

With this issue, there has been a modest change to the masthead: Domenick DiPasquale, who has been serving as "Interim" Member News Editor, has dropped the qualifier and has agreed to serve for the next two years helping edit PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TODAY. I am profoundly grateful to him and his predecessors, Claude Porsella and Ed Scherr: Their work makes the Editor's job more manageable and improves the product we are producing.

You are invited to submit items to Domenick about things happening in your life, professional and personal. What new roles have you taken on? What has happened in your family? What are you studying or what have you done since retirement?

Above all, what's on your mind? Do you have thoughts about the major challenges facing public diplomacy practitioners today? What worked when you were active that would be a good model today?

You can contact Dom by writing to editor@publicdiplomacy.org.

Michael Korff

If you have not renewed your membership in PDCA, please do so as soon as possible. If you would like to check your membership record, contact members@publicdiplomacy.org

Election Cybersecurity as Public Diplomacy Focus of November 6 First Monday Forum

Former PDC President **Adam Clayton Powell III** and USC Election Cybersecurity Manager **Judy Kang** will be the featured speakers at the November 6 First Monday Forum that will focus on *Election Cybersecurity as Public Diplomacy*.

The USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative began as a nonpartisan independent project to help educate and protect U.S. campaigns and elections, made possible with support from Google.

In 2022, the initiative was expanded to include democracies in Europe, Asia, and Africa to exchange best practices in election security, starting in June 2022 in Athens. In October, the initiative co-sponsored "Cybersecuring Democracy: Africa" in Johannesburg with SA's Electoral Commission, and in November it

made presentations at a cybersecurity conference in Ottawa and at the annual convention of the International Association of Political Consultants in London.

This past winter, it was in Singapore and then Taiwan, and in June, USC held a conference with Strathclyde University in Glasgow.

In September, it was in Korea, and this winter it will return to Taiwan for its election.

Registration for the hybrid November 6 First Monday Forum is available on the PDCA website. The forum will take place at the Lindner Family Commons, Room 602, of the Elliott School of International Affairs of George Washington University, 1957 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052. A light lunch will be provided. The Forum will also be available via a Zoom webinar. ^α



USC University of Southern California

Election Cybersecurity Initiative

Supported by Google

Holiday Luncheon Set for December 11

PDCA has arranged a luncheon get-together at DACOR Bacon House on Mon., Dec. 11, with a no-host bar at 11:30 and a two-course meal getting underway at 12:30; the cost is \$35.

President **Joel Fischman** and other Board members

will welcome those in attendance and discuss future opportunities for in-person gatherings. In addition, upcoming programs will be reviewed as well as the outlook for the organization.

To register for the luncheon, either use the link on the PDCA website or return

the coupon on page 7 of this newsletter to PDCA Treasurer **Quentin Lide**.

DACOR Bacon House is located at 1801 F St., NW, in Washington.

Questions may be addressed to fellow@publicdiplomacy.org. ^α

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



Joel Anthony Fischman

"These days, to many watching at home and abroad, the American way no longer seems to offer a case study in effective representative democracy. Instead, it has become an example of disarray and discord, one that rewards extremism, challenges norms, and threatens to divide a polarized country even further."

—Peter Baker

"We may be appealing to you again to contact your elected representatives and media. We are a small organization with limited impact, but every message counts."

—Joel Fischman

"There was a time, not that long ago, when the United States presumed to teach the world how it was done. When it held itself up as a model of a stable, predictable democracy. When it sent idealistic young avatars to distant parts of the globe to impart the American way."

So began a news analysis by Peter Baker in the Oct. 5 *New York Times*.

Baker continues, *"These days, to many watching at home and abroad, the American way no longer seems to offer a case study in effective representative democracy. Instead, it has become an example of disarray and discord, one that rewards extremism, challenges norms and threatens to divide a polarized country even further."*

During the last week of September, as budget negotiations were taking place in Congress, **Michael McCarry** and **Mark Rebstock**, PDCA Advocacy Committee (ACE) co-chairs, alerted me to an amendment

submitted by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ) zeroing out funding for the State Department's Educational and Cultural Affairs programs. We were getting ready to alert all of you, our members, to that threat when cooler heads apparently prevailed and Amendment #133 dropped off. Nevertheless, the prospect of a shutdown continued to be a real possibility. On Friday, Sept. 29, with the help of our Communication Committee, we circulated a message to all members urging that you use the following text in reaching out to your Members of Congress and to media:

"Much has already been written about the harm the impending shutdown would have to our economy and communities, to Americans being cut off from important services, and to our military, civil service, and foreign service corps, whose pay would be cut off."

"The shutdown would also have damaging repercussions on our country's security and global leadership. As the world watches, resulting chaos will erode America's global image as a strong and successful democracy and a reliable partner. Countries around the world will adjust to America's paralysis, raising new uncertainty among those who stand with us and emboldening those seeking to undermine us during these challenging times. How can the world depend on America's global leadership if we project an image of instability and dysfunction? It takes a long time to recover from such setbacks."

"I call upon you to vote

against an interruption of government operations without delay."

A few days later, the office of the Speaker of the House was vacated for the first time in history. At a time when our adversaries, in particular Russia and the PRC, are placing a priority on discrediting our form of government, how do we square with the chaos we are witnessing? Are we handling Russia and China (not to mention Iran) an opportunity on a silver platter?

A last-minute deal on Sat., Sept. 30, produced a 45-day reprieve, but we are in a new period of uncertainty and facing another real possibility of shutdown in mid-November, just when the U.S. will be hosting a summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) inter-governmental forum in San Francisco. PRC disinformation functionaries are gleefully taking note. We are doing their job for them.

The members of PDCA's Advocacy Committee are watching events carefully and will be ready to mobilize if another shutdown appears likely. We may be appealing to you again to contact your elected representatives and media. We are a small organization with limited impact, but every message counts. We hear that the number of messages a member of Congress receives makes a difference. A lot is at stake. It takes a long time to recover from such setbacks.

Joel

Shaping the Narrative: A Call for Conversation

By **Larry Wohlers**

Hello PDCA members! Although a long-time member of both the PDC and PDAA, I had not been especially active in public diplomacy prior to joining the Board this summer. Indeed, much of my post-retirement work had been as a WAE working on diplomacy and security governance challenges in Africa, not public diplomacy. However, over the past decade, I have watched with dismay Russia's and China's increasing success in shaping the narrative of how Africans perceive the world.

Shaping narratives is an art that American diplomacy once mastered – in fact, our success in convincing foreign publics that our model offered a better future was a major factor in our triumph in the Cold War. Yet, in Africa, Russia and China were beating us at our own game. And with impressive results: in Central African Republic and Mali, Russian-backed influencers now dominate the political and social landscape, having squeezed out the French and shredded (the admittedly-tattered) Western narrative of the future that France represented. China, meanwhile, has made such massive media investments in Africa that Chinese messaging has become ubiquitous around the continent.

And this was just in Africa. The story in Latin Ameri-

ca and elsewhere, though I know these regions much less well personally, appears to be similar.

Yet the response of America's foreign policy establishment has been curiously limited. Although much is made of Russian and Chinese disinformation in Washington foreign policy circle, there seems to be little understanding that disinformation is only one tool in a much more ambitious strategy. Nor has there been much attention

paid here to what is at stake: having foreign publics on "your side" and believing "your version of world events" is an enormous force multiplier in a global competition. Russia and China clearly understand this; America's foreign affairs community seemingly does not (or has at least forgotten what it once knew).

Unfortunately, the lack of understanding of the dimensions of the problem translates directly into a lack of support for funding. Although our public diplomacy toolkit still exists, its funding pales compared to the Cold War years. Indeed, in the Sahelian countries I know best, we are barely on the playing field. True, we still

have a public diplomacy presence at our embassies, an array of exchanges, and innovative offerings in social media. Yet, those PD operations are too understaffed, underfinanced, and under-equipped to truly compete in an environment the Russians and Chinese are radically transforming.

Back in the 1950s, of

course, the story was different. It is easy to forget now, but much of Western Europe was then

ideologically up for grabs, and a Soviet-inspired narrative had found favor with substantial minorities, notably in France and Italy. For the U.S., the cost of losing the battle for control of the narrative would have been enormous – neither our military dominance nor diplomatic skills would have been of much use if we had lost the battle of European public opinion.

It was that sense of crisis that prompted the foreign affairs community to supply the political drive, the willingness to innovate, and especially the funding needed to counteract the Soviets. In just a few years, the U.S. created or greatly expanded institutions such as the U.S. Information Agen-

cy, the Fulbright program, and the Voice of America.

What can be done now? One reason for the current lack of urgency in the foreign affairs establishment is that the community lacks a platform for a sustained and thoughtful discussion of public diplomacy. Foreign affairs think tanks and journals rarely talk about the urgency of "shaping narratives." When they do, it is generally to lament the rise of disinformation and call for 'something to be done.' But these are one-off musings, not the stuff of a sustained debate.

Could PDCA be a potential platform for something more sustained? Until now, our focus has been internal: Our conversations are mostly for ourselves – practitioners and students of public diplomacy. A conversation that might reshape America's public diplomacy priorities, however, cannot be limited to just ourselves. Rather, it must fully engage the larger foreign affairs community, possibly in partnership with one or more better-known organizations. That is a tall order, and of course all of us have other interests. Perhaps we do not have the time or desire to take it on. However, the question remains, if not PDCA, then who? Clearly, the need exists.▣

Larry Wohlers is PDCA's Vice President. His final overseas posting was as Ambassador to the Central African Republic.



There's (Archival) Gold In Them Thar Memorabilia!

By *Domenick DiPasquale*

Stuff. Lots and lots of...stuff. It's an issue, maybe an affliction, which I'd hazard affects many if not most of us.

Of late, whether inspired by pandemic-era lockdowns, worship at the altar of Marie Kondo, Scandinavian-style death cleaning, or the simple imperative of downsizing to smaller quarters, decluttering seems to have become a national pastime.

Public diplomacy practitioners

most likely are not immune. I suspect those of us with a Foreign Service background in fact may have accumulated a significant amount of memorabilia over the course of our careers. It was presumably more tempting for a PD officer to keep as a memento that aesthetically pleasing program brochure of the major visual arts exhibit you organized than it was for an Admin Officer to keep, say, the monthly mileage records of the Embassy motorpool.

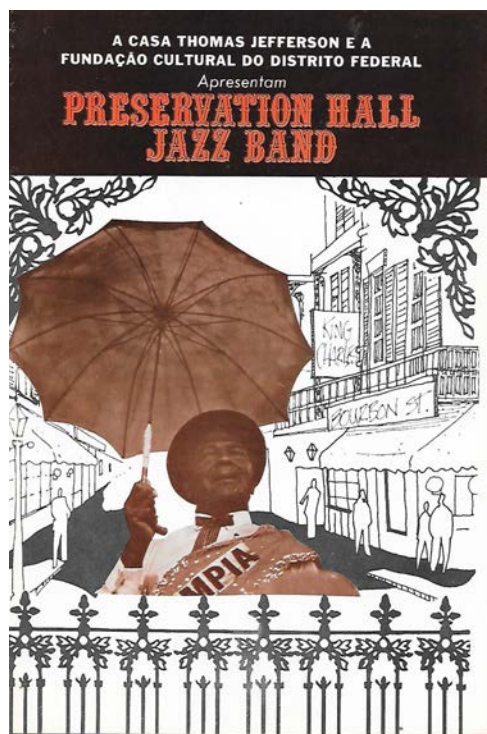
But before willy-nilly deep-sixing the mementoes from days past that were accumulated over the course of a career, keep in mind the old adage that one person's trash might be another's treasure.

There's potential archival gold in your accumulated memorabilia that, while perhaps not the equivalent of uncovering King Tut's tomb, may be invaluable to current and future scholars, researchers, and historians.

Based on personal experience dealing with my way too voluminous holdings – “the packrattery in my packratorium,” as I have come to term it – here are some potential destinations to consider as an appropriate home for any intriguing discoveries in your own collection.

National Museum of American Diplomacy
An obvious first choice would be the National Museum of American Diplomacy, located within the main State Department building. When the Museum was first beginning to amass its holdings more than a dozen years ago, I made donations in several tranches. Those items included everything from the final issue of USIA's Russian language magazine *America Illustrated* (pictured on the left), to the program of a 1980 Preservation Hall Jazz Band performance in Brasilia (see poster on page 5), to a T-shirt emblazoned with the words “America, Thank You For Liberating Grenada,” picked up on my reporting trip there for the USIA Wireless File shortly after the 1983 invasion. Note, though, that in considering donations to the Museum, it is interested in actual artifacts, not voluminous archives.





But there are both governmental and academic institutions that do welcome appropriate archival material. I recently unearthed a long-forgotten carton of material from my three years on the Latin American branch of the USIA Wireless File in the 1980s that contained a complete set of our weekly reports – articles produced, items translated into Spanish, press placement in Central and South American newspapers. In essence, these reports represented a compendium of official U.S. Government messaging to Latin America during the latter part of the Cold War when Central America – in particular the civil war in El Salvador and the anti-Sandinista movement in Nicaragua – was a significant U.S. foreign policy issue. Thanks to PDCA Board Member Dr. **Nick Cull**, the material now resides at his home institution, the University of Southern California's public diplomacy program.

Likewise, historical documentation from the Cold War era might also find an appropriate home at the Cold War International History Project of the

Smithsonian's Wilson Center. It was where I was able to donate copies of material related to the 1972 opening of the USIA American Center in Ljubljana, the first official U.S. diplomatic presence in Slovenia and one predating by 20 years the establishment there of the American Embassy. These were long-buried papers I discovered while stationed in Ljubljana as the public affairs officer in the mid-1990s; all the originals were archived per government regulation, while copies of the most significant documents went to the Wilson Center.

Material need not be official in nature to have value to researchers and scholars. Over the course of my 27-year career, Yugoslavia and its successor states occupied 10 of those years in one capacity or another. As such, I developed and maintained a vast newspaper clipping morgue of more than 3,500 articles related to the Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s. Although I now had no further need for this compendium, I was loath to simply toss it into the recycling bin. A little research uncovered an ideal repository – the Center for Bosnian Studies at Fontbonne University in St. Louis (a city with a large Bosnian émigré population). Academic institutions with similar regional or country-specific study programs are indeed ideal recipients for this kind of material.

Finally, if an overseas assignment included working on a presidential visit, consider whether you might have items of interest to a presidential library. President George H.W. Bush visited Singapore in 1992 while I was posted there. Among the mementoes I kept of that event were a few briefing books we prepared for the travelling White House press corps; President Bush's official library

in College Station, Texas, was pleased to accept a copy to add to its holdings.

Some Tips

If there's a possible donation in your future, some tips gleaned from my own experience:

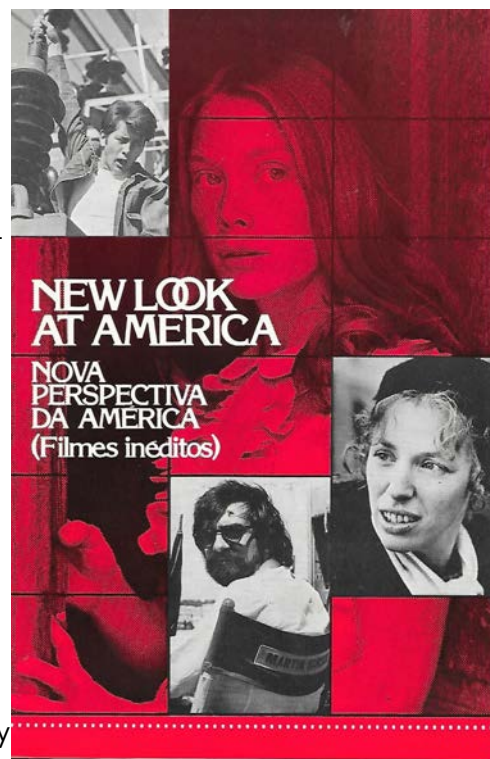
- ✦ Be realistic in determining if what you possess truly does have historic value.

- ✦ Be detailed in the description you send a potential recipient; the more detailed, the better.

- ✦ Be persistent in finding the right recipient; the first three institutions I contacted about the Ljubljana American Center declined the material before it found an appropriate home at the Wilson Center.

So, in the final analysis, if your... stuff...does not 'spark joy,' as Ms. Kondo might say, consider donating your hidden treasure to a place where it most definitely will.▣

Domenick DiPasquale is Member News Editor of PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TODAY. He may be reached at editor@publicdiplomacy.org



In Memoriam

Edward Alexander, a Senior Foreign Service officer with USIA, died October 5 at the age of 103. A New York native and Columbia University graduate, Alexander served during World War II on the staffs of General Eisenhower and Bradley in the Psychological Warfare Division. After the war he worked as public relations director for Sir Laurence Olivier on his Shakespearean films *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. Joining the Voice of America in 1950, he headed its Armenian language service for 10 years. In his Foreign Service career, Alexander served as public affairs officer in both West and East Berlin, Budapest, and Athens. He also was USIA's deputy director for the Soviet Union and East Europe. In retirement Alexander served on the Board for International Broadcasting that oversaw Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and was a spokesman for three international conferences on human rights.

Vivienne Bechetti, wife of USIA Foreign Service officer Fred Bechetti, died August 19 in Virginia Beach, VA. She was 96. Born in Evanston, IL, she attended the University of New Mexico, where she met her future husband. During their 77-year marriage she accompanied him on six diplomatic assignments, all in Latin America, and when abroad engaged in numerous volunteer activities to help local communities. Bechetti's proudest accomplishment was graduating nursing school at age 50.

C. Edward Bernier, a 30-year Foreign Service veteran of USIA, died August 28 of covid-19-related cardiac arrest at age 87. After graduating from the University of Washington with a B.A. in French and Education, he taught high school and later received a Fulbright grant to teach English in Morocco. His 30-year career with USIA began in 1966 with an assignment as deputy director of the Agency's English language center in Tehran. A Middle East and South Asia specialist who spoke both Farsi and Arabic, Bernier also served in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tu-

nisia, Algeria, and Egypt. He worked in Washington as deputy director for USIA's Office of North Africa, Middle East, and South Asian Affairs. In retirement he continued his life-long passion for tennis. Bernier's wife Jerry and daughter Michelle Bernier-Toth were also Foreign Service officers. A remembrance is on [PDCA's website](#).

Dick Bertel, a longtime broadcaster in both the private and public sector, died September 11 in Maryland. He was 92. In a radio career spanning several decades from the late 1940's onward, Bertel worked as a news writer, announcer, and program host at five different radio stations in Connecticut. He also worked as an anchor for Washington DC's all-news radio station WTOP, as well as for the NBC Radio Network and Mutual Broadcasting System. Bertel later became an executive producer at the Voice of America.

Frank Cummins, a longtime VOA employee, died from heart failure August 26 at age 91. Educated at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, among others, he served as a Navy officer from 1954 to 1958. In his 35-year career at the Voice of America that began in 1963, Cummins held several senior positions, including deputy chief of VOA's Near East and South Asia division, deputy program manager, and director of program evaluation. He served overseas with assignments in Lebanon, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Germany. Cummins also worked as a consultant to the British Broadcasting Corporation, National Public Radio, and Radio Finland.

Rudina Dervishi, a journalist with VOA's Albanian service, passed away in Maryland September 12 at age 53 after a two-year battle with breast cancer. Joining VOA in 1994, she became one of the main anchors of the TV show *Ditari*. Dervishi was a prolific journalist with interests ranging from economics to human rights. She played a major role in developing the Albanian service's website as its first webmaster and remained very active in its social media platforms.

William L. Harwood, 77, a USIA Foreign Service officer, passed away peacefully in Colchester, VT, August 23 after a 16-month battle with cancer. A native of

Burlington, VT, and an Army veteran, he earned a B.A. from the University of North Dakota and a Ph.D. in Polish and Eastern European history from the University of Illinois. His overseas assignments with USIA included Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, and Somalia. Throughout his life Harwood was devoted to music, singing in choirs, playing the French horn, and performing in musicals and operas, including Gilbert and Sullivan.

Philip Haynes, a correspondent and editor with the Voice of America, died July 15 in Fredericksburg, VA. He was 86. A native of North Carolina and an Air Force veteran, he graduated from the University of Maryland. Haynes' career with VOA included working as an editor in VOA's central newsroom in the 1980s and then four years as London bureau chief from 1989 to 1993. His colleague Stephanie Nealer wrote that "he was a good listener and a very thorough yet fair editor. Any changes he made to your copy improved it. He was open to ideas from subordinates, and he made a real effort to shepherd along young writers and reporters with helpful advice and encouragement."

Kenneth Vance Jackson, 93, passed away peacefully July 18 in Harlingen, TX. After graduation from McNeece State College in Lake Charles, LA, and military service with the U.S. Army in Korea, Jackson joined the U.S. Information Agency as a Foreign Service officer. His many overseas assignments as a USIA executive officer included Vienna, Saigon, Bangkok, New Delhi, and Rome. Jackson was an avid golfer, reader, and world traveler.

Donald Jameson, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 12 at age 81. Beginning his international career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guinea from 1963 to 1965, Jameson joined the Foreign Service in 1967 with an assignment to South Vietnam. As an East Asian specialist, his other postings in the region included Cambodia, Burma, Indonesia, and New Zealand. Jameson also served as chief of the Southeast Asia branch of VOA.

George P. Newman, a USIA Foreign Service officer, died July 20 in Mitch-

(Continued on page 7)

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