

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TODAY

Strengthening America's Dialogue with the World

The PDCA Blog: What's on Your Mind?

One aspect of professional associations that we sometimes overlook is that we share our reflections on the direction of the profession and comment on trends and innovations in its practice.

For PDCA, we have adopted the **Member Views** blog as our way of commenting on trends and practices.

A couple of recent contributions reflect the range of views that can be raised and answered—via the blog: **→** Bill Wanlund, a prolific contributor, quotes a Canadian author who wonders if artificial intelligence might give rise to new religious sects. Separately, Bill has written to the PDCA Program Committee to ask if we should organize a program on Artificial Intelligence and Public Diplomacy. Stay tuned.

♦ Loren Hurst, who works in the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, raises the issue of digital diplomacy. He argues that the concept of virtual communities is a useful context to operationally define digital public diplomacy. Read his blog post to see how he develops his argument.

You are invited to submit your own blog post — or to respond to those that have already posted.

Write to editor@public diplomacy.org with your submission. ¤

Excellence Takes Many Forms: 2023 PDCAAwards Announced

By Domenick DiPasquale

orking under wartime conditions in Kyiv to demonstrate continued U.S. support for Ukraine against Russian aggression. En-

video gaming. Orchestrating the bicentennial of diplomatic relations with Mexico. Bringing America to the remote hinterlands of Albania.

The 2023 recipients of the PDCA awards for excellence in public

diplomacy have advanced American foreign policy objective though their innovative use of technology, stellar management resources, public diplomacy professionals and leadership skills, outside the box thinking, and sheer hard work and perseverance. getting the message out that America is

The four recipients are:

- + Public Diplomacy Section, Embassy **Kyiv**
- + Onur Dizdar, Cultural Affairs Assistant, Consulate General Istanbul
- + Monica Sarmiento, Strategic Public Engaging young audiences in Türkiye through gagement Specialist, Embassy Mexico



awards reflect the extraordinary efforts of America's diplomats and their professional staffs to share our country's story and ex plain the policies

and motivations of the United States. Under difficult circumstances and constrained demonstrate creativity and commitment to



Tirana's Mobile American Corner was one of four nominations chosen to receive a 2023 award.

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Two Programs to Focus on Award Recipients

To provide an opportunity for PDCA members to meet the recipients of this year's Awards for Excellence in Public Diplomacy and ask about their work, PDCA has organized two upcoming Zoom programs.

On June 5, members will have the opportunity to meet Onur Dizdar, a Cultural Affairs Assistant at the Consulate General in Istanbul; Monica Sarmiento, a Public Engagement Specialist at



Istanbul Cultural Affa Onur Dizdar devised

the Embassy in Mexico City, and the Mobile American Corner Team at the Embassy in Tirana.

On June 12, PDCA will honor the Public **Diplomacy Section** at the Embassy in

Register for both programs on the PDCA website.¤

The mission of the Public Diplomacy Council of America is to encourage excellence and honor achievement in the professional practice, academic study, and advocacy for public diplomacy.

President's Column

A Salute to Sherry Mueller

t the end of this month, Sherry Mueller will step down as PDCA copresident after serving three years as PDC president and this past year as PDCA's charter copresident, four years in all. Sherry's tireless work during her tenure left its mark on the character of our new organization, much to the benefit of us all.

I first met Sherry when I was cultural affairs officer in Singapore in the early 70s and she was conducting research on the Asian and Pacific Student Leader Project for the State Department's Education and Cultural Affairs Bureau (remember State/ CU?). Beginning then, and in the grams. Where would we be years since, Sherry has been my guide into the world of U.S. exchanges and the diverse private sector network supporting it. With her deep experience and extensive network of contacts, Sherry continued to be my indispensable quide as we teamed up to plan and give birth to the Public Diplomacy Council of America.

Many of you know Sherry as the voice of the Weekly Update, a well-received compendium of thoughtful reflections and timely information for our members. Sherry inherited this instrument from PDC President Adam Powell, her predecessor, and made it her own. It was her eloquent voice that engaged us every week. Over the past year, working closely with Sherry, I have come to know how much of herself Sherry put into the Weekly Update. It was time consuming, but the value of her work can be seen in the impres-

sive open rate, an average of over 70%.

PDCA's current membership exceeds 500 thanks in large part to Sherry's tireless recruiting efforts. She puts her impressive wide range of contacts to good

Working closely with board members and PDC Fellow Olivia Chavez, Sherry conducted focus groups with area grad students. This led to the creation of the Rising Professionals program designed to encourage students, interns, and others not yet 35 and just beginning their careers, to pursue an interest in public diplomacy and build relationships among PDCA members. This growing member group has begun organizing activities that take advantage of PDCA's mentoring and speaker programs, as ful for the outsize role Sherry well as their own professional and social interaction. And they make a difference in our prowithout their tech support? Most important, Rising Professionals are a valuable investment in the future of our new organization and another Sher-

fundraiser. With the help of Len Baldyga and the generous bequest of Hans "Tom" Tuch, she created the endowment fund for our Hans "Tom" Tuch Fel-

low and is,

with the

ry legacy.

oping a second fund for an intern dedicated to communication and advocacy. She has now recruited several talented fellows under the Tuch Endowment, all of whom have made notable contributions to the improved functioning of PDCA. Look for the benefits that our communication and advocacy intern, in the works, will bring.

Another Sherry initiative: expanding partner organizations. As of this writing, she has made partnership arrangements with the GWU Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, the Alliance for International Exchange, and Global Ties U.S., all to mutual advantage.

Finally, I will be forever grateplayed as we put into motion our planning for the **merger** of the Public Diplomacy Council and the Public Diplomacy Association of America. Many PDAA and PDC members (and observers) told us it couldn't be done. Indeed, we both started that process with strong feelings

about our respective organizations and how closely the new organization should reflect PDAA or PDC. We ended up with a shared vision of a new organization, strengthened by the programs and accomplishments of its predecessors but with a distinctive identity of its own. We did this, as Sherry fondly puts it, "with no blood on the floor." We developed a comprehensive plan that our lawyers said was complete and accurate.

I am indebted to Sherry and grateful for the close collaborative relationship we have enjoyed. I wish her only the best as she focuses on her teaching and her writing. We will still have the benefit of her presence and experience: She is staying as an active member of the PDCA Board, concentrating on advocacy, mentoring, and leadership development. And she continues to be my indispensable quide.

Joel.



Sherry Mueller at launch of PDCA, International Student House, Oct. 3, 2022

VOA's Truth-Telling Reporting Continues to Counter Disinformation

By Steve Herman

eturning to the United States in 2016 after a quarter century abroad, I notof countries confirmed its value and impact. In Pyongyang, Yangon, and Marrakech I learned firsthand we were effec-



ed two distressing changes: deep political polarization and a decline in news literacy. Many, including family and friends, chose to consume media that only confirmed their political biases, and they gave more credence to obvious disinformation propagating their social media feeds than wellresearched factual reports from established mainstream news outlets. My brand of journalism seemed ineffectual, and if I had not been working for the Voice of America, I might have quit the news business to teach Americans media literacy.

As VOA's audiences are abroad — <u>via television</u>, <u>radio, the internet, and social media platforms</u> — our approach to evenhanded reporting about America and the world still felt relevant. Personally interacting with target audiences in dozens

tively countering the voices of dictators, generals and potentates. Even in the most repressive societies, people acknowledged hearing or seeing VOA reporting. Many North Korean defectors, for example, have recounted their initial suspicions of the Korean broadcasts of VOA and Radio Free Asia, explaining they only realized over time what they were hearing via shortwave radio more closely reflected their realities than what was airing on their own government's stations.

VOA now places special emphasis on fact-checking with our Polygraph initiative, [https://www.polygraph.info/] challenging the increasing volume of disinformation and misinformation being distributed and shared globally. A valid question is whether VOA, USAGM,

or another governmentfunded entity needs to also do something more fundamental: offer instruction in how to discern the credibility of news and recognize standards of fact-based journalism.

As someone on the front lines of the information wars, I wish we had additional journalists and greater resources. The annual average Congressionally-appropriated <u>budget for VOA</u> in recent years hovers slightly above \$250 million, split among four dozen language services and our staff of 2,000. Meanwhile, the

and trolls, they can influence minds beyond their own borders even though they are compelled to ignore the 1963 advice of journalist Edward Murrow, who ran our parent agency during the Kennedy era: "To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful."

That credo remains our most powerful weapon. Ideally, we should be able to use it to flood the information zone in more languages, with greater volume, and on additional emerging platforms.¤



Steve Herman reporting in Burma

Chinese, as former defense secretary Robert Gates notes, are "committing huge sums of money to build a modern media apparatus aimed at domestic and world audiences. But their public diplomacy remains crude. As we have seen from Chinese and Russian bots

VOA chief national correspondent Steve Herman is a veteran foreign service officer, an adjunct lecturer in journalism at the University of Richmond, and a member of the Public Diplomacy Council of America. His comments here do not necessarily reflect the views of VOA, the U.S. Agency for Global Media, or any U.S. government entity.

Awards for Excellence in Public Diplomacy

(Continued from page 1)

dedicated to the ideals on which our country was founded," noted PDCA co-president Joel Fischman.

Fischman continued: "The men and women we recognize, and the people who nominated them, understand that a consistent and committed engagement with friends and foes alike is necessary to bring about our vision of a peaceful and fair and prosperous world. We thank all of the diplomats, their staffs, and the support personnel and volunteers throughout the United States who share America's story. I want especially to call attention to the fact that two of the recipients of awards this year are locally-employed staffers from the diplomatic posts. Their selections help highlight the fact that our diplomatic efforts overseas involve staff from the countries involved. We are indebted to them as well as to their American colleagues."

Public Diplomacy Section, American Embassy Kyiv



erving under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances imaginable – a full-fledged land war not seen in Europe in eight decades - the Kyiv embassy's public diplomacy section has carried out an extraordinary range of activities. This includes not just the most immediate daily business of shaping official messaging to support and amplify official American policy in support of Ukraine, but also handling senior USG visits to the country, such as that of President Biden in February. The PD section's work with the traditional press as well as social media has highlighted Russian aggression, Ukrainian resilience, and steadfast American and international support for the country - messaging that has reached both Ukrainian and international audiences.

While this short-term work is critical, the PD section is also deeply engaged in the long game through such activities as supporting media development, civil society, and English teaching, all of which are crucial to Ukraine's post-war recovery and further integration with the West. This long-term programming will help post-war Ukraine rebuild its human capital, strengthen democratic norms, and advance the rule of law, anti-corruption efforts, and government transparency.

Onur Dizdar

n the other side of the Black Sea, Istanbul Cultural Affairs Assistant Onur Dizdar devised a novel strategy for connecting with Turkish youth, using the field of game development and design to engage this audience "where they are, not where we wish them to be," as the Consulate put it. Taking the lead on this initiative, Dizdar conducted extensive research and met local experts to establish new relationships and strategies with major Turkish players in the gaming field.

Based on this work, Dizdar then developed a multi-pronged public diplomacy strategy to connect with young audiences. One such initiative was conceiving and executing the first ever gaming-related Tech Camp, securing a \$100,000 grant from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. After nearly a year of preparation and coordination among multiple partners in both Türkiye and the United States, the three-day event for 60 participants led to dozens of gaming prototypes; six were selected to receive seed money for further development into playable games.



All six addressed one of three critical goals for the U.S. Mission in Türkiye – combatting climate change, gender-based violence, or disinformation.

Monica Sarmiento



ecember 2022 marked the 200th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico. To commemorate this bicentennial, Embassy Mexico turned to Monica Sarmiento, a Public Engagement Specialist, to plan and coordinate more than 200 programs marking the occasion. This ambitious celebration of one of the United States' most consequential bilateral relationships involved governmental, business, and academic entities on both sides of the border. Coordinating within the Mission among 36 USG agencies and nine consulates, as well as with Mexican institutions, Sarmiento enlisted cooperation from Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Relations, American and Mexican businesses, and U.S. universities to carry out a range of programming that highlighted the strong and enduring ties between the two nations.

Among the many tangible results of Sarmiento's work were substantial donations from such companies as Amazon and Dow Chemical to support the American Spaces network in Mexico, as well as commitments from more than 40 U.S. universities and colleges to promote greater opportunities for Mexican students to study in the United States. The overall impact of the bicentennial celebration, shep-

herded forward with Sarmiento's expert guidance and adroit management, helped advance Embassy Mexico's strategic goals on such key issues as security cooperation, the environment, migration, and economic partnerships.

Tirana's Mobile American Corners Team

mbassy Tirana's American Corners network covers four urban centers in Albania but is absent in the rural countryside that suffers from lack of economic opportunity, underdevelopment, and mass emigration, all of which negatively impact

work to stay connected with the existing American Corners, as well as with the Embassy's Youth Council and Outdoor Ambassadors groups. The Mobile American Corner is now a yearly project for Tirana's public diplomacy section, and State Department public diplomacy offices are using it as a model for other posts to follow.

dditional Recognitions
In addition to these four winning nominations, the PDCA
Awards Committee commended
three other nominations for special
recognition:



Venezuela
Affairs Unit,
based at
Embassy
Bogota, for
its work supporting the
U.S. commitment to
a democratic transition
in Venezuela.

It, Public Affairs

+ Public

Affairs Sec-

tion of the

the country's political and economic development. To reach these underserved areas, the Embassy's public diplomacy team created an innovative way to bring public diplomacy resources there by packaging the most effective American Corner programs, putting it on a U.S.-branded tour bus, and travelling around Albania. Visiting eight cities distant from the existing American Corners, the tour reached more than 4,000 youth.

To ensure that lasting follow-up opportunities and connection with the Embassy would remain in these areas post-visit, the public diplomacy team created a digital platform that enables young people ages 14 to 24 to join the Embassy's Digital Youth Net-

- → Erica Thibault, Public Affairs Officer, Embassy Tunis, for leading the Public Affairs Section's sustained activities to counter Chinese influence in Tunisia, specifically 5G technology promoted by PRC companies.
- + Laurence Socha, Public Affairs Officer, Embassy Mogadishu, for his work in the high threat environment of Somalia supporting Embassy messaging on such key issues as counterterrorism and alleviating the humanitarian food crisis.¤

The PDCA Awards Committee consists of Maritza Adonis, Domenick DiPasquale, Michael Korff, Patricia Kushlis, Michael Pelletier, Larry Schwartz, Earl Anthony Wayne, and Elizabeth Whitaker.

In Memoriam

Robert Dean Barber, 94, died Jan. 17 in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. Following military service and college, Barber joined the Department of State in 1954, serving as a special agent. In 1962 he transferred to USIA, where he was director of the Office of Security until he retired in 1980. In retirement, Barber moved first to Asheville, NC, and then in 1993 to Palm Beach County, FL. A dedicated Chicago Cubs fan, Barber enjoyed drawing and painting, reading history, and taking part in church, civic, and charitable activities.

Marcia Nightingale Carlson, a retired nurse and spouse of Ambassador Brian Carlson, died Jan. 29 at Sibley Memorial Hospital from pneumonia following a 10year battle against leukemia. She was 75. The Carlsons married two weeks after her graduation summa cum laude from Vanderbilt University in 1969 with a BSN degree. During her husband's Foreign Service career with USIA and later State, she held a variety of positions in the healthcare field and beyond. These included teaching school in Belgrade; serving as the Defense Attaché Office's only fluent Bulgarian speaker in Sofia; acting as the assistant pastor of the American Lutheran Church in Oslo; and working as State's medical evacuation manager in London. During Ambassador Carlson's tenure in Latvia, she organized a major retrospective there for the centenary of renowned artist Mark Rothko, who was born in the Latvian city of Daugavpils. Among the jobs she held while in Washington was one at Travelers Medical Service that included vaccinating the White House press corps before each presidential trip abroad. Amb. Carlson serves as PDCA's Vice President.

Stephen Frank, 76, died Feb. 17 at his home in Washington, DC, from pancreatic cancer. Early in his television career, Frank held a variety of jobs such as cameraman, producer, and director at stations in California, Nebraska, and Maryland. In 1983 he joined USIA as an executive producer with the Agency's newly created

Worldnet, the first live global satellite television network. The first of many special projects Frank created at VOA-TV, which was formed in 2004 after Worldnet merged with VOA, was a program for Ukraine called "Window on America." Featuring stories about the Ukrainian diaspora in the U.S., the program became a template for other VOA foreign language broadcasts. Following his retirement in 2011, Frank was active in the Songwriters of DC (SAW) and Nashville Association of Songwriters International (NASI).

Margaret Ann "Peggy" Hanson, a VOA correspondent, passed away at home in Washington, DC, Mar. 19 at age 83. A graduate of Yankton College in South Dakota, Hanson and her first husband served in the first group of Peace Corps volunteers assigned to Turkey, where she taught English. She later ran her own language school before joining VOA, where she covered such events as the 1984 and 1992 U.S. presidential elections. An author of two mystery novels, Hanson was a member of the Mystery Writers of America and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Maureen Howard passed away Jan. 5 in Tacoma, WA, at age 78 after a long battle with cancer. After joining USIA in 1995, she served from 1997 to 2001 in Cape Town and Pretoria during the early years of South Africa's post-apartheid transformation. In Washington Howard was the regional program officer for Africa in the Office of International Information Programs (IIP), managing the American Speaker programs for 49 U.S. embassies and consulates in sub-Saharan Africa. Following retirement, she became an affordable housing advocate; in that role she was executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Washington State and cofounder of the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless.

William L. "Jake" Jacobsen, Jr., 85, a career USIA Foreign Service Officer and former U.S. Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, died Sep. 20, 2022, in Easton, MD, after a long illness. Jacobsen joined USIA in 1966 and served in several Lusophone posts, including an initial five years in Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and Belém. After working in Lisbon as both a

Cultural Affairs and Information Officer, he became the first PAO assigned to Mozambique. Later in his career he was DCM in Botswana. Following assignments in Washington with the State Department and National Security Council, he was named Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, where he served from 1989 to 1992. After Jacobsen retired in 1993, he did contract work abroad and opened the U.S. Liaison Office in East Timor in 2000.

Joyce Kravitz, who served during the Clinton Administration as a senior advisor at the Voice of America and later as chief of staff to the director of USIA, died from cancer Feb. 2 in New York City at age 72. Earlier in her career during the Carter Administration, Kravitz worked first in the White House Press Office and then as deputy director for congressional and public affairs in the Office of the U.S. Special Trade Representative. Among the positions she held in her private sector career was overseeing public relations at ABC News for such network programs as World News Tonight, Nightline, and 20/20.

Margo Storm Lawless, 75, died Dec. 21 in Allentown, PA. Raised in Easton, PA, she launched her career with the federal government in Washington with positions at the Department of State and the White House press advance team. Lawless later worked for a large law firm in Washington before returning to Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, where she was active in the Catholic Church.

John Arthur Lindburg passed away due to complications from covid-19 Feb. 13 at age 79. A 1966 graduate of Yale University, Lindburg earned a Master's degree at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs and a JD from George Washington Law School. His government career included serving as assistant general counsel at USIA, general counsel of the Board for International Broadcasting, legal counsel of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, deputy general counsel of the National Gallery of Art, and general counsel and secretary at Radio Free Europe /Radio Liberty.

John Marshall Louton died Jan. 19 on Orcas Island, WA. He was 80. Louton at-

(Continued on page 7)

tended Ohio State University and earned a Ph.D. in Chinese philosophy from the University of Washington. Joining USIA in 1986, he served in Zambia, India, Albania, and Taiwan, as well as two assignments in China, Beijing and Chengdu. After retiring in 2006 and settling on Orcas Island with his wife Betsy, he taught classes at the local library on Chinese philosophical traditions, translated classical Chinese texts and poetry, and advocated tirelessly for campaign finance reform.

Joan McKniff, 81, died Apr. 17. She had served USIA in Guatemala, Madrid, Madagascar, and Paris as well as Washington. She was an early Peace Corps volunteer, who served in Colombia. She grew up in Lowell, Mass., and spent a year in South Vietnam during the war as a Red Cross "donut dolly" before working for the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in London. She loved to travel and meet new people, and she had a distinctive New England accent. She retired to Sarasota, Fl.,

and was active in Barack Obama's presidential campaigns. Despite her ill health of the last few years, she was a passionate supporter of conservation of endangered Florida panthers.

Janine Perry, 58, died suddenly March 3. Her career in USIA and State included working in the Office of International Information Programs' Western Hemisphere branch as Wireless File editor and webmaster of its Englishlanguage site, and later as an electronic publishing specialist in IIP's Office of Publication Services.

Perry Stieglitz, a USIA Foreign Service Officer, died Jan. 25 in Pompano Beach, FL, at age 102. Born in Yonkers, NY, in 1920, he earned a Bachelor's degree from NYU in 1941. After service during World War II as a Navy lieutenant, he taught English in the 1950s in New York City at both Hunter College and Hunter High School. Stieglitz began his USIA career as assistant cultural affairs officer in Paris, 1963-1967 and then as cultural affairs officer in Vienti-

ane, Laos, 1967-1968. Subsequent assignments included Marseille, Bangkok, and Brussels. After retirement, Stieglitz worked as the American representative of the London-based Thomson Foundation, a media development NGO, and as director of the Gibraltar Information Bureau. He also authored In A Little Kingdom, a 1991 book about Laos and his experiences there both as a Fulbright grantee and as a diplomat.

David Michael Wilson, a USIA Foreign Service Officer, died Feb. 27 at age 83. A native of Pittsfield, MA, who joined the Agency in 1963 after attending Columbia University and NYU Law, he began his career in Africa with threeyear assignments in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and Cape Town, South Africa. Wilson subsequently served in Ottawa, Geneva, and Brussels, as well as domestically with USIA's Office of the Inspector General before retiring in 1998. His varied interest included baseball, art, wine, good food, classical music, and theater.¤

Reporting Obituaries to PDCA and to the Media

he quarterly newsletter carries short obituaries of PDCA members and other individuals who had careers in public diplomacy. To prepare such obituaries for publication, the following general information is useful.

- ✓ Date, place, and cause of death, as well as age
- ✓ Birthplace, higher education, military service, and private sector employment
- ✓ Highlights of public diplomacy career, including entry on duty, positions held, overseas assignments if Foreign Service, and year of retirement
- ✓ Post-retirement activities

The length of the published obituary is dependent upon the editorial space available in that issue, but however long or short the obituary, the editors will honor the memory of those we have lost. Longer, more personal individual remembrances of the deceased are always welcome but due to space limitations will appear only on the PDCA website

Obituary information may be sent to the newsletter's interim member news editor Domenick DiPasquale at oceanic815@ verizon.net or to editor@publicdiplomacy.org.

Remembrances

emembrances and an index of obituaries going back to 2020 of PDCA, PDAA, and PDC members are carried on the PDCA website. To view both remembrances and the index, go to https://www.publicdiplomacy.org/obituaries and appreciations.php.

Public Obituaries

Member News Editor Emeritus Ed Scherr has prepared a <u>guide to preparing your own obituary</u>, and explains why it's important.

He writes: We write wills, medical directives, and even long autobiographies. But through an obituary, we can share our lives and days in USIA/State with our family, friends, and former colleagues. Newspapers may not carry extensive obits, and a lengthy paid obit is expensive. But in this technological era, emails, social networks, and the web can be channels to share your life story.

There are some misconceptions about newspaper obits. You have "news obits," written by the paper with information supplied by the family. There is also the paid "death notice," which includes funeral and memorial information, and can contain biographical details. Death notices are billed by the column inch, with cost depending on the day of the week and other features. But, for some, the price may be too expensive for a lengthy item.

To read all of Ed's article, go to https://www.publicdiplomacy.org/
obituaries memories of you.php

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