

April 2007

Annual Spring Membership Dinner

Sunday, May 6, 2007

China Garden Restaurant

1100 Wilson Blvd. Rosslyn
(Arlington), Virginia

- Cash bar 5:00 pm
- Dinner 6:00 pm

\$45.00 per person

Reservation deadline:
April 30, 2007

The menu will feature Cantonese cuisine served banquet style. See the article on this page and description of a Chinese banquet on page 5.

To reserve please return coupon on p. 11, or the form at www.publicdiplomacy.org/MeetingAnnounce.htm

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USIAAA TODAY

USIA Alumni Association

Volume 26, No. 2

Spring Dinner to Feature Chinese Banquet

USIAAA will hold its annual Spring Membership Dinner for 2007 on Sunday, May 6 at the China Garden Restaurant, located at 1100 Wilson Boulevard, in the Rosslyn section of Arlington, Virginia.

The China Garden Restaurant specializes in Cantonese cuisine and features a head chef from a major Hong Kong hotel. Cantonese cuisine emphasizes fresh seafood dishes and is more subtle than the in-your-face Hunan and Sichuan styles one finds at many local Chinese restaurants. The China Garden is a favored site in the Washington metro area for many Chinese wedding banquets.

Directions: The China Garden is located on Wilson Boulevard, at the intersection of Wilson and North Lynn Street, just across the Potomac from Georgetown. You will find the restaurant on the mall level of the 1100 building. The USIAAA Web site has a map; click on the link marked MAP at

<http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/MeetingAnnounce.htm>.

Free parking is available in the building on Sundays. The parking entrance is off Wilson Boulevard, just north of the pedestrian entrance to 1100 Wilson. If you're arriving by Metro, use the Rosslyn Station on the Blue and Orange Lines.

Schedule: A social hour with an open bar begins at 5:00 p.m. Dinner will be served promptly at 6:00 p.m.

Price: \$45.00 per person, not including drinks.

Photo courtesy China Garden Restaurant

Please use the order form on page 11 of this issue of the newsletter or on the Web site at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/MeetingAnnounce.htm>, and respond with payment by **April 30**.



Menu: The restaurant will serve a traditional Chinese banquet that features ...

Appetizers:

Deep fried stuffed crab claws

Baked spareribs with chili and spice salt

Soup:

Crabmeat with mashed asparagus soup

Entrees:

Sauteed abalone with Chinese mushrooms

Golden roast chicken Cantonese style

Baked lobster with ginger and spring onion

Crispy duck stuffed with taro puree

Sauteed fillet of flounder with vegetables

Yang Zhou fried rice

Dessert:

Almond tofu with mixed fruit

What's a Chinese Banquet?

USIAAA president and China veteran Gene Nojek explains the fine points of Chinese banquet dining; see page 5.

“The Best Job in the World”

Mike Canning

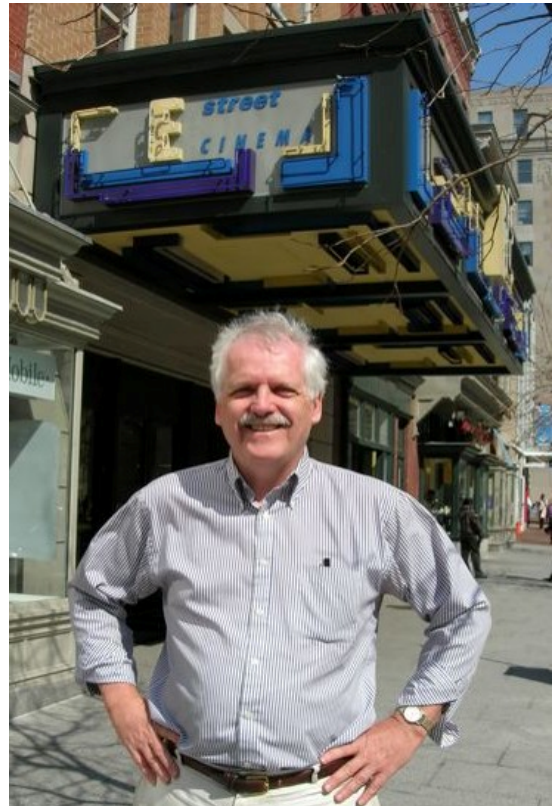
So, how does one get “the best job in the world?” In my case, by answering an ad. In 1993, after 28 fabulous years with USIA, I was in the State Department’s retirement course and wondering what would come next. While reading my local biweekly on Capitol Hill, the *Hill Rag*, I noticed a classified ad for a “movie reviewer.” I submitted a brisk résumé and my own review — as requested in the ad — of a current film then playing in town. Bless them, I was hired and have been writing about motion pictures ever since.

Thus, I have been able to indulge a desire I have held since I was about four: to go to the movies for *free* and write on those I care about. Even better, I am invited to private critics’ advance screenings at local cinemas, often at mid-morning (very decadent), with no interruptions or ads, no noisome customers, and excellent projection. Best of all, I write for my own neighbors and friends — the *Hill Rag* is very much a community newspaper — and get very personal feedback. No movie-lover could ask for more. One is hardly born a movie reviewer, of course, one starts as a movie-lover....

As one of the last pre-television kids (b.1941), my youthful entertainment in Fargo, North Dakota was radio -- and the picture show, which meant standard studio fare and adventure serials on the weekends. In college, I was captured by the exoticism of “foreign” films. The draw to foreign films was further stimulated by study in Germany when, during the early 1960’s, notable foreign directors were producing, year after year, what came to be called “a regular succession of masterpieces.”

Then, there was a career in the Agency where, as a press or cultural officer, I was often able to indulge my film bent. Since I was presenting *all* aspects of American culture to overseas audiences, I found ways to emphasize movies and, thus, led film discussions, fashioned film festivals, and wrote about films of all types. I even did a stint in the Agency’s Film and Television Division where I was in charge of the film acquisitions for USIS posts. My service abroad also allowed me to discover the cinemas of other countries -- and to compare them with our own.

Movies, then, were a life-long passion that persisted after my retirement from the Foreign Service, when I fortuitously answered that *Rag* ad.



When I started reviewing in 1993, I was looking forward to nailing some cinematic turkeys with biting put-downs. Having read much film criticism, I remembered fondly a few scorchers, and hoped I would have the wit to come up with some of my own. What I found very early on, however, was that the hard knock might be fun but it was also facile and fleeting. Bashing movies made the whole enterprise of film-making seem more wasteful and pointless than it sometimes really is, and it left me with a foul taste in my mouth — this from a guy who truly loved movies and who wanted to tell others about them.

What I quickly came to focus on were films that, because they intrigued me, moved me, or otherwise interested me, might interest those friends and neighbors for whom I was writing. I came to see myself as more than a mere assessor or grader but as a writer who could impart information and studied impressions about movies to movie-minded folk. I am, admittedly, somewhat didactic in what I write: providing background on a certain director’s or performer’s work, offering a little lore about a film’s location, setting the

(Continued on page 3)

Mike's take on two recent films ...

The Lives of Others

Director: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

Reviewed: March 2007

"It attains the form of a cat-and-mouse thriller, especially when the writer looks to hide a manuscript critical of the German Democratic Republic, and the captain both senses this betrayal yet does not necessarily want to find the proof of it."

Amazing Grace

Reviewed: March 2007

"Director Michael Apted (*Coal Miner's Daughter*, *Gorillas in the Mist*, *Enigma*, many others) makes what could be an insipid history lesson into a forceful and effective historical drama. Rich and reasoned language helps (the literate screenplay is by Steven Knight), as does the poignant theme, and a bevy of fine English actors...."

cultural context for a foreign film, etc., but basically I am offering one person's opinion which my readers can take or leave. My opinions and prejudices are my own, and, over time, readers can match them against their own.

Guiding those opinions and prejudices are my own basic criteria for "quality" in film-making: I favor literate, believable scripts fashioned into coherent, compelling stories, peopled by competent, credible actors who are directed with pace and weight appropriate to the material. These are my core values. All the other accoutrements -- cinematography, production design, lighting, music, effects, etc. -- are important, all enhance a motion picture, but, to this reviewer, they are finally *secondary* to good scripts, acting, and direction. Period.

This article has led me to other musings on all the movies I've seen over the last years (some 2,500) and all those reviews I've written (more than 400). I usually avoid the standard reviewer devices, such as star ratings, thumb directions, and top ten lists. I do this not out of superciliousness, but rather because I honestly feel such raw measures leave out nuance and variation. They also require comparisons that stretch credulity. How can you "rank," e.g., a gripping docudrama like *United 93* with a delicious take-off like *The Devil Wears Prada* -- or compare either of them with the grave *Letters from Iwo Jima*?

Some people who know I see a lot of movies (I average about 10-12 screenings a month) wonder out loud how I can stand it — given all the crap out there! The fact is, that after more than a dozen years viewing films, I can also confirm that, like so much else in life, commercial cinema aligns itself with the statistical "normal curve distribution" applicable to almost any human output. Restated, that means that about five percent of films are fabulous, 15 percent are good, something like 60 percent are variably mediocre, and some 20 percent stink up the place.

I favor literate, believable scripts fashioned into coherent, compelling stories, peopled by competent, credible actors who are directed with pace and weight appropriate to the material.

I am so lucky. I have an indulgent, kind editor who allows me to ruminate in my (now) monthly column. I am never ordered to review anything; I write about what interests me. I rarely write about the standard Hollywood blockbuster of the week (nobody, I insist, needs my opinion on *Spiderman 7*) but prefer to introduce or do riffs on the quirky independent effort or the intriguing new foreign flick. In discovering them for myself through writing, I hope to trigger interest in them for my reader.

At best, my writing on film is like having a good conversation (if a bit one-sided) with a good companion, exactly like conversations I have had with many friends and acquaintances who know I write reviews and, thus, readily ask me for my opinion (I always have one). It gives me a chance to share my enthusiasm about the movies. The outcomes of those conversations can be as stimulating as a genial agree-to-disagree or as simply splendid as having someone say: "Hey, I saw that movie you recommended — and it was great!" That kind of remark can make my day, my week, my month. What a great gig...

The International Dimension of Homeland Security

Amb. Cresencio (Cris) Arcos

The genesis of the Department of Homeland Security is the horrific attack on the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001 or simply 9/11. In the wake of the shock caused by this terrorist disaster, public opinion, the Congress and the President were moved to re-organize the national security establishment of the United States. Since the end of Cold War, ten years before this catastrophic event, there had been no major attempt to 're-tool' the security agencies to reflect the increasingly asymmetrical threats. This was in sharp contrast to the reorganization and redefinition undergone by the US military, intelligence and foreign policy institutions after World War II in order to meet the emerging Soviet challenge.

**Excerpts from remarks prepared for the
United States Information Agency Alumni
Association meeting, March 30, 2007,
Washington, DC**

The principal effort the National Security Act of 1947 was the legislation that created the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council. Ultimately, these were the key factors in the evolving 'Containment Policy' as Soviet Communism became the defining force of US foreign policy for the following forty years. When the Soviet Union crumbled in the early 1990's, the US emerged as the only remaining 'super power'. Yet, we did not count with a national security vision that addressed post-Cold War non-conventional threats nor engaged the American public. In sum, no compelling threat assessment resulted in any meaningful change or modification of the national strategic and tactical preparedness until the events that took place on 9/11....

Plainly, the most recurring and daunting challenge in these early years has been 'managing change'. The mere mention of 'change' within a bureaucracy normally produces the unleashing of anti-bodies. DHS was no exception. Consequently, the effort to bring together all these disparate agencies under one tent was often Sisyphean. Moreover, here I should note the imbalance of the Federal Bureaucracy's three P's: Process, Policy and Personality. The first two were initially scarce at DHS. The third, Personality, was the dominant driver in this newly created bureaucratic structure during these early formative years....

DHS has multiple tasks and responsibilities. Most prominent among them is border security. Implicit in this undertaking is



achieving the correct balance in the cross-border flow of goods, services and people. Clearly, safeguarding international trade is vital to the American economy. The growing security threats experienced by our country have forced the agencies involved to become innovative in managing risk while maintaining a desired flow of world trade. DHS has this responsibility at all of the nation's seaports, international airports and land ports of entry while securing the borders. The magnitude of the task is staggering: securing 5,500 miles of land border with Canada and nearly two thousand miles with Mexico; annually processing over 400 million people entries; and checking over 120 million vehicles entering the US yearly; as well as, nearly nine million maritime containers; plus examining air cargo at over 150 international airports; and safeguarding over 92,000 miles of navigable waterways.

Clearly, border security presents enormous international challenges. Partnering with foreign countries has become a necessity. DHS' posting abroad of over 1500 personnel is in the forefront of this effort. Moreover, in forging partnerships innovative initiatives formalize these cooperative relationships. After 9/11 and before DHS was functional, US Customs (now CBP) formulated and implemented a most effective and successful program: CSI. This Container Security Initiative began in 2002 almost simultaneously in Rotterdam and Singapore. It was a formal agreement negotiated bi-laterally with each country. The EU quickly complained that such bilateral agreements were distorting trade by one port becoming more attractive to shipping over other ports not in the CSI arrangement. US Customs moved swiftly to dispel this assertion by rapidly reaching agreement with several other EU countries (ports)....

During the Hurricane Katrina crisis an international challenge arose when many foreign governments began to offer relief

(Continued on page 5)

Some Notes on Chinese Banquet Etiquette

Gene Nojek

The banquet is central to Chinese social life. Americans tend to gather at cocktail receptions where people circulate freely among small groups of twos and threes, but Chinese love the formal dinner party with 12 to 16 people seated at a large round table. This is where introductions are made and business, social and familial relationships are cemented and celebrated. With this many people gathered around platters of food, some common sense practices are observed that keep the table from becoming a free-for-all.

Imagine the round table as a clock. In a tradition that dates from the feudal era, the guest of honor would sit at the 12:00 o'clock spot, facing the door, and the host would sit at the 6:00 o'clock with his back to the door. This seating indicates a relationship of trust between the guest and the host, for the guest would be the first to see a threat entering the room and the host would likely be the first victim, so the guest knows he is not being set up. In the modern era the practice has changed. Under the People's Republic, the guest still sits facing the door but the host sits next to the guest so as to assure that there is always food on the guest's plate.

Under no circumstances can one serve oneself food from a serving platter on the turntable using one's own chopsticks (or fork).

We will be seated at tables of ten at the China Garden and won't be concerned with a seating order. However, keep in mind the 12:00 location at the table: this is generally the seat closest to the kitchen and where the waiters will place each new platter of food.

On the arrival of each new dish, the person sitting in the 12:00 position should, using the serving spoon provided, take one spoonful or one morsel and move the turntable to place the platter before the person in the 1:00 o'clock position. Each person takes a small amount, one or two spoonfuls, and moves the platter around clockwise until each person has had a chance to be served. By that time, often a second platter has arrived and the process continues. The turntable continues to move in a clockwise pattern, for good reason: if persons in the one through six o'clock positions reversed the turntable direction to claim a second helping of a dish they relished, the person in the 11:00

o'clock position would get little to eat. Keep the turntable moving clockwise: there will be plenty of food and by the time there are several dishes on the turntable, there will usually be a favorite dish passing by your spot around the table at any time. Under no circumstances can one serve oneself food from a serving platter on the turntable using one's own chopsticks (or fork). Only the serving spoons should be used for serving. It is surprising how some Americans who would not dream of using their own fork or spoon to serve themselves from the common platter at a dinner party will, in a Chinese restaurant, think nothing of using their chopsticks, which they have just taken from their mouths, and rooting around the serving platter, shoving one or two food items aside, to spear a favorite morsel. Ugggh.

Finally, it is a good idea to pace oneself. We will have ten dishes. There is no need to load up your plate from the first several platters because there is going to be plenty of food for everyone.

Homeland security's international dimension (cont'd)

assistance like food stuffs, physicians, rescue workers, search and rescue aircraft, medicines and other supplies. The US plainly was not prepared nor ever seriously contemplated this scenario. Foreign medical workers without licenses, medicines without FDA approval, food ruled unacceptable by the USDA because it originated in 'Madcow' areas, all presented health hazards and legal liability issues.

FEMA along with the State Department, USAID, and the Red Cross formed a working group to handle the problem. Several foreign governments complained that their assistance was not welcomed or acceptable. In fact, much of the assistance sat idly at airports, some of it like medicines and food deteriorated. It was readily determined that monetary contributions was the only practical way to minimize the liability hurdles. The perceived leadership insufficiency at the time of the Katrina crisis should not suggest that DHS failed: it simply concentrated on preparedness for a terrorist attack not for a natural disaster of the magnitude of Katrina....

A former USIA and State Department Officer, Cris Arcos was named Ambassador to Honduras in 1989, and in 2005 became assistant secretary for international affairs at the Department of Homeland Security. He currently serves as Government Affairs Counselor at the law firm of Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Preston Gates Ellis LLP. The full text is found at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/79.htm>.

Former VOA directors appeal for reversal of plan to reduce network's presence on the world's radio airwaves

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Eleven former directors of the Voice of America have issued a joint statement calling on Congress to reverse a Bush administration plan to substantially reduce VOA's English broadcasts and those in 15 other languages.

VOA, the nation's largest publicly funded civilian overseas broadcasting network, may go silent in many areas of the world on radio later this year unless the Congress reverses the action in hearings on the U.S. federal budget for the next fiscal year starting October 1. Among the planned cuts is the shutdown on radio of VOA's worldwide English service. The former Voice directors joining in the appeal to reverse the cuts have served at various times during the past half a century under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

If the cuts go through, the Voice also would eliminate all broadcasts in Uzbek, Croatian, Georgian, Cantonese and Thai, and cease radio transmissions while retaining some television in Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Macedonian, and Hindi (to India.) Schedules would be cut, as well, in Tibetan and Portuguese to Africa.

The directors' statement follows:

"We former directors of the Voice of America urgently appeal for a reversal by Congress of planned reductions in VOA that could silence the nation's largest publicly-funded overseas broadcast network in much of the world. Taken together, the cuts would seriously jeopardize our national security and public diplomacy. Further, they would deprive millions of people of access to a fully free and open media, a core value of what our nation is all about.

"The Bush administration has proposed to eliminate VOA English in every continent except Africa, abolish services in Cantonese, Croatian, Georgian, Greek, Thai and Uzbek, cease radio broadcasts in Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, and Hindi (to India), and significantly scale back programming in Tibetan and Portuguese to Africa.

"In view of:

- Decisions by China, Russia, Iran, France and Al Jazeera TV to broadcast around the clock or increase airtime in our own language, English, spoken or understood by at least 1.6 billion people worldwide
- A 23 percent increase in Russia's military budget as Vladimir Putin muzzles his own as well as foreign news and information outlets

- New media restrictions and arrests or jailing of journalists in China, Tibet and Uzbekistan along with just declared martial law and an upsurge of extremist Muslim activity in Thailand
- The volatile situation in the Balkans as Kosovo moves toward independence, and
- VOA's proven cost effectiveness (more than 115 million listeners and viewers a week)

"We urgently appeal for an increase of the proposed \$178 million VOA budget to \$204 million for fiscal year 2008 beginning October 1. This would be mandated to cover programming and transmission of services listed above, 3.9 percent of the entire U.S. overseas broadcasting budget. This is a tiny but essential investment. Surveys show anti-American opinion abroad to be at an all-time high. At this critical moment in the post 9/11 era, the United States simply cannot, for its own long term strategic safety and security, unilaterally disarm in the global contest of ideas."

Mary G. F. Bitterman
Robert E. Button
Richard W. Carlson
Geoffrey Cowan
John Hughes
David Jackson
Henry Loomis
E. Eugene Pell
Robert Reilly
R. Peter Straus
Sanford J. Ungar

March 5, 2007

In Memoriam

- ◆ Norman Barnes, 83, whose World War II experiences in the Pacific led to a life-long interest in East Asia, died in his sleep March 8 in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. He had Parkinson's disease. After the war and his college studies, he joined the VOA in New York where he produced the program "America Calling the Philippines." After four years with VOA, he joined the USIA foreign service. His tours included Manila, Hong Kong, Taiwan (for Chinese language training), Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. He also was posted to Laos during the Vietnam War, Pakistan and Korea. With all the demands of diplomatic service, he still found time for his favorite sporting hobbies -- auto racing, golf and sailing. He drove twice in the Macau Grand Prix, and once in the Johore, Malaysia, Grand Prix. While stationed in Laos, he drove in the UN-sponsored motor rally from Teheran to Dacca, Bangladesh.
- ◆ Jim Mocer, 91, a retired USIA foreign service officer and a former Fulbright scholar, died March 14 of heart failure. He had Crohn's Disease. In World War II, he participated in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns. He joined the State Department in 1951 and was posted to Florence, Italy. His USIA assignments included Taiwan, PAO Sudan and Guinea, deputy director for plans in the Office of Policy and Plans in Washington, and assistant director for research. In 1974 he was awarded the Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy from Tufts University. After his retirement in 1976, he returned to his home town of Auburn, Washington.
- ◆ David Wilkin Smith, 85, a former USIA CAO, professor and administrator at Northern Virginia Community College and an education consultant, died March 9 of respiratory failure after a stroke. He was a Springfield, Virginia resident. In 1955, he joined USIA and was assigned to Germany as a CAO. He was director of Amerika Haus in Heidelberg and Hamburg and also served in Bonn and Bremen. After a tour in Nagoya, Japan, he returned to Washington where he was in charge of cultural exchange activities with Northern Europe at the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. He left the Foreign Service in 1968 and joined the Office of Education's Division of College Support.
- ◆ Frank M. Snowden Jr., 95, a Howard University classicist for almost 50 years and a former CAO in Rome, died February 18 in Washington. He had congestive heart failure. The Washington Post said that Snowden's research into the role of Blacks in ancient Greece and Rome opened a new field of study. His studies showed that Blacks in the ancient world seemed to have been spared the racism commonly found in later Western civilization. "The onus of intense color prejudice cannot be placed upon the shoulders of the ancients," he wrote. Dr. Snowden was fluent in Latin, Greek, German, French and Italian. He first visited Italy in 1938, on a Rosenwald fellowship, and returned a decade later as a Fulbright scholar. A frequent lecturer abroad on State Department-sponsored tours, he was named cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Rome in 1953 at the urging of Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce. Time magazine reported that his appointment combated "two of the standard Communist-propaganda charges against" the United States: "that 1) Americans are materialistic and cultureless, 2) the Negroes are downtrodden."
- ◆ Joe Vogel, 88, a former college journalism professor and USIA press attaché, died of congestive heart failure Feb. 22 at Sibley Hospital. He joined the USIA as a press officer in 1962 and served in Tehran until 1965. His USIA assignments included Istanbul, Lagos and Tel Aviv. In 1979, Dr. Vogel was sent on special assignment to Israel for Middle East peace talks between President Carter and Prime Minister Begin. In his final USIA assignment, he supervised the office for daily media reaction reports. During World War II, he was a navigator aboard a B-17 bomber. In January 1944 his plane was shot down. Joe parachuted from the burning plane, was captured by the Germans, and spent the remainder of the war in a POW camp until it was liberated by Soviet troops in May 1945. Before joining USIA, he taught journalism at Southwest Texas State Teachers College and the University of Florida. He had a 1954-55 Fulbright teaching grant to work in Assen, Netherlands. After retiring from USIA, he taught journalism at the University of Texas School of Journalism in Austin from 1979 to 1986. He returned to the Washington area in 1986.
- ◆ Sophia Yodis, 81, who after retiring from USIA returned to college to pursue degrees in spirituality and psychology, died February 26 at a nursing home in Alexandria, Virginia. In July 1945, Ms. Yodis was working on the 67th floor of the Empire State Building in New York City, when a B-25 bomber crashed between the 79th and 80th floors. She and her co-workers made it safely down the stairs. After moving to Washington, she worked for the War Assets Administration and for a judge of the Municipal Court of Appeals, before joining USIA in the late 1950s. After a tour as an executive officer in Calcutta, she returned to Washington in 1964 and worked as a documentary film archivist and reviewer until her retirement in 1985.

Editor's note: The newsletter now carries **In Memoriam** notices for spouses of the USIA and public diplomacy family. Please include information about the USIA/PD connection -- the senior positions and the overseas duty stations of the serving spouse.

Appreciations: Gordon Winkler, Abraham Sirkin, and Joan McGinley

Eddie Deerfield

Far too often these days, I get letters from 303rd Bombardment Group family members informing me that yet another of our World War II veterans has passed away. As editor of our Association's quarterly newsletter, the letters have been coming my way for the last nine years. Some of the departed veterans I knew during our time flying B-17 bombers from a base in England to attack targets in Germany and Occupied Europe. Others I met after the war at our annual reunions. It's not possible to harden one's self to this flow of sad news. The "In Memoriam" section in the March 2007 issue of *USIAAA Today* had the same disheartening effect. Three of the names impacted on my own career in USIA.

Gordon Winkler was vice president in a Chicago public relations firm when he hired me in 1962 as an account executive. When he left the firm to join USIA a few years later, I was moved up to vice-president. In 1966, I followed Gordon's example and joined USIA. Five years later, after my tours in India and Pakistan as Information Officer, Gordon asked me to request a posting in the African area, which he headed at the time. The Malawi assignment was my first as PAO, followed over the years by Kampala and Lagos. After retirement, Mary Lee and I enjoyed time with Gordon and Peg in their Georgetown home, and we continued to correspond after going our separate ways to New Mexico and Florida. He was talented and versatile, as his successes in a variety of USIA domestic and foreign assignments demonstrated.

Abraham Sirkin had just returned to Washington in 1966 after serving as PAO in Madras when I came into the Agency. My assignment to Tehran had been changed to Madras at the twelfth hour when a sudden need for an IO surfaced at the South India post. I met Abe for the first time in the old Foreign Service Lounge at 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue NW. He asked me and my wife to come to his home for dinner. Mrs. Sirkin was a charming hostess and I recall the discussion that evening as our first in-depth introduction to what life would be like at a Foreign Service post. When I left the PR firm in Chicago to join USIA, I was given a two-year leave of absence on the assumption I would return. That evening with the Sirkins was a memorable take-off on a 22-year career.

Joan McGinley has been part of our lives since the 1980s. Jim, her husband, was PAO in New Delhi when my tour as PAO in Lagos ended in 1985. It was presumed I would bid on the PAO opening in Islamabad or take a Washington assignment.

Knowing I would have to retire three years later at age 65, I chose to finish up where I started -- back to India. The BPAO slot in Calcutta was open, a good fit for a finale, and Jim encouraged me to join his team. We first met Joan, a very bright lady, at social functions during BPAO meetings in New Delhi. Jim was at my retirement party in Ed Penney's Near East/South Asia office in Washington in 1988 and made a point of conveying Joan's congratulations when I was honored with a USIA Career Achievement Award. We moved to the Tampa Bay area of Florida in 1991 about the same time that the McGinleys moved to Jacksonville. For the next five years we got together at every game in Tampa when the Redskins came to town to play the Buccaneers. Jim died in 1997. We continued to see Joan at meetings of the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida. She resigned as a Board member early this year when she became too ill to serve.

Joe B. Vogel, An Appreciation

Joe B. Johnson

I worked for Joe in 1978, when he was chief of USIA's Media Reaction Staff. We got to the office at the same early hour of 7 a.m. to begin the Morning Digest. This may be the only record of a Washington office staffed by two Texans named Joe B. (He was Joe Bill and I am Joe Bob.)

I remember Joe Vogel as a short man with a trim, silver moustache. He retained a Texan accent and the courtly manner of a Southern gentleman. Joe's sister, Pat, worked as a foreign service administrative officer for USIA.

Joe outlived at least two of his media reaction staff: Jim Schein, the masterful editor, who died of a heart attack at his desk a couple of decades later; and Don Hauger, an FSIO who passed away (also of a heart attack) a short time after retiring to the U.K. The media reaction staff was a colorful and diverse group that pulled telegrams and wire copy, typing headlines and quotes on IBM Selectrics to send its Digest off to Reproduction every morning. After that, we would get down to our in-depth products, which carried heavy titles like Current Issues and Selected Foreign Affairs Issues.

As a former journalism instructor, Joe presided effortlessly over the operation. He was not a garrulous man; I never knew of his war prisoner background when we worked together. As a former Fulbrighter and academic with real-life experience, Joe Vogel held the pedigree of a classic USIA officer.

USIAAA Member Updates

Eleven former directors of the Voice of America issued March 5 a joint statement calling on Congress to reverse a Bush administration plan to substantially reduce VOA's English broadcasts and those in 15 other languages. Association members **Mary Bitterman** and **Richard Carlson** were among the signers. The former VOA directors "urgently" appealed for a "reversal by Congress of planned reductions in VOA that could silence the nation's largest publicly-funded overseas broadcast network in much of the world. The signers noted that, "Taken together, the cuts would seriously jeopardize our national security and public diplomacy." According to the statement, "They would deprive millions of people of access to a fully free and open media, a core value of what our nation is all about." See page 6 for the full statement.

Guy Farmer, former chief of VOA's Spanish-language broadcasts to Latin America (1977-79), weighed into the VOA debate in his *Nevada Appeal* column on April 1. He called the proposed cuts "seriously flawed" noting that "English-language programs have long been a cornerstone of VOA's worldwide broadcasts." Farmer quoted fellow VOA veteran (and USIAAA member) Alan Heil who pointed out how BBG management had already eviscerated serious VOA Arabic broadcasts in favor of the rock music formats of Radio Sawa and its Farsi-language counterpart Radio Farda. Farmer added, "I hope my ex-USIA and VOA colleagues can save the Voice's flagship English-language service but given the current toxic political climate in Washington, it may go silent - and that would be another great tragedy in the history of American public diplomacy."

A February 24 *Washington Post* article about the lack of qualified personnel being sent to Iraq to help in rebuild that nation has a quote from association member **Kiki Skagen Munshi**. "The people our government has sent to Iraq are all dedicated, well-meaning people, but are they really the right people -- the best people -- for the job?" asked Ms. Munshi, a retired U.S. Foreign Service officer who, until January, headed a reconstruction team in Diyala. "If you can't get experts, it's really hard to do an expert job."

Does your mailing label say ...

[2006]

Then it is time to renew your USIAAA membership for 2007. Use the form on page 11 of the newsletter or online at ...

www.publicdiplomacy.org/7.htm. Or sign up for a **lifetime membership** and avoid the annual renewal hassle forever.

Welcome new USIAAA members

Martin J. MANNING
4701 South Park Court
Woodbridge, VA 22193
(703) 590-2512
ManningMJ@state.gov
Office (202) 453-8380

John WALSH
Unit 5301/Exec
APO AA 34039
011-59322558430
djakarta@hotmail.com
fax 011-5932261807

Member Directory Changes

Please note the following updates and corrections in the August 2006 member directory:

John M. BEINHARDT
4018 Johnson Ferry Drive
Marietta, GA 30062-5248
(770) 977-9709

JoAnn CLIFTON
4530 Coopers Hawk Rd
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
(541) 850-9212

James Herbert DE COU
3 rue Gabriel-Fauré
Le Vésinet 78110 FRANCE
33-1-30-53-47-19
jazznfiz@wanando.fr
blog: <http://web.mac.com/jazznfiz/iWeb/JAZZ%20AND%20FIZ/Blog/Blog.html>

Robert R. GAUDIAN
rrgaudian@aol.com

William L. HARWOOD
77 Overlake Park
Burlington, VT 05250

David I. HITCHCOCK
HitchDL@aol.com

Ronald P. OPPEN
Pamela Oppen
paroppen@yahoo.com

P. Paul ROTHMAN
pprrhr48@charter.net



Need to keep in touch?

Get USIAAA's **electronic** membership directory

The annual USIAAA membership directory is quite handy, but with many new

members added to the USIAAA roster since its publication, plus the normal address, telephone, and e-mail changes, keeping up-to-date with USIAAA's members can be a daunting task. We now offer a periodic electronic update of the membership directory in the standard Portable Document Format (PDF), available via e-mail for **USIAAA members only**. To request a copy of the electronic directory, please send an e-mail to **admin@publicdiplomacy.org**. (Sorry, electronic format only, not print.)

Wanted: Member News, Tributes, Appreciations

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

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 welcomed.

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

USIAAA Spring Membership Dinner

Sunday, May 6, 2007 - China Garden Restaurant (See page 1 for program details).

1100 Wilson Blvd. Rosslyn (Arlington), Virginia

Deadline for reservations: **April 30, 2007.**

Please complete the form below and mail with your check for **\$US 45.00** for each person to:

Eileen Binns

USIAAA Treasurer

6919 Radnor Rd.

Bethesda, MD 20817

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Date _____

Number of people _____ x \$US 45.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

USIAAA Membership for 2007 ... Check your mailing label for renewal status

The annual membership fee for the USIA Alumni Association is **\$US25.00**. 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 **[2006]**, it is time to renew your membership for 2007.

Lifetime membership option. One way to avoid the annual renewal is to pay a one-time fee of **\$US250.00**, and you can enjoy the benefits of membership, without the hassle of checks, envelopes, and stamps ever again.

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

Eileen Binns

USIAAA Treasurer

6919 Radnor Rd.

Bethesda, MD 20817

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Date _____

Membership type, please check one: ☐ New (\$25) ☐ Renewal (\$25) ☐ Lifetime (\$250)

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

USIAAAA Today
USIA Alumni Association
4521 N. 41st Street
Arlington VA 22207-2936

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USIA Alumni Association

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Editor: Alan Kotok

Member News Editor: Ed Scherr

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Editorial review: Peg McKay

Contributing writers: Mike Canning, Gene Nojek, Cris Arcos, Eddie Deerfield,

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