

# Newsletter

Association of  
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WOMEN

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## Newsletter survey: How Many Hours From YOU?

Almost any Foreign Service spouse will say that being one takes up lots of time. But how much time is that? What sort of endeavors does the time go into? What portion of the time goes into "official dutys"?

Representation in its many forms and the spouse's part in it is one of the recurring areas of concern expressed in responses to the Forum report which have come in from the field. In order that this, and other aspects of Foreign Service overseas living, may be discussed realistically, the *Newsletter* is instituting a survey to document how many hours spouses invest in activities stemming from their mates' connections with a U.S. mission abroad. This survey, which has already been pre-tested at some posts, is being undertaken because the information is needed for thoughtful planning. The questions are based on the assumption that everyone's time is valuable. The survey is deliberately trying to sort out time spouses invest primarily to meet the Mission's needs, not the extra time that "just living" in Timbuctoo or Zamboanga may require, as much a part of our whole lives as that also may be. Nor is the survey in any way addressing the knotty problem of whether or not time used in some of these ways should be recompensed. Very valid views are deeply held on both sides of that issue which are separate from

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**AAFSW MEETING**  
10:00 a.m., Wednesday,  
November 16

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker to speak on the Panama Canal Treaty  
Bring Friends and penetrating questions details on p. 3

## SECRETARY AUTHORIZES FLO; DIRECTIVE REVIEW INITIATED

The Department of State will accept applications for the position of Director of the Family Liaison Office between November 1-21. Before making application, interested candidates should request a job description and qualifications sheet by calling the Director General's Office of Program Coordination: 632-9404.

### Highlights: Active Month for Forum Committee

The Forum Report continues to generate activity. In addition to the Secretary's response (see the lead story), these are the highlights of the past month's events:

- Responses coming in from the field cite as major areas of concern the question of relationship; the need for employment opportunities for spouses abroad; and the need to reassess representation and the spouses' role in it.

- The Secretary of State's Open Forum asked the AAFSW Forum Steering Committee to discuss the report at a September 28 public meeting so that Washington-based employees and spouses would also have an opportunity to express their opinions on the future of the Foreign Service family.

- In preparation for opening a Family Liaison Office (FLO) the Department has asked the Steering Committee to make recommendations about the functions of such an office and the qualifications for its Director. After long discussions, the Committee proposed that the office should provide regular, dependable dissemination of information from the foreign affairs agencies to family members in Washington and abroad, and to

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Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, in speaking to AAFSW members at their September meeting, underscored his belief that the issues raised by the Forum are of great importance. He has sent a formal written response to the Report to AAFSW President Lesley Dorman in which each recommendation is thoughtfully addressed and Departmental action in a number of areas is initiated.

### FLO Authorized

As a first step, the Secretary has authorized the establishing of a two person Family Liaison Office (FLO). Rooms have been set aside on the main floor of the Department near the C Street entrance. A design for the functions of the office, which is to be responsible to the Deputy Under Secretary for Management, and job descriptions are now being drawn up. Hiring is to take place in the next few weeks and the office is to be open soon after the first of the year. The Forum is being actively consulted in this process (see highlights of Forum Activities on this page).

### Directive to be Reviewed

In responding to the need to establish a new relationship, the Secretary feels that a review of the 1972 directive should come as a "culmination of a joint effort between the Department and the spouses to address the range of issues and proposals made in the Forum Report....A representative group of spouses and Departmental personnel should develop a revised draft...(to be)...widely publicized, discussed and clearly understood" before a final version is settled upon. "As we move ahead with this process, the Department should assess and clarify what is considered to be the mutual needs and responsibilities of the Foreign Service and Foreign Service family members."

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# Secretary Responds to Forum; Starts FLO

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## Clarification of Training Needs

The Department, according to the Secretary, needs to clarify 1) whether it "needs/wants family members to have training and if so, what kind of training; 2) whether the training currently offered is adequate and 3) if not, what changes need to be made." As one of its first tasks, the new FLO unit, together with FSI, Administration and Personnel, will address the question of training for family members. Specific attention will need to be paid to the question of language training for spouses as the Department is obliged to review and assess existing programs and possibilities by September 30 in order to comply with section 414 of H.R. 6689 (see *Newsletters* May and September 1977).

## Representation Issues Difficult

One of the most difficult issues raised in the Forum Report, according to the Secretary, is the need to review and clarify representational responsibilities and explore ways to compensate spouses for their work. "I know that many women are adamant on the subject. Their husband's salaries are not high enough to deal with inflation and the inroads it has made on family budgets, and their own efforts on behalf of the U.S. missions abroad have not been adequately recognized or appreciated. I do not see any means available by which we could compensate spouses for representation abroad because of legal and financial constraints, **but I also do not believe we can continue to ignore this issue** (emphasis the Secretary's). Accordingly I am going to recommend that we undertake a major study of this problem by establishing a working group composed of spouses (who will at least be paid honorariums if normal salaries are not possible), and appropriate representatives of the Department and USA for the purpose of determining exactly what our representational needs are and how they can be equitably and appropriately met."

## Employment Possibilities Explored

The issue of broader work opportunities for spouses overseas "is one of the important factors affecting our competitiveness in getting and keeping new Foreign Service talent. The real issue, however", says the Secretary, "is whether the Foreign Service, with its high international mobility and increasing demands on the time and energy of one family member, can accommodate the modern highly educated American family in which both parents work and both share parenting and homemaking responsibilities.....The Skills/Talent Bank appears to be a workable solution...I will also ask the Legal Division and the Director General to be responsible for pursu-

ing the possibility of developing country by country bilateral agreements as well. I must emphasize that this is only a possibility to be explored and that the domestic implications of opening our job market to spouses of foreign diplomats will be a factor as well as the attitudes of foreign governments and conflict of interest problems...The Director General has asked the Inspector General to include a number of items of interest to spouses in their regular inspection tours. I would ask AAFSW to make its members aware of their responsibilities to advise inspectors of conditions at posts detrimental to the well being of the Foreign Service community...I will also see to it that 3FAM 620-10.735-206 on ambassadorial permission for spouses to work is revised and will ask that Personnel study how we might better implement 3FAM 122.25-1c, which encourages employment of qualified U.S. citizen dependents as resident staff".

## Other Problems also Addressed

The Secretary's response cites an Inter-Agency Committee on Overseas Allowances and Benefits report recommending that there be an authorization of 90 day temporary lodging with any single transfer of post. Draft legislation for this is being prepared. The same committee has strongly recommended against any changes in the current policy which authorizes travel for children of divorced employees only when the employee has sole or joint custody of the children. Departmental Management concurs. "Although our sympathies are with those who are in this situation", says the Secretary, "we cannot recommend a change to our current regulations. We believe that the best solution is one designed by the parties involved and presented to the court at the time of their divorce."

The Secretary reports that the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Medical Services, Dr. William Watson, agrees that health care delivery can be improved. Additional mental health personnel have been authorized and are being sought. Dr. Watson suggests that a "gray ladies" type organization be formed to work with the liaison officer to assist with "visiting the sick and ferreting out problems so that they do not fester. AAFSW might want to consult further with him on this idea."

Annual educational travel benefits can not be extended to 2 trips per year until uniformity has been established between agencies in administration of existing benefits.

Persons interested in reading the entire text of the Secretary's response will find copies in the Foreign Service Lounge and the AAFSW Housing Office, Room 1248.

## Survey (continued from p. 1)

knowing the amount of time involved.

To be able to make accurate assessments of the use of spouse-time, responses are needed from as many people, at as many posts, from as many portions of the foreign affairs community as possible. The back page of this *Newsletter* is a survey form. Please participate by keeping track of the time you spend for one month. Record it on the form. Return the form by February 1. In addition, please ask other women (or dependent male spouses) at your post to respond. Women in Washington who have kept diaries from previous posts might also be able to reconstruct their time-use. This information, too, would be helpful.

The data gathered from this survey will be used to assess how much time spouses contribute to the functioning of U.S. Missions. It will help answer questions about the demands that different posts and different employee's jobs make on spouses. It will help us, both as individuals and as an organization, and the agencies our spouses work for, to understand more realistically the contributions spouses make. Your participation is urgently needed. Watch the *Newsletter* for results of the survey.

## Forum Highlights

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communicate the views and needs of families to these agencies. It further proposed that the Director of this office have: a commitment to the foreign affairs community and a sensitive understanding of its problems and concerns; overseas experience in at least 2 posts; and a high level of competence in administration, management, communication, analysis, and inter-personal relations. These recommendations have been presented to the Director General, with whom the committee has again met, and will be a part of the Department's thinking as it establishes the office.

- As a first step toward an eventual clarification and amplification of the 1972 Policy on Wives, Director General Laise asked to meet with three representatives of the Steering Committee. Lynn Johnson, Janet Kennedy and Margaret Sullivan joined her and Stephanie Kinney in a session which began planning a process that will offer wide opportunity for consultation and expression of opinion on the issue before any new statement is formulated.

- As directed by the Secretary's response, the Department has held initial consultations with Cynthia Chard, Director of the WAO Spouses' Skills/Talent Bank, for the purpose of examining the proposal to institutionalize the Skills Bank within the Department of State.

- The Steering Committee has an appointment to meet with Ben H. Read, the new Deputy Under Secretary for Management.