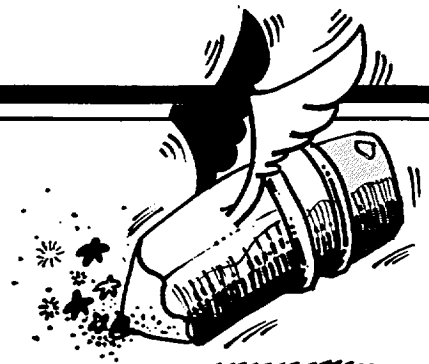


# □ THE LETTER BOX... □



20

Dear Sylvie,

The most recent issue of *Liaison* has arrived in Santiago and OF COURSE I have to write to you in response to the problems of Mr. Claus Jobes.

I would think that his very first step would be to stop thinking of his difficulties in terms of his gender! Surely in the 1980's a spouse is a spouse, be they male or female — and the problems are those of anyone dealing with that role in terms of a rotational life style. I wonder why he finds them "special" for male spouses — and why he feels he makes people "automatically uncomfortable". I do feel sorry about that, but then, if, as I begin to suspect, Mr. Jobes imagines the more numerous sort of spouses are happily making radish roses and dabbling in the arts and crafts in their spare time, well, yes, I begin to feel a little uncomfortable myself!

I suggest he cast his net a little wider and he will find a great many spouses sharing his concerns — and that a great deal has already been achieved, though certainly much remains to be done. Has he contacted the FSCA? As a potter who works and exhibits, I can sympathize with all the frustrations of re-establishing oneself every 3-4 years. However, only a few years ago bringing one's equipment was not an option, so as I say, some progress has been made. Where I would like some help is with maintaining contact in one's field in Canada, and with the bureaucratic side (not the transport) of sending work for exhibition. It is extremely difficult.

I wish you well in your efforts with *Liaison* and look forward to future issues — but please, please let spouses just be spouses. That's enough as it is! □

Sincerely,  
Margaret Chandler

Dear Claus C. Jobes,

As another foreign-born spouse, with neither English nor French as my mother tongue, I read your letter to *Liaison* with interest. I have had the experience of a foreign posting and also encountered the situation where your role as an accompanying spouse has been considered unusual. Based on my own experience in attempting to find employment at a post, I have two observations to make. The first is that a spouse's status as a non-Canadian is less of an obstacle to finding employment at a post than it is in Canada, — particularly in Ottawa. The second point is that a male spouse is largely spared the obstacles created by social attitudes, which may create difficulties for female spouses in taking up employment outside the home.

Personally I have enjoyed sharing my experiences as a working spouse, both in Canada and abroad, with other spouses in the Spousal Employment Committee of the Foreign Service Com-

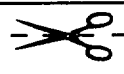
munity Association (FSCA). The number of male spouses enlisted as members of the FSCA has been steadily increasing and in my view increased participation by male spouses in the FSCA is the best way for us as a group to share our experiences with all our fellow spouses — male or female □

Yours truly,  
Björn Johansson

### CREDITS

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