

AAFSW NEWS

Association of American Foreign Service Women

SEPTEMBER, 1986

FORUM - ITS TENTH YEAR MAY 3, 1986 - FOCUS - UPDATE

Ten year anniversaries are always seen to be milestone events. They are often a good time to be both a reflective period while looking ahead to the future. FORUM was and still is to quote the AAFSW NEWS of October, 1976, "a project launched by AAFSW to solicit the various points of view of Foreign Service Women with regard to life in the Foreign Service."

The first Open FORUM meeting took place on November 7, 1976 at the Guy Mason Center in Georgetown. Over one hundred women attended that meeting. The meeting was intended to discuss thoughts and ideas in a public forum in order to give feedback to the various

AAFSW study groups. In general, the theme which emerged was "a need for humanizing and professionalizing the Foreign Service attitude toward wives."

The AAFSW NEWS will reflect upon that first FORUM in the November issue. We will examine the concerns of a decade ago and look at how these concerns were addressed, the various offices which were created to address these concerns and finally focus on the future needs of Foreign Service women. If you would like to contribute to this retrospective please write to the AAFSW NEWS Editor c/o the P.O. Box on page 2.

UPDATE - FOCUS - May 3, 1986

On May 3, 1986, a brisk spring morning in Washington, D. C., fifty or more interested AAFSW members and others working actively in the service of Foreign Service women gathered for three hours of discussion on the following topics:

Progress of the Foreign Service Associates Proposal Pilot Project

Sue Low reviewed progress on the FSA Pilot Project focusing specifically on how it seeks to meet one of the major concerns expressed in that first Open FORUM meeting in 1976. That concern was to have the Foreign Service recognize the diverse skills and talents of spouses and the need to work these valuable assets into the Foreign Service community abroad.

The FSA Proposal and proposed Pilot Project was further designed to provide a framework for career development enabling spouses to use their specific skills, education and training in a wide variety of ways well beyond the scope of the Foreign Service.

In tracing the progress of the FSA from August, 1985 to the present, Sue emphasized the point that it was "the kernel of an idea" i.e. the utilization of spouse skills, training and education, which was and remains foremost in the thinking of the AAFSW FSA Study Group.

One of the benchmark stages in the development of the FSA Proposal was the FSA Symposium which was held in November of 1985 at the Foreign Service Institute in Rosslyn. This symposium contributed to a clarification of ideas and a sharing of views. The resulting document will be available for distribution shortly.

The final FSA Proposal and proposed Pilot Project cleared all the "hoops and hurdles" and was sent back to Congress on 1 February 1986. Due to the impact of Gramm-Rudman the Project had to be put on hold. It will be reviewed by the DOS in September. In the meantime, the AAFSW Study Group has given it considerable time and thought. Karen Lundahl has been working on the legislative side and Dagmar Painter on the public relations side. Many others have also contributed to the Study Group.

Cont. p. 2

Happiness is having something to do,

Someone to love

and something to hope for.
—Anon

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 8 OBC - Re-Entry (Spouses)
9:15 - 1 p.m.
- 9 - 12 OBC - Employment Planning (Spouses)
9:15 - 2 p.m.
- 10 AAFSW - Coffee/Painter
10:00 a.m.
- 17-19 OBC - RAF
9 - 4 p.m.
- 22 - 26 OBC - English Teaching
9:15 - 1 p.m.
- 26/29 OBC - Re-Entry (Teens)
- 25 AAFSW-Coffee/Lundahl

OCTOBER

- 14 AAFSW Monthly Meeting
10 - 12 Noon
- 18 OBC - Going Overseas
9 - 1 p.m.
- 20 - 31 OBC - American Studies
9:15 - 3 p.m.
- 24 AAFSW BOOKFAIR
Family Night
BOOKFAIR
- 25-27 AAFSW BOOKFAIR
- 30 - 1 Nov. AAFSW BOOKFAIR
- 24 - 26 AWAL Retreat

INSIDE

- Forum '83 Crisis Reportp. 8
- From the President ...p. 4
- Fourth of July, Overseas Correspondentp. 5,6
- FSA UpDatep. 4
- AFSA Scholarships ...p. 6

OCTOBER PROGRAM PREVIEW

Please set aside October 14th for our first 1986-87 AAFSW monthly program at the Benjamin Franklin Room, Department of State. The meetings are held from 10 - 12 Noon. Meetings feature interesting speakers, tea and snacks, plus a wonderful opportunity for you to bring a guest to share in the enjoyment of the historic surroundings.

Look for the October issue of the AAFSW NEWS for an in-depth look at the speaker for the program, Carolyn Bennett Patterson, world traveller and journalist for the National Geographic Magazine.

Forum Continued from page 1

In response to a query from the floor, Sue Low stated that the public relations person works to provide information to members of the Foreign Service Staff Corps concerning the FSA Proposal and Pilot Project. Emphasizing the fact that "A Pilot is a Pilot", the proposed FSA Pilot is flexible, and once implemented it can be adjusted to meet changing requirements. Pilots require testing, only then can projects maintain flexibility.

Family Liaison Office— Sue Parsons, Director

Sue Parsons reported on the impact of Gramm-Rudman by pointing out that the Semi-Annual Employment Reports sent by CLO/ADM have reflected cuts in employment for spouses. She projected that in the following quarter the cuts will be even deeper. There will definitely be a short term loss. Looking at the long term prospects the employment scene holds promise. FLO will continue to stress the point that in an era of shrinking resources in personnel, qualified spouses "on hand" become more cost effective.

The recent formation of the Centralized Data Bank of Family Member Skills (see article in this issue) will allow for a far more effective use of spouse skills and talents, while providing accurate, up to date information about job availability.

Foreign Service Families in Situations of International Crisis Update

Ed. Comment—This September issue begins a three-part look at where AAFSW, OBC and FLO have come in dealing with these concerns.

Ann La Porta and Grace Brunton on the Crisis Study Group reported on the implementation of the 1983 FORUM Crisis Report. Ann stated that due to the close coordination

of AAFSW, OBC, FLO, SY, and MED a support system has been developed which is not only effective and efficient but sensitive to the needs of FS family members during crisis situations. The AAFSW Crisis Support Group continues to meet twice yearly with the DOS on these concerns. Daily realities regarding terrorism remain and continue to be addressed by the DOS.

FLO Director Sue Parsons reported on the recent evacuation (April, '86) from the Sudan. She explained how the close working relationship between FLO, the FLO Support Services Officer, Phyllis Habib, and the Task Force created to handle the crisis enabled the evacuation process to be so expertly handled. Ed. Comment. See the November AAFSW NEWS for an in-depth look at this recent evacuation and how far we have come in handling evacuation.

OBC's Assistant Coordinator, Lee Lacy, gave an update on OBC training in the "Human Side of Crisis Management." She prefaced her remarks by stating that she felt like a company executive reporting back to the stockholders. A great deal of work has been accomplished by the OBC during the past six months regarding the development of training materials. These materials include video tapes, printed information and workshop presentations all designed to sensitize and familiarize the audience on how to deal with crisis on a long term basis. Ed. Comment. Our October AAFSW NEWS will focus on OBC's specific training techniques on this subject.

Cont. p. 3

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE WOMEN Board Members and Committee Chairmen: 1986-1987

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PLEASE DIRECT MAIL TO APPROPRIATE CHAIRMAN

P.O. Box 70051, Washington, D.C. 20024

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Annual Dues are \$18.00. Subscriptions to the NEWS are open to the public at \$18.00 per year.