



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Happy holidays! As we all take stock of this year and look forward to 2006, I'd like to issue my periodic invitation to avail yourselves of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*. In that regard, let me thank those of you who responded to AFSA's recent online survey of active-duty State members, which contained a number of questions referencing the *Journal* (some indirectly). Approximately 2,000 members, nearly a quarter of the State contingent, responded to the survey, a remarkably high response rate. Of those, about 400 respondents offered written comments and suggestions about the magazine's coverage, readability, etc.

While they varied considerably in subject matter, level of detail and tone, one theme was dominant: a real hunger for "news you can use" — e.g., information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at State and the other foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families. Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of *AFSA News*. But another place to look is in our relatively new **FS Know-How** department, which ran four times this year — three of them by AFSA members sharing the hard-won benefits of their own expe-

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riences. We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one's career and cutting red tape to parlaying one's professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance for Foreign Service personnel.

There are many other ways you can contribute to our pages, of course. The **Speaking Out** department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 words long) can be based on personal experience with an injustice or offer your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

## Focus Topics

Each issue of the *Journal* features a **focus section** examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service or international relations. We commission most of the

articles for these sections from different sources, but warmly welcome contributions (2,000-3,000 words is the usual range, though shorter submissions are also accepted) from FS personnel who are familiar with these issues.

On the facing page you will find a list of the focus topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year (subject, of course, to revision).

As you can see, most of these themes relate directly to Foreign Service professional and lifestyle issues, so I hope many of you will consider sharing your insights and expertise with your colleagues. Please note that because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to receive submissions at least two months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January and February issues, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months.

If those choices don't grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional concern or functional issue, please consider writing a **feature article** (generally 2,000-3,000 words long) about it for us.

While we are continuing our annual **fiction contest** (now beginning its second decade, by the way), based on your input, we have decided not to devote a summer issue to it this year. Instead, we will publish the



### 2006 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

JANUARY	Life and Work after the Foreign Service
FEBRUARY	The State of State after Condi Rice's first year
MARCH	Third anniversary of Iraq War (central theme: impact of staffing posts in Iraq and Afghanistan on the Foreign Service as an institution)
APRIL	Latin America
MAY	Career development for FS Specialists
JUNE	Globalization & Development: The U.S. Role (USAID, MCC, etc.) (PLUS: semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)
JULY/AUGUST	The Post-DRI Era: Human Resources Management (PLUS: AFSA Awards coverage)
SEPTEMBER	Reforming the United Nations and other international organizations
OCTOBER	Public Diplomacy (evaluating Karen Hughes' first year)
NOVEMBER	Best & Worst of the Foreign Service (based on reader survey) (PLUS: "In Their Own Write," annual roundup of books by FS authors)
DECEMBER	Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union (PLUS: semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)

winning story (most likely in the July-August double issue, as in years past) and a few of the other stories in other issues throughout the year, space permitting. Otherwise, the rules and timing are the same: entrants are still restricted to one story of 3,000 words or less, which must be e-mailed to *Journal* Business Manager Mikkela Thompson at [thompsonm@afsa.org](mailto:thompsonm@afsa.org) no later than April 1. For more details, see the ads in the next several issues of the *Journal* or contact Mikkela directly.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy, along with promotional materials, for inclusion in our seventh annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, "In Their Own Write." Sept. 1 is still the deadline for inclusion in the roundup, which will run in November (but, in a change from the past few years, it will appear as a feature, not as that issue's focus). For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at [maitra@afsa.org](mailto:maitra@afsa.org).

### Share Your Insights

Our **Reflections** department presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive "travel pieces." Note that

we are pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Don't forget that the monthly *AFSA News* section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues. We are now — as always — accepting submissions for a number of features, including: Family Member Matters, Of Special(ist) Concern (a forum for specialists), Where to Retire, Memo of the Month and The Lighter Side (FS humor). Find more details in this month's *AFSA News*, or contact *Journal* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman for more information at [dorman@afsa.org](mailto:dorman@afsa.org).

Finally, let me invite you to share your reactions, positive and negative, to what you read each month in our **Letters** section. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we'll be able to print it in full.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at [authors@afsa.org](mailto:authors@afsa.org) and we will be delighted to respond. For other inquiries — changes of address, subscriptions, etc. — e-mail us at [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)

Let us hear from you. ■