border patrol, checkpoint operations, roving patrol and rapid response, and transportation check procedures for airports, trains and bus terminals.

Border training has yielded successful interdiction efforts in Belize, another major drug-transit country. In late November, 30 members of the nation's customs, immigration

and police anti-drug and special branch units received training from a CARS-funded CBP team. They learned to spot suspicious vehicles and persons, identify anomalies and unusual behavior in passengers, and use "Buster" density meters to find hiding places.

In December, one trainee noticed how a vehicle with Mexican license plates drove up to a border checkpoint, U-turned and drove away. The officer noted the truck's description and plate number. When he later spotted it heading toward the Mexican border, the officer gave police its description, then drove to the border crossing carrying the Buster kit he received earlier that day.

The trainee used the Buster on the truck and found a hidden cavity holding 111 kilograms of cocaine with a U.S. street value of \$2.5 million. It was one of the biggest drug busts in Belize to date. ■

RESTORING PEACE THROUGH UNITY

Embassy in Sri Lanka Supports Youth Programs

By Christopher Teal, public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Colombo

How do two sides overcome entrenched distrust after decades of civil war, especially when there are ethnic and language differences and each side has learned to fear since childhood?

Among the nations grappling with this question is the South Asian island of Sri Lanka, which has been mired in ethnic tension almost since gaining independence in 1948. Conflicts between the majority Sinhala (mostly Buddhist) population and minority Tamil (largely Hindu or Muslim) population led to a bloody civil war and one of the most destructive terrorist organizations of modern times, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), or “Tamil Tigers.”

Since the war ended in 2009, this nation of 20 million has taken tenuous steps toward repairing more than a quarter century of destruction and an even longer period of mistrust. The U.S. government provided post-war humanitarian assistance, including food and non-food aid and support for residents’ livelihoods. It also aided with demining, resettlement of the displaced, reintegration of ex-combatants and economic redevelopment.

These actions were just the beginning. True reconciliation could take place only if there were a real reduction in tensions between the communities and if every Sri Lankan felt a personal stake in the nation’s future.

According to the United Nations Development Program, 40 percent of post-conflict countries fall back into conflict within five years after fighting ceases, so there was only a small window of opportunity for U.S. programs to make a difference. The U.S. Embassy in Colombo decided the best chance of success was to invest heavily in youth programs that foster tolerance as a means to lasting peace.

Because two generations of Sri Lankans had never known unity, and entire communities had been cut off from neighbors, simply exposing young people to neighbors of other faiths and ethnicities was seen as a crucial first step. The embassy began partnering with students, leaders of community groups and nongovernmental and civic organizations to provide youth with the training and tools to repair their own communities.

In one effort, the post marked International Peace Day (Sept. 21) by helping undergraduate students

from seven universities create Mihasa, an organization dedicated to promoting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The founding members had attended the Martin Luther King, Jr. leadership workshops sponsored by the post’s public affairs section in 2010 and 2011, which brought hundreds of children together from across the island for interfaith discussions and nonviolence training.

These sessions inspired a core group to make changes in its community. Through Mihasa, these young people are undertaking projects such as providing financial assistance to children in war-affected areas and building a library for a school in an impoverished village.

“We were motivated by the nonviolence philosophy practiced by Dr. King, which inspired us to form Mihasa to take the message of nonviolence to our communities and the society at large,” said Mihasa founder Shashika De Silva.

“The MLK workshops provided the stage for us to come together as one single group bridging our ethnic, geographical and social differences. This conference gave us the opportunity to network with students from other universities, including the North and East, to form the Mihasa Foundation.”

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) also played a leading role with young people. The office took note of the importance of

Through dance, the Tamil and Sinhala communities grew to know each other better.

Photo by Thanuraja Thurairasa





Above: The Sri Lankan singing group Soul Sounds performs gospel music at the 2010 inauguration of the Martin Luther King exhibit. Left: A poster welcomes attendees to the Martin Luther King exhibit at the University of Colombo.

Photos by Finton Fernando



religious festivals in Sri Lankan life, and in 2011 it brought together several Tamil youth groups from the former northern war zones and several southern Sinhalese communities for a joint pilgrimage to the city of Katharagama, known for its multi-religious celebration. Prior to the nation's independence, the Katharagama Esala Festival had been multi-ethnic and involved many religions, but, as ethnic division grew, Tamil communities were left off the festival program in this majority Sinhalese area. In July 2011, thanks to OTT's help, Tamil Hindu youth for the first time since independence participated in the parades and street performances at the Katharagama Festival.

"We have always had fear in our minds to interact with Sinhala youth, but now I do not feel any difference between us. They are not different people. We share the same feelings and we are all interested in living together," said Mugunthini, a participant from the former LTTE stronghold of Kilinochchi. Now, I really feel we are 'one family' and I am praying to God this continues forever."

A Sinhala youth from the Southern coastal city of Matara offered similar sentiments.

"We gained relationships after many years of being apart," said Vishvanathan. "We shared our pain and realized all of us share similar pain. We really are one nation and one family."

The Katharagama Festival was more than a venue for simply performing together. Workshops, seminars and opportunities helped the two sides see beyond the mistrust and destruction of the conflict and learn about one another as humans. In the end, more than 100,000 people watched the parade that showcased the unity. Thousands of people like Mugunthini and Vishvanathan learned more about Sri Lankan traditions, and both Tamil and Sinhala youth felt pride in their cultures and gained a means to share the island's common heritage.

Meanwhile, the embassy's political section, with grants from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and help from local partners, supported Sri Lankan youths' production of a radio drama that will star young Sri Lankans and air their concerns. The post hopes this will spark a broader discussion of how the nation's communities can work together.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives Patricia Butenis said of the vision, "There is no greater challenge than helping a country come together after more than two decades of war. But we share a conviction with the Sri Lanka people that this can and must be done. To be successful, we have to think long-term. The events leading up to the conflict did not happen overnight and neither will the solution. But we are committed to the long haul and to see Sri Lanka prosper and reach its potential in South Asia."

More such programs are already under way, through youth empowerment grants, regional youth conferences, a local youth forum and social media outreach activities. The embassy will stay engaged over the coming year to build on this successful momentum.

Through these and other programs, Sri Lankan youth—Tamil, Sinhalese, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian—are coming to see diversity as a strength, not a weakness, and are overcoming earlier prejudices. They are the hope for a very different future. ■



Post of the Month

'Abode of Peace'

Invigorating opportunities abound in Brunei

By Deidra Avendasora, public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan

Imagine a country called “The Abode of Peace,” where one of the world’s longest reigning monarchies peacefully thrives and the sultan lives in a dazzling palace. The citizens are known for their graciousness and practice charity toward one another. Tropical rainforests shelter exotic species such as large-nose monkeys and the world’s largest flower (Rafflesia arnoldii). Such a place exists on the north coast of the world’s third largest island, Borneo, and its name is Brunei Darussalam.





Clockwise from above: A market vendor is dressed as colorfully as her merchandise (Photo courtesy of Brunei Tourism Development Department); the new embassy building, which officially opened in October, lights up at sunset; local guards Asmalee Ariffin, left, and Md Hamdillah Lamudin stand watch at a recent embassy event; embassy staffers participate in a team-building excursion to a local island. **Previous pages:** The sun sets over the beach at Kuala Belait, Brunei (Photos courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Brunei).





Birds, monkeys and geckos

herald the approach of dawn and the call to prayer reverberates in the humid air. The two-thirds of the nation's population who are Malay Muslim begin the morning with a prayer and then continue on with daily life. Significant populations of Chinese, Indian and indigenous Bornean people add to the nation's unique culture. The sounds of people speaking Malay, English and Chinese confirm this multi-ethnicity. The shopping malls are a swirl of people in Western garb or colorful baju, long-sleeved shirts and ankle-length skirts. Many Malay women wear the tudong, a traditional head covering, while Malay men wear the songkok, a traditional cap.

In the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, vendors sell fresh fish in open-air markets, river taxis ferry residents of a world-famous water village and friends stop at cafés for a cup of frothy teh tarik, literally "pulled tea." A stroller might run into Brunei's royalty or nobility, who have been known to walk about the city's streets.

Chinese and Arabic records show that an ancient kingdom flourished in A.D. 600 at the mouth of the Brunei River and traded spices, precious woods, camphor and other products with India and China. Records indicate the kingdom initially was controlled or influenced by Hindu and Buddhist empires, but Islam rose to dominance through the region's trade with Arabs and Indian Muslims, and in 1405 Sultan Muhammad led his people to embrace Islam. The 15th to 17th centuries mark Brunei's golden age, when its influence was at its peak and even briefly included control of Manila. However, European colonization reduced Brunei's power, and by 1888 the nation was a British protectorate,

internally independent but with British control over external affairs. Brunei Darussalam chose not to become part of the newly formed Malaysia in the 1960s, and instead became a fully independent state in 1984.

Modern-day Brunei's political scene is just as exciting as its past. Although only the size of Delaware, the sultanate occupies a strategic location that enables it to contribute to international efforts to preserve Asia-Pacific peace and stability. Located near the center of Southeast Asia, Brunei overlooks South China Sea lanes that link the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Embassy personnel work with Brunei's government and military to maintain stability and counter international threats. During the Crown Prince of Brunei's recent visit to Washington, D.C., and New York, the United States and Brunei launched the Senior Officials Dialogue, fortifying the countries' bilateral partnership and ensuring top-level coordination.

In 2011, high-level military visits from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Command and Pacific Air Force underscored the value placed on military relations. Additionally, American-made F-16 fighter aircraft headlined the U.S. presence at the Brunei International Defense Exhibition in July, and a U.S. destroyer participated in the country's first International Fleet Review. In 2013, Brunei will chair the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); host all the associated meetings, including the East Asia Summit;

and welcome U.S. Cabinet members.

Embassy Bandar Seri Begawan also engages in essential economic work. Embassy personnel contribute toward U.S. job creation by expanding Brunei's U.S. investments and advocating for the doubling of U.S. exports to Brunei sought by the President's National Export Initiative. Brunei boasts one of Asia's highest per capita incomes, approximately \$50,000 in terms of purchasing power parity.

Brunei's chief income source is oil and gas. The fourth-largest oil producer in ASEAN and ninth-largest exporter of liquid natural gas in the world, Brunei is opening up to U.S. energy firms. Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Ambassador Carlos Pascual signaled the intensifying U.S. role by representing the United States at the East Asia Summit Energy Ministerial hosted by Brunei, the first time the United States participated in such a meeting.

The most exhilarating aspect of the embassy's commercial work in recent months has been supporting the bid by a U.S. company, Sikorsky, to sell Blackhawk helicopters to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces. After intense advocacy involving many senior leaders in Washington, the Brunei government recently awarded Sikorsky a \$325 million contract, the largest single defense procurement in Brunei's history. The contract's U.S.-export content will support 1,100 U.S. jobs. Post officials are optimistic about prospects for additional defense deals in coming years.

Invigorating opportunities also abound on the educational front. The sultanate is



Embassy staffers pose with Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. representative Linda Scott, fourth from left, in front of a helicopter honoring Brunei heroes.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Brunei



Clockwise from below: Embassy staffers, from left, Josephine Chan, Daughne Alocod Fillag and Winnie Chihuh fill their plates at an embassy barbeque; cashier Daughne Alocod Fillag laughs during a lion dance at the embassy's Chinese New Year celebration (*Photos courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Brunei*); a gold-domed mosque thrusts into the tropical sky in this Muslim-majority country; a young girl's face is framed by her tudong, a traditional Muslim head covering (*Photos courtesy of Brunei Tourism Development Department*).





increasingly emphasizing the importance of international education, and Brunei's universities are strengthening ties with U.S. educational institutions by signing research and exchange agreements. The flow in both directions of students and faculty will educate Bruneians about the United States and help Americans learn about Brunei's unique biodiversity and moderate Islamic practices.

Last fall, the United States and Brunei announced the United States Partnership with ASEAN on English Language Education. This five-year, \$25 million initiative, supported by the governments of Brunei and Singapore with the East-West Center in Hawaii as an implementing coordinator, reflects a commitment to help unify the diverse members of ASEAN, improve English language capacity and advance educational and teaching opportunities in the region. The post's public affairs section will coordinate the pilot test of this program this year.

Beyond the embassy, Bandar Seri Begawan offers a relaxing change of pace. Brunei has a low crime rate, and members of the embassy community can travel freely to any part of the country or into neighboring Malaysia or Indonesia. Most Bruneians speak English well, so there's no need for a phrase book when exploring. Summer weather persists year round, with heavy rains falling during the rainy season. Drivers are courteous, traffic jams nonexistent and commutes short: a quick 15- to 20-minute hop for most.



Ambassador Daniel Shields greets Amalina Abdullah, president of a local NGO, as Public Affairs Officer Deidra Avendasora looks on.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Brunei

Brunei fosters active lifestyles. Some embassy staff members learn to sail or scuba dive in the South China Sea and take their children on picnics at the beach or hike through the rainforest. Others spend Saturdays at the golf course or taking horseback riding lessons. Indoor activities include movies, bowling or dining out. Sometimes in the evening, friends gather for lemonade on a neighbor's patio.

Challenges do exist, of course. As befits a Muslim country, the dress code is conservative

and public displays of affection are taboo. Alcohol is not sold in Brunei, but can be bought in nearby Malaysia and consumed at private venues. There are no operas, ballets or night clubs; the American expatriate community is small; American-sized apparel or Western food can be hard to come by; and Internet service is poor.

Off the beaten path, Brunei offers adventure, wholesome living and exciting political opportunities. Come see for yourself! ■

At a Glance Brunei



Capital: Bandar Seri Begawan

Government type: Sultanate (Malay Islamic Monarchy)

Area: 5,765 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly larger than Delaware

Population: 401,890

Languages: Malay (official), English and Chinese

GDP—per capita: \$51,600

Export commodities: Oil, liquefied natural gas, petroleum products and garments

Export partners: Japan, South Korea and Australia

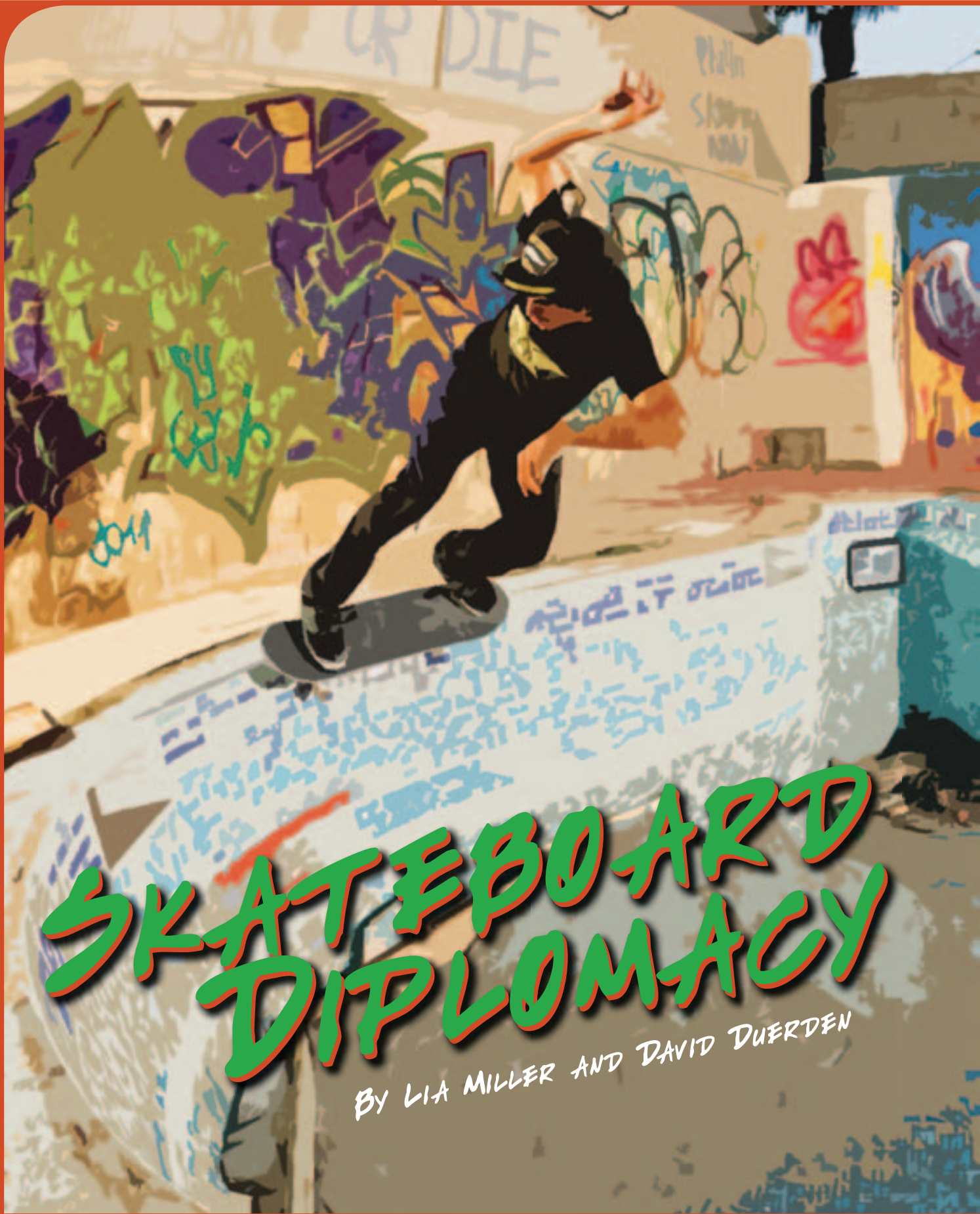
Import commodities: Machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, food and chemicals

Import partners: Singapore, Malaysia and China

Currency: Bruneian dollars (BND)

Internet country code: .bn

Source: Country Background Notes



SKATEBOARD DIPLOMACY

BY LIA MILLER AND DAVID DUERDEN



Embassy 'on a roll' in youth outreach

Tunisian youth played a leading role in their nation's January 2011 revolution, displaying activism and influence like never before. That's why the U.S. Embassy in Tunis believes that finding ways to increase its engagement with Tunisian youth is more important than ever. To that end, the embassy asked young people to "get on board"—skateboards, that is. An Embassy Tunis sports diplomacy program used skateboarding to bridge cultural and linguistic barriers, and introduced Tunisian youth to a new side of America.

American high school student and Eligible Family Member Jared Gibson provided the impetus for the outreach. The skateboard lover hosted skate clinics for Tunisian youth that raised money for the hospital stay of a sick child. His clinics won him the Foreign Service Youth Volunteer Award and inspired the public affairs section to provide a sports diplomacy grant to an Oregon group of skateboarders, artists and social activists called The Bedouins. They created the PUSH Tunisia Skateboard Program, with additional sponsorship from Element Skateboards, Philadelphia Skateboard and Rise Up International.

The outreach introduced young Tunisians to American culture and emphasized the ideals of self-expression and hard work through skateboarding and street art. It also brought American and regional skateboarders and artists to Tunisia. The PUSH Tunisia skateboard team, consisting of seven Americans, an Egyptian, a Jordanian and an Israeli, performed exhibitions in the capital and six other cities over two weeks. The kickoff event was a skate competition and professional skateboarding equipment donation at a skate park in a Tunis suburb attended by more than 130 people, including local press. Approximately 25 boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 18 competed. The festive atmosphere was accentuated by a local DJ who spun contemporary Tunisian and American music.

The next day, the PUSH team hosted a skateboarding workshop and demonstration at a youth center for 50 Tunisian children and their parents. The team instructed beginning skaters and modeled advanced skating techniques, inspiring the Tunisians to take their skills to the next level.

The PUSH Tunisia team then traveled to cities in the interior and south of Tunisia, starting in Matmata in one of the nation's severely underserved regions. The team met with residents and held a workshop on basic skateboarding for 44 children, most of whom had never seen a skateboard before. Townspeople said it was the first U.S. program there in recent memory.

Photo by David Duerden



Heading next to Sidi Bouzid, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, the team held a workshop at a local youth center that was attended by more than 60 people. Seven local skaters also performed. Afterward, the team spent the evening in the center of town speaking with adults who were curious about their visit and wanted to try the skateboards. The youth center's director said the town gained a positive image of the United States and wants to see more embassy programming.

In the coastal city of Sousse, the PUSH team helped build and repair skate ramps for local skaters and assisted Sousse's nascent skateboard association as they held several skateboard sessions. The team also held a competition and exhibition on the main thoroughfare that involved more than 75 participants and hundreds of onlookers.

Back in Tunis, local skaters showed the PUSH team a burned-out and vandalized home, the former abode of a member of the ruling family. After the revolution, the house became a public space for expression, but was now covered in garbage and graffiti. The team and the local skaters devised a plan to turn the house into a skate and art exhibition. They cleaned the grounds and pool, which was full of rubbish, and installed U.S. and local artwork. They even turned the pool into a skate bowl for an impromptu skate session. Neighbors and passersby thanked the team for beautifying the site and thereby paying homage to the revolution.

Photo by Nathan Gray





Photo by David Duerden

Left: Nathan Gray, director of The Bedouins, oversees the half-pipe workshop. **Below:** Beth Hunter, center, teaches skating tricks to Tunisian youths in Matmata. Second from left is husband Jake in sunglasses. **Right:** A Tunisian girl skates in the competition in La Marsa.



The culminating event of the PUSH Tunisia tour was a street art exhibition at the suburban Tunis skate park, where the team collaborated with local street artists to paint graffiti art on the walls and skate decks, which were then mounted around the park. While the local artists created their masterpiece at the youth center, team members displayed street art loaned by U.S. artists and put on a skating demonstration. On the final night of the tour, they previewed footage of a documentary about the trip that will be released early this year.

Skateboarding is not widely practiced in Tunisia, but its popularity is quickly growing, with several small, active youth skateboard communities. Though the PUSH team is now back in Oregon, Gibson is still in Tunisia and says he'll continue his youth outreach effort, working with the public affairs section and on his own. His first stop: a return visit to Matmata and Sidi Bouzid, where there is a newly discovered thirst for skateboarding and artistic expression.

To learn more about The Bedouins, the PUSH Tunisia outreach program and the documentary film, visit: pushtunisia.org or thebedouins.org. ▣

Editor's Note: Lia Miller is a foreign assistance officer and David Duerden is cultural affairs officer at Embassy Tunis.

Visit state.gov/statemag for a video from the event.



Ethical Fitness

Office certifies financial disclosures, fosters ethical behavior

Story by Katy Youel Page, senior ethics counsel, L/EFD | Photos by Ed Warner

State Department employees face hard choices every day and, when making them, they often must also address personal- or financial-conflict concerns, appearance or partiality problems and other ethical considerations. In these situations, employees turn for guidance to the office whose name is slated to this year become the Office of Legal Advisor's Office of Ethics and Financial Disclosures (L/EFD). The office, formerly known as L's Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Office, has 14 employees who embody more than 100 years of collective experience in U.S. government ethics.

The office can answer employee questions such as, "What should I consider when deciding to accept a donation for a public diplomacy event? What are my obligations when my foreign counterpart offers a gift? When will my outside activities, such as volunteer work for a charity, affect my official duties?"

The office also addresses limits on involvement in political campaigns, ethics implications of potential investments and what to do when asked to help form a public-private partnership.

In an average week, the office's six attorneys personally assist Department employees and answer more than 100 questions received via the "Ethics Attorney Mailbox" from staff worldwide. These questions range from personal matters to whether the Department can accept a particular gift. Staffer Judy Mann is known as the office's "ethics mailbox warrior," reflecting her skill at rapidly responding to a range of questions.

"The mailbox has definitely increased the number of questions we get, which is good, and hopefully is making the Department of State a more ethics-conscious environment," she said. "I think all employees would like having a single place to send questions, knowing they will get a quick response."

Indeed, L/EFD provides real-time advice to employees carrying out Department business around the world. When members of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, were invited to a dinner sponsored by corporate stakeholders, they asked L/EFD to help them address appearance-related concerns.

"I was impressed with the comprehensive and professional caliber of the advice we received from L/EFD, particularly on such short notice," said Griffin Thompson, senior climate change program manager.

L/EFD also plays an important role in helping vet outside entities seeking to give monetary or in-kind gifts to the Department. Together with other offices, L/EFD helps ensure that acceptance of a gift does not raise concerns of partiality or harm the Department's reputation.

"The ethics lawyers help us make sure that the Department's integrity is maintained throughout the gift solicitation and acceptance program," said Department Gift Fund coordinator Donna Bordley. "They have an energetic and enthusiastic approach that engages employees in ethics, making rules that seem dry come alive with meaning."

With the expansion of entities involved in public-private



Discussing an ethics matter during a meeting are several of the office's lawyers, including from left M. J. Alexander, David Wells, Marcella Green and Emily Pierce.

partnerships, L/EFD is increasingly helping lay the groundwork for vetting of partners as well.

Each of the Department's 220 presidential appointees and approximately 3,500 Foreign Service and Civil Service employees learn of L/EFD's work before they even join the Department, since potential employees must receive an "ethics clearance" as part of their pre-employment approval process. Potential conflicts of interest must be identified and resolved before the applicant can begin work.

"The Ethics Office provides an incredibly valuable service in processing and expediting the conflicts-of-interest analysis for ambassadorial and senior official nominees," said Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy. "Without the office's speed and dedication, these positions would remain vacant for undue periods, resulting in direct harm to national security."

"The State ethics office is skilled at navigating the complex financial disclosure requirements for Presidential appointees," added Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman. "Having recently undergone this process, I recognize how thorough and difficult it is, and truly appreciated L/Ethics assistance at every stage."

L/EFD also reviews for certification the approximately 1,550 OGE-278 Public Financial Forms and more than 2,200 Confidential OGE-450 forms filed by those who must receive ethics pre-clearance before entering on duty. It also reviews the annual ethics reports they file.

Sarah Taylor, chief of the Financial Disclosure division, has worked in ethics for 10 years, first for USAID and now with the Department. Taylor she said she encourages everyone who is preparing an annual report to refer to his or her previous year's report for consistency in substance and form of filing.

"Each filer is responsible for filing a complete and accurate report on the due date every year," she said.

Her staff of one ethics program specialist, five paralegal specialists, and one ethics program assistant review and certify approximately 3,700 reports annually. They must be agile enough to change priorities to accommodate urgent White House and Department requests.

L/EFD also ensures that employees receive appropriate ethics training. All new Department employees must receive ethics training within 90 days of beginning duty, and every person required to file a financial disclosure report must receive annual training. The training helps employees develop the ability to spot ethics issues before problems arise. L/EFD lawyers conduct more than 60 training sessions every year. These include orientation for new employees, annual briefings for filers and targeted training, such as briefings for deputy chiefs of mission and management officers that concentrate on issues employees in those positions are expected to confront.

"[L/EFD] provided an excellent session on ethics during the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs DCM Conference," said Alexander L.



Above: Senior Ethics Counsel Katy Youel Page directs L/EFD.
Below: Sarah Taylor, chief of the office's Financial Disclosure division, produces a report.

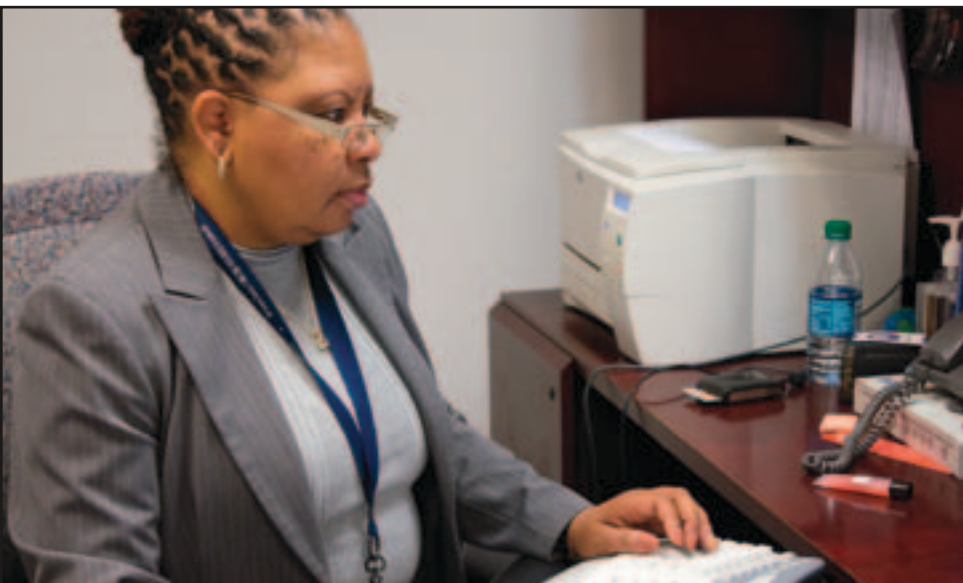
Barrasso, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. "I learned a lot, and it has already come in handy."

L/EFD is developing a new annual ethics training this year that will be available at each employee's desktop via a Foreign Service Institute training program. The aim of the program is to reach employees anywhere in the world who may not have time for or access to live briefings. This new training will provide a solid refresher of the basic ethics rules with a special focus on the types of ethics issues employees who are obligated to have annual training are likely to confront.

In addition to providing instruction, L/EFD's training emphasizes that it is every employee's personal responsibility to comply with ethics rules. Many of the penalties for violating the core statutes on ethics focus on the employee, not the Department. Accordingly, getting the rules right is in each employee's best interest. As Department employees make decisions and take official actions, they must always make ethics an integral part of the process.

"We continuously strive to reinforce a strong culture of ethics within the Department," said Rich Visek, the Department's designated ethics official. "Ethics is everyone's responsibility, whether you are posted abroad or domestically."

L/EFD makes ethics information available to employees through its intranet website. Employees may also e-mail ethics questions to EthicsAttorneyMailbox@state.gov. ■
(Marcella Green, M.J. Alexander and Emily Pierce contributed to this article.)



Crucial Connections

Center coordinates emergency response

By Eric C. Vore, emergency planner, Office of Emergency Management

In the event of a natural or manmade disaster affecting the Department's domestic facilities, the Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) Emergency Management Center (EMC) stands ready. The center, in the basement of the Harry S Truman Building, uses state-of-the-art communications equipment to receive and analyze information in emergency situations and coordinate response actions.

Designed to meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 and work in accordance with the presidentially mandated Incident Command System, the EMC has multiple communications links to the Department of Homeland Security, local police and fire departments, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and the Office of Facility Management Services. EMC personnel continuously monitor the National Warning System, an automated telephone system that warns of terrorist threats and natural and technological disasters.

The center also administers the Emergency Evacuation and Radio System, which facilitates emergency communication with bureaus, assembly point coordinators and floor wardens in the Department's National Capital Region buildings. EMC personnel also use the Alert Management System and Central Emergency Management System (CENS) to inform Department personnel of potential emergencies.

To enhance OEM's ability to anticipate the impact of natural or manmade disasters on Department facilities, the center is working with other Department offices to develop the State Incident Management Operating Nexus (SIMON), a geospatial information system that will collect and display information relevant to domestic disaster planning and response.

Personnel from OEM's Planning and Preparedness Division monitor potential domestic events during normal business hours. After business hours, the EMC's duty officer is only a phone call away.

When activated during an emergency, the EMC becomes a centralized 24/7 management center with an Incident Management Team (IMT) that plans and coordinates the response. The team includes representatives from OEM, A Bureau's Office of Operations, DS, the Bureau of Public Affairs and several other Department offices, including Legal Advisor and Medical Services.

The center works closely with the Operations Center's Office of Crisis

Management Support and the DS Command Center and Security Control Center. The IMT continuously monitors information on the status of the threat or event, makes and tracks response actions, and provides regular situation reports to Department sites and senior officials.

Recently, the EMC was activated in response to the potential exposure to biological hazards of personnel at the Diplomatic Mail and Pouch Facility in Sterling, Va., in March 2011. An IMT coordinated the response with multiple entities, including the Loudoun County HAZMAT Team, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia State Fusion Center and Joint Terrorism Task Force. Subsequent lab tests indicated no presence of a harmful substance.

In October 2011, the EMC was activated in response to a flood that closed State Annex-4, the Central Building on Navy Hill. The IMT worked with the Domestic Environmental and Safety Division of the Office of Facility Management Services, Bureau of Information Resource Management and General Services Administration to conduct safety and environmental assessments of the building, and survey the damage to furniture, telephones, computers and networking gear. The IMT stayed engaged until the damage was repaired and the building ready to be reoccupied. According to an IMT member, "The technology and personnel in

the EMC enabled the Situation Unit staff to stay abreast of the rapidly changing conditions, allowing the IMT to coordinate with Department personnel affected by the incident to ensure as rapid a recovery as possible, and a resumption of normal operations."

OEM also uses the EMC for emergency-management-related training, conferences, tabletop exercises, multimedia presentations, video teleconferencing and housing of temporary Department operations. For example, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs conducted public diplomacy operations for Libya from the EMC while the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli was closed. The EMC has also been used to train bureau administrators on the Centralized Emergency Notification System and floor wardens and monitors in the National Capital Region. Center personnel conduct monthly radio tests for National Capital Region floor wardens and assembly point coordinators.

The EMC can provide a classroom-type setting for up to 18 people with access to OpenNet computers and graphics displays, and its conference room can host conferences for up to 20 participants with Secure Video Data Connection capability. Those wishing to reserve EMC facilities for training can call (202) 647-1853. ■



In the Emergency Management Center, Kristina Mattice, planning section chief of the Incident Management Team, right, shows Incident Commander Thomas Sgroi Hurricane Irene's track up the East Coast.
Photo by the Office of Emergency Management

Matters of the Heart

Course focuses on FS singles' overseas dating challenges

By Kevin Casey, DS Public Affairs

Foreign Service officer Mercedes Crosby has a phrase that reflects a challenge facing singles in the Foreign Service as they move from post to post: Skype babies.

A student in the 162nd A-100 Generalist Class at the Foreign Service Institute, Crosby explained that, "You have these relationships habitually over Skype where you never actually get to spend time with the person.

"Eventually I want to have a family, but how does one accomplish that if they are always on Skype? So [the term] 'Skype babies': something kind of impossible."

Approximately 30 percent of FSOs are single, including those never married, divorced, widowed and single parents. So twice a year, FSI offers *MQ203: Singles in the Foreign Service*. Instructor Laura Miller and a panel of five experienced Foreign Service singles provide tools, resources and tips for improving FSO singles' quality of life, focusing on logistics, availability and social life issues.

"You need to make sure that you're getting out there and meeting your romance needs," Miller said, "but the reality is, you're in a fishbowl. Everybody is watching you, and the gossip can be outrageous, so be conscious of your corridor reputation." At some posts, your neighbors and maybe even the host nation's security personnel will know whose car was still parked in your driveway the next morning, she said.

"When it comes to dating, you have to understand the local culture so you don't find yourself in a situation you weren't expecting," Miller said. "One of the best ways is to observe how host-nationals interact and what is socially appropriate for things such as public displays of affection."

Also, there is another factor to consider if one's new romantic interest is a host national. Is this person enamored with me, or with the prospect of a visa? Regardless of whether the attraction is to the other person or instead to a opportunity to become a U.S. citizenship, men may find dating easier.

"Men go out, and they've just got the women falling all over them," argued Dianna Rooney, crisis management and support program specialist at the Family Liaison Office (FLO). FLO responds to questions on Foreign Service life and supports all FSOs, including singles.

"I just think it's harder for women [FSOs]," she added. "You don't have as many guys who are going to pick up and move around the world with you, but it does happen."

The best dates may involve dining. "The simple sharing of food is the greatest medium for intercultural communication," said former Deputy Chief of Mission of Embassy Port Moresby Paul Berg. "I guarantee, in whatever culture, you will find it 10 times easier to make friends over food."

Berg suggests attending representational events, exploring local restaurants and hosting a gathering of your own, especially if singles are alone over the holidays.

As for the logistics of being single, panelists at the FSI course advised asking friends or temporary workers for help with moving—especially when there are only two days to pack out and one day to unpack.

"You need to shanghai somebody, a friend, it doesn't matter who it is,"

said one panelist, Assignment Officer Sharon Featherstone. "You want at least one other pair of eyes, because they will send a swarm of packers, and you cannot be everywhere supervising everybody at the same time."

Other panelists advised bringing very little from post to post, since most diplomatic housing comes furnished. But don't be stingy with the things that give you pleasure.

"If you're a knitter, and you want to take 100 pounds of yarn, that's fine," Miller said. "Take those things with you."

"When arriving, you also need to know when to put the boxes aside and accept invitations," said the FLO's Rooney. "You'll have a flurry of people glad to have someone new at post, and they'll be inviting you over. If you say, 'No, I've got boxes to unpack,' you're probably not going to get that invitation a second time. It's against your nature probably, but accept the invitations when they come in."

Another issue is work assignments. Does the boss need someone to work late, pull holiday duty or cut a ribbon at a school two hours up a mountain by donkey? Singles without children worry they will be unfairly tapped for such tasks because others see them as having nothing better to do. This does happen, said several FSI course speakers, but new FSOs should not always assume the worst.

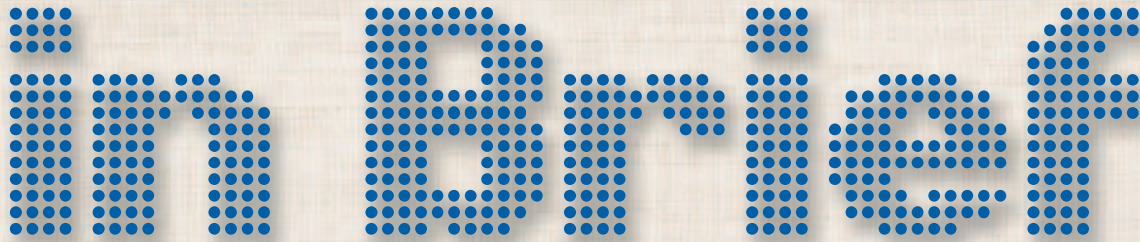
"We may be tasked on a holiday because of our low rank, not because of our single status," said USAID FSO Alison Case. "We need to recognize when it is something to be concerned about and when it is not."

When there is a problem, the course advises FSOs to be professional and work through the chain of command. According to Miller, singles should stand up for their personal needs. She advises that they take the time and travel they are due.

The FSI course urges single FSOs to always tell someone where they are going, if traveling alone, and be familiar with a variety of communication methods because, in an emergency, a cell phone may not work. There are so many things an FSO who is single must consider, such as asking for help when they need it, and being proactive but prudent about social relationships.

According to 3 FAM 4000, agencies "require the maintenance of the highest standards of conduct by employees of the Foreign Service, including an especially high degree of integrity, reliability, and prudence." That includes one's behavior in a karaoke bar on Friday night. Meanwhile, 12 FAM 270 contains regulations for reporting an ongoing relationship with a foreign national.

"That can be very uncomfortable," Miller said. "Trying to decide when to sit down and tell the regional security officer how many times you've seen someone is not enjoyable." ■



Secretary Praises Retirees

At a December ceremony to recognize employees who retired during 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton lauded them for their service and for spreading security and prosperity worldwide. She noted that they had served in 250 posts, including Washington, D.C., and that 41 of them had served for more than 40 years. One retiree, Ora Smith of the Office of the Inspector General, served for 47.

Secretary Clinton pointed out that the retirees spoke more than 55 languages, from Nepalese to Haitian Creole, and that one retiree, David Dunn, once used his language skill to translate for Mother Theresa on her visit to Burundi, where she established one of her first AIDS orphanages.

Secretary Clinton singled out the eldest retiree present, Ada Adler, who joined the Department in 1958, but married on her second tour, in Liberia, and therefore had to resign from the Foreign Service under a rule that banned married women from serving. When that rule was overturned in 1972, Adler returned to the Department, where she worked for 40 more years helping refugees, religious minorities, workers, women and disenfranchised people around the world. She once helped reunite a four-year-old boy in Ethiopia with his mother in Minnesota, from whom he'd been separated almost from birth, the Secretary said.

Adler's son, Michael J. Adler, is now deputy chief of mission in Kuwait and her grandson, Michael Karlsberg, works in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Visit state.gov/statemag for a video from the event.



Secretary Clinton congratulates retiree Cynthia Cohen for her dedicated service.

Photo by Ed Warner

Truckloads of Toys



The Domestic Facilities Protection Division of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security estimates that between 3,000 and 4,000 toys were donated in the Department's Toys for Tots drive in December. The division's coordinator for the drive, Byron Harley, said enough toys were collected to completely fill two medium-sized U-Haul trucks.

All Department donations were distributed in the Washington, D.C., area by the drive's organizer, the

U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, from its Reserve Training Center in the Anacostia neighborhood. They went to families that requested toys through the Toys for Tots website, and to local social service organizations that serve disadvantaged families in Maryland, the District and Northern Virginia.

Visit state.gov/statemag for a video from the event.





Outgoing DG Nancy Powell, center, stands with winners of HR bureau awards. Her departure ceremony coincided with the presentation of plaques to award winners.

Photo by Ed Warner

Departing DG's Tenure Lauded

Concluding her tenure as Director General in the last week of November, Ambassador Nancy Powell thanked members of the bureau she headed, Human Resources, saying its staff had worked across office lines on cross-cutting issues.

Until becoming DG, "I had no concept of how complex this all was," she said.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Steve Browning, now acting DG, lauded HR's accomplishments during Powell's tenure including: responding to the Diplomacy 3.0 hiring initiative, staffing priority posts, making aggressive strides in use of social media and promoting hiring of disabled veterans.

As a going-away present, the bureau gave Powell a framed photo of its "The Bird" statuette, which it presents each week to a different office in honor of its accomplishments.

Secretary Hosts 'Diplomacy at Home' Event

In December, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton held the third annual Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays event in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms at Main State. The celebration, which also featured Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, honored the service, dedication and sacrifice of U.S. government employees and their families who endure long separations due to assignments in hardship posts.

For the first time, the Office of the Chief of Protocol partnered with Skype and Hallmark to help bring separated families together via traditional media and new communications technology.

During the event, Jennifer Mauldin described being separated during the holidays from her husband, Jimmy, who is on a yearlong assignment in the economic section of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, while she takes care of the couple's four children in suburban Virginia.

Secretary Clinton surprised Mauldin after her speech by introducing the next speaker: her husband, appearing live from Pakistan on big screens via Skype.

"I just want to tell you, Jennifer, you're absolutely fantastic, and I couldn't ask for a better wife or a better friend," he said. "You've been the encouragement behind me that pushed me out of the peanut fields of south Alabama to the front lines of diplomacy here in Pakistan."

During the event, laptop computers with webcams were set up around the Benjamin Franklin Room, allowing other family members to Skype with their loved ones at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world.



Baking and 'Putt-Putt' Raise CFC Funds

The Human Resources Bureau offices of Resource Management Analysis (RMA) and Employee Relations, respectively, held a mini-golf tournament and a bake sale in late 2011 to benefit the general fund of the Combined Federal Campaign. The golf tourney, held along the halls of RMA's SA-1 offices, featured a hole that required golfers to knock the ball through the small mouth of a red "fish" the size of a basketball backboard and into the cup on the other side. Other holes of the "Putt-Putt Around the World" course represented different world regions. The event raised \$400.

The ER bake sale and its accompanying "white elephant" sale, featuring items such as a doll from Thailand and a fancy liquor kit, raised \$816.



From left, office staffers Aida Sacks, Jeffrey Miller and Eliot Johnson helped make RMA's putt-putt fundraiser a success for the CFC.

Photo by Ed Warner

IIP Holds Open House

Staff members of the Bureau of International Information Programs demonstrated the tools of their trade to a packed Delegate's Lounge in Main State at the bureau's Nov. 30 open house. Attendees explored the new and improved products and services of the "new IIP." The bureau has undergone an extensive reorganization aimed at providing cutting-edge information technology, digital engagement, U.S. speakers and publications to colleagues in all bureaus.

For more information on IIP's expanding social media engagement, connecting with global youth and sharing stories with the world, visit iip.r.state.sbu.



FLO Program Wins Top Honors

The Global Employment Initiative (GEI) of the Family Liaison Office (FLO) received the Best Family Support Program Award (for Europe) from the Forum for Expatriate Management in November. The Forum is an international organization that provides news, information and networking events for human resource professionals specializing in global mobility.

Other nominees included the World Bank Family Network, U.S. Girl Scouts Overseas and the United Nations. GEI's job-coaching services for family members was the deciding factor, the Forum said.

The GEI, launched in 2002, helps

family members of U.S. government employees with job hunting and career development while overseas. Services include résumé help, interviewing tips, networking assistance (where available) and career coaching. FLO's Global Employment Advisors (GEAs) throughout the world provide onsite or virtual job coaching, training and career development services at no cost. Where possible, they establish partnerships with local employers to gain job contacts for family members.

Family members of direct-hire government employees serving overseas who are interested in contacting a GEAs should email gei@state.gov.



Photo courtesy of DigitalPhoto Ltd.

Embassy London GEA Rick Furno, far right, accepts the award on behalf of the GEI, along with, from left, Heineken employee Ellen Jansma and Brian Friedman, CEO of the Forum for Expat Management.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Adams, Nicholas James
Alexander, Susan Elaine
Alston, Cheryl L.
Canavan, Katherine H.
Chicola, Phillip T.
Conway, Ellen Mary
Dragovich, Pamela M.
English, Charles Lewis
Fishbein, Jonathan Lyman
Gabbard, David William
Garcia, Marie R.
Gaskill, Patricia A.
Grappo, Gary Anthony

Green, Milton V.
Kaplan, Sidney L.
Kleinsmith, Wanda D.
Korycki, Leonard J.
Kruger, Mary Anne
Lewis, Lynn E.
Moreau, Gladys A.
Norris Jr., John Jacob
Perez, Karen L.
Reynard, Garace A.
Rosenberry, Sara A.
Scheland, Mark Douglas
Soler, Richard Peter

Tavakoli, Edith I.
Toy, Steven Michael
Volker, Karen Eileen

Wiener, Sharon Anderholm
Zimmerman, Craig A.

Civil Service

Gall, Luis G.
Hafner, Anne Marie
Lane, Stanley W.
Lawrence, Sally J.
Lyons, Charles R.

May, William E.
Perros, Frances E.
Schaffer, Jonathan F.
White, Rose Mary S.

Performance Management Training Offered via Distance Learning


After more than a year of preparation, a joint working group from the Bureau of Human Resources and Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has launched the last of three complementary online distance-learning courses to help supervisors improve and expand management skills. The three courses—one each for Civil Service (GS), Foreign Service (FS) and Locally Employed (LE) Staff—cover general yet crucial material for new supervisors and employees. Each course takes about 90 minutes to complete and can be taken in increments, with the student ending a session after any module and returning to it later. When all modules are completed, the student takes an online test.

The courses spotlight performance management and evaluation features that differ among the GS, FS and LE Staff personnel systems. Each course also details elements of Department supervision that are common to all three systems. These include having agreed-upon work requirements/performance plans established at the beginning of rating periods, monitoring performance so that an employee's strengths and weaknesses can be assessed and discussed, and implementing performance counseling and timely submission of performance appraisals. Throughout the courses,

users find tips and examples to assist them with understanding the material, plus additional resources for complex cases.

Course participants learn that the rating official, rated employee and reviewing official each play different but important roles in the performance management process, and that the participation of all three benefits managers and employees.

To supplement the concise course content, users find applicable examples and useful ways to put them into action. The courses are not all-inclusive but serve as practical educational aids and reference tools for all supervisors, especially new supervisors. More experienced supervisors can expand, reinforce and refresh their proficiency, and employees can learn about the performance management process, which governs their careers.

The courses are listed in FSI's catalog as PA495—Civil Service Performance Management and Evaluation, PA496—Locally Employed Staff Performance Management and Evaluation, and PA497—Foreign Service Performance Management and Evaluation. Employees can apply for the courses online at fsi.state.gov/admin 



A blanket of winter snow covers the FSI campus in Arlington, Va.
File photo

Riding the Wave

Surging retirements challenge Department managers

By John Naland, director, Office of Retirement

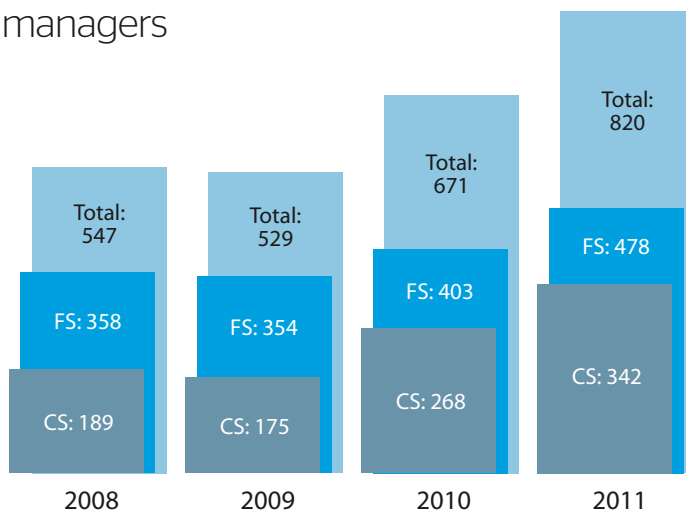
With the long-anticipated surge in baby boomer retirements now under way at U.S. foreign affairs agencies, the Office of Retirement (RET) is busier than ever. The office processed 820 retirements in 2011, a 22 percent increase over the 671 processed in 2010 and a 55 percent increase over 2009. Those numbers encompass the Department's Civil Service employees and Foreign Service members from all U.S. foreign affairs agencies.

This wave has probably not yet crested. Presently, 18 percent of the Department's American workforce is eligible to retire; in five years, that figure will increase to 32 percent. In 10 years, nearly half of the workforce will be eligible to retire. While employees usually do not retire as soon as they become eligible, this rising tide of eligible employees is undoubtedly a significant factor underlying the rising number of those who are retiring.

Retirements have increased despite the nation's high unemployment, which reduces post-retirement employment opportunities. There is no way to project how changes in economic conditions or federal pay and benefits will affect retirement rates.

Understandably, retirement eligibility is highest among senior-level employees. The Bureau of Human Resources projects that the attrition rate among Foreign Service generalists at and above the FS-1 level in the next five years will be 27 percent higher than the recent five-year average. There is sufficient "bench strength" among mid-level officers available for promotion into the senior ranks, but rising attrition among the Department's most experienced employees will present a leadership succession challenge that will need to be managed throughout the remainder of this decade.

Another challenge will be processing the increasing numbers of retirement applications. The Office of Personnel Management, which does the final adjudication of all Civil Service retirement applications, recently reported that it had a 133-day processing backlog. As a result, new retirees may have to get by for months on their interim annuities, which they receive until their retirement is adjudicated. The interim annuities typically provide 80 percent of what the retiree eventually receives after final adjudication.



The good news is that RET has no such processing backlog, nor does it initiate low interim payments. In fiscal year 2011, 90 percent of all new Foreign Service retirees started receiving their full annuity benefits on time. Of the 10 percent who experienced delays, which were usually short, some filed late or incomplete applications and others had internal processing delays.

To raise its on-time percentages, RET is implementing process improvements to improve customer service while handling the rising workload. Recently, the office also began issuing a series of cables and Department Notices on retirement issues, such as advice on how employees can set themselves up for smooth retirement processing (see below).

A 30-person office, RET provides pre- and post-retirement services to 41,000 clients, including 16,000 Foreign Service annuitants, 15,000 active-duty Foreign Service members and 10,000 Civil Service employees. The office also works with the Bureau of Resource Management's Financial Services Center in Charleston, S.C., which generates more than \$800 million a year in annuity payments drawn from the \$16.5 billion Foreign Service retirement fund. ■

Retirement Readiness Calls for Planning

Employees who are within five years of retirement should begin planning now. Here are key steps:

Do your homework.

Comprehensive Foreign Service and Civil Service retirement information is available on the HR Online Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) website, which has written information and videos of seminars on retirement benefits, financial planning, the Thrift Savings Plan, Social Security and life insurance. The site can generate an individualized estimate of annuity benefits based on any potential retirement date. Foreign Service retirement information is also available at rnet.state.gov and

includes a searchable database of frequently asked questions. The Foreign Service Institute conducts a variety of retirement planning workshops.

Resolve prior service issues.

Employees with prior federal civilian or military service can increase their retirement annuity by obtaining credit for that service. This usually requires making a deposit to cover the employee retirement contributions (plus interest) not made originally. Some employees must make re-deposits for service for which they previously took a refund of their retirement contributions. Resolving prior service issues usually requires

obtaining information from the prior employer and can take several months.

Review divorce decrees.

Divorce decrees and property settlement agreements can affect the division of retirement benefits. Sometimes, state court orders fail to meet federal standards or one party in the divorce will contend an order has a different meaning than its plain meaning. As a result, the parties may have to return to state court to correct the problem. To check in advance for such problems, employees should send a copy of any divorce decrees and property settlement agreements to RET for review.

Apply on time.

Employees who wish to receive their first annuity check on time should submit their completed retirement applications to RET at least 90 days prior to their retirement date. Meeting that deadline is a prerequisite for participating in FSI's pre-retirement Job Search Program. The Department's American employees should submit their applications online via the EBIS site, while Foreign Service members at other agencies should submit their applications to their agency's human resources office.

Specific questions can be answered by contacting HR/RET at HRSC@state.gov.



Richard J. Bloomfield, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 22 of complications from Alzheimer's disease in Belmont, Mass. He served with the Coast Guard in World War II and joined the Department in 1952. He was ambassador to Ecuador and Portugal, and also served in Bolivia, Austria, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay. After retiring in 1982, he was executive director of the World Peace Foundation and taught international affairs at Brown and Harvard universities. He loved fishing, food, wine, music, cinema and humor.



Donald E. Braum, 66, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 3 at his home in Alexandria, Va. He joined the Department in 1979 and served in Frankfurt, Khartoum, The Hague, Nicosia, Athens, Brussels, Kosovo and the U.S. Mission to NATO. Most recently, he was senior advisor for civilian-military engagement in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, where he continued to work after retiring in 2008.



Cyril M. "Cy" Ferenchak, 61, a management officer for the Board of Examiners, died Aug. 28 after a long illness in McLean, Va. He served in the Army for 27 years before joining the Foreign Service in 2003. As an Army officer he was posted to U.S. embassies in Kingston and San Salvador. His Department postings included Guadalajara and Washington, D.C. He coached football and helped lead a team from Guadalajara to a championship. He also purchased and donated equipment to the team.



Martha Bryan Holmes, 97, a retired Civil Service employee, died Feb. 19 at her home in Weslaco, Texas. She joined the Department in 1957 and served in the Foreign Service Institute's Budget Office before finishing her career as the first woman registrar of FSI. After retiring in 1978, she was ordained as an elder in her church and served on the Board of Lady Managers at Alexandria Hospital. She lived in Springfield, Va., for many years before moving to live with her daughter in Weslaco in 2006.



Allan M. Labowitz, 88, died Nov. 27 of complications from a neurological disorder in Arlington, Va. He lived in Alexandria, Va. He served in the Army during World War II and had a career at the Atomic Energy Commission before joining the Department in 1970. He served in the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, retired in 1979 to practice law and rejoined the Department in 1982 as assistant to the Ambassador at Large for Nonproliferation. He retired again in 1985. He was founding chair of the Alexandria Holocaust Remembrance program.



G. Eugene "Gene" Martin, 68, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 9 of pancreatic cancer at his home in Bethesda, Md. He joined the Department in 1966 and served in Hong Kong, Burma, Taiwan, the Philippines and China. He retired in 2000 as deputy chief of mission in Beijing. He then worked for the U.S. Institute of Peace as executive director of the Philippine Facilitation Project. He was also a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and taught China area studies at the Foreign Service Institute.



Leo Melzer, 96, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 27 of a heart attack. He served with the Army Air Corps in World War II and the Air Force during the Korean War. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1955 and was posted to Seoul and Dusseldorf. He retired in 1978 and moved to Santa Monica, Calif., where he wrote for various publications, pursued creative writing and was a docent at Will Rogers State Park. He was known for his generosity, compassion and sense of humor.



Larry D. Moyer, 72, a retired Foreign Service Information Management officer, died Oct. 18 in Newark, Del., from injuries suffered in a fall at his home. He served in the Navy from 1956 to 1960, primarily in Guam and Japan. He joined the Department in 1964 and was posted to Saigon, Copenhagen, Islamabad, Lagos, Panama City, Rangoon, London, Doha, Ouagadougou, Dakar and Mexico City. He was a lifetime member of a VFW Post in Hamburg, Pa., and enjoyed travel, cooking and dining out.



Frank George Trinkka, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 10 in Bethesda, Md. He served in the U.S. military during World War II and joined the Department in 1956. His postings included Frankfurt, Berlin, Prague, Belgrade, Zagreb, Vienna, the Sinai Field Mission and Ankara. After retiring in 1988, he continued working for the Department on Freedom of Information and other activities until 2010. He enjoyed traveling, reading, music and black-and-white movies.



Robert J. "Bob" Wozniak, Sr., 76, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 13 of complications from cancer treatment in Washington, D.C. He served in the Navy and joined the U.S. Information Agency in the early 1960s. He was posted to Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Morocco and USNATO in Brussels and was a senior manager at the Voice of America. After retiring in 1996, he was a diplomat in residence at American University's Center for Global Peace and served on the board of the Cyprus American Archeology Research Institute.

E. Leonard Damron, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 15 at his home in Reno, Nevada. He served in the Navy during World War II. His diplomatic postings included Iceland, Paraguay, Guyana, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. He switched to the Civil Service in 1970 and worked for passport agencies in San Francisco and Honolulu. He retired in 1986. He loved music and gardening.

Leonard D. Matta, a retired Civil Service employee, died Oct. 30 of natural causes in Annapolis, Md. He was a contract specialist with the U.S. Information Agency. He retired in 1988.

Authorial Ambassador

COM's published novels include mystery series

By Charles Ray, U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe

With the volume of written material Foreign Service officers must deal with, it may be surprising that we don't associate U.S. ambassadors with published writing, other than foreign policy books or articles. Given all the talent in the Foreign Service, there must be a lot of aspiring authors out there. I've been one since my teens. My first short story was published when I was 13 and, while I've neither made best-seller lists nor scored movie deals, I've been published regularly in print publications throughout the past 40-plus years and, in the past few years, on the Internet.

I came to writing at a young age because as a youngster I was painfully shy. I found my refuge in books. Having learned to read at age 4, I fell in love early on with the printed word, a love affair that has persisted all these years.

Over the years, I've amassed a significant body of fiction and nonfiction writing that includes two books on leadership, a book of essays, a photo-journal of southern Africa and three fantasy novels. My series of mystery novels now totals nine books, and the 10th is in progress. Along with these longer works, I have written thousands of magazine and newspaper articles, mostly travel articles, and essays on unusual historical or cultural events. I've also penned hundreds of short stories and poems.

I've even been an editorial cartoonist for a North Carolina weekly newspaper and chief cartoonist for a magazine on the history of African-Americans in the military.

One might wonder how I find time to write as much as I do, given the demands on an ambassador's time. Even as a child, I never needed much sleep, so I write for an hour each morning before I go to work, and when I finally get home at night, I write until midnight, or sometimes one in the morning. On weekends, I write for about half of each day.

When I was doing feature pieces for several North Carolina newspapers in the 1970s, a veteran editor for whom I'd written said writing, like any skill, had to be practiced regularly to improve. He advised me to set a quota of a certain number of words per day, suggesting 1,000 as a starting point. I've been doing that religiously ever since, either at my computer or, if traveling, in a notebook I always carry. With the average novel coming in at around 60,000 words, I can crank out a book in two months or less, and I often do.

The writer who most inspired me was L. Ron Hubbard, author of such science fiction series as *Battlefield Earth* and *Mission Earth*. He reportedly could complete a full-length work in less than a week and often worked from dawn to dusk. I'll have to wait for retirement to try that. I'm also impressed with such mystery authors as Mickey Spillane and Janet Evanovich.

My practice is to write everywhere and about everything, including plots of whatever book I'm currently working on. This has led to some interesting encounters. Once, on a long flight, I was jotting down plot details of a crime for one of my novels. My seat mate noticed and became quite agitated. I spotted his nervousness and quickly explained what I was really doing. I didn't get much more writing done, but the resulting conversation, which lasted for the remainder of the flight, found its way into a short story I wrote later.

On a different flight, from Dakar, Senegal, to Washington, D.C., I was seated next to a young woman who, like me, couldn't sleep on planes. We talked all the way to Dulles Airport. As we were getting off, she said, "I hope you'll remember the girl in seat 63-A." There was my title for a short story! "The Girl in Seat 63-A" won critical acclaim from the members of my writers' group, mainly for its grisly plot twist at the end.



Photo courtesy of Charles Ray

When people learn that I write, they often ask where I get ideas. My answer: from everywhere. I'm a notorious snoop, always recording snippets of conversations, interesting phrases, names and character or scene descriptions. One of my favorite books, for instance, is a parody of *Alice in Wonderland*, called *Wallace in Underland*. Once, while reading an article about parodies posted on a writing website, I thought of Lewis Carroll's classic and decided to try my hand at a modern-day version. Not only did I use a little consonant transposition in the title, but I completely turned Carroll's world on its ear. Zimbabwean author Virginia Phiri (*Highway Queen*) in a review described it as "a book that appeals to all ages. The user friendly language makes the book unique... This book, which highlights the ills of bullying and abuse, must be read."

The novels that take up most of my time and attention, however, are those in the mystery series I created based around a Washington, D.C., private investigator with the unwieldy name Albert Einstein Pennyback. The idea for the series had germinated in my mind for years. Most novels set in D.C. are about politicians, high-powered lobbyists, super spies and the like, but I felt that there should be something written about the common citizens of what is inarguably one of the most diverse and interesting cities in America. Having lived in the city off and on since 1967, I know that the residents who don't occupy seats of power lead lives just as interesting as the heavy hitters.

The first book in the Al Pennyback series, *Color Me Dead*, took me eight years to write and went through more than 10 drafts before I was satisfied with it. Once I reached the last page of the final draft, I was hooked. I found myself identifying with Al and his friends, and through happenstance found myself using "dead," "death" or some variation of these words in the subsequent titles.

Readers' reviews have been generally favorable, with one emailing to say she'd fallen in love with my main character. One book in the series, *Die, Sinner*, about the head of a mega-church who dies under mysterious circumstances and turns out to have been leading a secret life, was described by one reviewer as "brutally honest, but a book you couldn't stop reading."

After I'd been writing for print for decades, a writer friend in the late 1990s turned me on to Internet publishing. I've since written several e-books, fiction pieces, poems, travel articles and commentaries for a number of online sites. I'm a featured travel writer for the Yahoo! Network and contribute to several websites, mostly travel pieces that recount the hundreds of places where I've visited or lived over the past 49 years.

Writing has not made me rich. I've been paid as little as one cent per word. But I don't write for the money. For me, it's a passion; some would say an addiction. I write because I must. ■

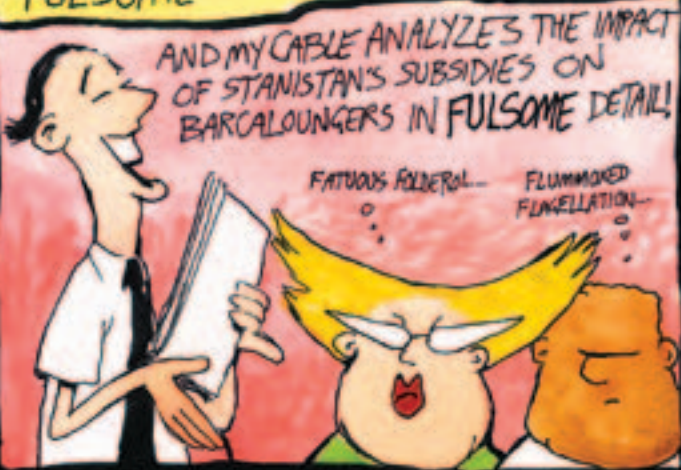
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AND SOUR SPAM CHILI...

CONVINCE ECONOMIC OFFICER DABNEY
HORNER TO STOP MISUSING THE WORD
"FULSOME"



AND MY CABLE ANALYZES THE IMPACT
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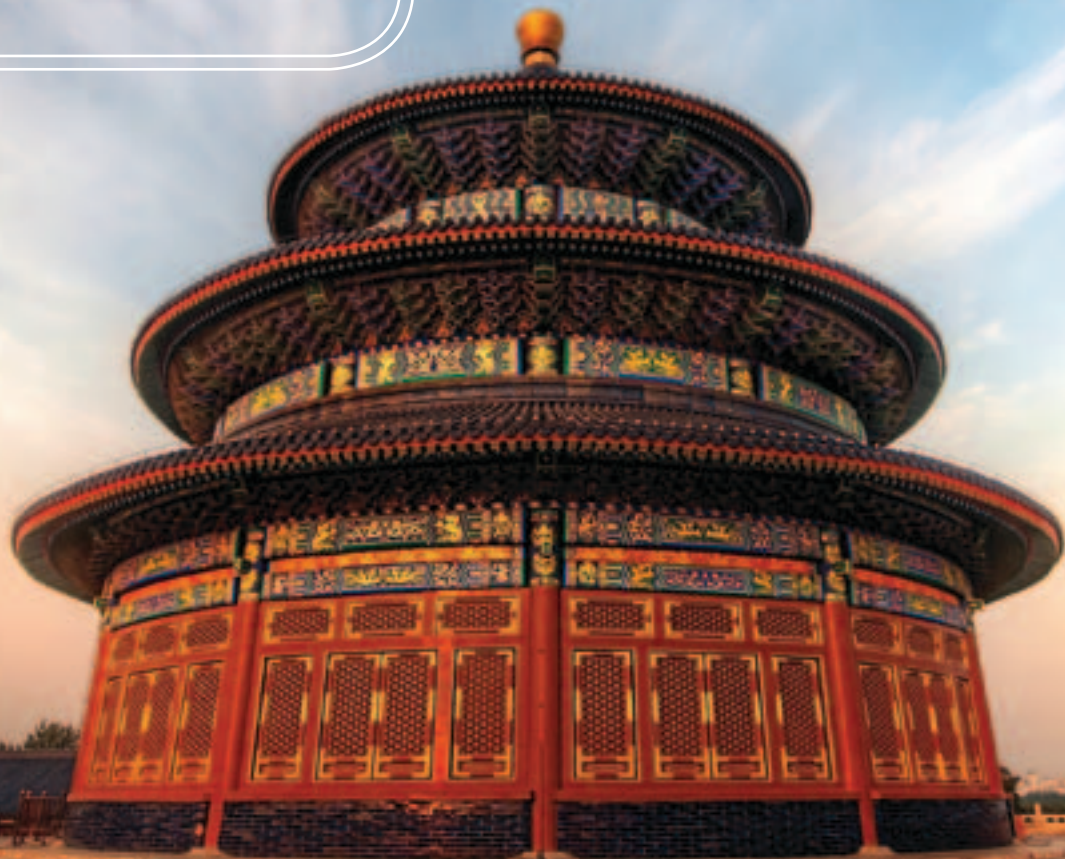
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FIGURINES ON THE DESK OF OFFICE
MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST LILA SHANKS



COUNTRY TEAM MEETINGS WILL BE MORE
PRODUCTIVE WHEN THEY BEGIN WITH A
BRIEF BUT SPIRITED PERFORMANCE OF THE
"CHICKEN DANCE."



End State



Sri Lanka



Children peer from the window of a train car at a stop near Pattipola. Founded in 1858, Sri Lanka's rail system is world-renowned for its scenic routes, especially the Main Line from Colombo to Badulla.

PG. 20

Creative Commons photo by James Gordon

Beijing

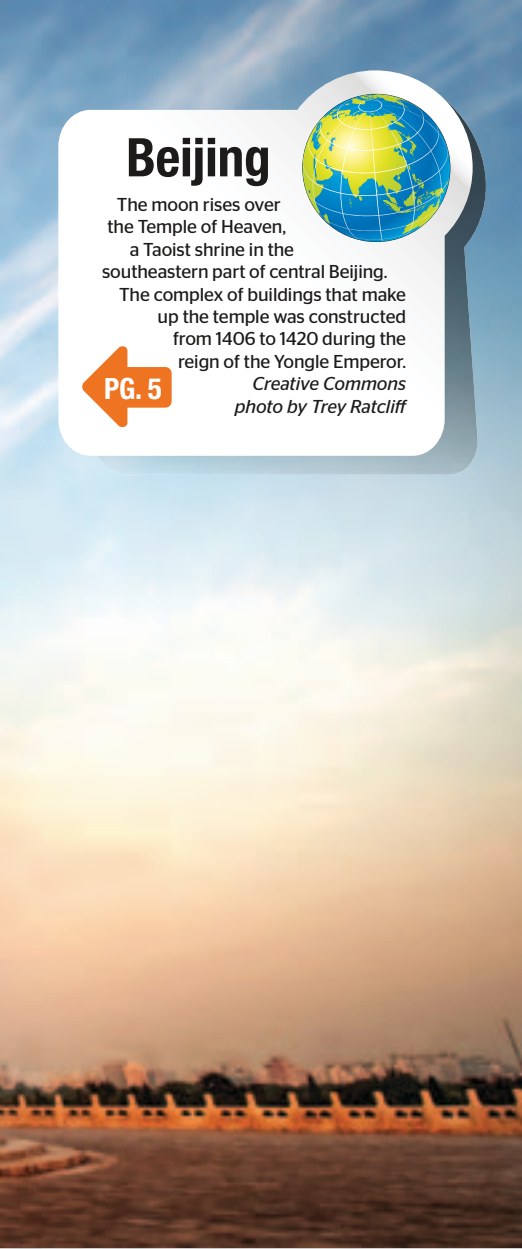


The moon rises over the Temple of Heaven, a Taoist shrine in the southeastern part of central Beijing.

The complex of buildings that make up the temple was constructed from 1406 to 1420 during the reign of the Yongle Emperor.

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PG. 5



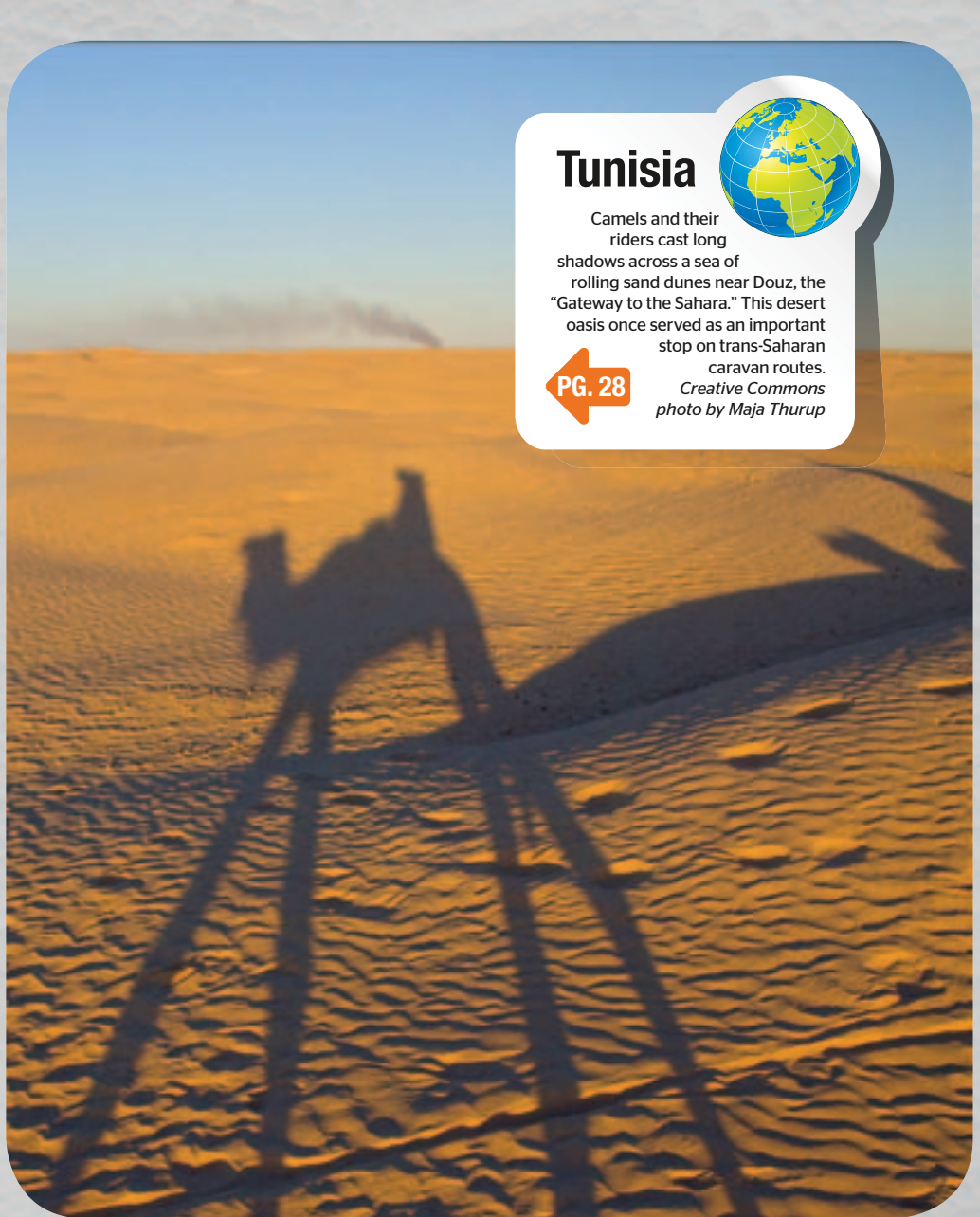
Tunisia



Camels and their riders cast long shadows across a sea of rolling sand dunes near Douz, the "Gateway to the Sahara." This desert oasis once served as an important stop on trans-Saharan caravan routes.

Creative Commons photo by Maja Thurup

PG. 28



Brunei



An adult male Proboscis Monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*) rests on a tree limb on a cool morning in Tasek Merimbun National Park. The nearly 70 sq. kilometer (19,274 acre) park is home to more than 20 rare and endangered animal species.

PG. 22

Creative Commons photo by Frank Starmer



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