

Next PDAA Lunch Program

Monday, Sept. 25, 2017

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

Topic: Public diplomacy in era of fake news

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

\$35.00 members and guests, \$42.00 non-members

Reservation deadline:
Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017,
5:00 pm

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

Next PDAA Events

First Monday Forum - State and Art of Digital Diplomacy. Sept. 11, 2017. See page 3

Lunch program - Monday, Nov. 13, 2017.

Watch the October issue of *PDAA Today* for details.

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Photo: Jacqueline Macou, Pixabay

PDAA Today

An association of public diplomacy professionals

Public Diplomacy Amidst Fake News Explored at Sept. 25 PDAA Lunch

Fake News and Disinformation: we cannot watch the news, surf the Internet, or even carry on a social conversation without hearing the words.

Whether from U.S. political leaders and spokespersons, foreign governments, media figures, violent extremists, “tweeters” “bloggers,” or bots, we face an almost-constant onslaught of fake news, “alternative facts,” or disinformation. Sifting fact from fiction

has become increasingly challenging for citizens needing accurate information in order to make informed decisions. Many have said that fake news and disinformation are among the gravest threats facing our democracy.

Yet difficult as they are for citizens of the United States and other democracies, fake news and disinformation pose an even greater challenge to diplomacy, and particularly to public diplomacy. How can today's public diplomacy professionals—whose job it is to explain the United States and U.S. policy and seek to persuade the citizens and governments of other countries to support those policies—do their jobs in the face of this omnipresent fake news and disinformation?

To help us answer this question, PDAA is very fortunate to have two senior State Department officials as speakers at our first

luncheon of the 2017-2018 program year. Susan Stevenson is Acting Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of State. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, she previously served in

Washington as the Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs .

Daniel Kimmage is the Acting Special Envoy and Coordinator for the State Department's Global En-

agement Center, where he leads efforts to coordinate and synchronize U.S. government communications efforts to counter terrorist recruitment and state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation. He has held a number of other State Department positions, including covering counterterrorism issues for the Office of Policy Planning and as Principal Deputy Coordinator of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications.

What is certain to be an important and stimulating program will take place on Monday, September 25, from 12:00 to 2:00, at DACOR Bacon House, 1801 F St., NW. To register, please complete the form on page 7 of the newsletter or register on-line at www.publicdiplomacy.org . Reservations must be received no later than **5:00 pm on Thursday, September 21.**



My Next Life: Local Activism and Politics

Judy Aita

I loved writing for The Washington File. Working for USIA and then State's IIP, I couldn't believe I had such an interesting job. I saw the UN go from a sidelined Cold War institution to the center of international diplomacy during the Gulf War. I covered UN issues and New York events and worked with young journalists from developing countries as a member of the Dag Hammarskjold Scholarship Fund for Journalists.

Not a bad gig.

I approached retirement with deep regret. I couldn't imagine what could possibly top those 27 years. (Spoiler alert: Nothing has.) But even Northeastern Pennsylvania has its challenges.

My first opportunity came in 2007 from the local community college. The college was opening its art gallery and a local businessman insisted on bringing his childhood friend with his art works to inaugurate the gallery . . . from Malaysia. Malaysia? From Malaysia to Nanticoke? Well, I saw some very talented USIA officers at work, so I copied them in reverse. The result was Malaysian banners throughout the campus, an opening ceremony featuring the Malaysian ambassador to the US and dance demonstrations by Malaysian students as well as gallery talks by the artist.

It was fun, challenging and well received. Retirement might not be too bad after all.

In September 2011 as I was settling into my 1873 Victorian childhood home in West Pittston, a borough of about 5,000 between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton, the Susquehanna River came flooding through town with Tropical Storm Lee. While my neighbors and I were still rebuilding our gutted houses, a FEMA long-term recovery team came to town. We took advantage of FEMA's expertise, putting together a long-term recovery plan for West Pittston and starting a 501c3 non-profit called West Pittston Tomorrow. I was the group's first president. One reason I was chosen, I'm sure, is that I was the only one who could write and edit the final report and put together press kits. (We did get great publicity.)

West Pittston Tomorrow developed good ideas for revitalizing the town. But we drove borough officials crazy. They thought that we would dissolve after FEMA left and



Photo courtesy Judy Aita

somehow things would go back to the way they were. But the town wasn't the same: houses were abandoned, FEMA buyouts leveled historic homes, and infrastructure was crumbling.

Trying to get the simplest project started was impossible. Friends began encouraging me to run for Borough Council, which was where the power was, they said. I ran to fill an unexpired term and to the council's surprise -- and mine -- I won.

Group of 3 vs. me

After taking office in January 2016, I quickly found that there wasn't any "power" for me. The bullying and authoritarian attitude that surprised Americans a few

(Continued on page 3)

Local Activism and Politics (cont'd)

months later was actually in full swing in my Rust Belt hometown. These were not the officials of my youth, or of 20 years ago. I was the third woman to serve on council since the borough was founded in 1857, but I was the first woman who didn't know her place.

I wasn't allowed to speak at work sessions. When I spoke at public meetings one of a "group of three" in control – or G-3 – tried to belittle me, the others sat and watched. The only thing I managed to do was set up the borough's first web site. Writing again.

Then in September the unbelievable happened. A vote to allow the police chief to retire on disability didn't go as the G-3 wanted, so the three men threw very public temper tantrums and resigned. To make a long, harrowing story short, those of us remaining were able to compromise and appoint three replacements. I was elected president of council. Now as I chair public council meetings each month, facing angry mobs in front of me and some hostile colleagues alongside, I wonder what possessed me to do this.

It hasn't been easy: Federal and State flood recovery projects are spiraling out of control, our tax base is still shrinking, employee problems have exploded, there are weekly engineering delays on most projects, and constant lobbying for grants. I soon realized that the G-3 saw the police vote as a grand way out and took it! I've had to hold due-process hearings; sit in on contract negotiations; and make decisions on how to get the town through the worst blizzard in the borough's history. On the positive side,

we have been able to get a new park underway and a flood recovery streetscaping project finished with spectacular results -- only a year late.

In May I didn't want to run for re-election. At my age, the position is too stressful with few gains. But I'm not a quitter so I joined with the newly appointed council members and ran, hating every minute of campaigning. I was surprised at how relieved I was on election night when I lost. A few days later I was told that I tied for a spot on the ballot with one of my running mates. I happily ceded the spot to him and look forward to finishing the year without a target on my back.

I'm hopeful for my second retirement. Now I have a road map: Continue working with West Pittston Tomorrow and fight for flood protection; get historic district designation for West Pittston; and work with the revitalized alumni association of my high school, which graduated its last class 51 years ago, to name a few goals. But then again, who knows what adventure lurks.

Does your mailing label say [2016]?

Check the mailing label on your newsletter. If the label says **[2016]** after your name, then your membership in PDAA is overdue for 2016. Without your renewal, you will miss out on future copies of the *PDAA Today* newsletter and the quarterly membership directories, nor will your name appear in future directories. The cost: a low \$35.00 per year.

Renewing your membership is easy. You can renew online with a credit card at www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership or you can fill out the brief form on page 7 of the newsletter and send it with a check to PDAA's treasurer, made payable to PDAA.

Digital Diplomacy Examined at First Monday Forum

The state and art of digital diplomacy is the focus of the next First Monday Forum, set for Monday, September 11, 2017 beginning at 12:00 noon, at American Foreign Service Association in Washington, D.C.

On the date exactly 16 years after 9-11, the discussion will examine new methods needed to communicate effectively in a digital environment. An expert panel of public diplomacy practitioners and technologists from State Department will explore this question .

Monday forums are a joint project of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, and Public Diplomacy Council, joined for the first time by PDAA, an association of public diplomacy professionals.

The event is free, but advance registrations by e-mail are required: **FirstMondayForum.RSVP@gmail.com**. For more details, see <http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?p=1556>

President's Notes

Amb. Cynthia Efird

Dear PD Members and Friends,

This summer newsletter is being assembled during a week of intense controversy and debate about the role of diplomacy in the Trump Administration, especially in the context of a pending re-structure of the State Department under Secretary of State Tillerson. Although each of us, no doubt, has strong opinions, on how public diplomacy may be affected, PDAA's tax status and by-laws specifies that it is not an advocacy organization. Our status enable us to work closely with the State Department on our awards program for excellence in public diplomacy and to encourage membership in PDAA.

We are particularly proud of the awardees honored at the May brunch. This ceremony, described on PublicDiplomacy.org, marked the twentieth anniversary of PDAA's work to honor our outstanding colleagues for their public diplomacy work. In all but five years, since 1993, there have been such ceremonies for our awardees. Many of us find these awards are so important that we gladly contribute to the fund that provides the cash awards. Others who might want to contribute will find information on how to do so on the PDAA website. Having had the honor in May to teach the senior public diplomacy seminar, I can attest that there is excellence in public diplomacy efforts worldwide of which our awardees are excellent examples.

On September 25, from 12:00-2:00 pm, at DACOR House, PDAA will have its first luncheon program of the new season. We have asked Susan Stevenson, Acting Assistant Secretary of PA, and Daniel Kimmage, the Acting Special Advisor and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center to reflect on "Public Diplomacy in an Age of Fake News." It is hard to imagine a more important -- or provocative -- topic or two better speakers to address the issues. Be sure to make your reservations early to insure a place.

By contrast to PDAA, the Public Diplomacy Council (PDC) is an advocacy organization, with attendant freedoms and limitations due to that status. What unites both organizations is an interest in encouraging an effective public diplomacy for the American people, both in State and in non-governmental organizations working on U.S. foreign policy. In recognition of that common concern, the two organizations post information about each other programs on their websites to keep the PD community fully informed about all the possibilities for learning and participating in current public diplomacy efforts.

PDAA will also be jointly sponsoring with PDC and the University of Southern California upcoming Noon luncheon programs at AFSA in the First Monday series. With this new effort at collaboration in mind, I invite all of our members to attend the September 11 Noon program at AFSA on Digital Diplomacy, moderated by Shawn Powers, Executive Director of the U.S. Public Diplomacy Advisory Council, and featuring four State people working on digital outreach.

Key to PDAA's ability to carry out its work to connect all of us with a concern for public diplomacy practice, is the hard-working Board. This year, four Board members are resigning. I want to thank Karen Posner Mullen, Dan Whitman and Bruce Byers for all of their work and service to PDAA. I want to particularly note the contribution of Alan Kotok who has for years not only edited this newsletter, managed communication for PDAA, and been our webmaster, but has carried out numerous roles in every department of the organization. He will be missed and impossible to replace. However, I am sure there are many reading this column who have ideas and energy. If you wish to serve on the Board or just have thoughts on good programs for this year, please contact me. Many thanks for all that YOU do now and will help with in the future.

Member Updates

Bob Beechman in his recently released book of historic fiction, *Dire Road to the Unknown: A Soldier of Fortune Meets His Match*, protests a risky lack of public diplomacy in current U.S. overseas operations. The book begins during the Korean War, and American civil servant, Wiley Earnest Freeman is there. The e-book is available from Amazon's Kindle Store.

Bob Baker captured his stories about growing up in Baltimore and his work overseas and in Washington with USIA in book form, after years of distribution by e-mail. *The Unlikely Diplomat Traveler Tales* is available in paperback and e-book from Booklocker.com, as well as Amazon.com.

In Memoriam

- ◆ Mike Brown, 90, a retired USIA information officer, died December 1, 2016 in Honolulu. During World War II he served in the Marine Corps in the Pacific. He joined the State Department in 1952. Mr. Brown's overseas posts included Havana, Seoul, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Rangoon, Saigon, Taipei, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. He retired to Honolulu in 1984.
- ◆ Ainslie Embree, 96, a scholar of Indian history at Columbia University, who served a tour as CAO in New Delhi, died June 6 at a retirement community in Mitchellville, Maryland. From 1958 to 1991, he was on the faculty at Columbia University, with a leave as CAO, 1978 to 1980, in New Delhi.
- ◆ Stephen Dachi, 84, whose FSO career in USIA included serving as PAO in Budapest, the city of his birth, died July 2 in Woodbridge, Virginia. He had cancer. Dr. Dachi, trained in oral pathology, joined USIA in 1972, after helping to start the University of Kentucky school of dentistry, and serving as a Peace Corps executive in South America. His USIA positions included Latin America and Caribbean area director, 1978 to 1984. While U.S. Consul general in Sao Paulo in 1986, Mr. Dachi used his oral pathology training to help in the investigation that identified the remains of Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele after the body had been exhumed from a Brazilian cemetery a year earlier. After his FS retirement in 1996, he spent 14 years as chairman for South Asia area studies and special Afghanistan programs at the State's Foreign Service Institution.
- ◆ Philip Dorman, 99, a retired FSO whose postings took him to Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, died April 8 at his home in Washington. Dorman joined State Department in 1948, then moved to USIA after it was established in 1953. He returned to State in 1971 and retired in 1976. In retirement, he served as a member of the Foreign Service Grievance Board.
- ◆ Russ Dybvik, 80, retired chief diplomatic correspondent for the Wireless File, died July 4 at his home in Wilmington, North Carolina. He had cancer. Mr. Dybvik began covering State during the first Reagan administration, and retired in 1995. He traveled with, and reported on trips by secretaries of State to 54 countries. After college, he reported for UPI, where he became UPI's youngest ever, foreign bureau chief, when assigned to Djakarta. He later worked for RFE and VOA before joining the Wireless File. He served one tour of duty with the Army. In retirement, his passion was golf.
- ◆ James Feldman, 92, a retired USIA FSO, died May 26 at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. Feldman served 21 years with USIA. He retired in 1983.
- ◆ Eli Flam, 83, a former FSO in USIA, who in retirement edited a literary review magazine, died May 19. He lived in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Mr. Flam's foreign postings included Caracas, Buenos Aires, Moscow and Madrid. And at VOA, he served as head of its USSR division, and later its Latin American division. He retired in 1988. He continued his writing career with articles in various publications, including the Washington Post. For eight years, he was publisher-editor of a literary quarterly, Potomac Review, which was donated to Montgomery College.
- ◆ Paul Good, 77, a retired FSO, died October 12 in Reston, Virginia. He joined USIA in 1963, where his posts included Thailand, Colombia, Nigeria, Australia, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Morocco and Senegal. When he retired in 2000, Mr. Good opened a practice as an immigration lawyer in Herndon, Virginia. An avid reader and champion-level squash player, he took up cycling in recent years.
- ◆ Gallais (Gale) Matheny, 78, husband of FSO in USIA Judith Futch, died May 22 at home in Ashland, Virginia. After retiring as a public school teacher, he moved to Madrid, where Ms. Futch, was a new FSO. They later lived to Seoul, New Delhi, and Rome. While overseas, Mr. Matheny taught English to college students and businessmen in Seoul, coached Little League baseball, and volunteered for four years at the USO in Rome.

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Back Issues of PDAA Today Now Online

If you missed an issue of our **PDAA Today** newsletter, you can now find back copies of the publication on the PublicDiplomacy.org Web site. All but the most recent two issues, going back to 2013 are found at <http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?p=1078>.

In Memoriam (cont'd)

(Continued from page 5)

- ◆ Vinh Dinh Nguyen, 78, headed VOA's Vietnamese language service, 1991-2010, died April 8 at his home in Annandale, Virginia. Mr. Nguyen was born in Hue, Vietnam. He worked with the U.S. during the Vietnam War, and 1968-1991, headed the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service in Bangkok. After retiring from VOA in 2010, he continued working for the agency as a contract editor and linguist. He was a volunteer with Meals on Wheels, and as a translator for hospital patients.
- ◆ Howard Russell, Jr., 88, a retired FSO in USIA, died June 23 in Rockville, Maryland. Joining USIA in 1955, his overseas assignments included India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Libya, Sudan, and Uganda.
- ◆ Sol Schindler, 92, a FSO in USIA, from 1952 to 1989, died April 11 in Washington. He served throughout Asia. Mr. Schindler's last assignment was deputy chief of programs for ICS. In retirement, more than 100 of his op-ed pieces and book reviews were published in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Times and other publications. He was a World War II Army veteran.
- ◆ Mary Sherwood, 99, a retired writer and editor for the Wireless File, died May 3 at her home in Alexandria, Virginia. She worked for USIA from 1957 to 1974. For several years, she wrote a column, The Week in the United States, about issues ranging from civil rights to politics.
- ◆ Donald George Smith, Sr., a retired State Department and USIA cultural exchange officer, died September 24, 2016. He lived in Bethesda, Maryland. During World War II, he was an air force navigator on bombing missions over Japan. Joining State Department after college, his overseas posts included cultural officer in Pakistan, Egypt and South Korea. He later joined USIA.
- ◆ Ilya Suslov, 82, former translator for the Russian edition of America Illustrated, died March 22. He lived in Pottomac, Maryland. He was a prolific writer of humor and satire. More than 300 of his stories and six books were published in the United States. Before immigrating to the United States in 1974, Mr. Suslov was known in the Soviet Union for his column, Club of Twelve Chairs, appearing in the Literary Gazette. He was also an editor, lyricist, and actor. His 30 years with USIA also included broadcasting with VOA.
- ◆ Katherine "Kaky" Turpin, 67, a long-time press officer at USIA's Washington Press Center, died May 7 after a

long illness. She started working with the foreign press in the mid-1980s. Ms. Turpin was a former board member of the National Press Club. She retired in 2003.

- ◆ Mary Woods, 94, a supervisory USIA librarian, 1973 to 1985, died April 30 at a retirement center in Fairfax, Virginia. She accompanied her Foreign Service Officer husband, the late Carroll Woods, on his postings to Moscow, Paris, Brussels and what then was British Guyana. Ms. Woods came to Washington in 1944 as a World War II Japanese language code-breaker.

Welcome New PDAA Members

M. Theresa BLATT
4525 Franconia Road
Alexandria, VA 22310
703-971-9164
mtblatt@verizon.net

Joseph BRENNIG
137 Kale Ave
Sterling, VA 20164
703-399-4587
brennig@hotmail.com

Tanya BROTHEN
1510 Clarendon Blvd #1120
Arlington, VA 22209
651-335-0380
trbrothen@gmail.com

Marjorie HARRISON
3426 16th St NW Apt 304
Washington, DC 20010-3045
202-525-4436
marjorieharrison@yahoo.com

Lauren LOVELACE
4117 Davis Place NW, Unit 300
Washington, DC, 20007
202-469-2057
laurenlovelace@gmail.com

PDAA membership for 2017 ... Check your mailing label for renewal status

- If your mailing label says **[2016]** after your name, your membership for 2017 is overdue.
- The annual membership fee for the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association is \$US35.00 and \$400.00 for a one-time lifetime membership. Renewals are collected annually by the first few months of the year, and we cannot pro-rate memberships for a partial year. **You must be a paid-up member to be included in and receive the next 2017 member directory in October.** Please complete the form below (indicate if any items are changed from before) and mail the completed form with your check, made payable to PDAA, to:

James L. Bullock, PDAA Treasurer

**319 E Street SE
Washington, DC 20003**

___ 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 \$35.00 ___ Renewal \$35.00 ___ Lifetime \$400.00

Contribution to Public Diplomacy Awards Fund (optional) _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Or you can renew online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership>

PDAA September 2017 Luncheon Program

September 25, 2017 - DACOR-Bacon House. See page I for program details,
1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Deadline for reservations: **5:00 pm, September 21, 2017.**

Please complete the form below and mail with your check, made payable to PDAA, for **\$US35.00** for members and guests, and **\$42.00** for non-members to:

James L. Bullock, PDAA Treasurer

**319 E Street SE
Washington, DC 20003**

Please send payments for this event only. If there is no change in your contact information, you need only fill in names and date.

Name(s) _____
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Telephone number _____
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Number of members/guests _____ x \$US 35.00 Number of non-members _____ x \$42.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

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Editor: Alan Kotok

Member News Editor: Ed Scherr

Contributing writers: Amb. Cynthia Effrd, Judy Aita

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Public Diplomacy Alumni
Association

Address:

4521 N. 41st Street

Arlington VA 22207-2936

E-mail: admin@publicdiplomacy.org

Web site:

<http://www.publicdiplomacy.org>

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Arlington VA 22207-2936

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