



USAID Alumni Association

January 2020 Newsletter

Best Wishes from the UAA Leadership Team

The USAID Alumni Association Board and Committee members wish you a prosperous and healthy 2020. We are pleased with the new initiatives undertaken this past year and we welcome hearing from you about how our services to the membership can be further improved. To facilitate alumni contacting us, we are providing a link [here](#) to a list of all Board and Executive Committee members who can be reached at office@usaidalumni.org. Thank you all for your continuing support through contributions and volunteer services!

Mark your Calendars for Upcoming UAA Events

Wednesday, January 15, 2020, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. -- **Jim Fox, Co-chair of the UAA Development Issues Committee**, will present a short review and lead the discussion of Rachel Maddow's new best-seller *Blowout*, 2019, 367 pages, about the global oil and gas industry. This meeting of the **UAA Book Club** will be held at the BISTRO 1521 Restaurant, 900 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22203, which is near the Ballston Metro Stop. Please let Book Club chair Stu Callison (stucallison@yahoo.com) know if you plan to participate, but please respond to Stu only and not "to all."

Thursday, January 23, 2020, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. – **Maureen Shauket**, USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning, and **Donald Niss**, Division Chief for Strategy, Policy and Evaluation in USAID's Africa Bureau, will be the guest discussion leaders for this meeting of the **Development Issues Committee** to be held in the conference room of Arizona State University's Washington, D.C. campus, 1800 I (Eye) Street, N.W. They will lead us in a discussion of the new USAID Country Road Maps, a key stage on the "journey to self-reliance," focusing on countries in Africa, and of a potential role for UAA members in reviewing the Road Maps and upcoming Country Development Cooperation Strategies. If you plan to attend, please advise Committee Co-Chairs, Steve Giddings (Sgiddings5@gmail.com) and Jim Fox (jameswfox@cox.net) no later than Tuesday the 21st of January.

Wednesday, January 29, 2020, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. – AFSA President Eric Rubin will speak at a **UAA/DACOR** lunch on "The State of the Foreign Service and its Future." Describing the current situation as presenting "probably the most significant set of challenges our service and our institution have ever faced," Ambassador Rubin and his new board have appealed to fellow Foreign Service officers to stay in the service and pledged to defend its people and its institution. The lunch is \$30.00. Please let us know if you plan to attend by clicking [here](#) no later than 9:00 a.m. January 27.

Sunday, February 9, 2020, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. – The **UAA Winterfest**, our first social event of the year, will be hosted by Frank and Antoinette Almaguer at their home in Vienna, Virginia. UAA members and spouses or partners are invited to share wine and appetizers with alumni friends and former colleagues. Please RSVP by February 3 by clicking [here](#). See below for more details.

New! on USAIDalumni.org

- **New Leadership:** In [About Us](#), you can see the list of new UAA Board of Directors & Executive Committee members serving from October 2019 to October 2020.

- **Obituaries:** The [In Memoriam](#) page contains five new entries.
- **Articles:** In [Articles](#), you can read 23 news pieces with a variety of topics, including: USAID retirees signed letter of support for State officials; release of USAID's public release of the Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps (FY 2020); fighting corruption in Ukraine: USAID's strategy; six Federal employees honored with the "Oscars of Government Service" including USAID/Haiti's Ryan Shelby; what technology means to the US international aid agency; Ivanka Trump announces \$100M more for women's global development fund; budget bill includes small increase for foreign aid, but is it a win?; the Global Fragility Act passes as part of US budget deal; and a number more of USAID-topical articles.
- **Forum:** The [Forum](#) page offers four new discussion items, including the USAID retirees' statement of support for State Department officials testifying in the Trump impeachment inquiry, and an analysis of the FY 2020 appropriations package.
- **Bibliography of USAID Authors:** There are several new entries since the last update of the [Bibliography of USAID Authors](#).
- **Development Resources:** In addition to the Articles mentioned above, this web section also offers up-to-date information on USAID authors, book club reviews, papers recently published by USAID authors, and a link to AFSA, among other topics.

Do you have news, an article or event you would like to share? Please send it to office@usaidalumni.org or, better still, post it on the Forum.

Looking for someone with a USAID alumni background and skills to hire or as a volunteer? If you would like to post a job or volunteer opportunity, please email us at office@usaidalumni.org, Attn: Jobs/Volunteers.

Join us for the Annual Winterfest!!

UAA members and spouses are invited to the sixth Annual Winterfest, our casual late afternoon gathering to get us through the remainder of the cold winter weeks. This is a free event for UAA members and those eligible to become members.

Date: Sunday, February 9, 2020

Time: 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Residence of Frank and Antoinette Almaguer, 1503 Dulcimer Court, Vienna, VA. (Note: The Almaguer's home is located very near Wolf Trap Park for the Performing Arts, off Exit 15 of the Dulles Toll Road. If lost, call: 703-938-3289.)

Dress: Totally Casual

RSVP: Please send acceptances no later than Monday, February 3, by clicking [here](#). If weather threatens, the snow date is Sunday, February 23. Please check the UAA website for any change in plans.

Call for Alumni to Host Future UAA Social Events

Over the past few years, we have all enjoyed annual UAA social events, such as the Winterfest in February, Spring Reception in May, and Summer Picnic in September. These events have been graciously hosted by Frank and Antoinette Almaguer, Malcolm and Tish Butler, Dave and Connie Eckerson, John and Nancy Pielemeier, and Alex and Patricia Shakow. They happily continue to open their homes to entertain former colleagues and friends of the UAA. We invite a broader segment of the alumni community to volunteer to help host activities of this or a different nature in the future. If you are interested, please contact UAA Membership Committee co-chairs Bette Cook (bettecook@cox.net) or Tom Nicastro (tnicastro339@gmail.com).

2020 UAA Survey

As has become customary, the 2020 UAA Survey will be sent in late January by email to all who receive this newsletter. We ask that you respond quickly -- we'll leave the survey open

about two weeks -- and announce the closure date when we send it. This is so that we can analyze your responses and provide results to the Board and Committees to guide 2020 programming. The most important questions will be those about which activities you'd like to participate in, and whether you'd like to be involved in committee work and, which one(s). Our committees often meet by conference call, so you can participate even if you don't live in the D.C. area.

Compared to prior years, the survey planned is shorter, as we'll not repeat some of the questions we've asked in the past which don't show much variation annually. We may revisit some of those questions on a 3- or 5-year cycle, but they have ceased to be useful for guiding our programs on an annual basis. So, watch your inbox for the 2020 UAA Survey!

UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue



On December 9, 2019, Homi Kharas, Interim Vice President and Director of Brookings' Global Economy and Development Program, gave a wide-ranging, thoughtful and challenging talk based on the recent book he co-edited, *Leave No One Behind: Time for Specifics on the Sustainable Development Goals*. Kharas provided in the book examples of practical ideas on how to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Among his many salient points, Kharas expressed concern that attention to development issues was being lost in the intensified public focus on climate issues and argued that the two need to be better integrated. You can benefit from the many insights during his talk and in the Q&As by clicking [here](#).

UAA Development Issues

The Development Issues Committee's planned December's discussion with **DJ Nordquist, U.S. Executive Director of the World Bank**, will be rescheduled for early 2020 and a notice will be sent to UAA members. Through our efforts to schedule these stimulating discussions we hope to increase collaboration between interested UAA members and USAID staff. The Committee welcomes new UAA members to its periodic discussions of relevant development topics.

UAA Book Club

On November 20, 2019, **Lee Roussel** led a discussion with fifteen members of the **UAA Book Club** of **William Nordhaus's, *Climate Casino***, 2013. Lee's summary review of this book is posted in the UAA Book Club Reviews section of the UAA website by clicking [here](#). Lee selected this book because it is a comprehensive approach by an economist to the complex issues confronted in considering climate change. Written for non-economists, it covers all the elements involved in understanding the human role in climate change, both what we now know and what we do not really know. Nordhaus was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 2018. In detailing its reasons for giving the prize to Nordhaus, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences specifically recognized his efforts to develop "an *integrated assessment model*, i.e. a quantitative model that describes the global interplay between the economy and the climate. His model integrates theories and empirical results from physics, chemistry and economics. Nordhaus' model is now widely spread and is used to simulate how the economy and the climate co-evolve." Nordhaus has been sharply criticized by many who objected to important elements not adequately addressed by his model. The book group found urgency in three pages of findings and six specific recommendations issued by over 11,000 scientists on November 6, 2019. These findings especially focused on population policies and the difficult to quantify but important trends impacting agriculture, fishing, and biodiversity.

Alumni Profile: Three Generations of the Sands Family

This is a story of three generations of the Sands family – Fenton Sands Sr., Fenton Sands Jr., and Jahmal Sands – who have been USAID foreign service officers since the inception of the Agency in 1961 and continuing today.



It all started with **Fenton B. Sands Sr.** who grew up as a poor child in Harlem, NY and, strangely enough, became an international agricultural expert who worked in or visited about 30 countries. How did a city-boy from Harlem get into agriculture? His childhood curiosity, after being awed by seasonal changes he saw in plants in the park outside his window, drove him to study agriculture. That led to an overseas career with several international development organizations, beginning in the mid-1940s when he went to Liberia with his wife to start the agricultural school at Cuttington College. In fact, he worked for the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) in 1961 at the time it was re-established as USAID. From 1960 to 1964, USAID assigned him to Sudan as a Horticulture Advisor. From there Fenton Sr. went on to work overseas with other agencies, and eventually retire from the World Bank in 1982. Another amazing fact about Fenton Sr. is he was a member of the

historic Tuskegee Airmen who joined the 477th Bombardment Group in 1942 as a member of the first Navigator-Bombardiers.

The second generation, **Fenton Sands Jr.** who retired from USAID in 2007, grew up in Liberia, Nigeria, and Sudan (with his mother Dorothy and sisters Doy and Renee) and went to high school in both Egypt and Switzerland. Fenton Jr. inherited part of his gypsy-lifestyle from his parents – first following in his father's footsteps by earning a degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University, the same university where his father got his PhD in agriculture. After Fenton Jr.'s first job at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, his father's career and Fenton Jr.'s experiences living overseas inspired him to join USAID as an IDI in 1976. He initially served three years in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), then with his family (wife, Cynthia and sons Bemani and Jahmal) took a leave of absence from the Agency to go to Michigan State University for his doctorate degree.

Thereafter, he rejoined USAID and, with his family, headed off to Uganda in 1984. His USAID career-odyssey continued for over 25 years from Uganda to Morocco, to Egypt, then Ghana, and briefly in Washington, DC before going to Guyana in 2005 as the USAID Mission Director. Since retiring, he's done several international consultancies with USAID Missions in Ghana, Malawi, and Guyana. He now lives with his wife Cynthia in Washington, DC. When not working periodically, he enjoys doing creative things with his own extensive photographic collection and the one he inherited from his father. Using the vast amount of information left by his father, Fenton Jr. documented his father's life as a Tuskegee Airman and his very interesting international life in a self-published essay-photo book.



Although Fenton Sr. passed away in 1998, a third generational member of the Sands family, **Jahmal Sands**, continues the family legacy today as a USAID officer. He worked with the Agency as a Civil Servant for several years before converting to the Foreign Service in 2018. He is currently assigned to USAID/Egypt as a Deputy Executive Officer. Jahmal is in familiar territory, having graduated from Cairo American College during his father's five-year posting at the same USAID Mission 22 years ago. While Fenton Jr.'s other son, Fenton Bemani Sands, does not work overseas, he does work in the United States for another foreign affairs agency, the Department of State.

Clearly, the two generations after Fenton Sands Sr. were highly influenced by his courageous pioneering spirit and willingness to venture where few would think of going. In particular, all three

have been committed to applying their skills to benefit those in need all over the world as

USAID officers have been doing since Fenton Sr. first did so when USAID started close to 60 years ago.

Call for 2020 Membership Contributions

In 2020, the UAA plans to continue increasing its membership while also expanding and extending the reach of activities of interest to our members, no matter where you reside. To make this happen, we need your active participation, ideas, and generous financial support.

We encourage you to become a contributing member of the UAA for calendar year 2020 by making a tax-deductible financial contribution in one of two ways:

1. Contribute electronically. Most members and prospective members will likely continue to find it most convenient to pay dues and other contributions online. [Click here to make your contribution](#). Or go to USAID Alumni Association website and see link in blue panel to the left on the opening page.
2. Contribute by check. For those who wish to pay by check, please note the **new address for UAA dues and other contribution checks**. We have rented a post office box for the receipt of dues and other contributions, which will enable quicker deposit and acknowledgement of checks as they are received. Beginning January 1, 2020, please send checks for dues and other contributions, made out to "USAID Alumni Association" and with a note on the memo line as to the purpose of the check to:

Treasurer, USAID Alumni Association
P.O. Box 16723
Alexandria, VA 22302

The suggested contribution levels for 2020 are:
\$75 Those who live within 50 miles of Washington, DC
\$25 Those who live elsewhere in the United States
\$25 Residents of foreign countries
\$25 Former FSNs, wherever they live, or
\$25 Associate Membership

And, of course, we welcome you to join with UAA and other "angels" who have generously contributed \$100 or more as "Friends of UAA."

So don't delay! Make your 2020 annual membership contribution today, and encourage your friends and former colleagues to sign up and contribute to UAA as well. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have questions or comments, or if you know of other alumni who are eligible to join the UAA. Everyone is welcome, including former FSOs, Civil Servants, FSNs, PSCs and other contract personnel, and political appointees.

Newsletter schedule

We hope you have enjoyed the first UAA newsletter of the year 2020. The next issue will be sent February 3 and will be provided approximately monthly throughout the year. If you have any stories or events that you would like to share with your fellow alumni, please send the information along with a picture and caption of the event, date, and people shown to office@usaidalumni.org.

[Make your 2020 UAA Membership contribution here](#)

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