

Next PDAA Lunch Program

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

DACOR-Bacon House
1801 F Street NW,
Washington, DC

Speaker:

Dr. Sherry Mueller, details at right

- Cash bar 12 noon
- Lunch 12:30 pm
- Speaker 1:00 pm

\$30.00 per person

Reservation deadline:

Tues, November 22, 2011

To reserve please return coupon on p. 7, or online at www.publicdiplomacy.org/

March 2012 PDAA Lunch Program

Mark your calendars for PDAA's next luncheon program on **March 6, 2012**, a panel on U.S.-Pakistan relations, featuring Stephen Cohen of the Brookings Institution.

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PDAA Today

Public Diplomacy Alumni Association

Formerly USIA Alumni Association

Smart Power and Citizen Diplomacy Examined at November 30 PDAA Event

Sherry Mueller, who until recently led the National Council of International Visitors (NCIV), will discuss the role of citizen diplomacy in public diplomacy -- an important role in her view -- and how that role might be expanded in the future. Mueller will share her observations at the November 30, 2011 luncheon program of the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association in Washington, D.C.

Mueller will also examine opportunities for collaboration between PDAA and NCIV, including reciprocal memberships that harness the communications skills of Association members -- working as individuals -- advocating for public diplomacy and exchange programs. She believes strongly that PDAA members possess valuable talent and experience that can and should be put to use and not remain on the sidelines.

Mueller served with NCIV first as Executive Director and then as President until September 30, 2011. Before coming to NCIV, she worked for 18 years at the Institute of International Education (IIE), first as a program officer and then as Director of the Professional Exchange Programs staff. During this time she was also an adjunct professor, pioneering the first course on public diplomacy at American University's School of International Service (SIS). Prior to joining IIE, Mueller served as an Experiment Leader to the former Soviet Union, an

English Language Officer for the U.S. Department of State, and a lecturer at the University of Rhode Island.



Mueller has served on the boards of various nonprofit organizations including World Learning (Vice Chair), the Public Diplomacy Council, Friendship Force International, and the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy. She has taught English in Brazil, participated in an Experiment in International Living program in Germany, and served as a speaker and conducted workshops on leadership development in nonprofit organizations for the De-

partment of State in Saudi Arabia.

In October 2008, Georgetown University Press published the book *Working World: Careers in International Education, Exchange, and Development*, written by Mueller with Mark Overmann. She has Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy and Ph.D. degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

This PDAA event will be held on Wednesday, November 30, 12:00 pm, at the DACOR-Bacon House, 1801 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. To reserve your place, please return the coupon on page 7, or reserve online at www.publicdiplomacy.org by **Tuesday, November 22.**

Photo: Courtesy, Sherry Mueller

A Veteran USIA Officer Now Serves U.S. Veterans

George Dwyer

I joined USIA the same month Bill Clinton accepted his party's nomination for a first term as President. It was July 1992 and I had just turned 35.

Prior to this I'd been employed at ABC News for more than a decade, producing television reports on 'Animals & the Environment' for *20/20*, *Good Morning America*, and *World News Tonight*. In 1990 I even served as a founding board member of the international Society of Environmental Journalists. Covering the global environment was a plum assignment for a young man interested in transnational issues; I traveled widely and learned a good deal as a result.

My public diplomacy career began at WorldNet Television, USIA's international broadcast TV service. I covered arts, politics, science, business, and human interest stories. From the beginning I found the work more than agreeable, but it was becoming clear already that USIA was drifting toward oblivion. That worried me.

When the end came, USIA's broadcast services were assigned to the independent authority of the BBG, and WorldNet was subsumed under VOA. President Clinton, now well into his second term, sent along this message of congratulations:

"I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on ways to enhance U.S. broadcasting in support of our 21st century foreign policy objectives."

I knew that many of those I now worked with at VOA would disagree fiercely with this characterization of our mission. Most of the staffers there seemed to see themselves as traditional broadcast journalists (or "pure journalists" as they often put it) with no role to play in public diplomacy whatsoever. I never really saw it that way. As a result, I suppose, I never fully fit in at VOA – although I did receive its highest award for program excellence for two years running.

In June 2008 I left BBG to accept a promotion from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, where today I am an Executive Video Producer for the Department's monthly magazine-style broadcast, *The American Veteran*. (You can find us at: www.va.gov/opa/feature/amervet/index.asp).

Our broadcasts seek to inform, empower, and inspire a target audience of 27 million veterans and their families. We are blessed in having complete mission clarity and generally high morale. VA ranks in the top 10% among the best places to work on the 2010 Federal Human Capitol Survey. BBG, for what it's worth, ranks last. (Editor's note: The 2011 survey, published after this essay was written, shows VA ranked in the middle of the pack, but BBG remains dead last. See <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/>)

At VA we believe that those who have served in the armed services, and particularly our wounded warriors, deserve the "best care anywhere." We never forget that they have earned this consideration through their service and their sacrifice, and that our job is to see to it that their efforts are honored and never forgotten.

When I speak of "best care anywhere" I am referring to a slogan that VA has embraced for its system-wide health care practices. But the same ethic carries over to our outreach and communications efforts as well.

Our team on *The American Veteran* is ever grateful for the opportunity to serve the needs of our veterans. We often remark on the fact that we get to meet the most inspiring people in our jobs. When we interview VA medical staff we always hear the same thing – these veterans have such amazing stories to tell! It's a thrill to be a part of that. It reminds me of what USIA "old-timers" say about the work they once did.

We feel a passion for telling these stories and getting them right. It is a commitment which, combined with the esprit de corps we share, has helped earn our producers three Emmy Awards in the past two years. And we're not done yet.

We will continue to report on advances in VA-sponsored research and development, as well as on new services and benefits for eligible veterans. A few of the topics I've reported on since I joined the staff here include:

- Use of Wii game technology in treating wounded veterans
- Roll-out of new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits

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A Veteran USIA Officer Now Serves U.S. Veterans (ctd.)



VA hospitals and clinics take pride in providing “the best care anywhere.”

- The (somewhat controversial) adoption of chiropractic services by VA
- Effectiveness of psychiatric service dogs in helping veterans cope with PTSD
- Legacy of veterans who served in the Strategic Air Command, and...
- VA’s efforts to promote smoking cessation among veterans

One of the more interesting personal experiences I’ve had since coming to VA involves a visit to Albuquerque, New Mexico in the summer of 2010. I had gone there to report on a VA pharmacy lab charged with coordinating distribution and ensuring the quality of medicines and devices used in clinical research studies all around the world. It was (maybe) not the world’s most compelling story for television, but there was a great back-story.

The Director of the facility, Dr. Mike Sather, had decided more than a dozen years earlier to lead his staff on a “Quality Journey” toward performance excellence. The benefit to veterans was obvious – a ‘no-brainer’ you might say: better research and better care. But an additional payoff came in 2009 in the

form of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, our nation’s highest public honor for performance excellence.

As I stood before the trophy case looking at the Baldrige Award, I reflected on my personal journey from “the bottom of the barrel in government” (BBG) to the very heights of achievement. I remember hoping, but hardly expecting, that some day U.S. International Broadcasting will finally get its act together.

Today I remain deeply committed to the project of public diplomacy, although I no longer believe one can find a satisfactory outlet for a commitment of that sort at the Voice of America. I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Georgetown University, working with fellow PDAA member and former Senior Foreign Service Officer John Brown on a thesis exploring public diplomacy, public dialogue, and public journalism. I am thrilled to be a member of this association and look forward to sharing ideas with all of you. It certainly feels like the best is yet to come.

Photo: courtesy, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

President's Notes

Greetings Colleagues:

My graduate International Relations class ventured to the Department for a briefing at the Ops Center, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and we were treated to an exposition of the merger of high-tech communications and the keen dedication of the professionals in State. This is especially gratifying when one considers how "held back" State has been until recent years, because it lacked the funds and the will to modernize its communications systems. Other changes, largely because of public/cultural diplomacy and its practitioners, are helping modernize the conduct of diplomacy and America's engagement with the world. Slowly, too slowly, change happens at Foggy Bottom.

We can stay current through tuning into the many Web sites available at State, and through the BBG, and thanks to the efforts of our colleagues. State IIP has archived America.gov but you can link to several Facebook or Twitter sites at www.america.gov. The Department covers the waterfront at www.state.gov. If you want to find someone in the phone directory it's not easy, but go to the home page, scroll down the right side to the small "more" on the bottom then scroll down on the left to phone directory. Refreshed sites that open the window to broadcasting and culture can be found at www.bbg.gov and exchanges.state.gov.

Len Baldyga's article alert is the world's best service, and Joe Johnson and the PDC have set up a blog with commentaries by colleagues on PD related issues, www.publicdiplomacycouncil.org. Our site, recently updated by Alan Kotok, offers brief reports on our activities, very lively reminiscences by members and links to blogs by retirees and other sites at www.publicdiplomacy.org.

Check out any of these sites, perhaps "bookmark" or "favorite" them for easy return visits.

Meanwhile, PDAA has a questionnaire for members available online about our program and services at www.publicdiplomacy.org/survey/start.html

We hope you'll take a few minutes to respond. We're all about helping our membership stay in touch and keep current with a rapidly changing world. Your views and participation are vital.

All the best.
Mike Schneider

Member Updates

Len Baldyga was honored by the University of Adam Mickiewicz (UAM) in Poznan, Poland for his cooperation with the university during the Communist era. Bronislaw Marciniak, rector of UAM, presented to Baldyga the school's medal on May 17.

The rector cited during the award ceremony Baldyga's support for the development of UAM's American English program during his time at the U.S. Consulate in Poznan in the 1960s. Baldyga's efforts brought 20,000 volumes of American English materials to the university and helped establish UAM's language laboratory.

Does your mailing label say [2011]?

Then it is time to renew your PDAA membership for 2012. Renewals are collected annually in the first few months of the year. Because of the low fee, we cannot pro-rate memberships for a partial year.

You can renew your membership online at www.publicdiplomacy.org — click on the **Online** link in the right-hand column under **Join PDAA**. All major credit cards are excepted.

Or use the handy form on page 7 of the newsletter, that you can mail back to the PDAA treasurer.

In Memoriam

- ◆ Betty Anne Fordney, 75, died August 19 of pancreatic cancer. She lived in Harrisonburg, Virginia with her husband, retired USIA FSO Ben Fordney. Ms. Fordney accompanied Ben on seven different assignments in Thailand, Nigeria, Canada and Kenya, and also worked for the State Department and USIA. She received a Special Commendation from USIA's Office of Congressional Liaison in 1988 for "promoting closer ties to the Congress." An avid tennis player, Ms. Fordney was a past president of the Harrisonburg Tennis Patrons. She was also an accomplished water color artist.
- ◆ Thomas John Crockett, III of Unionville, Connecticut died June 28 in Farmington, Connecticut. The former State/USIA FSO was 89. Following a brief career at the Hartford Times and service in the Army, he joined the Department of State. He served for 40 years, including tours in the early years of VOA and USIA. Following his retirement in 1986, Mr. Crockett pursued his passions: the Unionville Museum, tai chi and gardening. He also became an informal historian of Unionville.
- ◆ Mo Rothman, 92, a former top Hollywood film executive, died September 15 in Los Angeles. Mr. Rothman was a member of USIA's volunteer Film Acquisitions Committee in the 1980s. As administrator of the rights to the classic Charlie Chaplin silent films, he obtained access to them for the Agency. They became instant hits and needed no translation for audiences abroad who loved Chaplin's silent films.

PDAA Member Survey Now Online

Public Diplomacy Alumni Association needs your help, and all it takes is a few minutes of your time.

In an effort to better respond to members' interests, the PDAA Board would appreciate your response to a few questions on our Web site. And, you can request a copy of the results at the end.

To begin the survey, go to the PDAA Web site at ...
www.publicdiplomacy.org/survey/start.html

You will see most questions require no more than a Yes/No answer, but you will see places where you can leave extended comments, if you wish. We thank you for your time and help.

Wanted: Member News, Tributes, Appreciations

PDAA Today carries updates -- one to three paragraphs each -- on the activities of USIA or State Department PD alumni. Any submission should include the date you retired or left USIA or State.

We will also accept short articles on your activities that would be interest to the membership. Topics could include continued work in public diplomacy and related fields. Please continue to let us know about deaths in the USIA family. Articles of tribute and appreciation are welcome.

Please send your contributions by e-mail to Ed Scherr at:
edscherr@earthlink.net

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PDAA membership for 2012 ... Check your mailing label for renewal status

- The annual membership fee for the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association is \$US30.00 and \$300.00 for a one-time lifetime membership. Renewals are collected annually in the first few months of the year. Because of the low fee, we cannot pro-rate memberships for a partial year.

- If your mailing label says **[2011]**, it is time to renew your membership for 2012.

Please complete the form below (indicate if any items are changed from before) and mail the completed form with your check to:

**David Whitten,
PDAA Treasurer**

**4100 S. 16th St.
Arlington, VA 22204**

No change in contact info; fill in name and date only

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Date _____

Membership type, please check one: New (\$30) Renewal (\$30) Lifetime (\$300)

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Or you can renew online at www.publicdiplomacy.org — Click on the Online link under **Join PDAA** at the right

PDAA November 2011 luncheon program

November 30, 2011 - DACOR-Bacon House (See page 1 for program details),

1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC

Deadline for reservations: **November 22, 2011.**

Please complete the form below and mail with your check for **\$US30.00** for each person to:

**David Whitten,
PDAA Treasurer**

Please send payments for this event only.

**4100 S. 16th St.
Arlington, VA 22204**

No change in contact info; fill in name and date only

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Date _____

Number of people _____ x \$US 30.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Or you can reserve online at www.publicdiplomacy.org

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