



Newsletter

Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members

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Members of the AFSM Board invited Dr. Mirta Roses de Periago to lunch to thank her and to show AFSM's appreciation for all her support during her time as Assistant Director and Director of PAHO.

From left to right: Mercedes Vargas, Enrique Fefer, Amalia Castro (Ponce), Mario Boyer, Nancy Berinstein, Dr. Roses, Jaime Ayalde, Marilyn Rice, Jean Surgi, Hernan Rosenberg, Sylvia Schultz

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Message from the President



In the last issue I wrote about change, and now it appears that change is upon us. After 10 years in office, Dr. Mirta Roses Periago is retiring from service and returning to Buenos Aires for a well-deserved period of

relaxation. Although she has traveled well over 1,000,000 miles throughout the world in her career as PAHO Director, she is now ready to enjoy her family and life without the awesome responsibilities that she has managed so ably over the last decade.

And we look forward to welcoming our new Director, Dr. Carissa Etienne. It will be a learning time for all of us and we only hope that we can continue to enjoy a fruitful and productive relationship with PAHO and its new Director.

A very significant percentage of PAHO employees are expected to retire within the next three years. This will change the face and perhaps the personality of the Organization. The Institutional Memory project started by Dr. Roses will become all the more important as new staff becomes acquainted with what PAHO was and what we hope it may become.

The economic turmoil in the world today will also have significant impact on WHO and PAHO. Governments no longer have monies readily available to fund us, whereas international corporations are poised, ready, and able to take an increasingly active role in many areas of international health. There are those who question whether organizations such as WHO and PAHO still have an important role in the world or whether it is time for us to retreat.

AFSM members know of our proven capabilities and of our potential for continual contributions to international health. Highly skilled technical staff and advisors/consultants working with WHO and PAHO are answerable to countries' stated needs

and cannot readily be replaced by wealthy and often well-meaning corporations whose ultimate goals may not always coincide with those of our member countries.

The same economic turmoil that is producing change in the world of international health is also having a direct impact on our staff benefits. WHO is committed to fiscally sound and responsible management; this is one of the underlying reasons for the recent changes in WHO health insurance governance. Although beneficiaries understand this goal, we must also keep ourselves abreast of these changes and how they may impact us in the future.

We are being asked, for the first time, to vote for representatives to the new WHO Global Standing Committee and the WHO Global Oversight Committee. You will be receiving ballots from Geneva at approximately the same time as you receive our Newsletter. Details will be found within the Newsletter, but my basic message to you is: **Please Vote**. You may choose whoever you believe is qualified to represent you, but it is important to choose those individuals you believe will work to your benefit and will be recognized and heard by Geneva.

Former PAHO/WHO staff members are encouraged to remain active and not lose sight of the basic goals and priorities to which we devoted ourselves during our working years. We are able to remain knowledgeable about work being done and changes being made at PAHO and WHO by going online. The intranet is there for us and our new SharePoint system will make it all the more user friendly.

And so, as we move on to a new Administration, we send our very best hopes and wishes to all.

Nancy Berinstein
President

Save the Date!

Fifth AFSM International Reunion

P A N A M A

The Fifth International Meeting of the Association of Former Staff Members of PAHO/WHO will be held in Panama City, Republic of Panama, 15-18 October 2012.

Hotel

The Continental Hotel and Casino is located in the financial center of the city, close to restaurants and shopping centers and is accessible to all the attractions that the city offers. The double rooms have been lowered to \$125 per day, plus 10% tax, and include breakfast buffet, wireless internet access, and use of the gym and pool. Detailed information can be found at <http://www.continentalhotel.com>. For reservations from Latin America call (507) 366-7700, and from the United States call 1-888-625-9385.

AFSM Activities

Update on the UN Pension System, news about the Credit Union, changes in health insurance, ongoing processes for the development of AFSM, and proposals for improvement.

Cultural Activities

Panel on the history, culture, and development of Panama; conference about managing our finances as retirees; and conference on healthy aging.

Recreational Activities

Welcome reception and dinner together. City tours will be available.

Travelling

Travel Agency "Marbella," Panama, offers discounts for this meeting. Call Mr. Joseph Samudio at (507) 396-0419 or email reservas@viajesmarbella.com.pa. You can also seek other options and select one that is more beneficial to you.

Those who have participated in previous meetings know that they will have a great time and will enjoy meeting colleagues and friends. Those who have not participated in previous meetings should be prepared for an unforgettable and pleasant reunion. We count on your presence. Don't miss this opportunity!

Please sign up. To confirm your participation in the meeting, do it right now by emailing Hortensia Saginor at isaginor@aol.com.



Letters to the Editor

On August 20, 2012 my beloved wife Mrs. Gloria Alicia Rendón de López passed away in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, due to severe atypical pneumonia. We were happily married for 53 years, and almost a third of that time we lived as part of the PAHO/WHO family in several South American countries. We happily shared our lives with our colleagues and their families in Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia; in Porto Alegre, Brazil; in Caracas, Venezuela; and finally in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

During that time, Drs. Abraham Horwitz and Héctor Acuña, Directors of the Organization, as well as many other colleagues and their wives honored us with their friendship and shared the sincere warmth and affection of my wife. I'm sure those who knew her will remember her kindness, her joy and her people skills.

Please say a prayer to God for her eternal rest.

Thank you,
Daniel López-Ferrer

AFSM has also learned that Lurdy Bruch died on 7 September 2012. Lurdy was the wife of Hans Bruch who was the Founding President of AFSM and is at present an Honorary Member of the Board. Lurdy worked closely with Hans in hosting the original members of AFSM and bringing everyone together to form the association.

AFSM sends its sincere condolences to Dr. Daniel López Ferrer and Dr. Hans Bruch on the loss of their wives, both of whom were very much partners and part of the PAHO family.

Facilitating Communications: New Services

AFSM is pleased to inform you that, with PAHO's support, it is making available a number of virtual communication tools to its membership. Our goal is to make news of interest to our members readily available by different routes. We hope that these tools will make it easier for members to share experiences, opinions, pictures, etc. Also, virtual communication will help lower our operating costs.

We have chosen to develop different virtual tools to cover the different communication and information needs of our membership. To keep communications secure, and available only to members, these programs require an ID and password. We hope through this initiative to keep ourselves up-to-date on matters of common interest and to foster communications among our colleagues.

The first one of these tools is our Association's SharePoint. The SharePoint site is the PAHO platform that allows for collaboration and information exchange. The AFSM SharePoint is accessible at: <https://sites.paho.org/afsm>.

When you type in this address you will find in the upper right-hand corner a "Sign in" box. Upon clicking you will be asked whether you are working from a personal computer or from a public one (internet cafe, library), and you will be required to provide your ID. Your ID is ET\ followed by the first part of your email address:

ID: ET\ and the first part of your email address.
Example: torres.tina.08@gmail.com turns into
ET\torres.tina.08

*** Remember to use the internet address listed in the AFSM directory. If different, please inform Hortensia Saginor at isaginor@aol.com or hortensiasagi@gmail.com**

Then you type your password, as follows:
Password: **Paho1902!**

There you will find the collection of Newsletters in English and Spanish, the By-Laws of the Association (also in both languages), the Membership Directory, the Board of Directors, and committees with their terms of

reference. Moreover, for those tech-savvy members who already have a “smart phone” you have access to the above site by simply reading the following “QR” (Quick Response) code with your “smart phone.”



Through SharePoint you will be able to contact other AFSM members using the Association’s **Facebook**. This tool is included to foster social networks among the members of AFSM, allowing us to share news and pictures. To log into our Facebook, type the following address:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/230159803692834/>.

Once you have typed in the above address, you have to request access as a “friend”. The Moderator will allow you access once he/she has verified that you are a member of the Association. This is a “closed” Facebook account: only AFSM members have access in order to safeguard communications. You may also access it by reading the following QR code with your “smart phone.”



Also, through SharePoint, you will have access to the Association’s Virtual Room, available through **Blackboard Collaborate**, a software program used for virtual meetings. Meeting participants can intervene and become visible (if they so wish) and are able to share documents and make long distance **PowerPoint** presentations. You will be able to work on documents, making revisions in real time. To have access to the Virtual Room and organize a meeting, please follow the instructions available in the section concerning the Virtual Room in the Association’s SharePoint. For more information please contact Cristina Torres at torres.tina.08@gmail.com. ■

Upcoming Elections for Health Insurance Representatives

During the Eighth Joint Meeting sessions of the WHO Staff Health Insurance (SHI) in Geneva last October, important changes to the governing structure of the Plan were suggested. These were approved by the Director General in early December and took effect immediately. The new governance structure is composed of a WHO SHI Global Oversight Committee and a WHO SHI Global Standing Committee. Regional Surveillance Committees (RSCs) will continue to exist for the time being, with any decision on their termination to be based on both their performance and an assessment of the performance of the two global committees.

In order to begin the implementation of the new governance structure, these committees must be formed and representatives selected. It is notable that for the first time ever, ALL of the retirees covered by WHO SHI are being invited to participate in the selection of the representatives responsible for bringing their concerns and issues to the highest levels of SHI governance. Retirees will be represented by persons elected globally on these two committees:

Global Oversight Committee (GOC) – the primary decision-making body for the Plan, with one member and one alternate representing all retirees.

Global Standing Committee (GSC) - responsible for applying Rules, proposing amendments to GOC, reporting on work, reviewing costs of the GSC and RSCs, and providing guidelines for RSCs, with two members and two alternates representing all retirees.

In mid-June, a call for candidates went out with an explanation of the elections process. We expect that, within the next month, each participant covered by SHI will be asked to cast a vote for representatives. **We cannot overemphasize the importance of participating in this election.**

Retirees, who unfortunately tend to account for higher costs, presently account for approximately 25% of participants. If present trends continue, by 2020 they will be close to 50%. In order to preserve some of the best health benefits in the world it is critical that everyone be involved. **We urge you to vote and to encourage all of your fellow retirees to be counted!** ■

New PAHO Director



Dr. Carissa Etienne, a native of Dominica, will be the new Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). She was elected Wednesday, 19 September, by PAHO Member States during the 28th Pan American Sanitary Conference. Dr. Etienne will begin her five-year term on 1 February 2013, succeeding Dr. Mirta Roses Periago of Argentina, who has been PAHO Director since 2003.

Candidates Oscar Raúl Ugarte Ubilluz (Peru) and María Julia Muñoz Melo (Uruguay) officially withdrew from the contest, leaving Caroline Judith Chang Campos (Ecuador), Carissa Faustina Etienne (Dominica), and Socorro Gross Galiano (Costa Rica). On 19 September a first vote was taken and none of the three candidates received the necessary 20 votes. On the second ballot the 20 votes were cast for Carissa Etienne of Dominica, our new PAHO Director.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Etienne said her vision of the Americas is one of “societies free of inequality, where people have access to healthy social determinants and environments that allow them to live long, dignified, healthy, and productive lives. This includes access to universal health services without fear of being impoverished . . . and I hope to take PAHO forward in new and challenging directions, working hand in hand with PAHO’s able and dedicated staff. At the same time, I pledge never to forget that PAHO belongs to the Member States and that I am (their) humble servant.” We shall bring you further details in our Newsletter scheduled for early 2013. ■

New Pension Fund CEO

On 2 July 2012, Mr. Sergio Arvizu, currently Deputy Chief Executive (CEO) of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and Deputy Secretary of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB), was elected CEO of the UNJSPF and Secretary of the UNJSPB, effective 1 January 2013.

For additional information you may go to the AFICS/ New York webpage www.un.org/other/afics. ■

Seventh Meeting of the Colombia Chapter of AFSM



The Seventh Meeting of the Colombia Chapter of AFSM (CCOL/AFSM) was held at the Hotel Portal del Sol, 13-16 June 2012, and, in the opening session on Wednesday, German Mora was appointed president. German was also unanimously designated an honorary member in recognition of his work as a founding member and promoter of the Chapter.

The approval of the proposed agenda was followed by the welcoming remarks of Dr. Cristina Nogueira, the PAHO/WHO Representative, who expressed her continued support for the Chapter. That evening the participants enjoyed a dinner with Colombian and Andean music generously sponsored, as in previous meetings, by the PAHO/WHO Federal Credit Union.

Helena Restrepo was appointed rapporteur at the first session, and Elmer Escobar, as president of the Chapter, thanked the AFSM Board for its continued support through its president, Nancy Berinstein. There followed

emotional tributes to the lives of Alberto Flores, Alfonso Mejia, Luis Carlos Ochoa, Carlos Davila, Luis J. Uribe and Cecilia Barrera, former staff members who died during the period 2011-2012.

Dr. Nogueira made a presentation on the technical cooperation of PAHO/WHO in Colombia, acknowledging the challenges and successes of the Organization's work in a country where health programs are matters of heated debates. The second session was held on Thursday night, when it was agreed that the venue for the next meeting will be close to Villavicencio, in the Eastern Plains region. Elmer and Gustavo reported on the situation regarding the WHO health insurance program and the decision in Geneva Headquarters to centralize its administration. Then, as part of the cultural program, the film "Tango," by Carlos Saura, was presented.

The third session was held on Friday morning and began with the report of the Chapter's Board, which recognized the excellent work of Aurora Montoya as treasurer and confirmed the close and productive working relationship with ASOPENUC. Presentation of a table with financial flows led to a discussion of Chapter membership fees. Strategies were analyzed to improve their collection, and an increase in the annual fee was approved.

Blanca Mónica presented the report of the Voluntary Support Group that continues to operate successfully in Bogotá; it was decided to concentrate efforts on this project, taking into account that those proposed for other cities were not feasible. Gustavo reported on his participation at the annual meeting of the AFSM Board and noted his appreciation for all the attention

and facilities received; he also distributed copies of his presentation and commented on the possibility of virtual participation in the Board meeting this year, using videoconferencing technological advances.

Another agenda item was the presentation of diverse experiences and accomplishments of Chapter members through documents prepared by Luis Arcila, Martha Ligia, Helena, and Gustavo; Elmer referred to books written by Yolanda Ruan and Alvaro Moncayo. Next, the meeting proceeded to appointments for the Board of the Chapter: Gustavo Mora as new president; for the secretariat Rodrigo Rodríguez (expected to return soon); Aurora will continue as treasurer; and the regional focal points remain the same. There was a special recognition to Elmer's contribution as president during the previous two years.

The fourth and final session took place on Friday and began with the analysis of compliance with the commitments made in Ibagué; Elmer said that the manual for retirees, prepared by ASOPENUC, is ready and appointed a commission to review and complete it. He reiterated that the Expanded Social Project will continue only in Bogotá, with additional voluntary contribution of members of other cities.

The plan of action 2012-2013 was reviewed, and Elmer underlined the importance of promoting attendance at the International Reunion of the Association in October in Panama. Finally, and as optional activities, Gustavo elaborated on Zen Buddhism and German on Reiki, as physical and mental relaxation techniques. It was agreed to give more time to this subject in 2013. The annual meeting was complemented by visits to places of great beauty, such as the Valle de Cocora, Salento,

the Quimbaya Museum, the Coffee Recreational Park, the Guadua and the Bambú Research Center. Friday night some of the participants still had enough energy to enjoy an evening of milonga and tango in Armenia. ■



Summer Luncheon in Washington



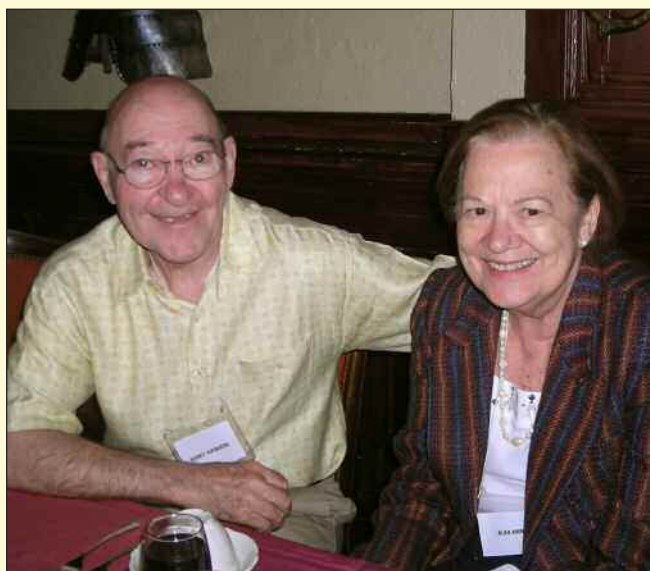
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The annual AFSM summer luncheon took place on 25 July at Alfio's Restaurant in Chevy Chase, MD. In spite of the heat, some 35 brave souls showed up, including some spouses. It was a good opportunity to find out about new retirees (a few attended) and about what has happened to not-so-new ones. President Berinstein addressed the group, explaining our new connectivity and ease of communications, as well as other progress in AFSM, including the Panama meeting that will take place between October 15 and 18.

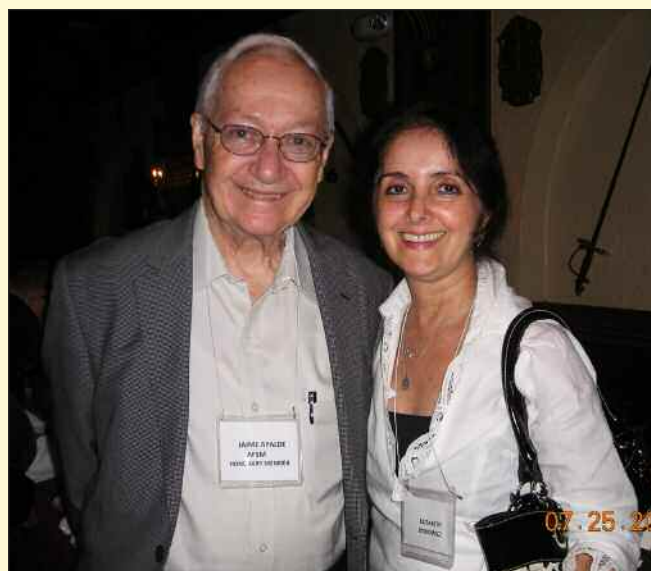
Although wine was not on the menu (it will be in the future, we hope), the bar was available before

lunch, resulting in many an active conversation and finding some surprising factoids. Two former staff members remembered when there was a theater group in PAHO and that they had staged a play by Alejandro Casona in which one of them (claiming to be the youngest, but we did not triangulate the data to verify) played the grandmother of the other. Others re-encountered old colleagues not seen for a while. And all had a very good time.

We hope to see you at the next social if you live around Washington DC. And if you do not, please consider coordinating a trip so you can join us!



(left to right) Jerry & Alba Hanson



(left to right) Jaime Ayalde and Elizabeth Joskowicz



(left to right) Linda Beckner, Hortensia Saginor, Jenny Eybers and Patricia Peterson



(left to right) Ana Ma. Perdomo, Diana Cheng, Cristina Torres (standing), Roberto Ribero, Gloria Khokhar and Teresita Josey



(left to right) Mercedes Lorenzana and Alicia Pome



Jim Milam



(left to right) Hortensia Saginor and José Ma. Salazar



(left to right) Elena Buenaño, José Luis Zeballos and Cecilia Jibaja



(left to right) Amanda Ellaur and Irma & Luis Pérez

Meeting with Jean-Paul Menu, President of AFSM Geneva

A visit to AFSM in Washington



Nancy Berinstein and Jean-Paul Menu

Taking advantage of his private trip to the USA, Jean-Paul Menu had the great pleasure to be invited by Nancy Berinstein, President, AFSM (Washington), to share views on their respective Associations. To our knowledge this was the first time such a visit took place. On 11 September, Nancy organized a lunch meeting at Alfio's restaurant in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with local AFSM members and Board members. A PowerPoint presentation allowed the participants to learn about the actual organizational structure of the Geneva-based association, its relationship with the WHO administration, and the WHO Geneva Staff Association. The presentation and the ensuing discussions examined the ways and means used by the associations to meet the needs of their members, particularly in the crucial matters of pensions and health insurance. Such an exchange brought to light many points of mutual interest.



Some AFSM members who attended the luncheon with Jean-Paul Menu in Chevy Chase, Maryland

It was of particular importance for AFSM (Washington) to learn of the close relationship of AFSM (Geneva) with AAFI-AFICS Geneva and also to learn that the President attended the meeting of the FAFICS Council last June in Paris as part of the AAFI-AFICS delegation. As was the case in previous years, this participation enabled AFSM (Geneva) to gain first-hand knowledge about United Nations pension issues and to share views on issues of common interest with other associations of former international civil servants. AFSM (Washington) is not a member of AFICS although many of their members do hold individual membership. Sharing information between Geneva and Washington will now allow all of us to learn more about one of the most important issues that affects the life of every former staff.

Indeed, collaboration in many areas has become a real possibility. AFSM (Geneva) has been organizing trips and river cruises in Europe each year, and we can now pursue this in hopes that some of us might participate in this lovely adventure. The AFSM Geneva Newsletter is now on line, and members in the Americas may be able to access it and keep advised of happenings (<http://www.who.int/formerstaff/en/>).

This meeting has opened a door, and we will continue to explore and learn to work together for everyone's mutual benefit.

This article appears simultaneously in the Quarterly News – Nouvelles trimestrielles (Geneva) and in the Newsletter of AFSM PAHO/WHO.

— Nancy Berinstein and Jean-Paul Menu

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Nancy and her husband Herbert for their wonderful hospitality in Washington.

— JP Menu



Enjoying a moment of humor at Jean Paul's luncheon



(left to right) Carol Collado and Chantal Menu



Hernán Rosenberg



(left to right) Mrs. Arambulo, Primo Arambulo and Mario Boyer



Flora Early



(left to right) Alfonso Chang and Amalia Castro Ponce



(left to right) Hortensia Saginor and Elisabeth Joskowicz



(left to right) Enrique Fefer, Marilyn Rice and Jean-Paul Menu

Workshop of International Associations of Retirees, 24 October

A workshop will be held on 24 October at the International Monetary Fund. Participants will be drawn from the 1818 Society (the World Bank retiree association), AFSM (Association of PAHO/WHO Former Staff Members), AFE-ADB (Asian Development Bank), IMFRA (International Monetary Fund), IDB (International Development Bank), AROAS (Organization of American States), and AFICS (Association of Former International Civil Servants).

In-depth discussions will center upon two topics. Workshop I will focus on health insurance issues and Workshop II will deal with the relationships of the retiree/alumni associations and their parent organization. The Workshop will run for a full day to allow for

substantive conversations. Carol Collado from PAHO, along with Jill Gale de Villa of AFE/ADB and Pat King from the 1818 Society, will lead the preparation on Workshop I, and Hans-Juergen Springer (ADB) will be assisted by Sheila Meehan, the new president of IMFRA, in preparing Workshop II.

The last three workshops have allowed AFSM to become acquainted with both the people and the policies of various international organizations and, in some cases, provided us with valuable information to assist in improving services to our members. The outcome has been a more knowledgeable AFSM Board better prepared to represent members in dealings with the PAHO/WHO administration. ■

AFSM General Meeting, 5 December

The 23rd General Meeting of AFSM will be held on 5 December 2012 at PAHO Headquarters in Washington DC. As in past years, there will be a presentation from the health insurance office as well as information about our United Nations pension fund. The Credit Union will provide us with up-to-date information on what is happening in its office.

An election will be held to choose three members to the AFSM Board of Directors.

The program for the Meeting includes an invitation to Dr. Carissa Etienne, the newly elected Director of PAHO. Dr. Etienne is acquainted with our Association since, as Assistant Director (2003-2008) she has participated in our General Meetings. If she accepts our invitation, the December session will allow members to meet PAHO's new leader in person and hear her plans for the Organization.

At the close of the meeting a luncheon will be served at Headquarters, to which everyone is invited and welcome.

An official announcement will be sent weeks before the Meeting, but we ask you now to save the date. ■

Welcome to New AFSM Members May to August 2012

From the Washington, DC Area

Benguigui, Yehuda
Brennan, Bryna
Sotela, Roman
Velzeboer, Marijke
Villalta, Rosa Maria

From Other Parts of the US

Ballayram, R. – Loxahatchee FL
Gonima, Alberto – San Antonio TX

From Other Countries

Malvarez de Carlino, Silvina – Cordoba, Arg.
Pillet, Juan Vincent - Tourrettes-sur-loup, France
Sotelo, Juan Manuel – Lima, Peru

THERESA MILLER

Theresa Rope Miller was born in 1935 on an Iowa farm about 80 miles south of Omaha, NE. She spent her childhood exploring creeks and open pastures on horseback and on foot. She rode horseback to a country school and drove cars and tractors before the age of 10, chauffeuring neighbors to high school in Clarinda, a small rural town. From these adventures and the kindly guidance of her family, she learned to accept responsibility and to find beauty in people and nature.

As an adult, Theresa was fortunate to work as a nurse educator for WHO. This provided her with an opportunity to visit and work in such countries as Kenya, China, Guyana, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Bolivia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and the South Pacific and Caribbean Islands. With national health officials, she went to remote and under-served areas of these countries to assess needs and develop programs to improve health.

Theresa learned, most of all, to love and understand the peoples of those lands. Through reflection on these experiences, she found that creativity was universal and that hands can create masterpieces from simple resources. As she journeyed to the corners of the globe, through work as a WHO nurse consultant, her passion to understand diverse cultures and art were fueled.



Upon retirement, Theresa settled in Tucson, AZ along with a remarkable international collection of art - necklaces and beaded body decorations from Kenya, fabric art and brass trays from India, a coin dragon, leather and wooden puppets from Indonesia,

Kukari knives from Nepal, a Somalian hand-beaded ostrich egg from Somalia, beaded Oaxacan belts from Mexico, and more and more.

During a recent visit to the Iowa Western Community College's Clarinda Campus, Theresa decided to donate her extensive collection to them, with the idea that if students see art created by people little known to them, it will start to lift the veil about diverse cultures and open their minds to the greater world. As she wrote a brief story about each piece of art for the exhibit, she tried to recount cultural characteristics of the society around the person who made it. The resulting document, "Journey of Art," contains pictorial displays of her various pieces and takes you with her to learn of the people and the culture from which it comes.

Theresa has written: "The wisdom of health workers, as well as the vision of artists, manifests a desire for universal peace which allows healthy living and expressions of beauty in everyday life. It is a global world, and somehow each of us has a challenge to make it better. I have found it to be a wonderful, wonderful world."

— *Extracted from "Journey of Art," by Theresa Rope Miller, 2012*

Health Information Tips

Study raises questions about the added value of eating organic foods

From the San Francisco Chronicle

A mega-study by Stanford doctors found that organic edibles are no more nutritious than conventionally farmed vegetables, milk, and meat. All that extra cost and fussing over produce at the farmers' market doesn't count when it comes to vitamins and minerals.

It's an intriguing finding, built from a two-year look at more than 200 other studies of the organic-versus-conventional divide. With very few exceptions, that carrot lovingly grown by a small farm cooperative has the same food value as one delivered by a semi to Safeway. The price differential, which can double the cost of an everyday meal, looks more noticeable than ever.

But the study also acknowledges another point: Eating organic means a lot more than basic nutrition – for instance, seeking out labels such as “sustainable” or “artisanal”. Organic food comes with a host of associations: fewer pesticides and hormones, a shorter trip from field to shopping bag, dirt-friendly practices that don't bleed chemicals into rivers and water supplies, and a concern for farm worker wages and health. There's also the ultra-subjective notion of whether a left-alone peach tastes better than the sprayed and doused version. The study will hardly stop this trend, and that was never its purpose.

The study may have debunked the nutritional superiority of organic food, but it made plain that there were other differences with conventionally grown vegetables, fruit, milk and meat. Traces of pesticides were found in 37% of the conventional produce, compared with 7% in organic items, though both levels were below federal safety standards. In meat, there were lower levels of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in organically raised animals.

These differences aren't surprising, given that organic farming avoids chemicals and most animal drugs. What's needed is a deeper level of study about the lasting effects of these additives on both humans and the environment. But given all the influences on health

and diet, it may be hard to determine the effect of no-spray fields versus ones treated by crop dusters. One major study proposes to follow through on such questions over 100 years, if the nation can wait that long. The study's real value may be getting people to think more seriously and critically about what they eat. At the same time, science needs to work harder to examine the long-range impacts of what this report didn't say about mainstream farming practices, food additives, and human diet. Those results will say more about the worth of organic and conventional food.

Read more at <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/editorials/article/Organic-food-takes-a-semi-hit-to-its-image-3850037.php#ixzz25uuX5VDK>. ■

In Memoriam

DEATHS IN 2011 AND 2012 NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED

William Ronald	26 January 2011
Enid Arden	2 May 2011
Carlos Tejada	5 May 2011
Alfonso Mejia Vanegas	5 May 2011
Delores Groom	26 January 2012
Carlos Davila	12 May 2012
Leonor Amaral	20 May 2012
Ethelbert Roget	29 June 2012
William H. McManus	16 July 2012
Anundo Duarte	10 September 2012

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 2012 **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 Hortensia Saginor (AFSM) by routine mail to PAHO Headquarters in Washington DC or, preferably, by email to isaginor@aol.com or hortensiasagi@gmail.com



Officers

Nancy Berinstein ('14)
President
(301) 229-3162
nancy.berinstein@verizon.net

Carol Collado ('14)
Vice President
(301) 384-1212
collado@verizon.net

Enrique Fefer ('13)
Secretary
(301) 340-6799
feferenr@yahoo.com

Hortensia R. Saginor ('14)
Membership Officer
(301) 654-7482
isaginor@aol.com
hortensiasagi@gmail.com

Sylvia Schultz ('13)
Treasurer
(703) 273-7252
myfoothome@hotmail.com

Members-at-large

Mario Boyer ('12)
(301) 229-9547
meboyer1966@comcast.net

Amalia Castro Ponce ('13)
(202) 965-5247
ponceama@gmail.com

Germán Perdomo ('12)
(703) 310-7013
perdomog@gmail.com

Cristina Torres ('12)
(301) 608-8137
torres.tina.08@gmail.com

Honorary Members

Jaime Ayalde
(301) 983-0569
jayalde@aol.com

Hans Bruch
(301) 530-5450
hbruch@erols.com

Jean Surgi
(301) 762-7490
jayess1@verizon.net

Note: The term of each member of the BOD expires in December of the year in parentheses.

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Members - Mario Boyer,
Hernán Rosenberg,
Germán Perdomo

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