



The Forum

Newsletter of the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Inc.

Winter 2006

2005-2007 Board of Directors

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www.fawco.org

Groundbreaking at the new "FAWCO House" in Sri Lanka

Official groundbreaking for the "FAWCO House" in Beruwala Village, Sri Lanka, funded by proceeds from FAWCO's Emergency Relief Fund (ERF), took place on October 28, 2005. When completed, the "FAWCO House" will consist of twelve apartments for women and children whose husbands and fathers lost their lives during the Asian tsunami on December 26, 2004. In the three months following the tsunami tragedy, FAWCO member clubs and individuals contributed \$48,000 for this building project. This unprecedented level of donations will completely subsidize the building of new homes for these families left homeless by this natural disaster. FAWCO is proud to be a part of this rebuilding project. We look forward to the dedication of the "FAWCO House" in 2006.

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Pictured laying the first stone is project director, Pierre Vivier, founder and president of the Beruwala Village Humanitarian Association.

FAWCO Clubs Donated 1.7 Million Dollars in 2005

Emily van Eerten

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In the fall of 2005, the FAWCO Board was pleased to learn that a former Nobel Peace Prize winner would consider the work of FAWCO and its member clubs for a possible nomination for the 2006 award. Our member clubs were asked to submit their yearly reports placing special emphasis on the good works they accomplished in 2005. Using these reports, a brief but comprehensive portrait of FAWCO in 2005 was compiled. Given a mountain of information from FAWCO's 78 member clubs, global committees, and liaisons, which was already presented in condensed form, it was a formidable task to condense these accomplishments even further.

The nominations were due on February 1, but, unfortunately, are not made public. We may never know if this application has led to a nomination. Nevertheless, FAWCO is extremely honored to have been brought to the attention of a former prize winner and we have been enriched by having been given a reason and an opportunity to examine and process what our clubs are doing. Our altruistic spirit has been present throughout our seventy-five year history

and rarely acknowledged. This spirit of helping and giving starts with the primary task of helping each other settle into new lives in new countries, celebrating cherished cultural holidays from "home," and learning about and sharing with new friends. All of our clubs, small and large, young and old excel at this aim.

As time and resources allow, many of our clubs also add a philanthropic component to the mix – our member clubs were collectively responsible for donating \$1.7 million in 2005 alone, to an astonishing variety of charitable organizations, donating thousands of hours of community service and collecting and distributing an untold amount of food and goods, primarily for the benefit of disadvantaged women and children. Although this amount may seem modest next to professional charitable organizations, FAWCO member volunteerism, projects, grants and scholarships on the whole raise a disproportionate amount of awareness and commitment, all the while encouraging self worth and empowerment for our members and the lives they touch. If you would like to read the report, please see www.fawco.org.

FAWCO is the largest international network of independent associations representing private American citizens overseas. Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit U.S. corporation that has more than 75 member clubs representing more than 17,000 members in 35 countries worldwide. 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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FAWCO Interview With President Emily van Eerten

Connie Moser
AWC Amsterdam

Madame President has hit the ground running. She's been visiting FAWCO clubs throughout Europe, The Netherlands, Italy, Norway, and Germany, to name but a few. She's been to Geneva meeting with other American clubs in preparation for Overseas Americans Week. She's been to Washington, meeting on the Hill with senators, congressmen, and think tanks. And she answers a few hundred e-mails on a regular basis, while working to support Emergency Relief Fund projects, implement *Millennium Development Goals* through our consultative NGO status and improve FAWCO's worldwide visibility. Add in three children, her Dutch husband, local Amsterdam American Women's Club activities, and swimming for the Malaria Networks swim fundraiser and you may catch a glimpse of Emily van Eerten in motion - definitely a woman on the move.

"It's astonishing the amount of ignorance there is concerning people who are living abroad. The assumption is that they all are wealthy expat tax dodgers, when in reality they are regular people, teachers, students, those married to locals, widows, retirees, and business representatives for American companies - the whole gamut. Often people who live abroad are more patriotic and conscious of their American heritage than those who have never left the country. Every year in Washington the profile of FAWCO members has been raised. We're on the radar. It's important to let the legislature know how its decisions affect overseas Americans. We've already made significant headway with voting, though the census efforts did not provide enough response to be statistically valid. In the future, a caucus to create specific interest for Americans living overseas and their needs could be presented in position papers relative to those needs," Emily commented.

Speaking out is what she's about. A graduate of Rice University, with a law degree from Tulsa University, a civil litigation lawyer for the defense, as well as the founder and director of a theatre company with five

shows per year, Emily is passionate about people. "When visiting the clubs, I've been impressed by how very divergent they are in their profiles and in their different cultural traditions. From those married with locals to women who have traveled extensively, we really are world citizens with a compassion for the philanthropic. Wherever they go, these women give more than they take and contribute to the local communities," she revealed. "Moreover, we are first and foremost a networking and support organization. The Federation is a loose coalition of willing participants in an international community and through work, birth, or marriage reach out to each other to make transition and assimilation as successful as possible. At times it results in odd friendships, an unexpected combination of background, schooling, and heritage, women all sharing their knowledge in a strange environment, from the subtle to the obvious. We can all use help at times. You bring what you bring and often it is a fantastic mix of personalities. At every club I visited, I was warmly received and made to feel extremely welcome."

And her own mix? A chance meeting with the only Dutch naval officer at a Cheyenne rodeo festival with hundreds of cowboys, a three year long-distance romance and marriage, island life in Curacao, where she read news on the radio and taught American history and psychology, moving on to a NATO posting in England, and currently her home in The Netherlands. As web woman, she caught FAWCO fever while communicating with members around the globe. "In Washington at the 2000 conference, it was so great to put faces with people I only knew by their e-mail addresses." She went on to design websites for other clubs and in 2001 became 1st VP for PR and Internet Presence at the Luxembourg conference. Ever dedicated, she brought her six week old baby to the Florence conference in 2002. "It was wonderful having 200 surrogate grandmothers to assist!" She served as Regional coordinator for the

Benelux, attended conferences in Stockholm and The Hague, and in Birmingham 2005 became our new Madame President.

She is justifiably proud of FAWCO. "Collective work makes a large impact. FAWCO is all volunteers and we accomplish amazing things together. . . And there's a world of good to embrace. There are so many nationalities represented in our membership. They have traveled and know what it's like to integrate and assimilate, often repeatedly." Emily's advice: "Let's make it personal, reaching people, letting them know that individual effort does count. Don't underestimate what you can do. Everyone does what they can and it works. We celebrate our individual efforts collectively in our 75th anniversary. . . Since 1931, and for many clubs even longer, people have gotten together to help and support each other and their communities. That's as grassroots as it gets. The breadth of experience is phenomenal. You name the talent and we have it within our clubs. I fully anticipate we will be around for another 75 years."



FAWCO President Emily van Eerten, r, with Terri Knudsen, Region 2 Coordinator, at the 2005 Oslo FAWCO Regional.

Dillard University to Receive Hurricane Katrina ERF Funds

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The FAWCO Board has chosen Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana to be the recipient for the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) following Hurricane Katrina. While many schools along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were damaged by the hurricane, one of the worst hit was Dillard University which was located near one of the breached levees. Much of the campus was covered by twelve feet of water and many of the buildings were damaged by wind and fire.

Dillard University was founded in 1869. One of the first African-American liberal arts colleges, it currently has nearly 2000 students, almost all of whom are on scholarship. Most of the students come from black families in the Gulf area. Dillard had the first accredited nursing school in Louisiana. Following the hurricane, however, the staff and students were evacuated to Shreveport, Louisiana while the school decided how to move forward.

Following the hurricane, Dillard University's President was philosophical. "Our beginnings are rooted in struggle and a committed determination to overcome social, political and environmental obstacles. . . . Today we face a formidable challenge; however... we are guided by our unwavering belief

and absolute confidence that Dillard will be back and better."

By supporting Dillard University (now an equal opportunity university) in its time of need, the FAWCO Board plans to direct our donation to rebuilding a specific department or program. We hope that FAWCO clubs will join us in supporting Dillard as the recipient of the FAWCO Emergency Relief Fund.

Information about sending funds to the FAWCO treasurer is found on the FAWCO website: http://www.fawco.org/latest_news/donate.html or by contacting treasurer@fawco.org. Donations will be accepted through the FAWCO conference in Berlin, March 2-6, 2006. See also: www.dillard.edu

75th Anniversary Book documents FAWCO's History

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During three days in May 1931, some twenty American women from five different European countries met in London to pursue the idea of forming an association of American Women's Clubs. Its purpose: to work towards international goodwill and the preservation of world peace, while at the same time helping one another solve problems common to them all.

As a result of that meeting, representatives from six American Women's Clubs from London, Berlin, The Hague, Zurich, Paris and Vienna met the

following year in Berlin to officially form the Federation of American Women's Clubs in Europe. The name was soon changed to Federation of American Women's Club Overseas and the acronym FAWCO adapted soon thereafter.

From this small, courageous beginning to a vibrant organization today of seventy-eight clubs throughout the world, FAWCO continues to practice the vision set forth by its founder, Caroline Curtis Brown. This rich history has now been documented by a special 75th Anniversary Book, available only on order.

Besides a year-by-year account of FAWCO's activities and achievements, this book contains essays that follow the actions taken on various topics by the committees. These include U.S. citizens' concerns, voting from overseas,

citizenship rights, the environment, UN NGO and ECOSOC activities, education issues, and women's health issues. Several women have written memoirs of their lives and experiences abroad, and tributes have been made to many extraordinary FAWCO women for their service to the organization.

The emergence of FAWCO's philanthropic arm, the FAWCO Foundation, is covered in great detail, and the creation most recently of the FAWCO Alumnae USA group, FAUSA, is described. Lists of every sort appear for those interested in statistics and a short description of each member club has been recorded.

Of course, in between all the written words are photos of the rich history that is FAWCO. For information on obtaining a copy, please write: historybook@fawco.org.

The World Swim for Malaria – Pooling Together!

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On December 3, 2005 over a quarter of a million people in over 130 countries made a big splash by joining the World Swim for Malaria - a splash - that raised a lot of money and also created a great deal of awareness for the tragedy of malaria. FAWCO was pleased to join this global fundraising swim with close to thirty registered swimmers in pools, oceans, and even bathtubs!

We had swims in the US, in New Zealand, and all over Europe – some small and some large. The AWC Zurich swim was hugely successful with 189 swimmers going the distance – 281 kilometers – for malaria. They raised over \$12,000 and had fun doing it! Some of the smaller swims that featured children were also hugely successful because of the use of “sponsor me” pages on the user-friendly World Swim website.

FAWCO’s participation with World Swim for Malaria was an energetic idea coming from FAWCO’s NetWorks initiative. NetWorks was created after the member organizations agreed to band together in the battle against malaria in March 2005; its goal is to raise \$75,000 by FAWCO’s 75th anniversary, March 2006, for the purchase of long lasting insecticide-treated bed nets. We are well on our way to achieving that goal.

A splash is a good start, but a tidal wave of swimmers pooling together for malaria eradication would be better. The swims will continue up until June 3, so if you have not yet done a swim or if you would like to do another, the goal of having a million people around the world acting as aquatic life savers to fight the single largest killer of children in the world can still be reached. We want this to be a million-person swim from which 100% of the money raised will buy treated mosquito bed nets - millions of them.

For inspiration and complete information on how easy it is to organize a swim in your area, go to www.worldswimformalaria.com/FAWCO. While there, check out “our swims” and see who else is pooling together within FAWCO and how successful they have been. This is an opportunity to involve your family, spouses, children, scout groups, work associates, friends, etc. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to organize a swim for FAWCO and the World Swim.

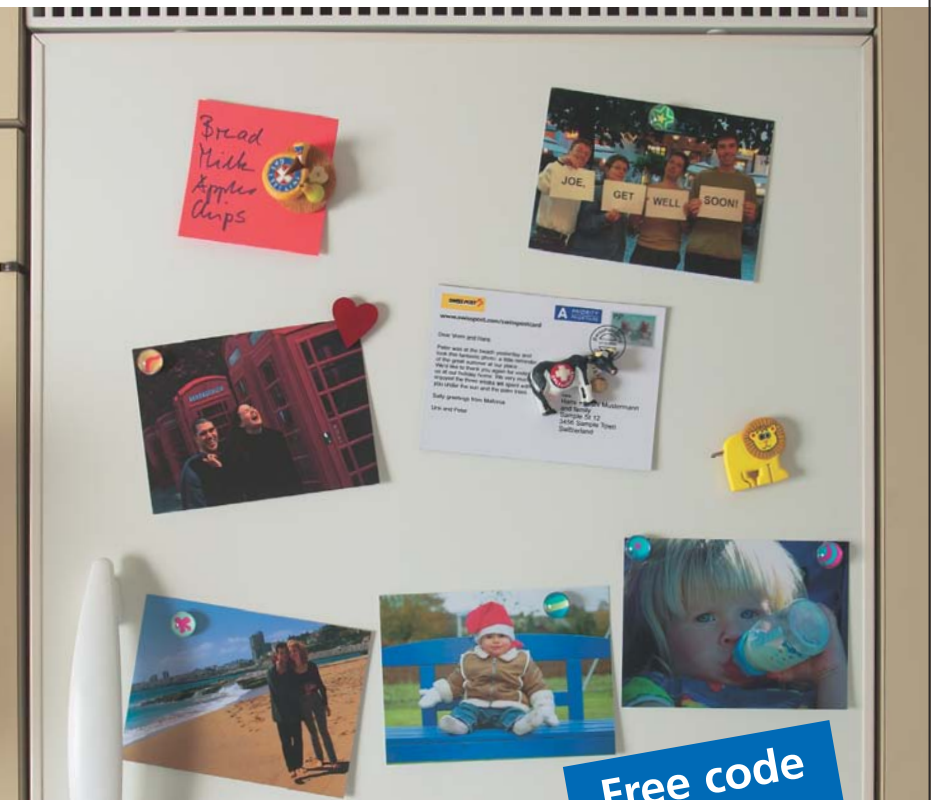


Paris in September: a dedicated team of FAWCO members prepared packages to mail out to all FAWCO Reps, with Insecticide Treated Nets, flyers, and business cards. This kick-off team for FAWCO’s participation in the World Swim for Malaria, is pictured above, from l-r: Lucy Laederich, FAWCO U.S. Liaison; Nan de Laubadere, AAWF FAWCO Rep; Jan Laabs, AAWF FAWCO Rep; and Charlene Labro, willing AAWF volunteer. FAWCO would like to thank Office Depot and DHL for their donations of goods and services for this promotion of the World Swim.

Special promotion for NetWorks

Send a picture post card for FREE and support FAWCO’s NetWorks. FAWCO wishes to thank SwissPostCard for donating one long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito net to NetWorks for every new user of this free service. Visit www.fawco.org and click on the bright yellow Swiss Post logo.

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Voting From Overseas

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Recognizing 25 years of dedicated service to helping overseas Americans vote

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Director Polli Brunelli presented retiring FAWCO Voting from Overseas Chair Kathy Webster with several items of recognition and honour at the FAWCO 2005 conference in Birmingham, as FAWCO members responded with a standing ovation. Among Kathy's awards was a U.S. flag with a certificate stating it was flown over the Pentagon in recognition of Kathy's service to her country.

Ms. Brunelli and her assistant, Bobby Flanders, also awarded outgoing FAWCO President Arline Coward several gifts and a Pentagon book signed by Pentagon Historian Dr. Al Goldberg in honour of her service to FVAP and FAWCO.

FAWCO and the FVAP came full circle at the Gala evening, when outgoing President Arline Coward presented FVAP Director Polli Brunelli with the FAWCO Fellowship Award for over ten years of guidance, support, and efforts to help Americans vote from overseas.

Did you know?

Only seventeen US states (Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) allow citizens who have never resided in the US to claim the legal residence of their parent(s) and vote where either parent is eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). A "voting residence" is simply the last place the parents lived in the U.S. and it defines the local election jurisdiction where their vote will be counted. With only seventeen states allowing this form of voting residence through parental association, a large population of U.S. citizens that have never actually resided in the U.S. are not entitled



FVAP Director Polli Brunelli (l) and former Voting from Overseas Chair Kathy Webster at the 2005 FAWCO Conference in Birmingham.

to vote under current laws. These are usually first or second-generation citizens born abroad to American parents. While they are subject to U.S. income tax and all other requirements of citizenship, including registering for selective service, they are not allowed to vote unless their parent(s) have voting residence in one of the seventeen states.

If your state is not among the seventeen listed above, it is important for you to **register anyway** - as your application may indeed be accepted. While not guaranteed by law in the other thirty-three states, your registration may still be accepted by your local registrar. There is NO penalty for trying to register.

Be sure to obtain your **Social Security Number** far in advance of registering to vote! You will need one, as many states require it as the main source of voter identification for overseas voters.

Attention All Voting Assistance Officers... What's new for 2006?

The FVAP has prepared many new materials for the 2006 elections. There is a new 2006-07 Voting Assistance Guide, Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), an Election Dates Poster, and two new motivational posters.

The Federal Post Card Application Form (FPCA SF-76) request for registration and absentee ballot has been revised as of October 2005. This form is accepted by all states and

territories as a simultaneous request for registration and/or an absentee ballot. The FPCA reflects changes in law as well as changes suggested by citizens voting under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and state and local government officials. The 1995 revision is still valid, however, it is highly recommended that you stock the October 2005 version as soon as possible.

Citizens voting under UOCAVA are eligible to participate in all elections for Federal offices in their state of legal residence. Federal elections include Presidential, Vice Presidential, and both houses of Congress (U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives). Because election laws vary from state to state, please consult the 2006-2007 Voting Assistance Guide or your Voting Assistance Officer (VAO). The guide contains state-by-state procedures for UOCAVA citizens to register and/or request an absentee ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF-76). The guide is available in hard copy format or on-line at the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov.

The FPCA is the first step in the absentee voting process. It is important to realize that state laws determine the information required on the FPCA, as well as the deadline for submitting the form. As a result, accurate completion and timely submission of the FPCA are critical.

Although Federal law states that the FPCA is valid for two regular Federal elections, FVAP recommends that you submit a new FPCA in January of every year and whenever you move to ensure that your Absentee Ballots will be sent to you in a timely manner.

Start planning your 2006 voter training sessions now so that you can assist voters from states with early primary elections. Check for the dates of the elections in the Election Calendar, soon to be available at the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov.

Check your inventory of absentee voting materials to determine what you may need to perform your duties as a VAO. Do not forget to include family members when determining the quantity of voting supplies needed. The FVAP recommends stocking four FPCAs and one FWAB per voter.

Now is the time to generate interest in the 2006 elections. Use your club newsletter, bulletin board, and website to inform US citizens of the upcoming election calendar, especially those states that will hold early primary elections. Organize teams to assist citizens to register to vote at social functions, businesses, clubs, school, and sporting events.

Please join us at the 75th anniversary conference in Berlin where FAWCO will once again welcome Polli Brunelli and her team from the Federal Voting Assistance Program. There will be a special workshop to explain and train club reps and members interested in becoming Voting Assistance Officers. Your success in helping fellow citizens register to vote will be assured by training with the best.

Your Vote Does make a Difference!

U.S. Citizens' Concerns

FAWCO Joins in *Amici Curiae* Brief in the United States Supreme Court on the Issue of Consular Access

Every year, a significant number of United States citizens traveling or living overseas find themselves ensnared in the criminal justice system of a foreign government. Consular assistance provides a vital service to these Americans, maintaining a desperately needed link to the outside world, and helping them navigate and understand an unfamiliar, and perhaps hostile, legal system. The United States played a leading role in creating Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which ensures that consular officers will be allowed to perform this important service. Article 36 depends in the first instance on the right of an individual detainee to be notified of the right to seek consular assistance. It obligates Member States to notify foreign detainees of that right, and to permit their consuls to have access to and to assist the detainees. But if officials in this country fail to provide foreign nationals with the full benefit of the Article 36 provisions on consular assistance, beginning with the individual detainee's right of notice, it is inevitable that U.S. citizens abroad will soon suffer a similar, reciprocal fate. Indeed, nothing presents a greater threat to consular assistance to Americans abroad than the failure to respect foreign nationals' reciprocal right to assistance in the U.S.

FAWCO has joined with former Ambassadors and Foreign Service Workers, Peace Corps volunteers, Americans imprisoned abroad, and other American citizen organizations in an *amici curiae* brief now before the United States Supreme Court: *MOISES SANCHEZ-LLAMAS v. OREGON* and *MARIO A. BUSTILLO v. GENE M. JOHNSON, DIRECTOR, VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS* (Nos. 04-10566 & 05-51). Taking no position on the ultimate merits of the underlying criminal cases, the brief urges that the failure by the lower courts to give a vigorous and robust scope to the protections of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations will ultimately, and inevitably, endanger the welfare of United States citizens abroad. For a copy of the brief, please contact president@fawco.org.

Inclusive Education - the Prague Conference

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In October, the European Comenius Network Project brought together practitioners from Europe, Israel, and the United States at the Charles University in Prague to explore recent findings in the field of inclusive education (mainstreaming) for students who learn differently (LD students).

In Norway, inclusion has been law since 1975, mandating four identified tasks for inclusion, (1) fellowship, (2) participation, (3) democratization (all voices were to be heard), and (4) benefit (students were to be given an education to their advantage both socially and substantively). Peder Haug (Norway) explained that parents, teachers, and students support inclusion on a general level, as a main principle for compulsory schooling. However, he pointed out that after 30 years of mandated mainstreaming, it continues to be difficult to change traditional teaching methods.

Barbara Kovacova (Slovakia) successfully uses puppets with LD preschoolers to role-play basic social skills, such as giving answers, describing events, telling problems, telling stories, and learning how to behave in real-life situations.

FAWCO's Educational Support Chair, Susan van Alsenoy (Belgium/U.S.) presented a summary of general considerations and strategies at the conference, compiled from her research into the best practices for mainstream teachers, a project which has now been translated into eleven languages.

Reuven Feuerstein (Israel) talked about mediated learning experience and instrumental enrichment, the theory of altering a person's behavior or performance, as a means of modifying the innate being.

Dario Ianes (Italy) is a proponent of teaching metacognition (thinking about thinking: "students' awareness of their actions, how thinking occurs, how strategies are used, and the effectiveness of one's cognitive processes"). He also discussed Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in terms of life-long plans, not just academic learning plans. Italy has experienced 35 years of full inclusion and this speaker has found it to be largely positive.

Rafi Feuerstein (Israel) underscored that for integration to succeed, everyone concerned must be prepared, student, parents, teachers, all of the school staff, and any additional helpers or tutors. He sees inclusion as a moral choice and outlined the advantages of inclusion as providing opportunities for imitation, modeling, and stimulus; regular exposure to normal environment for the child and his parents; increased effectiveness of change; and facilitating autonomy for the student.

To learn more about the Prague conference or the topic of educational support, please see www.studentswholearn.fawco.org.

Citizenship

New Passport Requirements for Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Visitors to the U.S.

For information on these new requirements, with links to government agency information, please see the Citizenship Committee's report on the FAWCO website:

http://www.fawco.org/us_concerns/citizenship/newpassport_visa_waiver.html

Fifth Annual FAUSA Conference

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Five FAWCO Counselors attended the fifth annual FAUSA conference, September 15-17, in historic San Antonio, TX. Mona Garcia organized the get together in the shadow of the Alamo, and Linda Sampson handled the nuts and bolts of the meeting. The delegates all enjoyed the speakers, tours, and meandering along the River Walk. The highlight event was a beautiful evening river cruise on the San Antonio River featuring Mexican food. Barbara Santoro won the beautiful autumnal quilt created by Linda Sampson. Proceeds from the quilt auction support the FAUSA education award. Of course, the best part of FAUSA conferences is being together with our long time and new friends.

There was a little time for business, too. Jane Indreland was elected president, Denise Fryzek became the new 1st VP/Membership Chair, LaVerne Ferguson stayed on as 2nd VP/Regional Representatives & Metropolitan Coordinators Chair, Liz Hemminger became Secretary, and Erica Fox Zabusky took on the Treasurer's position.



FAWCO Counselors, pictured l-r, front row: Kay Miller, Pamela Dahlgren; back row: Georgia Regnault, Virginia Roth, and Shirley van Ooijen.

It is membership renewal time for FAUSA and this is the perfect time for new members to join. Find out about the group and download a registration form on the FAUSA website, www.fausa.org. Joining FAUSA is the best way to maintain your connection to FAWCO.



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Gender and IT Training - What's New?

Pam Perraud
NGO Director

On Oct 13, 2005, the US Mission to the UN sponsored a panel discussion on "Gender, ICT, and Education: Removing Old Barriers with New Technologies" at the UN headquarters in New York. The panel was comprised of experts currently training women in high technology.

Since the technological revolution started in the 1980s, experts have been concerned that not only was the Third World being left behind in the process (the so-called "digital divide") but also that women were being left out of the IT (Information Technology) revolution. There was a major digital divide between men and women. Women's groups have been petitioning governments around the world to asking for equal access to high-tech training to use in the home as well as in small businesses. However, progress is hard to gauge because statistics on women's access to technology, particularly in the Third World are scarce. Little is known about the true participation rates. But, there are organizations which are trying to tackle the problem of getting more women trained and interested in technology.

During the conference, Dr. Amita Singh, from Nehru University of New Delhi, India, stressed the importance of empowering women to take advantage of the new technologies. She stated that much needs to be done to remove the fear factor that women often have of asking for access to training. In some countries, women must fight hard for the right to basic education, but find access to a computer is even more difficult. When using scarce resources like a computer in the developing world, the first priority is usually to train males, not to train females.

There are also other problems for women trying to access training. Marina Larios, of Inova Consultancy, spoke during the session about her own experience of trying to train minimally literate women in a remote area of Northern Spain who were unable to come to a central IT training center because of transportation, babysitting, or other family-related issues. She spoke of the need to take some of these special considerations into account before women can begin to participate in IT training. These basic problems are common and occur repeatedly in developing countries.

Cisco Systems, Inc. is one of the leaders in training women in IT. Since Oct. 1997, some 1.6 million students in over 150 countries have participated in classes with Cisco. It offers an IT certification which is recognized around the world. According to Marianne Needham, International Programs Director, Cisco is trying to encourage more young women to get into the IT field. In the least developed countries, Cisco is partnering with UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women), USAID (the US Agency for International Development), and Harvard University to bring IT programs locally through their Networking Academy Program.

Cisco also offers a program, internally, called "Girls in Technology." Through this program, Cisco provides volunteers to go into local

schools to train girls and to encourage them to go into IT careers; they provide pamphlets, posters, and videos to promote women's IT training; and they work to provide mentors for young girls as well as for women in their own management ranks.

This information session was one of the advance meetings prior to the 2nd UN sponsored WSIS (World Summit on Information Society) conference which took place in Tunis on Nov. 16-18, 2005. The

first phase conference was held in Geneva, Dec. 10-12, 2003. For more information on the WSIS conference please check out www.itu.int/wsis/tunis.

Women's access to technology has been a major UN concern for a long time. For more information on gender and IT, please check out <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/wsis2005/> where you will find position papers, studies, reports and live UN webcasts related to the issue.

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Promoting Peace in the Middle East - Bright Spots?

If you think nothing will ever change in the relations between the Palestinians, Arabs, and Israelis, think again. People ARE trying to change attitudes and create programs of cooperation. There actually ARE some bright spots of hope. In September 2005, the US Mission to the UN sponsored a panel discussion at UN Headquarters in New York highlighting two successful programs that have been launched to change "business as usual" between hostile neighbors.

Seeds of Peace

Seeds of Peace is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1993 to promote peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis. Annually, it selects young students from both groups and sends them to camp together for a month in Maine. Through sports, recreation, and arts, students are taught the importance of cooperation, mutual respect, and cultural values.

Since its inception, some 2,500 young people have gone through the program and have participated in follow-up conferences and educational seminars. Two graduates of the program—Eldad Levy, an Israeli youth, and Ruba Musleh, a 25 year old Palestinian, both spoke on the panel about their experiences at the camp. Each talked about their initial fears of meeting the other participants and of wondering how they would ever "survive" the camp. But, both also spoke of the camp as a "life-changing" experience.

Ruba, who went to Maine when she was only 15, is currently working in the field of conflict resolution. She remains in contact with the other graduates of the program and feels that the program is crucial to the future of peace between the two communities. Both participants felt that indeed, the seeds of peace were now being planted and, with time, a new generation of leaders will emerge, perhaps more willing to listen and respect the other side. For more information about this unusual program, contact www.seedsofpeace.org

Friends of the Earth Middle East

This program is considered a model for community development in regions of conflict. The theme of the program is "Good water makes good neighbors." Since water does not respect any political boundary, the idea was that water should be used for peaceful purposes. Historically, water rights have been a major cause of conflicts in the Middle East. This time, local governments were persuaded to come together to work on how to best utilize their shared limited resources.

The project began in 2001 on the Jordan River. Pilot communities in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan were contacted to raise awareness of the importance of working together to find common solutions on water-related problems. The project started with four communities paired on each side of the river. Community representatives met, shared information, started joint programs to educate the populations on river use, and pollution problems. The program eventually grew to 17 communities and the results were impressive.

New bonds of trust were created as more water improvements were made. Mayors in each city helped support the mayors on the other side on efforts to persuade voters that new sewage and treatment plants were needed. A conference was held between local mayors on the efforts to rehabilitate the Jordan River as a basis for improving the livelihood of local residents on both sides. As in the *Seeds of Peace* program, young people were drawn into the awareness campaign.

As part of the campaign to help the river, photos were taken of the mayors from both sides of the river in their bathing trunks holding hands. This "Big Jump" photo showed mutual support for the clean water initiatives. The photo-op caused a great stir because it was something unheard of in recent history.

Speakers with representatives from both sides pointed out that this successful program continued without interruption during the *Intifada*, which is also a testament to its vital importance.

The speakers suggested that there are several lessons to be learned from this project:

- ❖ Water can be a bridge, not a divider, between nations;
- ❖ Local government cooperation is possible on vital issues;
- ❖ Assistance on these kinds of programs can be incorporated in conflict prevention and peace-building;
- ❖ Cooperation on water and other natural resources can provide a "peace dividend" for investment; and
- ❖ People-to-people programs create the foundation for peace.

For more information about this fascinating program, check out www.foeme.org.

The Gift of a Better Future

Mari Miyashita
FAWCO Rep AWC Thailand

The AWC of Thailand has been making a lasting difference in the lives of Thai girls through our Scholarship Program for the last eleven years. Sponsors around the world send just \$120 to provide an underprivileged girl with a year's education and a chance of a brighter future—and are rewarded with the opportunity to correspond with their student while she completes her high school education. The AWC Thailand Scholarship Committee is gearing up to find sponsors for the 2006 school year, which begins in May. The Scholarship Program grows bigger every year and we always welcome new sponsors for 'our' students!

What is the Scholarship Program?

Founded in 1995 and operated entirely by volunteers, the American Women's Club Scholarship Program has helped over 2,000 Thai children pursue one common dream: an education. In Thailand, the compulsory education system requires students to attend school for grades 1-9 only. The final grades 10-12, which mainly focus on academic or vocational training, are often sacrificed because of financial pressures on individual families. The AWC program targets female students, who are at greater risk of dropping out during these crucial three years. Through these scholarships, the girls are given the opportunity to realize their dreams of an education.

Why is the Scholarship Program needed?

The Thai government aims to provide basic tuition, but in most cases the amount is not nearly enough. The fees for books, special classes, uniforms, supplies, meals and transportation are all the responsibility of the student's family. Even these basic expenses remain too costly for most families in the rural communities of Thailand.

Who is eligible for an AWC Scholarship?

Students who show a strong desire to complete their upper secondary education and also meet the established grade point requirement are nominated for the scholarship by school advisors. These are students who would be unable to study without financial support. Once applications are received and approved, students are matched up with their individual sponsor. In return, the student must continue to meet the grade point requirement and correspond in English with their sponsor.

How do we make sure scholarship money is used appropriately?

An advisor at each school is responsible for overseeing the funds sent to the students. The students are required to obtain receipts for all expenses. Each term the advisor prepares a financial report for the AWC. The AWC committee works closely with the advisors and makes periodic visits to the schools to monitor the program.

How can you participate?

Every scholarship is made possible by the generosity of individual sponsors. Your sponsorship will make all the difference! Applications are available online at <http://awcthailand.org/scholarship.html>. For more information, contact Chris Morris, AWC Scholarship Co-chair at scholars@awcthailand.org.



We look forward to welcoming you to the FAWCO Interim Conference & 75th Anniversary Celebration Hilton Hotel, Berlin

Thursday, March 2 – Monday, March 6, 2006

“Tearing Down Walls”

Through Education, Knowledge, Tolerance, and Understanding

For more information, please see www.fawco.org

Stockholm Club Makes a Difference in Tanzania

Jann Mitchell
FAWCO Rep AWC Stockholm

What is the AWC in Stockholm doing in an East African village? Plenty! Since 2001, AWC member and FAWCO Rep Jann Mitchell has built and sponsored a pre-school in a suburb of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where her physician husband works with AIDS patients. The school serves children ages two and a half to six years (many of them AIDS orphans) offering a bilingual education (which prompts them to excel in primary school), and supplying them with two meals and snacks (the only food some children get every day). The school also sponsors literacy classes for adults, as well as, a women's group which makes crafts for sale and encourages women-owned businesses. The club's donation of nearly \$3,000 completed the school's crucial security wall and installed three gates, bought school supplies, provided transport to enroll more orphans, and built and installed the school's first playground equipment: merry-go-round, seesaw, slide, and crawl-through. The children were ecstatic!

Funds from the club were also used to purchase a hand-pedalled tricycle for a paralyzed 38-year-old single father, Juma, who is raising two young sons. He had been crawling through the village to the school each day to learn to read and write.

On our last visit, Juma sent a letter of thanks, which was published in the AWC in Stockholm's bulletin. The letter looks like a child's, for the 38-year-old father with two sons to support has learned to read and write only this year at the Bibi Jann Day Care Centre.

In it he thanks the bibis (Grandmothers and other sponsors). In his words (loosely translated), “*All of the bibis (grandmothers and other sponsors) outside Tanzania: God would love that we see each other and give you a good life full of happiness and belief and good love. You have done well (with this project), Bibi Jann and Babu Eric. I am your friend.*”

Juma's benefactors are American and Swedish, Swiss and South African. Sons Shaban, 11, (who wants to be a policeman) and Hassan, 14 (a would-be cab driver), attend school full-time now, with proper uniforms. They can eat more than once a day. They experience compassion from strangers far from their East African village. And they now see pride on their father's face.

For further information on this program, or the new GRAMMA-2-GRAMMA project in which people can sponsor a grandmother raising her AIDS-orphaned grandchildren, contact Jann at jannmmitchell@aol.com.

Jann Mitchell in Tanzania with Juma and his new hand-pedalled tricycle.



The FAWCO Foundation...a Patchwork of Projects

Mary Rose Stauder
Foundation President
president@fawcofoundation.org

Such was FAWCO's enthusiasm and passion to be actively involved in education and charitable causes that The Foundation was formally established nearly 40 years ago. This compassionate outreach is clearly demonstrated year after year as clubs and individuals continue to support The Foundation's existing awards and development grants programs, as well as to respond to emergencies throughout the world. It is with this in mind that The Foundation places so much effort in expanding its programs and fundraising efforts on behalf of FAWCO.

The FAWCO Foundation is delighted to introduce two new Development Grant categories for its 2006 program. The "Care in Crisis" grant focuses on the most urgent needs of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. FAWCO member clubs have been involved in many such projects and this grant will focus on this global pandemic and its horrific impact on children. The "A Place to Learn" grant focuses on the dire infrastructure many of the worlds most impoverished children must endure in an effort to go to school. As well as the addition of the two grants, The Foundation is very pleased to be able to increase the value of nearly all of its 2006 Awards in response to the ever increasing cost of third level education.

But none of this would be possible without two critical things: the continued support of sponsors, member clubs and individuals; and innovative fundraising projects. Some of the highlights of this year's fundraisers include the ever popular FAWCO Friendship Quilt raffle. Pictured is a sneak preview of some of the detail of the 2006 quilt, *A Friend Is a Gift You Give Yourself*. Raffle tickets are available at www.fawcofoundation.org/fundraising/friendshipquilt.

There is a saying that change is as good as a rest. The FAWCO Foundation has hardly been resting, though, as several changes and new fundraising projects have been introduced this year. Proceeds of the "Kids Help" certificates project will be donated to Paul Newman's *Hole in the Wall Gang Camps* for sick children; and the Silent Auction, held during FAWCO's annual conference, will be presented in one spectacular "Diamonds in the Rough" evening. The Foundation is also pleased to be supporting the FAWCO NetWorks fundraising effort with Malaria Matters donor certificates which are available online.

Perhaps the most exciting event that is being put together for the benefit The Foundation is The FAWCO Foundation Friendship Dream Cruise with *Costa* cruise line, September 24 to October 1, 2006. Billed as the *Scent of the Western Mediterranean*, this cruise is one of those rare opportunities to fulfill one of your own dreams while helping to make the dreams of others come true at the same time! Don't miss the boat. Visit The FAWCO Foundation website at <http://www.fawcofoundation.org/cruise/> for more details.



Detail from the 2006
FAWCO Friendship Quilt



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www.fawcofoundation.org

The FAWCO Foundation is the philanthropic arm of FAWCO. It was created in 1967 as a not-for-profit corporation registered in the State of Missouri to administer all awards and grants on behalf of FAWCO. For more information, please contact info@fawcofoundation.org

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The FAWCO Forum is published twice a year. Email submissions to the editor at editor@fawco.org
For advertising information, please email advertising@fawco.org

FAWCO Co-Sponsors House of Lords Event

Seated, l-r: Baroness Uddin, House of Lords member and American author Carlana Stone. Standing, l-r: Celeste Brown, FAWCO 1st VP; Kathleen Simon, former FAWCO 2nd VP; Yolanda Henry, President, AW of Surrey; Jo Brandt, Region 1 Coordinator; Louise Greeley-Copley, Voting from Overseas Chair.



Celeste Brown
FAWCO 1st VP
vp-communications@fawco.org

On Friday, December 9, 2005, FAWCO was a co-sponsor for a special presentation held at the historic House of Lords in London. The Baroness Uddin, first female Muslim appointed as a member to the British House of Lords, was the hostess for a presentation by Carlana Stone, the American author of "Never Give In, Never Give Up." (Note: Ms. Stone will be a workshop presenter at the upcoming FAWCO Conference.) Ms Stone's story begins with a life-altering auto accident that, at the age of 17, left her wheelchair bound. Her personal and touching story unfolds as a compelling testimonial of fortitude, courage, and sunny optimism. Her passion for life is a true example of positive attitude triumphing over unexpected adversities.

Thanks to the event's main sponsor, Convenxia Ltd., donations were accepted at the door to support FAWCO's NetWorks, as well as Baroness Uddin's ongoing projects in Bangladesh. FAWCO would like to thank Convenxia for forwarding funds collected at the event to NetWorks, for the purchase of insecticide-treated nets in malaria-afflicted areas of the world.