

Newsletter

Association of
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WOMEN

P.O. Box 8068
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024
MAY 1975

Look Homeward, Angels To Changes in Local Scene

by Virginia Egan

It's transfer time again, and foreign service families all over the world will soon be packing their possessions and moving on. Those returning to Washington may be alarmed by some of the changes made in the last two or three years, and for them the *Newsletter* offers this incomplete but hopefully helpful summary of some of the happenings that may be of interest or even affect important decisions of Stateside-bound personnel.

Housing is of immediate importance for most people returning home, and anyone who has been away for a few years will be shocked by high prices. Area realtors estimate that housing costs have risen 10 to 15 per cent a year for the past several years. A house that sold for \$45,000 in 1968 might cost as much as \$70,000 in 1975.

Mortgage money is available, in contrast with its scarcity last summer. The lending rate has been fluctuating for the past year from 8.5 per cent to 10 per cent.

Rents have escalated in much the same manner as purchase costs — perhaps as much as 10 to 15 per cent per year in some areas — but rent control in the District of Columbia has held increases there to an average of 5 per cent annually since 1971.

Utility rates, too, have increased considerably and should be accounted for in anyone's Washington budget. According to the Washington Gas Light company, the

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1975-76 OFFICERS INTRODUCED AT FINAL MEETING FOR SEASON

AAFSW President Charlotte Recknagel and President-to-be Mary Buell introduced old and new officers of the association at the last get-together of the 1974-75 season, held May 7 in the Diplomatic Receptions rooms at the Department of State. The meeting, at which Donald Barnes, chief of the Interpreting branch of the Department, was guest speaker, served to bring together final business of the year.

FSECC: WHO, WHAT, WHERE

Families in the foreign affairs community who have a particular educational concern or need information, evaluation or counseling either on return to the United States or departure abroad are reminded of FSECC, which translates as:

The Foreign Service Educational and Counseling Center, 2101 E street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 338-4045.

FSECC is a subsidized service sponsored by AAFSW and AFSA. There is a fee of \$15 per hour for consultation, to defray a portion of the cost of Center services. For members of AAFSW and AFSA the charge for the first hour of consultation is considered to be included with annual dues.

Further details about FSECC are included in Marilyn Holmes's report on page 4 of this *Newsletter*.

At the same time, emphasizing the fact that work can never be tied up in neat little packets and put away, the agenda also included impromptu statements relating to need for assistance from foreign service women in a newly-developing situation: the Vietnam and Cambodian refugee problem. Speakers on this matter were Betty Lee Berger (Mrs. Samuel D.), an AAFSW member helping with the volunteer Washington Area Refugee committee, and Howard Sollenberger, director of the Foreign Service Institute, who spoke on behalf of the Department's Volunteer English Teachers program. Both appealed for aid from the association membership.

After reporting on AAFSW's activities during the past year and thanking her board members, Mrs. Recknagel presented her successor — Mary Buell (Mrs. William, Jr.) who in turn called forward other members of the 1975-76 slate: first vice president, Hope Meyers (Mrs. Howard); second vice president, Helen Zurhellen (Mrs. J. Owen, Jr.); third vice president, Judith Clark (Mrs. William, Jr.); fourth vice president, Lesley Dorman (Mrs. Philip); recording secretary, Claire Cochran (Mrs. Blake); alternate recording secretary, Nancy Matthews (Mrs. H. Freeman, Jr.); corresponding secretary, Charlotte Harrell (Mrs. Roy, Jr.); alternate corresponding secretary, Britta Rosenthal (Mrs. James); treasurer, Ingeborg M.

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THE OLD AND THE NEW — past and present AAFSW Board members and committee chairmen, photographed at May business meeting.

Concerns of the Foreign Service Woman

Two items which have been for sale in the office have been discontinued: the calendars and "Washington Assignment." One new item has been added: note paper, which has colored pictures of furniture of historic value placed in proper settings on the eighth floor. Please feel free to stop in at this office at your convenience.

AFSA Scholarship Liaison

Margaret Mark, chairman

Fifty-six students from 40 institutions were awarded scholarships this year (1974-75) from the AFSA/AAFSW Scholarship program. Grants ranged from \$500 to \$1200, depending on student's available resources — with most grants in the lowest third of this range. In some cases, the foreign service grant was additional to loans, grants or student employment provided by the college; in other cases, it made up the needed difference between parents' and students' ability to pay and the cost of a college year. Grants were awarded on the basis of need, with admission to an accredited institution a requirement. At present, only undergraduates benefit from the program.

Total funds disbursed in scholarships to date this academic year amount to \$37,530, of which \$13,054 came from AAFSW. (This includes \$11,000 paid out last June under the previous Board.) The rest comes from the AFSA Scholarship fund and from donations made to the AFSA program during the year.

For the coming year, the Scholarship Committee has budgeted \$35,000 plus a reserve fund of \$2000 — for emergencies that may arise after the initial awards are made (this has happened in the past).*

Book Fair

Dawn Vine, Muriel Heichler, co-chairmen

To quote the *Washington Star*, our 14th annual Book Fair was "a model of efficiency, as tightly organized and efficiently run as a coup d'etat by 271 hyperactive foreign service wives." Happily it was also a huge financial success.

Book Fair '74 smoothly picked up where Book Fair '73 left off. Dual chairmen worked with a committee of 27 other volunteers to plan and execute the operation. These were greatly aided by 244 other women who collected, sorted, priced, packed, publicized and sold the nearly 200,000 volumes donated. The special corners — Collectors, Art and Stamps — followed the pattern established in previous years and grossed more than ever.

Book Fair '74 was our most financially rewarding to date. The committee feels that the combination of the Sunday Family Day, perfect weather, generous press, new book cases and most important of all a revised floor plan made this possible. We were further blessed with splendid cooperation from our kind supporters in General Services, Visual Service and Security in the Department of State.

Career Workshop

Hope Meyers, chairman

Because the last — and very successful — workshop, held November 8, 1974, has already received adequate publicity, the chairman prefers to limit her report to the announcement that the next in this series will be held during the latter part of October 1975. Please watch the *AAFSW Newsletter* for further details.

AAFSW is looking for a new chairman for this important activity. If you are interested, please call Hope Meyers, 965-2285.

Community Relations

Margaret Dickman, chairman

The Community Relations committee has continued along the same vein as previous years.

Widening Horizons Programs

The year began with AAFSW's participation, at the invitation of the Department of State, in the Widening Horizons program sponsored by the D.C. Recreation department summer program. The overall appearance was excellent and the Recreation department and the Public Relations division of State were pleased — thus the day from all appearances was a success.*

Simmons Elementary School

Hazel Hall, chairman

Our program at Simmons Elementary School at 1st and Pierce street, NW, remains the basic remedial teacher's aide program found in many inner city areas. Though more volunteers are needed, the program continues to make progress and is appreciated by the faculty of the school.

Eastern Branch Boy's Club

AAFSW members continue to be the guiding force within the Women's Auxiliary. AAFSW's generous contribution of \$4,000 was the mainstay of the budget. \$3,000 of this sum went toward establishing the summer intern program. The balance was earmarked for the scholarship aid program. This amount supplemented the expenses of five young men during the academic year.*

Area B's Mental Health Clinic

Dr. Towns and Mr. Hicks are most appreciative of the continued interest of AAFSW. Our \$500 contribution in art and craft materials hopefully will help establish a permanent program in the geriatric division of the clinic. The craft program lacks leadership and support from the major funding sources. A partial solution to this problem would be a strong volunteer program. Dr. Towns hopes to attract volunteers and hopefully looks toward AAFSW for encouragement.*

THIS and IVIS

Sally Scott, chairman

My activities as liaison chairman for THIS and IVIS have been stimulating and interesting. In my opinion AAFSW should continue to have someone act as their representative to these organizations and I urge members to join both THIS and IVIS in their endeavors to assist foreign diplomats, visitors and students.

The Bi-Centennial is rapidly approaching and they need assistance to make it a success.

Education Committee

Pat Squire, chairman

The individual members of the Education committee have done a fine job this year, although there have been many changes. As a group, due to these changing positions and three chairmen, the committee has merely limped along.

Hopefully, next year will be different. The committee that eventually evolved during the year will continue for '75-'76 and is having its first meeting in May. It is a strong, talented group, all planning now to remain in Washington for a year!

Committee personnel included: Chairman — 1) Betty Sutterlin, 2) Priscilla Streeter, 3) Pat Squire; AFSA Scholarship Liaison — Margaret Mark; FSECC — Priscilla Streeter followed by Marilyn Holmes; Mental Health — Mary Louise Weiss followed by Lee Dane; Education Files — Pat Squire followed by Betsy Taylor; Teen Activities — Pat Squire followed by Carol Metzler.

FSECC Liaison

Marilyn Holmes, chairman

The Foreign Service Educational and Counseling Center, which was created in April 1973 as a joint AFSA/AAFSW program to help the foreign service community in education and counseling matters, has had a very successful year. The center, staffed by Clarke Slade (a psychiatric social worker who has been AFSA's consultant on education and youth concerns for many years), and Mary Jane Brown (social worker), provides services in the following fields: 1) helping children of families returning home from abroad, or based in the Washington area, find the right school, public or independent; 2) counseling individual children, or entire families facing emotional problems; 3) helping children of families returning home with problems of 're-entry' into the US; 4) providing a range of testing services (either by the FSECC itself or by referral) including academic achievement tests, individual intelligence tests, education diagnostic/prescription tests and psychological projective testing.

To date this fiscal year, the center has had approximately 360 cases, ranging in age from 3 to 25 — a large increase in the center's activities. Two special education scholarships have been awarded to children with severe learning disabilities, and much advice and aid has been given to families abroad who have written for assistance and guidance.*

Language Study Committee

M. Jane Biltchik, chairman

The Language Study groups involve, in all, approximately 75 AAFSW members in weekly or biweekly meetings. As regular guests there were two Embassy wives per group. Meeting informally in each other's homes, the groups covered an interesting variety of topics from Chinese art to Italian movies and basic grammar.

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