

Newsletter

Association of
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WOMEN

P.O. Box 8068
Washington, D.C. 20024
DECEMBER 1976

Director General Has AAFSW's First Report On Forum Findings

AAFSW has submitted to the Director General of the Foreign Service a preliminary report on the findings of the Forum to date. Input from the hundreds of Foreign Service women who attended the November 7 open meeting, attended study group meetings or responded to AAFSW's mailing to 9,000 Foreign Service women formed the basis of this report. AAFSW intends to follow up with a detailed report early in 1977, including suggestions of ways the Department of State can make the life of Foreign Service women as rewarding as possible. The Director General has informed us that she welcomes our suggestions and will be happy to meet with us after the completion of the final report.

The preliminary report, which was submitted November 19, is reprinted below.

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Preliminary Report of the Association of American Foreign Service Women's Forum on Concerns of Foreign Service Women and Families, based on the information it has received from letters to the Forum and in the exchange of views at the November 7 open meeting.

It is felt that the 1972 directive has been misinterpreted to the detriment of the Foreign Service. It should be made clear that an Ambassador's wife can seek voluntary help, but that the other wives can decline to give help, if they desire, and that there will be no recrimination. Many wives enjoy and gain much, in the sense of learning, from participation.

At the same time women want the chance to obtain paying jobs. In the Mission, for example, a wife could be social secretary to the Ambassador's wife, coordinator of official visitors or serve in an administrative position in the General

TIME'S JERROLD SCHECTER TO SPEAK AT AAFSW'S JANUARY 11 MEETING

Jerrold Schecter, Diplomatic Editor of *Time* magazine, will speak on "The Media and the Foreign Service" at AAFSW's January 11 meeting. The meeting will convene at 10 A.M. on the eighth floor of the Department of State.

For ten years from 1960 to 1970, Mr. Schecter and his family lived outside the United States. Their first assignment was Hong Kong, where he covered China and Southeast Asia for *Time*. Then, after a short spell in England, he served as Bureau Chief in Tokyo, followed by 2 years as Bureau Chief in Moscow.

During these assignments the Schecter family tried to identify as much as possible with the people and culture of the country in which they were living. The family learned to speak Chinese and Japanese and in Moscow the children attended Russian schools. All five children are currently involved in furthering their knowledge of Russia and the Russian language.

Mr. Schecter is also known as the author of "The New Face of Buddha," a book based on his experiences in the Far East, as a contributor to the Introduction of "Krushchev Remembers; the Last Testament" and, more recently, for "An American Family in Moscow," a book to which the whole family contributed.

The coupon on page 2 of the



Jerrold Schecter traveled with President Nixon to Russia and China in 1972.

Newsletter must be returned to reservations chairman Lana Leake, mailed by Tuesday, January 4. Admission is \$2.50 and guests are welcome. We regret that we will be unable to accept telephone reservations or reservations mailed after January 4.

Services Office. Ways should be explored to give wives an opportunity to continue their own careers abroad, if possible practically and politically.

There is no inconsistency in these two positions. The misunderstanding that has occurred is that permitting women to pursue their own career interests has meant that other women who wanted to

continue helping the Mission felt that they had been "fired." There is room for both types of women at posts abroad.

The concerns stated most frequently by the women their letters to the Forum and at the November 7 open meeting are the following:

(Continued on page 2)

JANUARY PROGRAM

Jerrold Schecter Tuesday, January 11
 Eighth floor reception rooms 10:00 A.M.
 C Street Entrance
 Department of State

Name _____

Phone _____

Names of guests _____

Reservation forms must be mailed by Tuesday, January 4. Please send slip, with check made out to AAFSW (\$2.50 per person) to: Mrs. Woodrow Leake, 10303 Dickens Avenue, Bethesda, Md. 20014.

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AAFSW Housing & Information Desk	Mrs. Robert A. Bauer (Maria)	966-7433
Book Fair Office	Rm. 1248, Dept. of State	632-3573
AAFSW Mailing Address	Rm. 8326, Dept. of State	632-3931
	P.O. Box 8068, Wash., D.C. 20024	

AAFSW membership dues are \$10.00 per year.

Deadline for News—The 1st of the month. Send to Editor, 30 Hickory Avenue, Takoma Park, Md. 20012.

DECEMBER 1976

Preliminary Report
 (Continued from page 1)

1. *Lack of communication as to what is happening at home in the U.S. and at posts abroad. The wife feels she does not receive pertinent information from the Department concerning regulations that affect her well-being and the services to which she is entitled. She has no direct way of indicating her problems to the Department.*

2. *Lack of recognition by the Department of the needs and aspirations of the modern Foreign Service wife. There should be clarification of mutual needs, responsibilities, and the overall relationship between wives and the Department. Career development needs of the wives should be taken into consideration. There should be a clarification of representation with special emphasis on the role of the senior wives. There is also a need to rebuild a sense of community among Foreign Service families.*

3. *Lack of protection for divorced wives. A grave injustice has been shown the wife who has served many years abroad and is then divorced. She receives nothing although she has worked in the past for the United States Government (two for the price of one), and has not been able to pursue a career. Although we are aware that divorce is happening everywhere, it is a particular hardship for the Foreign Service wife who has been out of the job market and often has no roots in her own country.*

4. *Inadequate orientation for the wife. It is felt that there is a lack of accurate and realistic information available to wives as their husbands enter the Foreign Service. This is needed in order for the husband and wife to assess the effect that life in the Foreign Service will have on their own lives. Language training for wives is of the utmost importance, and is a problem for various reasons which will be enumerated in our next report.*

5. *Inadequate family services and lack of realistic assessment of the effects on family life of the Department's attitudes, policies and practices. There should be more adequate educational allowances for children, educational and family counseling and more help in case of evacuation, either because of security or medical reasons.*

6. *Lack of recognition by the Department of the problems faced by families returning to Washington, especially during the first three months of culture shock. Specific concerns include the lack of a personal attitude on the part of the Department toward medical problems and the inadequate length of time given for temporary housing.*

This will be followed by a detailed report when more information has been collected and there has been time to make an evaluation.