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THE
FAWCO
Newsletter of the Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas Inc.

Overseas Americans Week 2008 – Advances on Several Fronts

FAWCO’s largest delegation ever went to Washington in mid-April for the 8th annual “Overseas Americans Week,” with three main objectives: to grow the recently formed Americans Abroad Caucus, to promote new legislation that would remove some remaining obstacles to voting from overseas, and to support efforts to reduce the increasingly heavy tax burden on Americans living and working abroad.

President Celeste Brown and U.S. Liaison Lucy Laederich joined Citizenship Co-Chair Michelle Miller, Voting from Overseas Chair Mary Stewart Burgher, U.S. Tax Chair Eric Way and Washington Representative Dale Koepenick for close to one hundred of a total of around 150 meetings, organized together with their colleagues from AARO (Association of Americans Resident Overseas) and ACA (American Citizens Abroad). The AARO delegation was even larger, and included its President Kathleen de Carvuccia (also FAWCO Citizenship Co-Chair) and Executive Vice President Andy Coyne, both from Paris.

The week began with a briefing the three groups had organized for Congressional staffers to give a quick overview of the issues currently of concern to their members and discuss these with them individually. Both this briefing and a Wednesday evening reception were made possible by FAWCO sponsor Clements International.

The second high point of the week was a hearing especially organized by the House Administration Committee to coincide with Overseas Americans Week. Among other responsibilities, this is the committee that reviews and makes recommendations on all voting legislation. At the hearing, Committee Members heard testimony on two bills from their authors, Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Kevin McCarthy (R-CA); the first makes practical amendments to UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act), eliminating some barriers to voting by these two populations and allowing young people who do not meet state residency requirements to vote at the address of their eligible U.S. citizen parent(s), and the second provides for expedited collection and delivery of military absentee ballots. FAWCO supports both bills, respectively HR 4237 and HR 5637.

Eleanor Roosevelt Girls’ Leadership Program

Every summer since 1997, the Eleanor Roosevelt Girls’ Leadership Workshop offers two special nine-day sessions conducted by committed, dedicated and highly accomplished women in government, medicine, education and business. These sessions, held at Eleanor Roosevelt’s home at Val Kill in Hyde Park, New York, consist of classes, seminars and field trips for girls entering the equivalent of sophomore or junior year in high school. The program, designed to celebrate the life and legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt, develops self-esteem, confidence, and skills needed to exercise leadership; provides opportunities for self-awareness, self-definition and growth; and nurtures sisterhood, citizenship, and social responsibility.

Of the hundreds of girls who applied, submitting essays identifying issues about which they felt strongly and the manner in which they have addressed these issues, FAWCO is proud to announce that four daughters of FAWCO members have met the selection criteria of personal maturity, demonstrated volunteer service, social/civic issue awareness, intellectual readiness, and a potential and demonstrated leadership quality.

FAWCO is pleased to support the program and donated $3300 in honor of Eleanor Roosevelt and the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

FAWCO congratulates and extends their best wishes to both the girls and their proud parents.

Participants — Our FAWCO Member
Shannon Gereely-Copley — Louise Gereely-Copley (FAUSA)
Eleanor Jacobs — Amanda Norton (AWC Luxembourg)
Jill Kennedy — Mary Kennedy (AWOG- Greece)
Carlotta Ruiz — Julie Nauman (AAWE- Paris)

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Photo by James Kogan, AARO Director
US Liaison Lucy Laederich at an Overseas Americans Week briefing for Congressional staffs on April 14

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FAWCO is a network of independent American and international volunteer organizations representing private-sector citizens overseas. Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit U.S. corporation with over 75 Member Clubs representing more than 15,000 individuals throughout the world. A recognized non-governmental organization (NGO) since 1995, FAWCO was granted special consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the UN in 1997.

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In Memoriam

ELAINE SENIGALLIA

Elaine Senigallia died on January 10, 2008, in Rome. She lived for over fifty years in an *attico* with glorious views to the Pincio Gardens and the dome of St. Peters. She remembered an era of few cars and no traffic lights, when women wore hats and had maids. “It was at that pleasant moment,” she wrote, “that AWAR was organized.” AWAR was the American Women’s Association of Rome; the year was 1955; the Ambassador was Claire Booth Luce. “I was not at all interested. It did not occur to me to join until a friend persuaded me to come to the first meeting. I met some delightful people and, feeling a little foolish (a women’s club, for heaven’s sake!), I joined.” Within a few months, she became program chairman, then publicity chairman, and eventually president. She continued as a valued consultant for the next forty years.

Elaine, her husband Silvio and I shared a van on a FAWCO safari in Kenya. Silvio was charming and effervescent, a sprightly elf. Elaine was more sober. They flirted continuously. They were both journalists; they had met in New York. Elaine, a Wellesley graduate, wrote for *Women’s Wear Daily*. In Rome, she covered fashion for *The International Herald Tribune*.

Elaine was part of the FAWCO team that worked on overseas voting rights. She submitted her report, “Americans Who Can’t Vote,” to Congress in 1968. She became FAWCO President, 1981-1983, beginning an important decade of expansion and evolution. In Lugano she presided over the first Interim Conference that was open to members-at-large, not just officers and committee chairs; 110 attended. She wanted to keep the FAWCO momentum, not let it languish over a two-year hiatus.

Even today she continues to influence FAWCO. In Casablanca in 1986, Elaine stood at the podium as Membership Chair and asked for a debate on becoming a global entity with member clubs on every continent. “We are the Federation of American Women’s Clubs *Overseas*, after all.” Just this year, with our first conference in Asia, her vision has come to fruition.

She edited the FAWCO Red Book Histories of 1991 and 2000; she is a Circle of Honor recipient. The Foundation is offering a Humanities Award in her honor.

She believed in ideas. She cared to express them in a clear and cogent language. She liked to put thoughts into a logical progression, to view the larger picture, then the details. She had a vision of the possibilities and a boredom of the mundane. I will remember this— in appreciation and respect, and with affection.

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2008 FAWCO Conference

*Learning about Korea, FAWCO and the World*

Cheryl and Jan Steenman
AWC Amsterdam
(Wife and Husband)

The AWC of Korea was extremely proud to host this year’s FAWCO conference, the first in Asia. The five-day Conference drew 155 FAWCO members and their guests. A four-day pre-conference tour, *Taste of Seoul*, introduced over 50 first time visitors to Seoul and South Korea, while the equally fascinating post-conference tours in Beijing and Shanghai offered attendees the opportunity to further expand their Asian experience before returning home.

Modern South Korea is a well-developed industrialized country with a good standard of living for the whole population. Much like any modern European or U.S. city, there are many high-rise buildings and streets with six or eight lanes of very intense traffic. The landscape of Seoul is very hilly with little greenery, and the cold, dry winters and hot summers do not make it easy for much to grow. In addition to Buddhism, Christianity is widespread among the South Koreans with the crosses on the steeples of the many churches brightly lit at night.

The *Taste of Seoul* tour brought us to the Changdok Palace and gardens that once housed the royal family. Unfortunately, because of the occupation by the Japanese and the Korean War, only 30% of the buildings, which are beautifully restored, and a few items of original furniture remain. We also visited a Korean Folk Village where traditional architecture and life style has been preserved. Traditional weddings are enacted daily; however, the day of our visit, a couple had decided to have a traditional wedding in traditional attire. The groom arrived on a white horse and the bride in a carriage carried by four men. Unfortunately, the ceremony, while surely perfect for the young couple, was slightly marred for the onlookers by the snow and freezing temperature, but the spectacle was nonetheless impressive.

We later visited Kangwha Island located 60 km west of Seoul that has historically been the focus of many foreign attacks.

(Continued on P. 5)

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Conference Trends for the Future

New in Seoul, the BOOST (Be Open, Organized, and Successful Today) Sessions allowed attendees to choose from multiple topics related to personal and club development.

**BOOST: Attracting and Keeping Club Members** presented by Norah Franchetti, Crown Group Vice-President, Learning and Development

This interactive presentation applied current demographic statistics used by businesses in developing their marketing campaigns to demonstrate that potential new club members are out there. Participants learned not only how fascinating statistics can be, but also how to use them to determine what measures clubs need to employ to attract new members. A compendium of ideas for recruitment has been posted on the FAWCO web site [www.fawco.org] by clicking on the link to the Conference Korea 2008 page.

**BOOST: Public Speaking with Poise and Confidence** presented by Jaap Russchenberg, Division B Governor, District 59, Toastmasters International

Those who dared stand up and speak received valuable feedback, which no doubt will have an immediate impact on their future presentations, and even the timid left the session having profited from Jaap Russchenberg’s useful tips for improving their presentation skills, which included a reminder that heartfelt remarks are more effective for convincing an audience than a simple PowerPoint presentation.

**Parallel Sessions** For the first time this year, FAWCO’s parallel sessions, which traditionally offered concurrently running, targeted presentations for Club Presidents and FAWCO Reps, with respectively role specific programs, this year has been expanded to include a series of entertaining and informative sessions for participants and guests.

Both initiatives met with enthusiastic approval and will be carried forward into future conferences.
Those attending the FAWCO Conference in Korea viewed a documentary film about The Organic Farmer, the free farmers’ magazine for Africa and developing countries, featuring one of its most important contributors, Su Kahumbu. Su is the Kenyan “Dear Abby,” and in her advice columns she offers practical information to small scale farmers for improving their crops and their lives. She is a multi-talented mother of three, a rock singer and a pioneer of organic farming in Africa. She is committed to improving the lives of farmers in a country where 80% of the population lives directly or indirectly from agriculture and most of the farm work is done by women who often have little access to educational opportunities although they play a central role in feeding and caring for their families and communities.

Su Kahumbu recognizes that for African farmers “organic” is a way to get good harvests without expensive input such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides. She knows that it is vital for farming families without means to receive instruction on how to increase harvests without huge financial investment. She has become a role model encouraging farmers to be proud of their profession and what they produce with their own hands. Most important, she has demonstrated that ecologically sound, sustainable development can become a reality in Africa and proven that the marketing of organic agricultural products has a promising future here.

Su is an organic farming pioneer and her warm charm, enthusiasm and communication skills make her a natural leader and educator. Her monthly column in The Organic Farmer has made her an advisor to a large following of farmers that now numbers over 100,000. Her in-field farmers’ training and her in-shop marketing sessions help small scale farmers to improve their production, income and self esteem as she teaches them to produce more and better crops and sell them at a profit, while at the same time protecting and improving the human and natural environment. Su says, “Those of us that have the tools to empower others must use them and stretch them to their limits.”

For all of the above reasons and because she is a woman who uses hard work, courage and innovation to educate and empower others, FAWCO has proudly nominated Su Kahumbu as a candidate for the Women’s World Summit Foundation 2008 Prize for Women’s Creativity in Rural Life. Visit the FAWCO website to view the 10 minute documentary film and meet our nominee, Su Kahumbu.

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Kenya’s 1st Organic Farmer – FAWCO’s Nominee for Women’s Creativity in Rural Life Prize

How many young lives does $137,519.00 save in the fight against malaria? That is the exciting US dollar amount that FAWCO has collected in the past three years in support of its adopted resolution: “...to focus on malaria, the single largest killer of children, with a commitment to world wide malaria prevention.”

FAWCO and its members have enthusiastically supported this initiative, partnering with the Swiss foundation BioVision in pilot projects in Kenya. With the purchase and distribution of insecticide treated bed nets and education, FAWCO has contributed greatly to the success of these projects with many, many lives saved.

At the heart of these “help through self help” projects is education. The lack of practical information in the fields of agriculture and health is a principle factor restraining progress in Kenya and many other African countries. One way our partner BioVision is addressing this problem is with The Organic Farmer (TOF). TOF is a free magazine that reaches over 100,000 people every month.

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to tracking to confirm to voters that their ballots have indeed been received, and Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman, who made an impassioned plea for a federal ‘mandate’ to correct certain aspects of her state’s laws and facilitate absentee voting.

OAW delegates were delighted to learn that immediately following that hearing, Representative Charles Gonzales (D-TX), a member of the House Administration Committee who had been actively engaged in the discussions, called Caucus Chair Maloney’s office to announce his intent to join the Caucus.

The Wednesday evening reception sponsored by Clements International drew over forty guests in addition to the 20-strong OAW delegation. Congresswoman Maloney and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) spoke about the Americans Abroad Caucus they founded over a year ago and about some of its bipartisan initiatives like making Congressional websites more “friendly” for overseas constituents. Mrs. Maloney also told about her bill, the latest of her many efforts to improve voting procedures for Americans abroad. Mr. Wilson announced that he and Mrs. Maloney had received confirmation from the Treasury Department that there is no legal basis in the Patriot Act for refusals by banks to maintain or open accounts for customers with foreign addresses. FAWCO members are not alone in having reported being unable to administer accounts for which they are executors, maintain a US bank account with which to make tax payments or campaign contributions, or transfer funds to a new and more advantageous U.S.-based bank. OAW delegates also met with senior staff on the House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Banking Committee, asking for their help in correcting this situation which imposes a hardship on many Americans abroad.

Congressman Wilson welcomed and introduced his colleague Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) of the House Foreign Relations Committee as the newest member of the Americans Abroad caucus. With the arrival of Representatives Payne and Gonzalez, alongside Representatives Conaway (R-TX) and Schakowsky (D-IL), caucus membership at week’s end stood at 19 and by May 1, it had risen to 24, with Mike Doyle (D-PA), Jim Moran (D-VA), Rush Holt (D-NJ), James McGovern (D-MA) and André Carson (D-IN).

Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) also spoke at the reception (see photo) and explained why, as a Japanese-American with a large overseas constituency, he, too, has introduced legislation (HR 4173) to improve voting procedures abroad. His bill is very similar to Ms Maloney’s but adds funding for voter outreach and information programs and requires the State Department to put information on voting rights and procedures in U.S. passports.

The featured speaker at the reception was Michael Caudell-Feagan of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Mr. Caudell-Feagan heads a project called Make Voting Work and centered his talk on not only the special challenges facing overseas voters but also promising initiatives that have been taken and current experiments to expand the use of technology to enhance both speed and security in the voting process. He places great faith in the “bottom-up” principle of working closely with states to iron out problems before seeking solutions on the federal level.

By week’s end, the FAWCO delegation had visited all 17 offices in the Americans Abroad Caucus and all offices on the House Administration Committee, urging (Continued from P. 1 - Overseas Americans Week)
Education Support Committee Completes 7-Year Project in Seoul

Susan van Alsenoy esc@fawco.org

In 2001 the FAWCO Educational Support Committee launched a project to aid students who learn differently, their families, and their educational professionals. The purpose of the research was to provide simple strategies that mainstream teachers, working worldwide in pre-schools through universities, might employ to help the LD pupils in their classes learn more effectively.

With the help of 47 experts in the educational field, an initial 203 strategies were refined and reduced to create a single page of suggestions for ease of use by busy professionals. The next step in the project was to obtain translations of this page into all the languages where FAWCO has member clubs. Korean is the most recent of the 27 translations completed to date.

The final phase is to offer this research to the host countries and international schools where FAWCO members reside. To this end, a cover letter was presented at the Seoul conference to use as a template when sending out this information. The result of this research has already been hand-delivered to Dr. Wendy Tata at the United States Department of Education in Washington, D.C. A detailed explanation of the project as well as the translations is available on the FAWCO website (www.fawco.org).

Evenings we enjoyed Korean-style meals and went to traditional dance and musical shows as well as the play, “Jump,” which has also been performed in New York City and was spectacular. The Charlie Chaplin style acting, martial arts, kung fu action, and audience participation kept the audience engaged and laughing.

The visit to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) at the 38th parallel and the barracks at Panmunjong were particularly interesting. This is where the negotiations took place between North and South Korea under the supervision of the UN. The site is very reminiscent of Berlin in the 1970s and 1980s, where the communist guards peered through binoculars at everyone passing. We also walked through part of one of the four tunnels excavated under the DMZ in the 1980s by the North Koreans intending to enter South Korea in a surprise attack.

A major focus of the conference was the plight of the North Koreans. Norbert Volkersten, M.D., who, in the...
late 1990s, worked for 18 months in North Korea before he was expelled, and is currently a human rights activist, explained that the much publicized food shortages in North Korea represent only the tip of the iceberg. There is also a lack of basic facilities and equipment in hospitals as well as commodities and staples such as soap, anesthesia for operations, glass for windows, and electricity. Another speaker, Tim Peters of Helping Hands Korea works to help North Koreans who have fled their country. The only way it seems possible to leave North Korea is by way of China where often they are arrested, imprisoned and penalized, and subsequently repatriated to North Korea. Mr. Peters’ underground organization undertakes the extremely difficult and dangerous job of trying to get them to safe harbor in Thailand.

This, my first FAWCO conference, has enlightened my life and opened my eyes to others’ lives in ways I had not expected. It was equally interesting to meet and get to know the American women living there and to see how they have learned to adjust to Korean life, foods, language and culture. They are really embracing their adopted home and blooming where they are planted. Jan and I are glad we went!

May 29, 2008 marked the fourth anniversary of the terrorist attack in Khost during which Dianne suffered extensive wounds to her legs. She is scheduled for, hopefully, a last surgery this summer. Dianne writes, “…I wouldn’t have come through this without all of the love and support of my FAWCO family.”

We all wish Dianne a total recovery and hope to see her soon at a future conference.

In a new focus, TOF will print special supplements to the farmers’ news on subjects such as healthcare. FAWCO has sponsored the important first, health edition with four pages on malaria prevention information by printing additional copies of the malaria insert specifically for schools. Kenyan radio stations and other media channels are spreading the content further. The Organic Farmer with the FAWCO sponsored supplement on malaria is available for downloading at [www.ngo.fawco.org/malaria]. This is yet another way that FAWCO is contributing to sustainable malaria eradication in support of the UN Millennium Development Goals.
When you live overseas, you are special. You are special in your host country because you are an American. When you visit family and friends in the USA, you are special because you live in an exotic place. When you return to the United States permanently—you are not special anymore. You are just another American in America, and your friends can only take so much of your rhapsodizing about your exciting and challenging previous life. That is the first blow.

The second blow comes when you realize that Americans who haven’t lived outside the country are, for the most part, isolated and simply cannot understand what is happening beyond their borders.

If you are employed, the third blow may come when you notice that your co-workers have moved on while you were away.

Your children may return from school unhappy because they have a different accent and a different view of the world from their classmates. That is the fourth blow.

The fifth blow is that you have no one to speak to about all this.

The FAWCO Alumnae USA, better known as FAUSA, is here to help. FAUSA is a nation-wide network of “repat.” Our organization is the perfect way to keep in touch with the international side of your life that was and is so important to you. FAUSA members are kept up-to-date about everything having to do with FAWCO, and they may participate in FAWCO activities.

We keep in touch through e-mail and our quarterly magazine. Small groups meet regularly around the country, and we all get together annually in a different location in the United States. In October 2009 we will meet in Longboat Key, Florida.

We also have a charity component, which focuses on the Americas, and each year, a member, member’s child, or member’s grandchild receives our FAUSA Education Award.

To find out more about FAUSA and to become a member, please visit our website: www.fausa.org.
The FAWCO Foundation

The FAWCO Foundation 2008 Development Grant Recipients

The FAWCO Foundation announced the recipients of the 2008 Development Grants at the FAWCO Conference in Seoul. FAWCO clubs nominated 35 projects this year. This is truly a global program as the projects spanned 25 countries from four continents. We should be encouraged by the remarkable and innovative projects that were nominated, with 55 clubs participating in the voting process to select the recipients. The Foundation awarded one grant in eight categories, each worth $3500. ♦

A PLACE TO LEARN sponsored in part by Barcelona Women’s Network
The primary school of Assumer educates approximately 64 students in Avilla, a rural commune in Morocco. The school has potable water but no indoor plumbing. The Grant will fund the construction of separate inside toilets for the girls and the boys, and construct housing for the school’s teachers, who live there.

The Primary School Project
located in Assumer, Morocco
nominated by AWC Casablanca

AROUND THE CORNER, A WORLD AWAY sponsored in part by the AWC Luxembourg
Peaceful Home for Children is a rural project. The children, orphaned by AIDS or disabled, have no parents and little hope for the future. The grant will help construct and furnish a safe and secure compound of six permanent family-style houses.

Hope Peaceful Home for Children
located in Nairobi, Kenya
nominated by AWA Kenya

CRITICAL HEALTH CONCERNS sponsored in part by AWC Basel
Heart To Heart Shanghai has assisted many needy children through its clothing, book and toy donations and by raising funds to sponsor heart-surgery for 94 needy Chinese children. The Grant will sponsor heart surgeries for more of these children.

Heart to Heart
located in Shanghai, China
nominated by AWC Shanghai

EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE sponsored in part by AWC The Hague
This program began as part of the “Oasis of Care” shelter program. The shelter provides homeless, abandoned and orphaned children with food, housing, and health care, enabling them to escape a life of prostitution or theft. Originally an abandoned building, the shelter cares for up to 40 children. The Grant will finance two new bathrooms.

Mayday! Mayday! located in Carei, Romania
nominated by AILO Florence

ENDING HIV/AIDS sponsored in part by AWC Auckland
Grandma-2-Grandma helps grandmothers (bibis) who are raising their AIDS orphaned grandchildren. The Grant will: 1) Help the bibis educate women and girls in their communities on HIV/AIDS prevention, and 2) Allow them to stockpile craft supplies needed to create the batiks, thus increasing sales.

Grandma-2-Grandma
located in Tanzania, East Africa
nominated by AWC Stockholm

AW OF SURREY FEED THE WORLD
The Caritas Athens Refugee Program offers services, including monthly food bags to around 80 families. The contents contain essential items, including a liter of olive oil, used daily in Asian and African cooking. Currently financed by the center, this Grant will purchase this otherwise expensive commodity for the food bags.

The Caritas Athens Refugee Program
located in Athens, Greece
nominated by AWO Greece

AWA OF VIENNA HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION
Tulay Ng Kabataan, created in 1998, aids the poorest children in Manila. It provides basic needs, such as food and housing for girls, the poorest of the poor, from the shantytowns of Manila, but does not provide for their education. The Grant will pay for the education of one or more girls for a year.

Scholarship Fund for Girls
located in Manila, the Philippines
nominated by AWG Languedoc-Roussillon

SKILLS FOR LIFE co-sponsored by AILO Florence and AW of the Eastern Province
Women for Girls believe that given the opportunity, women can express their creativity, initiate economic activities, improve self esteem and participate in the decision making process within the community. This grant will be used to purchase a grain mill to liberate the women from the time consuming process of hand grinding, creating extra time in which they can obtain training in literacy, numeracy and management.

Women for Girls
The Mill Project
located in Mbousnakh, Senegal
nominated by AIWC Genoa ♦