

PDAA Lunch Program

Mon. February 9, 2015

DACOR-Bacon House
1801 F Street NW,
Washington, DC

Panel: Global Health
Crisis Communications

- Cash bar 11:45 am
- Lunch 12:15 pm
- Panel 12:45 pm

\$35.00 members and
guests, \$42.00 non-
members

Reservation deadline:

Sat. January 31, 2015

To reserve please return
coupon on p. 7, or
online at
www.publicdiplomacy.org

Events calendar

- **March 30.** Next PDAA lunch program, discussing immigration issues.
- **May 3.** Public Diplomacy Achievement Awards are announced at a special brunch event. Watch for details in the next PDAA Today newsletter.

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February 9 PDAA Lunch Panel: Effective Communication Strategies in Global Health Crises

Whether it is Ebola or HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, or dengue fever, health public diplomacy plays a critical role in an effective response to managing, and hopefully, eradicating diseases that can no longer be contained within geographic borders.

PDAA will be presenting an exciting panel of experts on Monday, February 9 from government, academia, media, and the non-governmental community to discuss why it is just as critical to get out good health information in a way that can be absorbed by local communities as it is to have more doctors and medicines.

Representing the State Department will be Todd Haskell, Director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the Bureau of African Affairs. Haskell, also a member of the Ebola Communications Task Force, will discuss the Department's health communications initiatives through the region. No stranger to dealing with challenging issues, Haskell has served in the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Mexico, Israel, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Poland.

Haskell will be followed by Kathryn Jacobsen, professor of epidemiology at George Mason University, who will discuss her field research in Sierra Leone and several other sub-Saharan African countries to illustrate how health information -- and misinformation -- is disseminated and perceived in both rural and urban areas. An expert on hepatitis, Jacobsen will also speak specifically about Ebola communication since her communities studied in Sierra Leone have been directly affected by the epidemic, and will touch on some of her other infectious disease work in Africa that relates to the communication and diplomacy theme.

Our third panelist is Christopher Conte, a freelance journalist, former Wall Street Jour-



nal writer and editor, and Knight Health Journalism Fellow in Uganda. Conte, who has also traveled the world on assignments for a number of international development agencies, has trained and mentored African journalists both in person and online for more than a decade. He will discuss his work as a media consultant and mentor in Uganda, as well as the importance of crafting messages on health issues in a way that audiences can respond effectively.

Our last panelist, Collin Weinberger, is the Business Leadership Council Project Director at the Global Virus Network (GVN), a coalition of the world's leading medical virology research centers working to prevent illness and death from viral disease. Weinberger will talk about what GVN is doing to engage journalists to gain better understanding, and provide accurate reporting, on outbreaks, including Ebola and Chikungunya, and also how it is working with the business community on these same issues.

This PDAA lunch program takes place on Monday, February 9 at DACOR-Bacon House, 1801 F Street NW, Washington, D.C. **This event begins a little earlier than usual, at 11:45 am.** Reservations are \$35.00 for members and \$42.00 for non-members. The deadline for reservations is Saturday, **January 31**. You can reserve with a credit card at www.publicdiplomacy.org, or complete and mail the form on page 7 with your check.

Photo: Morgana Wingard/USAID

Ben Bradlee – The Reluctant Public Diplomacy Officer

Michael H. Anderson

Dr. Anderson is a retired Foreign Service Officer, a member of PDAA and Public Diplomacy Council, and a long-time reader of The Washington Post. This essay first appeared on the Public Diplomacy Council Web site and PublicDiplomacy.org, and is reprinted with permission of the author.

Washington and, indeed, much of the world, recently paid tribute to the legendary Ben Bradlee, the Executive Editor of The Washington Post from 1968 -91, who passed away October 21, 2014. His role in managing his paper's sensitive relations with the government during both Watergate and the Pentagon Papers and leading his paper to 18 Pulitzer Prizes made him arguably the most influential journalist of the 20th Century.

Despite the in-depth coverage of his remarkable life (a Boston Brahmin, a Harvard student, a WWII Navy veteran of the South Pacific, a foreign correspondent, John F. Kennedy friend and Georgetown neighbor, a Washington-based bureau chief and editor, etc., etc.), one part of his long career got little attention — Bradlee, pictured at right, was once a reserve Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). In today's language, he would be called a public diplomacy (PD) officer in the State Department.

In the post-war, early 1950s, Bradlee left The Washington Post to serve as a young assistant press attache and then press attache with the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in Embassy Paris. In 1954, he resigned, but remained in Paris to become the European correspondent for Newsweek magazine, which at the time was not yet owned by The Post.

Those interested in learning about Bradlee's rather reluctant service as a diplomat would enjoy reading — or re-reading — *A Good Life – Newspapering and Other Adventures*, his irreverent 1995 autobiography. It has a wonderful chapter about his 1951-53 "adventures" in the Press Office of Embassy Paris, where he worked for an old friend, Press Attache Elias McQuaid; Public Affairs Officer Bill Tyler; and Ambassador James C. Dunn, a career diplomat.

In his book, Bradlee revealed that he flunked the USIA oral exam but passed after he got a second crack. He recalled he accepted a USIS job offer at a salary of "\$5,400 a year, plus a modest housing allowance." Also, he wrote: "I had



zero interest in becoming a career diplomat. What little I knew about the Foreign Service suggested that the cover-your-ass crowd frowned on balls and initiative, especially at the lower level. But the State Department was experimenting with journalists who spoke the appropriate foreign language to be press attaches."

The book does an excellent job explaining what it was like to do Cold War press work at a large European embassy in a capital that hosted many big-name foreign correspondents and had anti-Americanism. Bradlee, for example, was frustrated with Washington for its failure to provide sufficient press guidance to intelligently answer French journalists' questions about the landmark 1951 espionage trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Also, he clearly wasn't pleased by the "McCarthyism" bullying which tried to pressure USIS to ban from its overseas libraries a book like Theodore White's *Thunder Out of China*.

Bradlee did love living abroad, especially in glamorous Paris, but he realized early that he really wasn't cut out to be diplomat. He recalled: "I was never really trusted by the diplomats, because of my belief that, all things considered, a press attache ought to answer questions truthfully."

And he was not all that happy with the "scut work" which had to be done in the embassy: "We had to attend certain cocktail parties, but to work, not play. We had to pick up guests at the end of a receiving line every so often, and guide them to the booze and chat them up a bit. One's chances of finding someone interesting were poor, unless you count as interesting the odd French countess, who turned out to have been born Irish in Chicago, and had come to Paris with Mummy between the wars to land

(Continued on page 3)

Ben Bradlee, Reluctant PD Officer (cont'd)

herself a title. The really interesting people had better things to do than go to embassy functions.”

Bradlee also had mixed feelings about dealing with different journalists: “The Americans were no problem. The good ones didn’t bother with press attaches; they knew the ambassador and his top aides a lot better than I did. The bad ones had no good questions, meaning no questions that were hard to answer. The Brits were tougher, always showing off their shorthand skills and threatening to take down every bloody word you said. The French were tough for me at first, for I didn’t know them and their political shadings, and I didn’t speak French well enough to be sure I gave them the delicate nuances that had been given me by the policy wonks.”

After about two years with USIS, Bradlee decided it was time to return to journalism. He candidly said: “The embassy was something less than heartbroken when I told them I would be leaving.”

On a personal note, I only had the privilege of meeting Bradlee once – that was in the late 1970s. By then it was after Watergate, and he had become a genuine celebrity, and every journalist visiting Washington wanted to meet him. I was escorting a group of Asian journalists participating in the East-West Center’s Jefferson Fellowship program around the U.S. Somehow we were lucky to wangle a tour of The Post’s old newsroom on L Street in downtown Washington and a chance to exchange views with the Great Editor himself.

Bradlee didn’t disappoint. He still enthusiastic about his profession and as confident, charming, fascinating and dynamic in person as he was portrayed to be by actor Jason Robards, Jr. in the 1976 movie *All the President’s Men*.

Yes, I recall he wore his trademark Turnbull & Asser banker shirt, but I cannot recall a single thing he told the Asian editors that day. What I do clearly remember was that the experience was the highlight of the group’s entire U.S. visit. All realized they had met a very special individual who had had a positive impact on two great institutions – the press and the presidency. Everyone realized they had encountered an American original. And today I realize — more than ever — that his leaving the Foreign Service was, of course, ultimately the public’s great gain. He served us all far better as a journalist than he ever could have as an Ambassador or a PAO.

President’s Notes

Greetings, PDAA members and friends,

First, I want to wish all of you a very Happy New Year! I hope that your holiday season was filled with the joy of good friends and family, and that 2015 is beginning on a positive and hopeful note for all of you.

I want to thank you for your enthusiastic support for PDAA, which helped make 2014 a very successful year. Our programs not only offered wonderful opportunities to connect (or reconnect) with friends and colleagues; they provided evidence of the continuing – and I would argue increasing -- importance of public diplomacy. Our spring program at the Swedish Embassy – a first for PDAA – demonstrated the increasingly significant role of public diplomacy in the diplomatic relations of other countries. At our end-of-year dinner last May, we honored several of the State Department’s most innovative and successful practitioners of public diplomacy. Our two fall programs—the first on Russia’s use of propaganda on Ukraine and the second on China –were timely, well attended, and well received.

We have an exciting year to look forward to in 2015. I encourage all of you to attend our luncheon program on February 9, at which a panel of experts from academia, media, government and the NGO community will discuss effective communication strategies in addressing global health crises. Our luncheon program in March will focus on the immigration challenge and public diplomacy outreach. Both topics could not be more timely or important. They are also examples of how the public aspects of diplomacy are at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to address the new challenges of the 21st century, from combatting violent extremism to promoting tolerance and human rights to supporting democratic development. Your PDAA board is continuing to work on other programs for the spring, including another possible program in coordination with a foreign embassy. We welcome your ideas, as always, for future programs. Mike Anderson and Jon Schaffer are our program co-chairs.

For our May social event, we are seriously considering a brunch, rather than a dinner. Many of you have expressed enthusiasm for this idea. Jan Brambilla is coordinating the planning for this event, so please feel free to send suggestions to her of places for brunch. (And if you have strong feelings about either a brunch or dinner, please let us know that as well.) This event will again be the occasion

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Victor B. Olason – An Appreciation

Robert Chatten

Born Vigfus Bjorgvin Olason in Seattle on June 5, 1930, he was of Icelandic heritage, a son of Vigfus Bjorgvin and Carolina Stephanson Olason. For years, I thought I might be the only other person in the Agency aware that “Victor” was a nom de preference, a nom de convenience.

Vic was my oldest and dearest friend in the Foreign Service. He was an example of what USIA’s Junior Office Program was supposed to produce through boots on the ground seasoning, leading step by step to leadership in international public affairs. He served in eight countries over a 36-year career. He learned five languages and, when he retired in 1995, only four years before USIA disappeared, he was one of only four officers with the rank of

career minister. If memory serves, he had become one of only two officers to be Area Director of two regions.

He came to USIA knowing journalism from the ground up. As an undergraduate, he covered campus news for the Seattle Times. He became editor of the student newspaper at the University of Washington and the Times hired him after graduation to walk a beat, be a police reporter, and work the city desk. Vic could walk into a newsroom anywhere and be in familiar territory. Foreign journalists often could sense this and responded. He was a friend of many foreign correspondents, whose legitimate functions he understood and, when necessary, helped Ambassadors to understand. He was helpful to newsmen when he could and earned their respect when he couldn’t.

We met when we joined USIA in September 1959 in a JOT class of 11, which produced three area directors and a Counselor of the Agency. We cut a training class to see Khrushchev arrive as a guest at Blair House. As with many of you here with most of the 20th century on your hard drives, Vic saw, sometimes with an active role, many of the big events and players of the era.

His USIA career started in Santiago, where Barbara White and Hew Ryan, future mandarins of the Agency, were role models. Come the Kennedy Administration, Vic was named to a new group of Alliance for Progress information officers, with an office in the AID mission, working with Peruvian media to interpret the new look in U.S.-Latin American relations. Those relations included one of the largest initial groups of Peace Corps volunteers, headed in Lima by his friend Frank Mankiewicz, a future political mandarin in the making.

When we joined the Foreign Service, the book on ideal career trajectories saw officers in the afternoon of their careers with an area of primary and one of secondary emphasis. It looked like Vic was to major in Inter-American affairs after a cultural assignment in Guatemala, graduate Latin American studies at the University of New Mexico and two years as Central American desk officer. But then he won the job as Information Officer in Germany, where he spent five years. International attention followed when, in 1974, an AP photo moved worldwide of Vic and a Marine guard taking the photo of newly resigned President Nixon from the walls of the Embassy.

President’s Notes (cont’d)

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for honoring outstanding current practitioners of public diplomacy in the Civil as well as the Foreign Service through our PDAA awards program. We welcome member contributions to the awards fund. If you wish to make a contribution, please send it to PDAA Treasurer David Whitten.

Many of you have already renewed your membership for 2015. I thank those of you who have done so and encourage all of you to renew your membership. It is very easy to do so on-line through the PDAA website, or you may send your registration form and check to David Whitten. See page 7 of this newsletter.

PDAA is your organization. All of us on the Board want to make it relevant and responsive to your needs and interests. Please let us know what your interests are and how we can make PDAA an even stronger and more vibrant organization in 2015 and beyond.

Again, let me wish you and your loved ones a very happy, healthy and rewarding 2015. I hope to see you on February 9 for our exciting first program of the New Year.

Greta Morris

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Victor B. Olason (cont'd)

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Bonn service got him his first PAO job in Iceland, the ancestral home. It also earned his three children long hours a day on school buses to and from school at the U.S. airbase, still fresh in their memories decades later. They credit me with saving them when Director Jim Keogh let me choose my Deputy Area Director, and Vic returned to Latin America in time for the Panama Canal negotiations, with attendant foreign and domestic furor. He succeeded me as Director.

Arabic language training and Counselor of Embassy in Cairo designation followed before returning to an illustrious career in European affairs as Executive Director of the Presidential Commission for the German-American Tricentennial. Then came a hitch as Deputy Chief Inspector, then returning to the Continent directing public affairs in the U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels. Vic then ran the Agency's worldwide Press and Publications Service before the capstone of being named European Area Director, with its 71 field posts. He reveled in the job, once saying that going to work was fun because "you never know what's going to walk through the door in the morning." He topped that with a final valedictory of three years in Rome.

I'll leave to others to flesh out the glories of Europe, though we visited in Bonn, Brussels and Rome. Mike Eisenstadt had known Vic for years and preceded him as Director for Europe. He wrote, "I always respected his careful, invariably accurate, and low key judgments and his kind and courteous way of dealing with others. He was a good friend and colleague." Another friend wrote of him, "Reticent to speak as he was, he was like E.F.Hutton: when he spoke, others listened."

Lest anyone be lulled by countless tales of a gentle, low key gentleman, a distinguished diplomat who looked the part, Vic did have a wild oats, paint-outside-the-box phase of his life.

In the summer of 1957, he and Dody quit their jobs and, with another couple, went to Europe, bought a little car, and spent six months touring 11 countries. That may have opened windows on a much larger world because in the year after returning to the Seattle Times, he and USIA found each other, where we met.

Rest in peace, friend.

Welcome New PDAA members

Louise CRANE
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Update: Russia Cancels FLEX Youth Exchange Program

In October, Russia canceled its participation in an American high-school exchange program after a teenage Russian boy in Michigan sought political asylum claiming fear of persecution at home for being gay. The Future Leaders Exchange or FLEX program that sponsored the child's visit is funded by State Department, and administered by American Councils for International Education.

According to the New York Times, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center says the 17 year-old boy expressed fear of returning home, sought asylum in the U.S., and was placed in foster care. The Times cites Russian media reports claiming a gay couple in Michigan, not the host family, influenced the boy's decision and promised financial aid. The Russians also criticized the American legal system for not returning the boy immediately.

FLEX and other youth exchange programs were the subject of a PDAA lunch program in February 2014, featuring Lisa Choate, vice-president of American Councils for International Education.

In Memoriam

- ◆ Paul Altemus, 73, a former Foreign Service Officer in USIA, died October 2. He lived in Silver Spring, Maryland. He joined USIA in 1967 and left the agency in the mid-1970s. His postings included Laos, Italy, Ivory Coast, and Upper Volta. After USIA, he was in the home redecorating business.
- ◆ Mary Lee Deerfield, 78, the wife of retired USIA Foreign Service Officer Eddie Deerfield, died October 23. Ms. Deerfield lived in Palm Harbor, Florida. During her husband's postings in South Asia, Canada and Africa, she was active in social welfare in each country. In Calcutta, India, she befriended Mother Teresa and assisted her Missionaries of Charity.
- ◆ Hal Eidlin, 90, a VOA newsroom editor in the 60s, died November 30. The Silver Spring resident later worked as a public affairs officer at Department of Health and Welfare. In retirement, he taught journalism history at the University of Maryland in Towson.
- ◆ Susan S. Ellis, 82, a retired writer and editor at USIA and State Department died October 21 of a brain tumor. Ms. Ellis worked at USIA from 1978 until her retirement from State Department in 2002. Her specialty was African affairs. Before her Federal career, Ms. Ellis was a reporter for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, press secretary of the AFGE union, and worked in the Peace Corps press office.
- ◆ Donald Gilmore, 90, a retired foreign service officer, died June 17. He lived in Concord, New Hampshire. He served in the Navy during World War II. Mr. Gilmore's postings included Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Belgium, India, and Colombia. He also worked at VOA and was a deputy assistant director of USIA. After retiring, he was an escort-interpreter for State Department cultural exchanges. Mr. Gilmore co-edited a book on archaeology, and lectured on rock art of the Sahara. He was an avid hiker.
- ◆ Vladimir Korchak, 89, a retired editor at America Illustrated magazine, died May 29 of heart failure at his home in Wilmington, North Carolina. Born in the Soviet Union, he came to America in 1949 and taught Russian at the Army Language School in Monterrey, California.
- ◆ Sally Kux, 51, a senior adviser for democracy and governance issues in State Department's Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, died October 1. She had breast cancer. Ms. Kux joined USIA in 1994. She helped develop civic education programs in Russia and Eastern Europe. After the USIA's merger with State Department, Ms. Kux served as the director of democracy programs in the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia.
- ◆ Jerry E. Kyle, a retired Foreign Service Officer, died August 26 in Ukiah, California. He served in the Army during the Korean War and joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1961. His postings included Manila, Chiang Mai, Jakarta, Nairobi, and Rangoon, where on his second tour in the early 1980s he was public affairs officer.
- ◆ Edward F. McKnew, Jr., 94, a retired State Department and USIA auditor, died on September 12 in Midlothian, Virginia. He served with the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and took part in the Normandy landing. During his State Department and USIA career, Mr. McKnew had temporary duty assignments in 53 countries. He retired in 1978 after 32 years of government service, and later volunteered at Fairfax Hospital and Chippenham Hospital in Richmond.
- ◆ Hugh Muir, 82, a former Wireless File reporter and VOA correspondent and editor, died November 4 in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Mr. Muir worked for the New York World-Telegram and Sun, and later briefly at the Washington Post, before becoming a foreign service specialist in 1966. He particularly enjoyed covering several presidential political campaigns for the Wireless File. After a tour as an information officer in London, Mr. Muir joined VOA as chief of the Africa regional desk, and later became correspondent and East African bureau chief based in Nairobi. In retirement, he designed and built a cedar and glass house in Cold Spring, New York and was a reporter and editor for The Poughkeepsie Journal. In 2005, the Muirs moved to Fredericksburg where he wrote features for the Free Lance-Star and indulged his passion for history, taking people on tours of area battlefields.
- ◆ Victor Olason, 84, who retired as a Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, died November 27 at his home in Kensington, Maryland. He served in USIA for over 30 years, retiring in 1995. He worked for The Seattle Times as a reporter and assistant editor before joining USIA in 1959. His postings included Chile, Peru, Guatemala, West Germany, Iceland, Egypt, Belgium, and Italy. After retirement, he worked on the Grievance Board at USIA. (Appreciation, page 4)
- ◆ Thavanh Svengsouk, 79, a retired Foreign Service Officer at USIA, died September 1 in Honolulu. His overseas postings included Georgetown, Cebu City, Paris, Bangui, and Dakar. Born in Vientiane, Laos, he spent more than 10 years as a VOA broadcaster before joining the Foreign Service.

PDAA membership for 2015 ... Check your mailing label for renewal status

If your mailing label says **[2014]**, it is time to renew your membership for 2015.

- The annual membership fee for the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association is \$US35.00 and \$400.00 for a one-time lifetime membership.
- Renewals are usually collected annually in the first few weeks of the year. Please complete the form below (indicate if any items are changed from before) and mail the completed form with your check to:

**David Whitten,
PDAA Treasurer
4100 S. 16th St.
Arlington, VA 22204**

___ No change in contact info; fill in name and date only

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Date _____

Membership type, please check one: ___ New \$35.00 ___ Renewal \$35.00 ___ Lifetime \$400.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Or you can renew online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/membership>

PDAA February 2015 Luncheon Program

February 9, 2015 at DACOR-Bacon House. 1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC.

See page 1 for program details.

Deadline for reservations: **January 31, 2015.**

Please complete the form below and mail with your check for **\$US35.00** for members and guests, and **\$42.00** for non-members to:

**David Whitten,
PDAA Treasurer
4100 S. 16th St.
Arlington, VA 22204**

Please send payments for this event only. If there is no change in your contact information, you need only fill in names and date.

Name(s) _____

Street address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone number _____

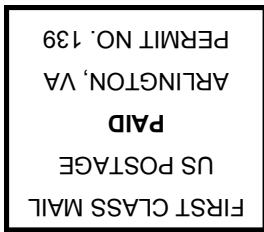
Email address _____

Date _____

Number of members/guests _____ x \$US 35.00 Number of non-members _____ x \$42.00

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Or reserve online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org>



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