

□ LETTERS WE GET LETTERS... □



This publication is for you. If it is to be of maximum interest and use to you, it needs your input. We welcome any and all suggestions and comments about this issue. Please write to: Posting Services and Community Liaison Division (Liaison), Department of External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson Building, Ottawa K1A 0G2.

Dear Sylvie:

Your "Editor's Note" made me write this letter to you. It sounded somewhat fresh and energetic in the way that you introduced yourself and so I accept your invitation to write.

First I would like to introduce myself. I am one of that rare species — a male spouse — which tends to make people automatically uncomfortable. Making it worse, English is not my mother tongue because I am German. But topping it all is my profession (and that helps some people to explain this 'weird' person). I am an artist — sculptor and photographer — who also has published a book of poetry in German. My experience with the Canadian Foreign Service is based on three-and-a-half years in Manila and four months in Copenhagen.

There have been a lot of interesting articles in *Liaison* — especially for an outsider like myself — but I have never seen anything about our rare species of male spouses and their special problems. I'm quite aware of the fact that with my profession I belong to a group with fewer problems as I basically can work everywhere; but let me tell you my side anyway.

When we moved from Toronto to Manila it was easy because it was just the two of us and my studio equipment. Once in Manila I had to fight for myself in order to find studio and workspace, materials and contacts for future exhibi-

tions. That was fine by me because I liked the challenge. But then came the move to Copenhagen. This time it was not just the two of us and my studio equipment. Our family included by then a two-and-a-half year old boy and a six month old girl. All that the Department added was 1 000 kg. At the best of times I find it quite a challenge to move a family of four with 4 000 kg. But with my studio equipment and pieces left from former exhibits I found it close to impossible. The Department doesn't give a damn about the fact that I have to move my studio every three to four years and doesn't offer any help. I suppose it is "all settled with the allowances."

Don't you think it would make quite an interesting and informative story for *Liaison* to find out how many male spouses there are, what they do when their wives are being posted abroad and how the Department could be of any assistance? I would be pleased to

share my own experience and am sure that others would as well.

Looking forward to the forthcoming issues of *Liaison* □

Yours truly
Claus C. Jobs

CREDITS

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Editor: SYLVIE GAUVIN

Copy Editing English:
Margaret Mitchell

Copy Editing French:
François Galarneau, Denys Leclerc.

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