



# Newsletter

The Association of Former Staff Members

VOL XXI, NO. 2

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## *4th International Reunion – Lima, Peru. Join Us!*

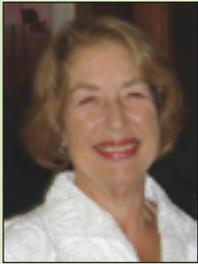


*Machu Picchu, Peru*

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## Message from the President



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It has been a good year for AFSM. Our special promotion for lower dues brought us many new members, for which we are delighted. We believe that the

larger our membership and the stronger our sense of solidarity, the more both we and PAHO's administration will benefit.

With the help and guidance of our indispensable Peruvian colleagues, we are working on the final plans for the Fourth International Reunion in Lima, Peru, scheduled for 1–4 November 2010. The hotel and its conference accommodations are excellent and the location will definitely add to our enjoyment. Distinguished speakers will grace our meeting and deal with items of great interest to our members. In addition, our colleagues in Peru have identified a travel agency in Lima, Nuevo Mundo, who works closely with PAHO and is prepared to assist us in planning visits within Lima as well as to “must see” sites such as Machu Picchu. In the midst of all this reunion planning, our Peruvian retirees are also establishing their own AFSM national chapter!

Airline fares increase as time goes forward, so we do hope that you have already made your hotel reservations, registered for the reunion, and purchased your airline tickets. If not, we suggest that you do so quickly in order not to miss out on all the fun! We remind you that the special rates offered by the hotel only will be available until 11 October, at which point they will rise.

**Please note that we will publish and mail more detailed information only to those of you who complete and return a Reunion registration form.**

Since our last *Newsletter*, our colleagues in Haiti and Chile have undergone some terribly difficult times. The AFSM Board has made a significant financial contribution for relief operations in both countries. We also met with Jean-Luc Poncelet,

Manager of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief, and with Robert Lee, Advisor of the Emergency Operations Center, to learn what, if any, official plans or suggestions exist to provide relief to former staff in case of disaster. An article based on the findings of this meeting can be found in this issue.

AFSM has continued to develop closer working relations with other international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization of American States, the Inter American Development Bank, and the Association of Former International Civil Servants. The President and some board members of each of the retiree associations are now meeting quarterly to discuss problems and issues of common interest. Again, we all foresee that strengthening the solidarity of our groups may prove to be very beneficial in the years to come.

We are working with PAHO to determine whether to develop our new Web site under the umbrella of the PAHO SharePoint system now functioning within the Organization. Designated AFSM members are being trained and the AFSM Board of Directors is holding meetings with PAHO staff to become familiarized with the system so as to be certain that it is the best vehicle for our needs. We want to be certain that we will enjoy the privilege of cyber security, lower costs, and the possibility of instant electronic communication whereby PAHO Information Bulletins as well as our calendar of activities and other items may be automatically posted to our site. Details of the new Web site and how to use it will be made available in a future Newsletter.

In conclusion, we assure you that we will continue to do our best to represent the needs and interests of PAHO/WHO former staff and we take this opportunity to send you our very best regards.

Nancy Berinstein  
*President*

# ASFM'S 4<sup>th</sup> International Reunion

**Lima, Peru, 1-4 November 2010**

The Fourth International Reunion is fast approaching and we want to bring you the latest news. We have planned an interesting and enjoyable program of technical, social, and fun activities for attendees and their families. The meeting's proposed agenda offers information about PAHO and its priorities today, panels to assist us in healthy aging, and news of AFSM members' activities in the countries. We even have planned to provide some information on how to safely survive the constantly changing economy. In addition, we are pleased that PAHO staff from Headquarters will join us to discuss pensions, health insurance, and Credit Union advantages. Moreover, we have planned an enjoyable lecture on Peru's history, and culture, so we may make the most of our time in this fascinating country. Lastly, you can participate

in discussions about the AFSM priorities you wish to see in the near future.

There will be simultaneous translation English-to-Spanish and vice versa for the program, so rest assured that everyone will be able to fully participate. All of this, plus opportunities both individual and in groups to meet with former colleagues, reminisce, and just enjoy!

Fall is high season in Peru, and we have been fortunate to obtain very good rates at Hotel Los Delfines, a five star hotel (with a casino). Keep in mind that these special rates are only valid through 11 October, so please make your reservations as soon as possible. If you have not received information on the Reunion, please request it from Hortensia Saginor at: [isaginor@aol.com](mailto:isaginor@aol.com).

We have identified the Nuevo Mundo travel agency (contact [jlagos@gruponuevomundo.com.pe](mailto:jlagos@gruponuevomundo.com.pe)) to assist those wanting to explore more in Lima or other attractions in Peru, such as the famed Machu Picchu, Cusco, Nazca, or other interesting cities.

Approximately 50 former staff, along with their friends and family, have already confirmed their intention to attend. We expect this reunion to be every bit as wonderful as previous ones in Washington, D.C. (2002), Buenos Aires (2006), and Cartagena (2008). Do join us!

## News from the PAHO/WHO Federal Credit Union



*Dr. Mirta Roses, Director of PAHO, cuts the ribbon that marks the opening of the new PAHO/WHO Federal Credit Union branch on May 22, 2010.*

The Association of Former Staff Members (AFSM) has always had an excellent relationship with the PAHO/WHO Credit Union. Retirees have long benefited from the Credit Union's interest in and generous support of our activities. A Credit Union representative has attended our annual meetings in Washington, D.C., as well as our biennial international reunions held in Buenos Aires and Cartagena. This year, the CEO, Miguel Boluda, Jr., has again offered his office's participation in the upcoming Lima reunion. As in previous occasions, they will host a dinner for those attending the event.

It gives us great pleasure to see our Credit Union growing and prospering, as evidenced by the opening of

their attractive and spacious branch at Columbia Plaza, directly across from PAHO Headquarters. The facility—which includes a 24-hour ATM machine—provides members with a convenient and secure place for conducting their banking business. The F Street location will continue to house the Credit Union’s administrative offices. The AFSM Board of Directors congratulates Mr. Boluda and his dedicated staff on the grand opening of the new branch. ■

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## Adjustments to Pension Entitlements on 1 April 2010

by *Jean Surgi*

On 1 April 2010, there was a 2.8% increase in the pension entitlements (in US\$), based on the movement of the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) over the two-year period December 2007 to December 2009.

For those who separated in 2009 or early 2010, the adjustment was prorated. For those receiving the first adjustment since the award of their pensions, the increase was reduced by a 0.5%. This reduction was set at 1.5% in the early 1980s as part of economy measures; however, in the light of progressive improvement in the actuarial situation, the Board decided to lessen the reduction.

For retirees and beneficiaries on the two-track pension adjustment system, the adjustment of the local-currency track amount on 1 April 2010 varied according to the CPI movements in their respective countries of residence, provided that the 2% threshold had been met. In years when the threshold is not met, CPI movements are carried over to the next year.

Retirees and beneficiaries received the increase on the occasion of the payment of their April 2010 benefits, due either on 1 April for those who retired before 31 December 1984 or 1 May for those who retired on or after 31 December 1984.

Retirees are reminded that their health insurance payments for the year 2010 have already been established based on their pension amounts at the beginning of the year. This cost will increase in 2011, when recalculated based on the new pension amounts, and this will result in a lower pension payment when the larger amount is deducted. ■

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## Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Colombia AFSM Chapter

Medellín, Colombia, 3–5 June, 2010

by *Gustavo Alberto Mora*



*AFSM Colombia Chapter members gather at their Fifth Meeting.*

The three-day reunion was held with the participation of 29 former PAHO/WHO staff, including their spouses. Also present were authorities of the National Faculty of Public Health (FNSP); a representative of PAHO/WHO in Colombia; and Dr. Horacio Toro, a former staff member from Bolivia, who attended as an observer.

The welcoming reception took place at the hotel Casa Laureles on Thursday evening, 3 June, and it gave the participants their first opportunity to catch up with others. An artistic video on contemporary dancing was presented, with introductory remarks by Helena Restrepo.

Three sessions were held over two days at the National Faculty of Public Health “Héctor Abad Gómez.” At the opening session on Friday morning, J. Burbano, president of the Chapter, welcomed participants; other speakers were Dr. Roberto Sempértegui, on behalf of the PAHO/WHO Representative in Colombia, and Dr. Alvaro Cardona, Dean of the FNSP. A special tribute was paid to the memory of Dr. Arturo Romero, who died recently. J. Burbano read a resolution declaring Dr. Helena Restrepo as honorary president of the Chapter.

During the first session Dr. Raúl Londoño was appointed chair of the meeting and Dr. Restrepo was appointed rapporteur, with the assistance of M. Fajardo. Dr. Luis Carlos Ochoa was recognized for his special contribution to

public health at the national and international levels. J. Burbano presented his report based on the 2009–2011 plan of action. The message of Nancy Berinstein, President of the AFMS Board, was read and appreciated. The strengthening of the relationship with the PAHO/WHO Country Office was acknowledged. A letter from ASOPENUC (former UN staff members) was read by E. Escobar. The financial report was offered for consideration by Julio Jiménez on behalf of the treasurer. Dr. Toro presented the report on health insurance. During the working lunch, sponsored by the PAHO/WHO Country Office in Colombia, there was an active participation of the FNSP authorities.

The second session began with a report from Dr. Sempértegui, which dealt with Colombia health conditions and PAHO/WHO's cooperation. During the discussion the group expressed concern about the low profile of the technical cooperation and the critical situation of the health sector. Dr. Cardona, Dean of the FNSP, spoke about the current crisis of the health

system and invited participants to contribute to discussions which are being led by his institution. On Friday evening there was a tango night.

The third session was held on Saturday morning, June 5. A minute of silence was observed in memory of Dr. Guillermo Llanos, engineer Miranda from Puerto Rico, and J. Burbano's sister. Dr. Restrepo summarized the information sent by the FCU. It was decided that the location for the next meeting in 2011 will be somewhere in the Eastern Plains region. It was proposed that current members of the Board be reelected for an additional year, but J. Burbano did not accept for personal reasons. Elmer Escobar was appointed as president and Gustavo Mora as vice president. J. Burbano's contribution was recognized and appreciated. Dr. Sempértegui was designated as honorary member of the Chapter. The main recommendation was to issue a joint declaration with the FNSP concerning the health sector crisis in Colombia. After the closing remarks by G. Mora, the participants went for a country lunch, the final activity of the meeting. ■

## Haiti, My Country

*Yva R. Latortue*

**F**or my husband and me, Tuesday, January 12, 2010, began as any other day. We had been scheduled to fly home to Haiti that day. As Providence would have it, however, we decided to postpone our return trip and remain with relatives in the United States a little longer. We would soon find out what that decision would mean for us.

The streets of Port-au-Prince greeted that day bursting with activity, mainly along Carrefour, on the city's south side, and in Portail St. Joseph, on its north side. No one could imagine that by late afternoon, after 38 terrifying seconds of rumbling from the bowels of the earth, most of Port-au-Prince's finest buildings, countless of its homes, many of its familiar markets and places, and more than 250,000 of its souls would be no more.

It wasn't long before we were looking at the shocking and gruesome scenes on television, worse than Dante's *Inferno*. Newspaper photos and articles were horrifying as well. I spent what remained of that day frequently conversing with friends and family

members who had survived in Haiti on this unforgettable day.

After many weeks and much thought, my husband, Francois, and I decided to once again return to our homeland on May 5th. We braced ourselves as the plane approached the airport in Port-au-Prince. Before landing, the pilot circled the city to allow the approximately 400 passengers to view the wreckage. Nothing we had seen on TV prepared us for the devastation; it looked more like a nuclear destruction than an earthquake.

As we came into the newly built airport, there was a sharp contrast between the passengers' sad faces and the warm welcome of the immigration employees. The usual calypso reception band, dressed in vivid costumes, played their drums and banjos, singing our favorite Haitian ballads. They were desperately trying to make us happy, but our grief was too deep for any musical balm to ease it away.

Did we want to visit our neighborhood now, our driver was asked. It was already early evening,

however, and with road conditions being what they were, with many streets impassable, we decided to proceed to our relative's house and save the visit for another day.

What should have been a fifteen minute drive from the airport turned into an hour, as we navigated Delmas Avenue; the road had been reduced from four to two lanes because of concrete blocks, and other debris piled on both sides of the street. None of the most important buildings were left standing. We were stunned: the National Palace; the Palace of Justice; the Internal Revenue Service building; and the Cathedral, famous for its stained glass windows; plus many other churches, hospitals, and schools had all collapsed under the violence of the tremors.

We passed many tent cities, small ones and big ones. At Champ Mars, we saw more than 2,000 tents organized in corridors, complete with electric pools, Red Cross latrines, water pipes, and other amenities. Once we reached our host's house, we stayed long into the night listening to horror stories, each one more dreadful than the last. But there were also many heartwarming and touching accounts. We were told how everyone had given up on saving a man whose voice was being heard under the rubble. Just then a woman ran up, yelling, "This is my husband's voice. Please help him; please help me!" How could they? They had no equipment; they had no tools. But suddenly, many people queued one after another, digging with their bare hands. Four hours later, they finally brought the man out from under the debris. Remarkable!

Early the next morning, we were finally ready to visit our home. We had seen pictures of the house, and so we thought we were prepared to face reality. However, standing in front of slabs of concrete and a mass of iron works, and looking down at what had been the roof of the house, was quite an experience. With help from the driver and another guide, we descended to what had been an upper level balcony in the back of the house. We were able to retain our composure by remembering that at least no one had died in this, our dream house.

Our neighbor to our right, fared a little better. The second floor of his house had disappeared, but the first floor, although damaged, still stood. The house to our left, however, was totally destroyed. We were told that at 4:00 p.m. the 35-year-old husband told his 32-year-old wife that it was time for him to pick up their two children (9 and 6 years old) from school. He

left the house and got the children just seconds before the school collapsed in front of him, burying many of his children's classmates inside. He was terrified, but consoled himself that he had his children still. When he rushed home at 5:10 p.m., he found his home completely in ruins, with this wife and another member of the household under the concrete. This was just too much anguish to even imagine.

Yet, as surely as the dawn appears even after the darkest night, I, too, experienced a ray of peace. As we looked at our house, we could see that although the basement had many cracks in the walls, it still stood. In the middle of all the debris, I saw something glitter like gold. As I dug through the wreckage, I could scarcely believe my eyes. I tugged and pulled out an intact, framed picture of my son Reynald. Even the glass was unbroken. Tears came to my eyes, accompanied by a strange sense of hope and tranquility.

All told, we spent twelve days in Haiti. During that time, we were able to put our own sufferings aside and visit and comfort friends. One of them, Elaine, told us that she had spoken to her daughter Florence as she was leaving her office and had asked her to stop at the Caribbean Market on her way home to get some bread. More than 120 people, including Florence, died at that market. Elaine blamed herself, and kept repeating: "Yva, we found her body three steps from the car, the bread and a jar of olives in her hand. Three steps..." Another acquaintance, Marie Marthe, who is director of the Canape Vert College, stood for hours after the quake, identifying bodies as workers extracted corpses from under the concrete slabs at the school. When the count reached 153, she lost consciousness. We encouraged and comforted as best we could.

The country has lost so much that it might seem that the tangible efforts made by so many during the last few years might have disappeared too. Much of our "intelligentia" died: professors, doctors, engineers—all gone. A great number of laborers and students also perished. Nevertheless, Haitians, with the help of the international community will rally to put our country back together. We who are left behind have a duty to perform; we owe it to all those who have passed on. We will, surely, become a better, more prosperous Haiti so that it will once again be known as the Pearl of the Caribbean. We will live up to our creed, *L'union fait la force*—in unity there is strength. ■

## Helping Retirees in the Aftermath of Disasters

*Carol Collado*

In the aftermath of this year's devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, your fellow retirees on the AFSM Board began to consider what the Association could do to improve the security and welfare of those of us who live in situations where natural or manmade disasters occur. Immediately after these disasters, the Association contributed to the Credit Union funds set up for relief efforts. We also got in touch with Dr. Mirta Roses, the Director, to express our regrets, voice our concerns regarding the retirees, and offer our collaboration wherever it was needed. The Board felt, however, that it needed to do more in this regard, and do it more proactively, to fulfill our mandate to look out for the well-being of our members.

As a first step, the Board formed a subcommittee to investigate the current situation—what was being done for retirees during disasters—and what measures AFSM could undertake to diminish the damage of disasters on former staff. Subcommittee members met with Dr. Jean Luc Poncelet, the Area Manager of PAHO's Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief, to find out which PAHO plans include provisions that cover both active and former staff in disasters. Individual agencies such as PAHO apparently are not responsible for arranging evacuations of staff and their families. Rather, the UN has a disaster management plan in place in the countries, which is usually coordinated by United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Former staff members are not usually considered within individual Country Office plans. The subcommittee also has begun to collect various preparedness guides. We will be sharing such information with you in future issues of this Newsletter.

Clearly, our work regarding the effects of disasters on former PAHO staff members has only just begun. For starters, we have identified three broad concerns in the immediate post-disaster situation: health, housing, and communications. We also want to focus on lasting traumas that can persist long after the event is over. Often, these are overlooked or forgotten after the disaster's immediate aftermath. Even with our limited resources, there is much we can do if we work together. We will explore such things as maintaining a list of retirees in each Country Office and establishing a "calling chain"

of members in a country or region. We will keep you informed as details of these and other efforts emerge.

Perhaps the most important element in this effort is that we work together to help each other. We will be calling on you in the coming months to help us identify and coordinate these initiatives. Moreover, many of you have experienced disasters first-hand. We welcome your input and comments. Please write to us at AFSM, c/o PAHO Headquarters, or send suggestions directly to [collado@verizon.net](mailto:collado@verizon.net). By working together, you will help make our Association's bylaws a reality—to "promote fellowship...and well-being...of our members by providing...information on matters of special interest." ■

### Welcome to New AFSM Members in 2010

#### From the Washington, DC Area

Guerrero Espinel, Juan Eduardo  
Kent, Mrs. Jeanne S.  
Rusca Ferri, Maria-Ines  
Torres, Cristina

#### From Other Parts of the US

Roux-Sajous, Marie – Flushing, NY  
Stephens, Mrs. Susan Anne – Hayes, VA

#### From Other Countries

Bolaños Linares, Claudio – Lima, Peru  
Castro, Ma. Del Rosario – Lima, Peru  
Dorich, Irma Dancourt – Lima, Peru  
Olcese, Haide – Lima, Peru  
Osorio, Maxima V. – Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
Pimentel Olaverria, Maria Gisela – Santo Domingo,  
Dominican Republic  
Ponce, Pilar – Lima, Peru  
Rivera, Aida Teresa – La Paz, Bolivia  
Rodriguez, Sinforiano – Asuncion, Paraguay  
Unda, Juan Roberto – Jalisco, Mexico  
Villagra, Bernardino – Asuncion, Paraguay  
Taylor, David – Christ Church, Barbados

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### RICHARD MARKS

I thoroughly enjoyed my nearly 30 years of service with PAHO, in no small measure because it gave me the opportunity to remain engaged in Latin American life and culture, which began during my Peace Corps service in Colombia in the late 1960s. Working to improve health and living conditions in the Americas was deeply satisfying during my PAHO career, and it was not something I was willing to abandon after I retired from the Organization in 2002.

I had been active in my Episcopal congregation for several years, and it seemed logical to look to this connection to find a way to stay actively involved in Latin America. The establishment of a companion diocese relationship between Washington and Honduras provided an opportunity for service. As Chair of the Companion Diocese Committee, I traveled to small congregations in the Department of Santa Barbara and worked with the Honduras Diocese's development agency and its community leaders to develop small-scale projects aimed at improving local quality of life.

One such project was brought to our attention by the congregational leaders in the town of El Cerrón. Small producers of corn and beans found that middlemen paid low prices to the farmers when the grains were abundant at harvest time, and then resold the product to them at high prices when it became scarce after a few months. The community proposed forming a farmers' cooperative which would buy grain from its members at a fair price, hold it in a small silo storage facility until the time of need, and resell at prices local families could afford.

I took the proposal home with me and was able to get enough support from local Episcopal congregations and individuals to provide seed capital for a revolving fund (shades of the PAHO Textbook Program!) to set up the grain cooperative. The community received training in business practices and product processing and management, the silos were



constructed inside the parish social hall, and the program began running about four years ago. Although the fund has had its ups and downs, the original capital has been preserved and there has been a modest return on investment.

The community was also concerned about the high dropout rate of students—especially girls—after completing elementary school in El Cerrón. The local high school is about 45-minutes away by pickup truck, but many families were unable to afford the cost of about a dollar a day per student. Once again, we have been able to tap individuals and congregations in the Washington Diocese to help the community get their children to school and pay for school supplies.

I have also been involved in organizing annual summer trips to Honduras for members of Washington Episcopal congregations. The visitors get a week of intensive one-on-one Spanish instruction at a school in Copán and then spend several days working and praying with rural congregations in Santa Barbara. For several people, this has led to long-term, supportive relationships. We have a longer (six weeks) study program for seminarians planning to be ordained in the Diocese. We also bring a Honduran priest to Washington for two months each year to study English and establish contacts that could be useful in supporting community development projects in local congregations.

All in all, it's been an interesting and satisfying eight years since I retired from PAHO. I hope I can look forward to many more! ■

## WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Please write and let us know how you spend your time. Tell us of recent special trips. Motivate the rest of us with your achievements. Share with other AFSM members these interesting post-PAHO events!

# The Sotelo Family

## A Remembrance



Those of us with long ties to PAHO fondly remember Alejandro Sotelo, who served the Organization faithfully for many distinguished years. After Alejandro died, his wife, Semira, remained a faithful member of AFSM. And, following in the family tradition of service, Alejandro's son, Juan Manuel, has spent his professional career working with PAHO in several countries to improve health and living standards in the Americas. We are pleased to share with you Juan Manuel Sotelo's remembrance of his family upon the death of his mother. His letter reminds us how intertwined the Sotelo family's lives have been with the Pan American Health Organization. Semira Figueiredo de Sotelo died in Lima, Peru, on 30 June 2010. On behalf of the Association of PAHO/WHO Former Staff Members we send our condolences—and our appreciation.

—Nancy Berinstein  
*President, ASFM Board*



*Mother was an extraordinary person; she had one-of-a-kind traits and a joyfulness that came easily to her. She was an uncomplicated woman with an acute intellect, and she always spoke her mind. Good humor came naturally to her. She was an excellent wife and companion to my father, Alejandro, with whom she shared her life in a host of different places, from the Peruvian jungle through various capitals in the Americas.*

*As her only child, I was privileged to receive all her love and mothering. When my father passed away, she shared with me and Ingrid, my wife, many years of living in foreign lands because of my work. Throughout these long years, she had the ability to contribute, without its being obvious, to the harmony and soundness of my home.*

*She witnessed the birth of my children—Semira Carolina, Ana Elisa, Alejandro Nicolás, and Sebastián.*

*One day she decided to return to Lima and watch the world go by from her window. As a grandmother, she was often a willing accomplice with her grandchildren. As a friend, she was a generous and affectionate lady.*

*To paraphrase St. Augustine, “let us be grateful that we had her; let us not lament that we have lost her.*

—Juan Manuel Sotelo  
*Manager, External Relations,  
Resource Mobilization, and Partnerships*

## Medicare and PAHO/WHO Health Insurance: Information for Retirees Who Are U.S. Residents

As part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, U.S. physicians are allowed to opt out of the Medicare program. This means that doctors who opt out are not required to submit claims to Medicare for payment consideration.

If you choose to see a doctor who has opted out of Medicare program, it is important that you ask him the following questions:

1. Will the physician send in the claim to Medicare as a courtesy to you?
2. If so, will he or she submit it electronically or via a hard copy in the mail?

If the physician submits electronically and you are enrolled in Aetna's Medicare Direct Program, you do not have to do anything further. Under this program, Medicare automatically sends your claim to Aetna to be processed under your PAHO/WHO benefits. If you are not enrolled in Medicare Direct, you will need to send the Medicare Explanation of Medicare Benefit (EOMB) to Aetna for processing. To find out if you are enrolled in Aetna Medicare Direct, please call Aetna Global Benefits at the number listed below.

If the doctor's office does not submit electronically, or if you need to submit the claim yourself, **you must get the “opt out letter” from your physician**, which he or she is required by law to give to you. You will need to send this document along with the claim to Aetna for reimbursement under your PAHO/WHO benefits.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please call Aetna Global Benefits at (800) 231-7729. ■

—This contribution was provided by  
*Mr. Greg Ferro, Account Executive, Aetna.*

## Remembering Our Colleagues

### Egla Morales Blouin



1930–2010

by Gloria Silvestre Khokar

**E**gla Blouin was born in her beloved Puerto Rico on 9 July 1930, but she lived and worked in Panama, Argentina, Japan, and, finally, in the United States. It was here where she made her home for the last 39 years, surrounded by her books, paintings, oriental art, plants and flowers.

Many of us met Egla when she worked as an editor at the *Bulletin of the Pan American Health Organization* (which eventually became the *Pan American Journal of Public Health*). Years later, and up to her retirement, Egla worked as the Editor-in-Chief of the prestigious *Bulletin*. Under her caring oversight, manuscripts turned into well-honed articles that fed the pages of the journal. She was one of the PAHO editors who worked to produce PAHO's Style Manual and she also worked to edit reports on the meetings of PAHO Governing Bodies.

Egla began her literary career while very young, and she was an assiduous student of Spanish language and literature. She got a PhD in Spanish language and literature from Georgetown University, where she went on to teach literature and linguistics. Her love for teaching led her to teach English to foreigners, Spanish to Americans, and fine arts to adults and children. Most importantly, she was a consummate poet, writing beautiful verses which reflected her romantic nature. She published two books of poetry and many of her poems were included in several magazines and other publications.

The theater was one of her passions. She founded the American Community Theater Group in Yokohama when she lived in Japan, and she directed plays for the American Community School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the 1970s, she was one of the founders of GALA Hispanic Theatre, the Latin American theater group in Washington, D.C. While involved at GALA, she was admired as an actress, translator,

and director; she was chosen as a Washington-area judge for the Helen Hayes Theatre Awards.

Egla's artistic talents were many—she studied pottery with a living master; she was a wonderful dancer, ranging from classical ballet and folkloric dance to salsa and tango. While she lived in Japan, she learned the art of Japanese dance and became an expert in dancing with the fan. Egla was a talented painter and a true connoisseur of opera, which she enjoyed whenever she could. She also possessed an acute aesthetic sense, and she was well known for her style and elan.

Egla's spirit was generous, and she was always interested in helping her fellow humankind. She became a poetry therapist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington and a certified yoga instructor who held classes for her coworkers at PAHO during lunch. The AFSM was honored to have had Egla as a volunteer at the Board of Directors, where she acted as its Secretary in 1970.

No matter her manifold interests and activities, Egla's first priority was to her family. She dedicated herself to fulfilling her mother's—"Mamita"—every wish until her death. She was a loving wife who traveled with her husband while raising a family. She was a caring and proud mother of her children, Wendy and Michael, guiding them and supporting their dreams. Finally, she took great pride in caring for, playing, and teaching her three grandchildren, Samuel Alexander, Christopher Andrew, and Avery Michael.

Egla was a truly multifaceted woman. She will continue to live in our memories. ■

### Rafael Miranda Franco



1919–2010

by Jamie Ayalde

**A**fter taking the VIII International Course for Physicians on Malaria and Other Vector-borne Diseases, offered in 1951 by Venezuela's Ministry of Health and Social

Welfare, I returned to Colombia and was assigned to the Malaria Control Program, administered by the Inter-American Cooperative Public Health Service (SCISP) under an arrangement with the United States known as the Point IV Agreement. I would be stationed at the port of Magangué on the Magdalena River, and my work would consist of organizing the program in that area, a task that began with the procurement of the site and the recruitment of field staff and continued through the preparation of work plans, a geographic survey, epidemiological surveillance, control activities, and evaluation of the results. In other words, it was an enormous undertaking, almost enough to make throw in the towel and go home. Fortunately, my supervisor at our headquarters in Bogotá was Dr. José Antonio Concha y Venegas, a physician and public health specialist who had been trained in Mexico and had had experience with “extreme” situations, having toiled long days on horseback on the plains of Casanare. “Take it easy,” he said. “PAHO is involved in the program and is going to help us.” That help would materialize in the form of a young Puerto Rican engineer with experience in the “Malaria Control Program in War Zones.”

Rafael Miranda Franco arrived in February 1952. He was followed shortly thereafter by his wife, Bernadette, his 5-year old daughter, and his 2-year old son; his younger daughter had not yet been born. They settled in Barranquilla. This was the start of a long and fruitful friendship that continued when I joined PAHO as a staff member and our paths crossed again.

Rafael was born in Cataño, Puerto Rico, on 9 August 1919. He graduated from the School of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts with a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering in 1940, receiving a master’s degree in health sciences from the University of Puerto Rico School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan.

In 1955, having completed the work in Barranquilla, after an additional year in Jamaica Rafael was transferred to Mexico to serve as a consultant for the malaria program as part of the training team in the country. From there, he went to Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil at the time and headquarters of PAHO’s Area V, and ultimately, to Panama. There, he served as PAHO/WHO Representative, a.i. (October 1974–May 1975). His short-term consultancies took him to Indonesia, Nepal, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and other countries.

Cheerful, generous, and engaging by nature, Rafael was always interested in AFSM’s activities and honored the three international meetings that were held (Washington, D.C., Buenos Aires, Cartagena) with his presence. He had already expressed an interest in participating in the fourth meeting, scheduled for November, 2010 in Lima. His absence will represent a void that will be very hard to fill.

He is survived by his wife, Bernadette, his children Lourdes and her husband Mario, Rafael and his wife Meg,

and Aixa Milagros and Efraín; his grandchildren Mario and Karen, Sara Eisa, Carlos, Michael, Esther, Elis Aurora, David, and Efraín Antonio; and his great-granddaughter Andrea to whom we express our sincere condolences. ■

## *In Memoriam*

### DEATHS REPORTED IN 2009\* AND 2010

Eugenia Salcedo	10 July 2009*
Oscar Beltran	30 September 2009*
Guntis Ozolins	16 December 2009*
Paulo Albuquerque	11 December 2009*
Luis Alberto Espinoza Rosa	10 January 2010
Taurino Sanchez	15 January 2010
Maria Mujica Gonzalez	16 January 2010
King Morgan	25 January 2010
You Tsen Kuo	4 February 2010
Ligia Bonilla	22 February 2010
Alberto Nascimento	24 February 2010
Bertha R. Sera	28 February 2010
Iron Fernandez	6 March 2010
Carlota Castillo	13 March 2010
Carlos Hilbur	30 March 2010
Barry Whalley	31 March 2010
Brenda Obiaga	6 April 2010
Jeannette Sylvanin	19 April 2010
Eduardo Ramon Centeno	20 April 2010
Vinetta Shuert Martin	21 April 2010
Gladys Onega	29 April 2010
Elga Blouin	7 May 2010
Rafael Miranda Franco	8 May 2010
Arturo Romero	15 May 2010
Maria Nogueira	15 May 2010
Maria Mercedes Segarra	18 May 2010
Victor Moya	20 May 2010
Semira Sotelo	30 June 2010
Alfredo Rovatti	21 June 2010
Guillermo Roviralta	12 August 2010
Iris E. Rodriguez	10 September 2010

# The Back Page

The AFSM Board and committee coordinators would like to know about the needs of its members. We might not be able to solve all your problems but we have resources that could be utilized. Also, we encourage your contributions to the Newsletter, either in the form of articles for publication or in comments about its contents.

To reach us, write to:

**AFSM c/o PAHO**  
525 23rd St NW  
Washington DC 20037-2895

## Contact Information

Please refer to your 2009 AFSM Directory and be certain that all your personal contact information is correct. We also encourage you to provide us with your email address so that important and pertinent information can be electronically mailed to you. Any changes or additions to your address should be sent to Amalia Castro Ponce (AFSM) by routine mail to PAHO Headquarters in Washington DC or, preferably, by email to [ponceama@gmail.com](mailto:ponceama@gmail.com)



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### Pension and Health Insurance

Coordinator - Mario Boyer  
Members - Carol Collado  
Jerry Hanson, Renate Plaut

### Outreach-Expansion in the Countries

Coordinator - Carol Collado

### Liaison with International Organizations

Coordinator - Nancy Berinstein  
Member - Janice Barahona

### Editorial Committee

Coordinator - Nancy Berinstein, a.i.  
Members - Jaime Ayalde,  
Mario Boyer, Enrique Fefer,  
Jean Surgi

### Auditor

Fredy Burgos