

# AFFSC Newsletter

Vol 1, Edition 1

Spring 2001

Knock/Ring and wait .....

## Dear former CM's and friends

**H**ere is your first edition of the AFFSC newsletter for members of our new association.

Your former colleagues, some of whom now reside at Swagman Jack's, and who make up the executive of the recently formed "Association of Former Foreign Service Communicators" felt a newsletter would be a worthwhile addition to a number of current activities and I hope you will agree. For those of you who do not use the Internet and are without e-mail, this is an alternative means of keeping abreast of what your colleagues are doing (or not doing).

We truly hope that this newsletter will be welcomed by you all and begin so by encouraging each of you to become actively involved. How you say? Well let me suggest that no group has more interesting stories to relate than those of us who worked as CM's and we plan to include those stories from time to time starting with this first edition.

As a beginning, we solicit your suggestions for a name for this newsletter, the above title being only temporary. We know how imaginative all of you can be - after all, it was a CM who won the prize for the title: "Panorama" - and it was a CM who devised a way to lock a certain HOM in the "back room" of his mission! So put on your thinking caps and submit your

suggestions with attachments in Word or Wordperfect to me as follows:

**Email: [drdee@sympatico.ca](mailto:drdee@sympatico.ca)**

Snail mail: David Smith, 1789 Robinwood Place, Gloucester, ON, K1C 6L8

Not to be outdone by DFAIT with their Panorama naming contest, we too will offer a small prize - to be announced in a subsequent edition.

If there are topics/contents you would like to see included in your newsletter, you are invited to submit your suggestions and comments. While the focus will be on "NEWS" of interest to our group, there is no reason why our many stories and experiences, both as former CMs and later in retirement should not be included.

As so many of you already know, George McKeever has done a superb job with his CM website ([www.magma.ca/~golauren](http://www.magma.ca/~golauren)) and with it, he keeps us up to date. Your newsletter will seek to fill in the gaps for those who have a life and don't live in front of a PC! - in other words, no email or Internet facilities. With the exception of this 1st edition, the newsletter will only be mailed to those who are members and who don't use the Internet and email. So be sure to sign up today and keep in touch with your former friends and colleagues.

## Highlights of the AGM

Name accepted was **Association of Former Foreign Service Communicators**, or AFFSC

**By-laws:** Draft By-laws were accepted in principle and will be sent out to all members for review, discussed and voted on at next AGM.

## Election:

**Directors** elected were: George McKeever, Eleanor Ryan, John Kruithof, Ed Smith and Barrie Thomas.

**Board of Directors President:** George McKeever **1st V-P:** John Kruithof

**2<sup>nd</sup> V-P:** Open for member outside Ottawa area

**Secretary:** Barrie Thomas

**Treasurer:** Eleanor Ryan

**Director at Large:** Ed Smith

**Publicity:** George McKeever

**Membership:** Barrie Thomas

**Newsletter:** David Smith

**History:** John Kruithof

## Notes from the Treasurer

Greetings to all. Is anyone surprised that I'm the treasurer, looking after all your money?

Now for an explanation. Your cheques received in February and March could not be cashed immediately. The reason was that the bank would not let us open an account until we had By-laws, Board of Directors and a letter from the Secretary. So that is why the First Annual General Meeting was moved up from May to April. On April 21st we did elect a Board of Directors, approved draft By-laws in principle and within days opened an account at the Scotia Bank, Fourth and Bank, (almost next door).

With thanks to Hazel Marshall, the receipts have been processed and will go to you with this Newsletter. Many thanks to all who sent in their

membership so quickly and for all your friendly notes that were attached.

Also at the AGM I gave a Financial Report. Income \$580.00 (all memberships), Expenses to date postage \$55.57 and supplies \$12.13 leaving cash on hand as of April 17, 2001 of \$511.30.

Our Proposed Budget - Income \$700.00, Expenses: Postage, Supplies, Hospitality, AGM expenses and Good and Welfare totalling \$685.00, was also accepted.

Wishing you all a happy and sunny summer.  
Eleanor Ryan

## Memberships - keep them coming

*We now have 75 members and one associate (wife of) and would like many more former communicators and friends to join the Assn.*

## Membership costs:

<b>Former Communicators:</b>	\$10.00
<b>Associate member</b> (spouses of former Foreign Service Communicators or former Foreign Service employees:	\$5.00
<b>Supporting members</b> (friends of former Foreign Service Communicators)	\$5.00

Please send cheque payable to "**Association of Former Foreign Service Communicators**" to:

Eleanor Ryan  
124 Fourth Avenue,  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 2L4

## Books of Interest to Foreign Service personnel

### 1. "So Many Goodbys" - Episodes in a Foreign Service Career:

*by Janice L. Sutton*

Available only from the author, Janice L. Sutton, R.R. # 3, Yarker ON, K0K 3N0 marking "Book Order" on the front of the envelope. Total cost (cheque or money order only) is \$ 23.50 - \$ 20 for the book, \$ 3.50 for mailing and handling.

*Editors note: A very nice read in my view - Janice shares her experiences beginning with her life as a secretary and later as an FSO. Her life abroad is described in wonderful detail. This is NOT a diplomat writing about "all the wonderful things I did with DFAIT".*

## **2. "No Fixed Address - Life in the Foreign Service"**

*by Christine Hantel-Fraser*

Published by University of Toronto Press in 1993. Copies are available and can be ordered by calling 1 800 565-9523. Cost \$ 24.50 - soft-cover.

The University of Toronto website [www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/orderinfo.htm](http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/orderinfo.htm) states "Inquiries regarding shipping, current price and availability may also be sent via e-mail to: [utpbooks@utpress.utoronto.ca](mailto:utpbooks@utpress.utoronto.ca) Do not send credit card information via e-mail as this address does not provide secure ordering"

A review by Peter Roberts (former ambassador to the Soviet Union) in the August 21, 1993 Ottawa Citizen reads as follows:

"A professional social scientist, Hantel-Fraser is concerned mainly with what the foreign service does to people who work in it, and even more with what it does to their spouses and children. Her material comes from two sources. She has interviewed hundreds of the people involved and lovingly analysed the results. She, with her career husband, served in several posts, as well as in Ottawa....she skilfully weaves her personal observations into the scientific conclusions from her interviews. On two questions she is particularly valid. First, what effect does the foreign service have on the lives of spouses, most of them women? What effect on the lives of foreign-born spouses, of whom she is one and who constitute an astounding 40 percent? Second, what effect does it have on the children of people in the foreign service? On these fascinating matters she writes with conviction and eloquence"

*Editors note: Some chapters essentially describe the role of the different occupational groups which includes, SCY's, CR's, CM's, EL's, FSO's and Couriers. An interesting and fun read even if it is now dated. A good trip down memory lane .*

**T**he speakers column - articles submitted by your colleagues

**PROBUS:** *By John Kruithof*

Last year I joined PROBUS, an experience so satisfying I'd like to inform retired CMs about it.

I learned of PROBUS when a neighbour delivered a speech there and invited me. Soon I was a member and have since attended several world-class lectures on a wide variety of interesting topics. Members were curious about my experience in Hong Kong during the suspenseful years of 1996-1999, so I developed a lecture and delivered it to four Clubs. I also volunteered as Special Events Co-ordinator, which led to my being organizer and co-emcee of a Regional Luncheon for 320 members. Talent can be expanded in a supportive environment. I'd encourage anyone to try it.

PROBUS is an association of retired and semi-retired PROFESSIONAL and BUSINESS people (from which PROBUS is abbreviated) but is open to anyone who has had some measure of responsibility in any field of endeavour. PROBUS seeks to stimulate thought, interest and participation in activities. Clubs provide regular gatherings to hear selected speakers, discuss travel, hobbies and special events, visit appealing places, etc. Typically a Club has less than 100 members. The annual membership fee is a nominal \$25.00 or so.

Over one hundred PROBUS Clubs are scattered across Canada.. One is likely within a short distance from where you live. A complete list is at <http://www.probus.org/canclubs.htm>. For those not on the Internet, locations can be obtained through Rotary Clubs. PROBUS itself is international, with over 5000 Clubs worldwide. Their website is <http://www.probus.org/>.

## "The Desktop Time Machine"

by Jim Fanning

The first thing the recent retiree notices is the strange and subtle shift in the time/space continuum. Time speeds up logarithmically, and one's life becomes a circus of scheduling, dominated by a conundrum of lists. Lists for school runs. Lists for necessary home repairs. Lists of when visitors arrive. Lists to control the lists.

It rapidly becomes evident to the novice time traveller in this weirdly accelerated universe that a cosmic seat belt is necessary to avoid cosmic whiplash and g-force related illness. For me, the seat belt is my life as a CM, and, more recently, the wondrously transformed, blue-caped superhero, a CS.

I take time out from my busy day as house-husband (Terry works down the road a super-secretary at a used car lot) to reflect on the lives and travels of a magical bunch of cold-warriors: renegades, over-indulgers (in many things!), visionaries, radicals, husbands, wives, lovers, dreamers. A group of unique people without whom the gears of diplomacy would not have revolved. This is your life, and what a life it was.

On my desktop, I have a time machine that transports me into the past. I downloaded from <http://daily.webshots.com> a screensaver/wallpaper changer that permits the user to download shots from thousands of personal photos posted on this site. I found pictures of exact scenes that I had viewed during my years of travel in External. The pictures download into the desktop and wham ! magic.

Flash: the stilt fishermen on the south coast of Colombo. Flash: the Temple of Heaven. Flash: a Star ferry crossing the fragrant harbour with a junk in the background. Flash: Kaitour

Falls, followed by a shot of the slow, wide Demerara River. Flash: a sheik's palace on the road to Ras al Khaimah. Flash: the harbour at Valetta. Flash: the mountains around Poiana Brasov. And on it goes...my past reviewed in 15 second snippets.

Okay, so perhaps it is not such a flashy time machine as the Tardis, but it works for me. Keep me real. It ain't the destination man, it's the trip. *Peace, Jim Fanning*

## "Posting Season" by Jim Fanning

Some of us stay,  
To watch planes fly overhead,  
and feel the surge of posting season wanderlust  
Once again,

Others leave,  
And take a final look at people and places  
In a location that they had briefly  
Called home.

Some friendships forged.  
Some personalities clashed:  
And we were all part of each other's lives  
For this brief time.

Years from now Panorama will mention names  
And changes. And we will all  
Remember today