



FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREES ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

<http://www.FSRA-FL.org>

FROM ELLEN CONNOR ENGELS, New FSRA-FL Chair

Dear FSRA Members:

As the new FSRA Board Chair, I will strive to keep our organization vital, in spite of pandemic restrictions, and very much look forward to being able to meet in person safely for our luncheons in the not-to-distant future. Please share with me and any of our Directors ideas you may have to improve our website, newsletter or services, and do let VP Larry Farris know if you have any suggestions for topics you would like to explore or speaker recommendations.

I know we all miss the camaraderie of our luncheon meetings but the most important thing is to stay safe until this scourge has passed. Please make every effort to get your Covid-19 vaccinations and keep trying if you run into snags. As I can personally attest, perseverance does pay off!

All the best, Ellen

FROM Mike Boorstein, Former FSRA-FL Chair

Dear FSRA Members:

For those of you who did not participate in our January 15 Annual General Meeting, I informed the participants that I was stepping down as the FSRA Chair after that meeting. I have been the Board Chair since May, 2018, and with the election of new Board members and after accomplishing a number of important things during my tenure, with the collaboration of our very dedicated and knowledgeable Directors, I felt it was time to pass the torch.

The past year has been a very challenging one, with the pandemic requiring us to go virtual since March. We remained active as a Board and scheduled speakers, starting with Prof. Mormino last October, and Lynne Platt, after the January AGM. The Board also reviewed our Constitution to streamline and update it. Proposals made at the AGM to amend the Constitution were adopted by the Membership. The revised Constitution will be in the new Directory, published by early March.

Also, in accordance with the requirements of the FSRA Constitution, in advance of the AGM, I appointed Director Alan Van Egmond to head up a Nominating Committee. With his colleagues, we brought forward three new proposed directors, James Huskey, Henderson Patrick, and Catherine Hill-Herndon, bringing our Board up to its allowed maximum of 14 Directors. Following the AGM, the Directors met and elected Ellen Engels as new Board Chair, Larry Farris as Vice-Chair, Don Simmons as Treasurer and Sue Boorstein as Secretary.

Our FSRA Website, led by Rebecca Armand, has a new URL www.fsra-fl.org, and more links to sites of interest to our members. She also took over our Newsletter, after many years of dedication by Marion Walsh.

Another kudo goes out to Frank Young, who digitized many pages of FSRA Archives into a site accessible by all FSRA Board Members. This took many hours of work which will serve the Board well in the future. Our finances are in good shape, and we ended up the year with a higher balance in our books. Sue also led an effort to attract new Members, targeting those AFSA members in Florida who were not FSRA members. Overall we added 57 new members, bringing our total up to 418. We also said farewell to Linda Olesen, who earlier stepped down from the Board (Secretary). Joyce Fitzpatrick, transitioned from Secretary through the AGM, replaced by Sue Boorstein (she will stay through May), who transitioned from being Treasurer, a role now held by Don Simmons.

I will remain as a Board Director and look forward to seeing you in person when possible. I am confident that the new Board leadership will continue to make FSRA a vibrant organization serving the needs of our expanding Membership.

FSRA-FL Board of Directors 2021-2022

Chair:
Ellen Connor Engels

Vice-Chair:
Larry Farris

Treasurer:
Don Simmons

Secretary:
Sue Boorstein

Board of Advisors

Rebecca Armand
Mike Boorstein
Joyce Fitzpatrick
Catherine Hill Herndon
James Huskey
Jeffry Olesen
Henderson Patrick
Chris Swenson
Alan Van Egmond
Frank Young

The Foreign Service Retirees Association is a non-profit organization, formalized in 1982, designed to enhance the camaraderie and friend-ship of members and guests. Anyone who has served overseas as a representative of a U.S. government agency, including a branch of the Armed Services or Peace Corps, is welcome to join.

AFSA - AFSA encourages retired FS personnel to let your Congressional Representatives know what you think about the proposed cuts to the State Department, USAID Commerce and Ag budgets, and to thank them for the things they do support. <http://afsa.org/>

FROM Sue Boorstein, (now former) FSRA-FL Treasurer

If you find any errors/omissions in the your FSRA 2020 Directory, please contact Sue Boorstein at 703-606-9136, or boorsteins@aol.com. We will be adding the FSRA-FL membership list to a password-protected area of the website soon for ease of updates.

FROM Rebecca Armand, FSRA-FL Newsletter Editor/Website Manager

Hello everyone, and I sincerely hope that you are all healthy, as happy as possible, and had a wonderful holiday season. I am so pleased to let you all know that we are now posting our webinars and video content onto our new Youtube channel: [FSRA-FL YouTube](#). If you would like to view the AGM, please let me know, and I will give you access to that (until our new website, with a password-protected area is established). Please remember that our website is a living thing, and I can make changes, additions and so forth at any time - I welcome any and all feedback and suggestions from everyone! Life is hectic for us all, so if I do not respond to your contact in 24 hours, which is my goal, please ping me again.

Our **most recent webinar with Lyne Platt**, a retired career Senior Foreign Service Officer on the topic: **The 21st Century and the Final Frontier: U.S. Space Policy a Half Century After Apollo 11** can be accessed [here](#), on our YouTube channel. Our next webinar will be Ambassador (ret.) Craig Allen on the topic: The U.S.- China Business Relationship and the Florida Connection. The sign-up link is on the next page.

Please keep your input and articles for the newsletter, along with suggestions and ideas to keep our website relevant and informative for all of us, flowing! This newsletter features an article from retired State SFSO Fred Armand entitled:

For those **adventurers** among you, my old colleague John Fogarasi (now based in Michigan) is setting up a **bike tour in Europe** for late 2021. It will be 10 days of moderate biking, delicious food and drink and nice accommodations paired with historical context along the Danube. I hope that the spring season gives us amazing weather, I wish you all happiness and health, and my husband Fred and I hope to see/meet you all at a virtual or in-person event very soon!

Rebecca Armand

NEW FSRA-FL MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members:

BENTEL, John A.
State: *Executive Secretariat*

VARDY, Judy & Michael Corbett
State: *Moscow, Havana, Islamabad, Santa Domingo, Manila, New Delhi, Baghdad, Tripoli, Brussels*

WEINLAND, Gisela M.
State: *London*

**FSRA-FL
NEWSLETTER/
WEBSITE**

Please send any comments or suggestions for the FSRA newsletter or website to:
Rebecca Armand
202-247-1294 or
armandrk17@gmail.com.

FSRA-FL ANNUAL DUES

Please Pay your 2021 Dues Now to be Reinstated

\$20 for singles/\$30 for couples

2021 FSRA RENEWAL WAS DUE JANUARY 31!

For new member applications, member dues, member address/email changes, contact: Don Simmons at email: simmonseldon@verizon.net or at 703-851-6693. The [New Member & Renewal Form](#), along with the newsletter, is available on the FSRA website at: www.FSRA-FL.org.

IN MEMORIAM

Nothing to report !

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT WEBINAR The U.S.- China Business Relationship and the Florida Connection [[Click here to sign up](#)]



Amb. (ret.) Craig Allen Biography

On July 26, 2018, Craig Allen began his tenure in Washington, DC, as the sixth President of the United States-China Business Council (USCBC), a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing over 200

American companies doing business with China. Prior to joining USCBC, Craig had along, distinguished career in US public service.

Craig began his government career in 1985 at the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA). He entered government as a Presidential Management Intern, rotating through the four branches of ITA. From 1986 to 1988, he was an international economist in ITA's China Office.

In 1988, Craig transferred to the American Institute in Taiwan, where he served as Director of the American Trade Center in Taipei. He held this position until 1992, when he returned to the Department of Commerce for a three-year posting at the US Embassy in Beijing as Commercial Attaché.

In 1995, Craig was assigned to the US Embassy in Tokyo, where he served as a Commercial Attaché. In 1998, he was promoted to Deputy Senior Commercial Officer. In 1999, Craig became a member of the Senior Foreign Service. From 2000, Craig served a two-year tour at the National Center for APEC in Seattle. While there, he worked on the APEC Summits in Brunei, China, and Mexico. In 2002, it was back to Beijing, where Craig served as the Senior Commercial Officer. In Beijing, Craig was promoted to the Minister Counselor rank of the Senior Foreign Service.

After a four-year tour in South Africa, Craig became Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Asia at the US Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration. He later became DAS for China. Craig was sworn in as the United States ambassador to Brunei Darussalam on December 19, 2014. He served there until July 2018, when he transitioned to President of the US-China Business Council.

Craig received a B.A. from the University of Michigan in Political Science and Asian Studies in 1979. He received a Master of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University in 1985. After a four-year tour in South Africa, Craig became Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Asia at the US Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration.

Craig received a B.A. from the University of Michigan in Political Science and Asian Studies in 1979. He received a Master of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University in 1985.

Two New Announcements!

FSRA-FL has a new organizational email address:

FSRA.Florida@gmail.com

Please email us with any concerns, questions, etc.

Would YOU please write a small article for the next newsletter??

USAID ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (UAA) PARTNERSHIP

FSRA is pleased to announce a partnership with the USAID Alumni Association (UAA) which is based in Washington, D.C. The UAA fosters social and collegial networks of former USAID employees while promoting exchange of knowledge among alumni who wish to use their public service experience to advance global development. UAA facilitates access to alumni expertise for professional counsel and public education in support of sound U.S. foreign assistance. A link to the FSRA homepage is now on the [UAA website Alumni Groups page](#).

Frank Young, a FSRA Board member, is the point of contact for USAID retirees in Florida who want to learn more about FSRA and join. A UAA link can be found on the FSRA website [Web Links](#) page.

AFSA RETIREE OUTREACH

Christine Miele is the AFSA Retiree Outreach Coordinator. She engages with Foreign Service Retiree Associations and supports the work FSRA does locally to share the story of the Foreign Service. You can reach her at miele@afsa.org, or by visiting www.afsa.org/outreach.

Biking the Danube!

During these challenging times, it's important to have aspirations - a foreign adventure, healthy exercise while delving into fascinating history and culture. I'm developing plans for a 10-day program of moderate biking along the Danube River from Central Austria, dipping down to Burgenland, and then across Western Hungary to conclude in Budapest. Making this manageable and 'gemutlich' we're looking at no more than a dozen adventurous-minded folks biking about 30 miles a day, with an escort vehicle assist. We will also focus on history and culture, including sites of the region from early settlers, Turkish assaults, dramatic WWII sites, escape to freedom during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and more recently the first break in the Iron Curtain leading rapidly to the Fall of the Wall in 1989. Mixed into our tour days, we'll look forward to remarkable cuisine, picturesque vineyards, as well as a dip into one of the largest hot springs in Europe. Covid-19 allowing, my timeframe is late September or early October 2021. I'm working out the cost details over the next few months, with unique accommodations and professional support - yet with budgets in mind. Please contact John Fogarasi at john.fogarasi@gmail.com for more information.

LOOKING FOR NEW READING MATERIAL? YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK THESE OUT.....

These books have been published by retired FSO's (and FSRA-FL members) residing in Florida.



1. HEROES OF WORLD WAR II: RICHARD E. NUGENT, THE 1st BRAZILIAN FIGHTER SQUADRON, AND 209 OTHERS

by Dennis Reece, FSO, Retired. Available for purchase from the publisher: hellgatepress.com, or amazon.com/.

Richard E. Nugent commanded the XXIX Tactical Air Command as it gave air support to the Ninth Army from the Siegfried Line to within 53 miles of Berlin. The 1st Brazilian Fighter Squadron, part of the U.S. 350th Fighter Group in Italy, received the Presidential (formerly Distinguished) Unit Citation. All the other 209 individuals, serving in various land or air units, won at least one award for heroism, ranging from the Distinguished Service Cross to the Soldier's Medal.

2. MOVING TARGET (THE THIRD ALEX BOYD THRILLER)

by Mel Harrison, FSO, Retired. Available for purchase at amazon.com/.

Alex Boyd, Special Agent with the Diplomatic Security Service, is restless at a desk job in Washington, D.C.. He hates bureaucracy and misses the excitement of an overseas assignment. When unexpected opportunities arise, he and Rachel Smith, his new wife, jump at the chance to work in Paris. But nothing goes as planned. Soon their lives are at risk from a vicious Sicilian Mafia leader; their bosses, Henri and Giselle Ducat, have disappeared. Were they Kidnapped? Or did they run? Alex and Rachel follow the money trail across continents hoping to uncover the mystery before the Ducats are killed. Paris is the story's gorgeous, exciting backdrop and culinary heaven. But as Alex and Rachel find out, first, you must survive to enjoy it.

3. THE MAN WITH MANY LIVES

by Robert Day, FSO, Retired. Available directly from the author at 850-510-4989, email: WWhiteagle@comcast.net. Also available from the publisher: <https://www.xlibris.com/bookstore>.

Born in 1919, Robert W. (Bob) Day looks back on ten decades of his lifetime. From warding off machine-gun-wielding revolutionaries to a Prince intent on buying his daughter, he recalls all this and more as he celebrate 100 years of an adventurous life.

GIFT IDEA

Polo shirts with the FSRA-FL seal are available through FSRA member Bob Kegley at: RAWombat@msn.com (prices range from \$24 - \$27 with seal embroidery plus shipping; XL sizes add \$6). Search for "Port Authority Polo Shirt" for product info [here](#).

HOW and/or WHERE WILL THE NEXT FSRA- FL EVENT BE HELD?

Are you thinking it would be fun to have a virtual FSRA event? We need members to suggest ideas and speakers. Maybe a virtual wine tasting or Happy Hour? Perhaps a Zoom'ed presentation on WWII? Use your imagination!

With the continuing spread of covid-19, we are seeking input for virtual events. The board will be happy to help with setting up a Zoom or other meeting modality.

Please contact Larry Farris at farrisrl@hotmail.com or 727-307-2866 for more info or support.

I See CBD Products and Ads Everywhere – What’s the Deal? Can It Really Help Me with Anything?

By Fred Armand

Now that cannabis plants and products made from the plants are more accessible than ever, many of us wonder whether any of these products can actually help our aging bodies. There seem to be so many products and claims. But before I get into that, some definitions are in order. A more complete [definitions](#) list is also available.

- ◇ **Cannabidiol (CBD)** *The second most prevalent cannabinoid in cannabis, after tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Cannabidiol has been shown to calm the movements in people suffering from dystonia, a condition characterized by muscle spasms. Research also suggests it may be helpful for the treatment of anxiety, movement disorders, and pain.*
- ◇ **Cannabis** *Cannabis refers to a group of three varieties of marijuana plants with psychoactive properties: Cannabis sativa, Cannabis indica, and Cannabis ruderalis. Cannabis contains more than 120 chemical and biologically active components, known as cannabinoids.*
- ◇ **Edible** *Food or candy products infused with marijuana. Edibles must be digested in order to take effect, and as a result, it may take more time to feel their effects.*
- ◇ **Endocannabinoid system (ECS)** *A complex system within the human body that affects many important functions, including how a person moves, feels, and reacts. It includes endocannabinoids, endocannabinoid receptors, and endocannabinoid enzymes.*
- ◇ **Flower** *The smokable portion of the female cannabis plant (with THC) or the male plant (CBD).*
- ◇ **Hemp** *An industrial plant cultivated for its fiber and edible seeds. While hemp is in the same family as the cannabis plant, it does not have psychoactive effects. Commercial items made from hemp fiber include paper, textiles, clothing, biodegradable plastic, and food.*
- ◇ **Marijuana** *The dried leaves and flowers of the cannabis plant. Slang names for marijuana include weed, herb, and pot.*
- ◇ **Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)** *The main active psychoactive constituent of cannabis. It is responsible for the high sensation.*
- ◇ **Tincture** *A liquid that contains a concentrated herbal extract.*
- ◇ **Topical** *An oil, salve, lotion, or ointment infused with CBD that can be applied directly to the skin.*

Is CBD the real deal or an overpriced placebo? What is legal, and what isn't? Florida and many other states have passed laws legalizing marijuana products for medicinal, and in some places recreational, use. As the legal status of CBD changes in the United States, the amount of researcher being taken to explore the various medical benefits is increasing. Globally, the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in 2020 accepted a World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.

In [Florida](#) specifically, the market for medical marijuana use began opening in 2014. Cannabis access has progressed, and now the [Office of Medical Marijuana Use](#) (OMMU), established by the state Department of Health, is the organization responsible for the regulation of Florida's [medical cannabis program](#). For controlled

products (including items containing THC), patients need to obtain a [Registry Identification Card](#) from an approved [physician](#) in order to purchase medical marijuana in allowable quantities. Obtaining the medical marijuana card is done separately from purchasing products at “[dispensaries](#),” which sell medical marijuana products along with quality-controlled CBD items. Also, a myriad of CBD products not containing THC are available over-the-counter in many locations, even grocery stores and gas stations.

For many consumers, including [seniors](#), cannabis products may offer health benefits. Understanding the differences between the various products is crucial. Some products may contain high concentrations of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) which can produce psychoactive effects – these effects may be concerning, as we have spent our careers avoiding (previously) illegal drug use. CBD, however, can provide pain relief and/or relaxation without the psychoactive effects associated with THC. Everyone’s experience with CBD products is unique, and often trying individual products carefully is the best way to know if they will help you achieve your goals.

How can CBD help you? CBD has been shown to help relieve aches and pains as an effective anti-inflammatory, and has also been shown to help with anxiety, sleep disorders, and depression. Options for non-psychotropic cannabis relief include topical CBD such as skin creams and massage oils. For those who don’t wish to eat, inhale, or ingest CBD products, ‘topicals’ allow for relief where and when you need it.

Edible CBD and tinctures are other options. Tinctures can offer a measured form of CBD consumption allowing for gradual delivery. Concentrated CBD for inhalation is also available. These products are designed for a more rapid relief since inhaled cannabinoids enter the bloodstream much quicker.

If you’ve been considering CBD as an option for improving your quality of life, make sure to talk with your physician or care provider for specific recommendations unique to your situation. Medical marijuana and CBD are interesting therapeutics to learn about and possibly try out.