Newsletter

The Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members

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Special Edition

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Message from the President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

PAHO staff has been retiring over the last few years in record numbers. We must somehow contact these people and persuade them to join the Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members (AFSM). And we must start with the basic question, which is: Why should anyone join AFSM?

AFSM originally started as a vehicle for socializing. We wanted to be with a group of like-minded people who had shared experiences and enjoyed companionship. AFSM has evolved over the years and I can state that, in addition to good fellowship, the most important thing that it now does for former staff is to keep our staff health insurance system and other benefits healthy.

Dr. Etienne spoke to us at the Reunion about the changing role of PAHO and about its human resources implications. The days of having a 40-year career are numbered. The days of long-term contracts are over. Those long-termers already at PAHO will soon retire, and after them come people on short contracts for specific projects and even the out-sourcing of specialists.

PAHO is moving into a cultural transition, and the PAHO of the future may not look very much like the PAHO where we once worked. I can only assume that the sense or feeling that we are extended family will eventually become a thing of the past. But, oh my goodness, haven't we been lucky to have served at PAHO in its glory days!

People should join AFSM. They should enjoy the camaraderie and work along with the AFSM Board to protect health insurance coverage and benefits. We need to have strong spokespeople looking out for our welfare. AFSM plays that role. We have an alternate sitting on the Global Standing Committee, and we work closely with our AFSM colleagues in Geneva. We also have a representative and an alternate sitting on the PAHO SHI Surveillance Committee. These ties and connections are invaluable.

AFSM Board members are working very hard to represent former staff these days, but we cannot do it alone. Getting involved with the Board, even volunteering on a committee, can be fun. Laughing over shared experiences can be great fun. And that is especially true when one realizes that if one is not PAHO/WHO then they just don't understand the story.

I became a member of AFSM soon after my retirement in 2001. Jaime Ayalde was the President. Jan Barahona, Maricel Manfredi, Jean Surgi, and others I recognized were also on the Board. I attended some of the luncheons and other events. At some point I asked if I could sit in on a Board Meeting and was immediately invited to do so. I didn't know then what was in store for me!

After a few years serving on the Board, I was asked to assume the Presidency, and that was nearly 10 years ago. Jaime Ayalde served a bit longer, but I still have had a very long run. During my Presidency we reached out to other international organizations and eventually formed the Association of Retirees/Alumni of International Organizations, better known as ARAIO. We meet with colleagues from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, IDB, OAS, AFICS, and the Asian Development Bank. We also reached out to our colleagues at Headquarters and built solid bonds with AFSM Geneva. I have had an opportunity to make many new friends and to challenge myself in ways not open to me when I was an employee. It has been a tremendously rewarding experience.

By the time this last printed Newsletter reaches you, I will have officially resigned from the Board. It is time for others to step up and have such an opportunity. I admit that I am doing so with a heavy heart. AFSM friends and acquaintances are an important part of my life. But I hope and think that others will come along and do a great job. And so I step aside. Getting newer people on the Board will be healthy.

Please know that it has been a great privilege and pleasure to have served you over these past years. I feel honored to have done so.

Thank you so much.
Nancy

AFSM 5th International Reunion & 25th Anniversary Celebration

Washington DC, 3-5 December 2014

by Enrique Fefer

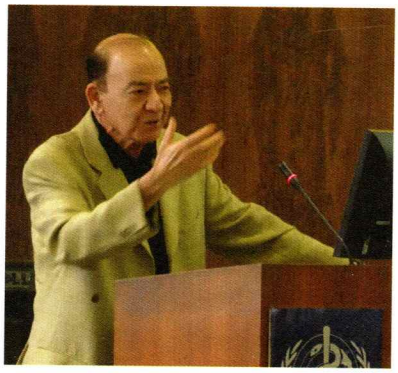
The 5th International Reunion marked the 25th anniversary of the Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members (AFSM). To celebrate this milestone, the program included personal recollections of life in the Organization and after retirement. The formal two days of sessions were preceded by a cocktail reception Wednesday evening at the American Foreign Service Club, across from PAHO HQ. This provided the social forum for hugs and handshakes with former colleagues, followed by polite inquiries regarding their health and affirmations of their graceful aging. To our delight, Dr. Carissa L. Etienne, PAHO Director, and Dr. Isabella Danel, the recently appointed Deputy Director, also attended. The following days were filled with speeches, presentations, and reports at PAHO HQ, culminating with a return to the Club for a lively farewell dinner dance. Obligatory items on the agenda were updates on pension and health insurance, matters that directly impact members' welfare.

The Reunion brought together about 110 former staff and invited guests from the Administration, from the PAHO Staff Association, and from our sister organizations in the World Bank, the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS/Washington), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Asian Development Bank.

Opening of the 25th AFSM Anniversary Celebration

Welcome by President Nancy Berinstein: Nancy welcomed the participants with special recognition of colleagues who travelled to attend this event. She thanked Dr. Etienne for agreeing to address the annual gathering and to remain for questions and answers.

Presentation by Dr. Carissa Etienne: The Director welcomed home the participants, whom she considers members of the PAHO family. She emphasized the need for the Organization to work strategically to remain relevant in a changing context of multiple agencies competing for resources and positions. The Organization is reassessing its normative and standard-setting roles and operational activity in light of the increased expertise found at country level. Present human resource strategies are not adequate to reposition PAHO to effectively respond to an environment of changing priorities and the need to engage all sectors impacting health conditions. Future staffing will require flexibility, extending contracts for limited periods for specific products, and curtailing long term appointments.



As staff retires, there is an opportunity to change to a younger, innovative profile of high-level professionals, balancing the need for technical excellence with the need for a core staff to provide continuity. A mentoring program is being planned that will contribute to retaining the principles and values of the Organization. Funding remains a challenge, though governments have been fulfilling their commitments to the regular budget and national voluntary contributions have increased. Other subjects briefly reviewed were the Sustainable Development Agenda, the cost of Non-Communicable Diseases, new and emerging diseases, and the PAHO Foundation (PAHEF).

In the Q&A session, the Director outlined her vision for PAHO: an intergovernmental organization responsive to country needs, technically sound, able to provide support, with transparent operations and a focus on equity and coverage. The level of operational engagement varies by country, and the Organization has to position itself accordingly. The Director noted with concern that not all countries have implemented the International Health Regulations.

Business Meeting: Antonio Hernandez, experienced in leading conferences and workshops (including last year's General Meeting), was designated as Chairperson by the Board. He requested a minute of silence in memory of colleagues who had passed away during the year. This year the list was again long with 32 names, a strong reminder of the gift of life and our mortality. They are remembered and will be missed by friends and loved ones.

The agenda for the Twenty-Fifth General Meeting/ Fifth International Reunion and the minutes of the Twenty-Fourth General Meeting (2013) were approved as presented.

History of PAHO - Challenges and Changes: Juan Manuel Sotelo provided an engaging review of the birth and growth of an inter-American health agency that became today's PAHO. The First International Sanitary convention took place in 1902 in response to the need to control disease and promote trade in the Americas. The new organization, with an expanding role in the Region, outgrew its cramped office at the OAS, moving to various buildings around DuPont Circle and, in 1965, to its present headquarters. In 1949 it signed an agreement with WHO to serve as its Regional Office while retaining its Pan American charter. Juan Manuel enhanced his presentation with rare pictures of the first directors and of travelling representatives. Habib Latiri complemented the presentation with anecdotes of his experiences over 25 years at HQ and in the field, including service as WHO representative in Lebanon. He noted that the Beirut WHO office was 10 years behind our Region in its budgeting and programming process and recommended looking at PAHO procedures as they updated their own. He also showed wonderful pictures of former staff that entertained many in the audience.

History of AFSM: Life and Friendship after PAHO: Marilyn Rice and. Hernán Rosenberg read the notes prepared by Jaime Ayalde and Jean Surgi, founding members of AFSM. Hans Bruch was the chairman of the preliminary coordinating committee and first President of the Association. At a meeting in PAHO in January 1990 the Association was welcomed by the Director, Dr. Carlyle Guerra de Macedo, who gave it his full support. This high-level support continues to this day, and AFSM enjoys the use of PAHO facilities for its meetings and events. AFSM began as a social outlet. Today, while retaining this role, the Association takes on important issues to protect the welfare and benefits of its members, particularly through its involvement in the Staff Health Insurance, both at the Regional and Central levels. The Association has sponsored international meetings in Buenos Aires, Cartagena, Lima, Panama, and Washington, and it actively promotes the establishment of chapters in the countries.

Video Memories of Former Staff: Germán Perdomo edited a selection of videos received from colleagues in the field in which they commented about their retired lives, their families and, for some, ongoing professional activities. We heard from: Carlos Campagnaro (Brazil), Helena Restrepo (Colombia), Emilio del Campo (Paraguay), Hernán Malaga (Peru), Henri Jouval (Brazil), Maria Isabel Rodríguez (El Salvador), and Mena Carto (Guyana).

PMIS Computer System: Ricardo de la Torre explained that PAHO is installing a new PAHO Management Information System. Phase I will be available for active staff by February 2015 and later in the year for retired staff. The cloud-based PMIS will facilitate technical cooperation by providing transparency, delegation, responsibility, and accountability to PAHO processes and activities. The main use of the PMIS for retirees will be to receive communications from SHI. Therefore, retirees should ensure that the PMIS has their correct e-mail addresses. Exceptional cases with no e-mail will require contact via the PWR office.

Report from the AFSM Colombia Chapter: Raul Londoño, Chapter President, presented an expansive review of the chapter's history to date. Under Helena Restrepo, its first president, the Chapter defined its social outlook and formalized its bylaws and operational framework. The Chapter, established in 2007, has held nine national meetings. The members have been active in publishing articles on health and cultural topics. Especially noteworthy were its charitable activities which provide shelter, food and other support to homeless adults.

Starting an In-Country Chapter: Three initiatives were presented.

- **Brazil:** Cesar Vieira reiterated his commitment to promote a local chapter. He reported that Brazil has an organization of former international workers, many of whose members are former PAHO staff, and he suggested that a "dual identity" as AFSM members may be possible for the latter. Cesar will ask SHI for a list of PAHO retirees.

- **Chile:** Alfredo Ballevona said that there is a core of seven AFSM members who have endorsed the establishment of a chapter, and the PWR is very supportive of this effort. They will use the Colombia Chapter's bylaws as a reference, and they have the official AFSM bylaws as well.

- **Costa Rica:** Rodrigo Barahona made clear that there will not be a chapter in the country. There are only 12 PAHO retirees, two of them quite old and sick. There are eight Costa Rican retirees who are close friends and have regular informal gatherings.

Memories of a PAHO Family: Juan Manuel Sotelo spoke of his 50-year relationship with PAHO: both his father and uncle were PAHO Representatives. He recounted anecdotes and personal experiences from the seven posts that he occupied during his career, highlighting the important role that the Organization can have when countries, governments, or staff confront a crisis.

PAHO/WHO Memories: The meeting heard very personal stories from the meeting attendees on how PAHO impacted their lives and their present interests and community services.

Staff Association Reception: The participants were invited to relax at the end of this first day at a reception shared by the Staff Association. This goodwill gesture was highly appreciated, and it demonstrated the commitment shared by the two groups to work together on behalf of both active and former staff.

The **Second Day** of the meeting opened with Nancy Berinstein welcoming the representatives from sister organizations (ADB, AFICS, OAS, IMF and WB) with whom AFSM has developed productive working relationships.

WHO Staff Health Insurance (SHI): Carol Collado noted that the SHI is a self-insured scheme based on the principles of solidarity, equity, and shared governance and urged all staff to be knowledgeable of their rights and obligations. She rates its benefits as the best available insurance, but it will face challenges as a result of increased longevity and increases in short-term contracts. By 2031 inactive staff will be twice as large as the active workforce. Carol described the recent governance changes at WHO/Geneva which included a proposal to eliminate the Regional Surveillance Committees. AFSM worked with the PAHO Staff Association and the Director's office to successfully challenge the proposal and retain this important feature of SHI.

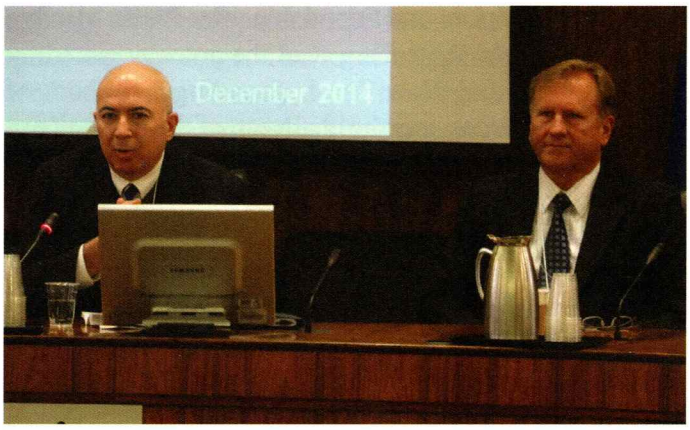
As long recommended by AFSM, a study is underway to assess the cost-benefits of reimbursing staff for Medicare coverage. Long-term care has become a major cost for SHI; a seminar on this topic will be held in 2015 with our sister international organizations.

Germán Perdomo explained the importance of the Regional Surveillance Committee and the role of AFSM in this body. He noted that the Association represents not only AFSM members but all former staff covered by the insurance program.

President's Address: As she announced her resignation from the Board, Nancy Berinstein noted that the Association will go through a time of transition as the pipeline of retired staff will diminish in future years. She stressed the important role of AFSM as an advocate for retirees. Welcome developments include productive relations with AFSM/Geneva and the Regions as well as with sister organizations in the Washington area. She highlighted the importance of social events that bring together colleagues. The Newsletter and the virtual communication tools developed by the Association allow members to stay in touch and share memories. She urged members to volunteer for the Board; they will find it to be fulfilling.

Treasurer's Report: Sylvia Schultz presented the *Income and Expenditure Report* and the *Balance Sheet* documenting that AFSM is in good standing with a positive balance. The Independent Auditor's Report was made available at the meeting.

UN Pension: Sergio B. Aruizú, UNJSPF CEO, provided a detailed overview of the Pension. The Fund has 200,000 beneficiaries, having paid out $4.5 billion in 2012-2013. As a result of a careful strategy by the Board,



the pension is in excellent operational and financial condition. With an expected real return of 3.5%, the principal will not be utilized for benefits for at least 50 years. Under a "pessimistic" scenario, that date would be 2034. The fund is structured to ensure that its resources are used only for its beneficiaries.

Paul Dooley, UNJSPF Deputy Director, addressed operational issues such as the importance of timely submission of the Certificate of Entitlement (CE) and the need to advise via Form PF23 changes in payment instructions. To ensure receiving survivor benefits, formal administrative procedures must be adhered to, including submission of original documents witnessed by approved authorities (local government or UN office). He advised signing up for internet access to the Fund, which allows for tracking the CE and receiving cost of living notifications. He asked that queries to the Fund be sent by e-mail since limited staff is available to answer the phone.

AFSM was very pleased that both gentlemen made the trip all the way from New York to be present at the meeting.

Election of Board Members: Nancy's resignation, as President as well as from the Board, has resulted in three posts being up for election. The meeting unanimously approved the re-election of two Board members who agreed to serve another three-year term, Carol Collado and Hortensia Saginor, and elected a new member, Roberto Rivero. Marilyn Rice was confirmed by acclamation to serve until 2015, replacing Mario Boyer who resigned earlier in the year.

Credit Union (CU): Patricia Vidal Ilijic, Executive Vice President, reported that the CU is doing well financially and is growing, with 5,000 members and $201 million in assets. A new mobile app allows deposits to be made

both in the US and abroad. Security has become a major issue, and she urges members to check their accounts weekly to detect any problem. The CU has moved from a four- to a safer seven-digit account number; accounts not updated by December 1 will be blocked. She reminded the participants that accounts become dormant if inactive for a year. New debit cards with a chip will be mailed in 2015. As in previous years, door prizes were generously offered by the CU. Nancy thanked Patricia and the CU staff for their continuing support.

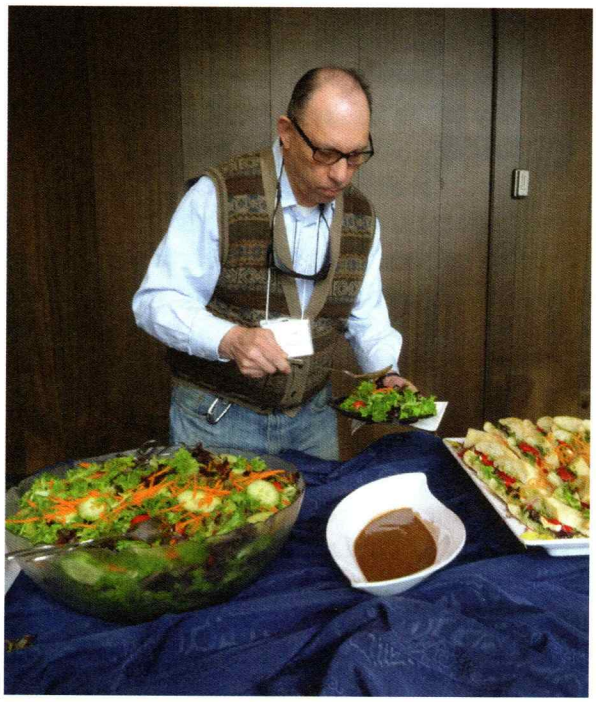
PAHO Staff Health Insurance: Chris Saenz mentioned that in a global survey by health insurance administrators, AMRO did "rather well" and that the PAHO insurance complies with Obamacare requirements. He reminded the participants that there is a 12-month limit to submit claims and asked that no more than two claims/month be presented. PAHO can arrange for Aetna coverage for retirees coming to the US for treatment, thereby benefiting from their rates. The Organization has negotiated with groups of hospitals in the countries to recognize PAHO coverage, avoiding the need for a deposit upon admission. A directory of these institutions is being prepared.

To fully fund the insurance scheme, there was a 10% increase in contributions in 2012, and for the next 30 years there will be an annual 4% increase. He noted that the UN requires all qualified staff to register for Medicare coverage and it reimburses these contributions; a study showed that the cost will be recovered in three years. A study to document similar savings is underway at PAHO and will be presented to Executive Management in 2015. Approval by the Global Oversight Committee will also be required for any changes to be made. Recognizing that it is difficult to get reliable cost estimates as required for pre-approval of surgery or emergency procedures, Chris said that PAHO will accept good-faith estimates. He explained that catastrophic care is based on a 12-month rolling basis and not on a calendar basis, which has created a certain amount of confusion.

Address on Various Aspects on Ageing: Enrique Vega Garcia, PAHO Advisor on Ageing, discussed the impact on public health of longevity and ageing. This new phenomenon of extended life spans has occurred in the last 50 years in both developing and developed countries. A new vision is required for this new stage of life. Though there are increased needs due to disability, comorbidity, and fragility, there is also a potential for seniors to contribute with their knowledge, experience and emotional balance. To maximize the contributions of this rapidly-growing segment of the population, societies will have to provide support and encouragement.

Future of AFSM: Nancy Berinstein introduced the topic by mentioning that our sister organizations are facing the same challenges to keep members engaged and to recruit new members. AFSM has provided a forum to socialize and to advocate for the benefits earned by our members. In a wide-ranging discussion, some suggestions were put forward for consideration by the Board. Recommendations that were made at the last International Reunion in Panama should be revisited. Technology should be used to establish virtual networks as well as to allow members to virtually participate in meetings. A small working group can be established to request ideas from the members and to develop activities according to the responses. Other suggestions included: train members in the use of social media, such as Facebook; plan a cruise for the next international reunion; promote preventive care. In short, AFSM's scope of work should encompass social events, use of technology and knowledge-sharing. Nancy said that she felt the time was right to "retire" but that it had been an honor to serve everyone. This elicited a standing ovation from the audience to show their appreciation (not to show happiness at her retirement).

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM. The President thanked all for their presence and invited them to the American Foreign Service Club for a reception sponsored by the Credit Union and the Association. Over 110 members and spouses enjoyed a memorable evening with drinks, dinner, and dancing. And then it was time to say good-bye, some hoping to keep in touch, all expecting to meet again at the next AFSM event.



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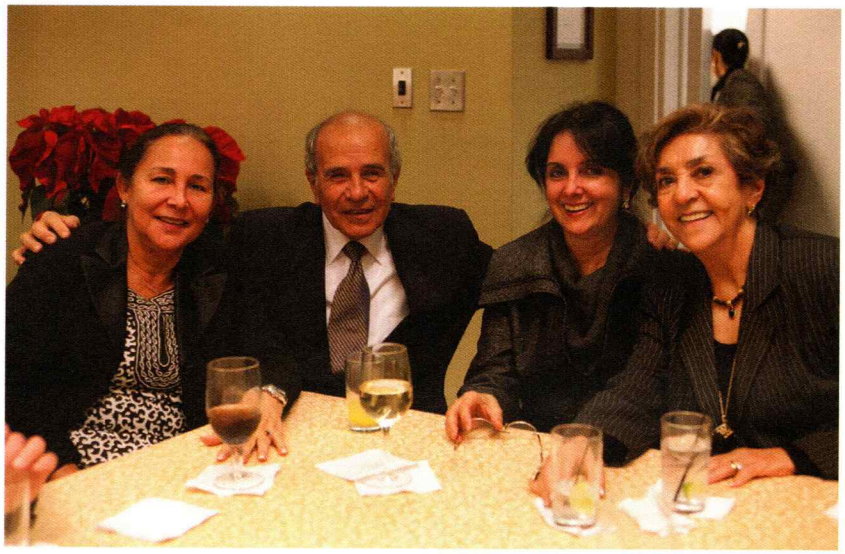

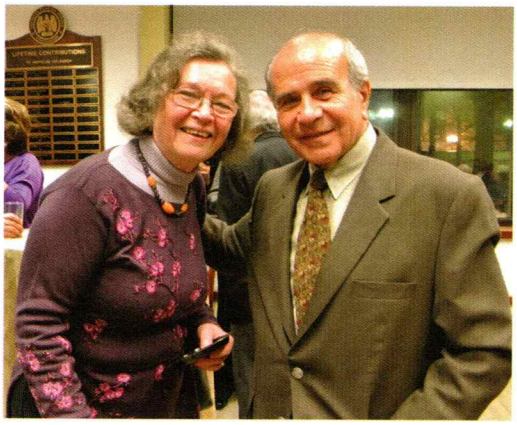

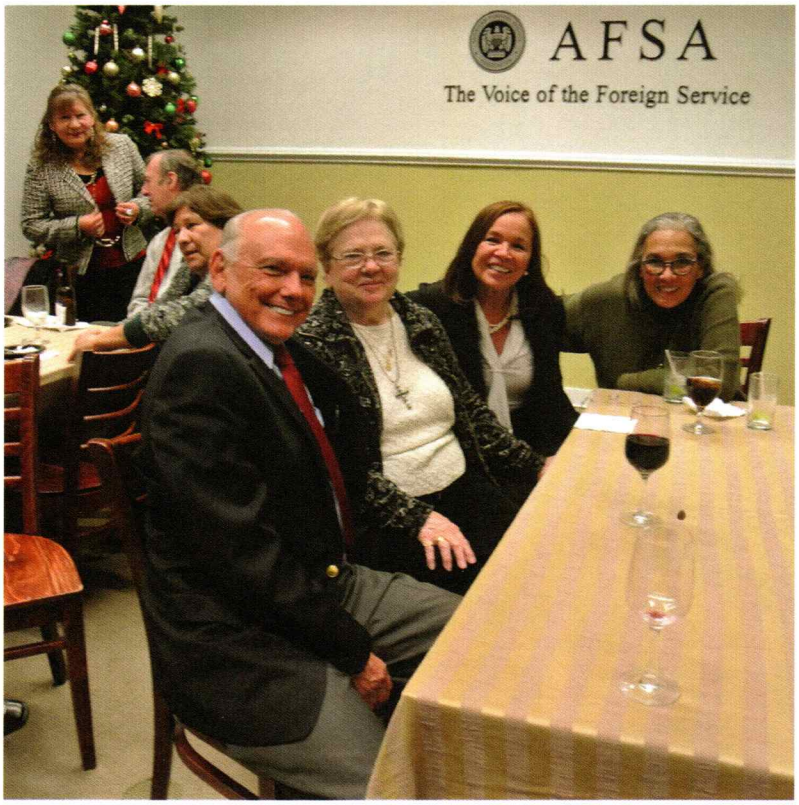
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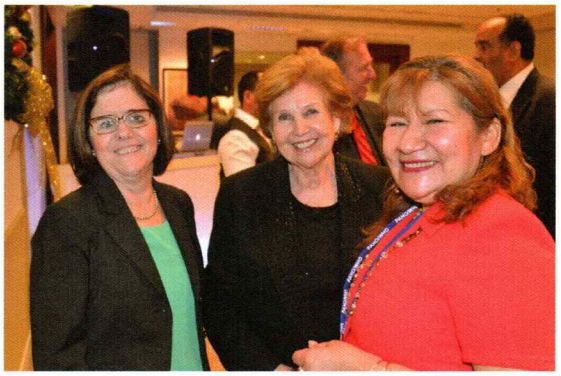
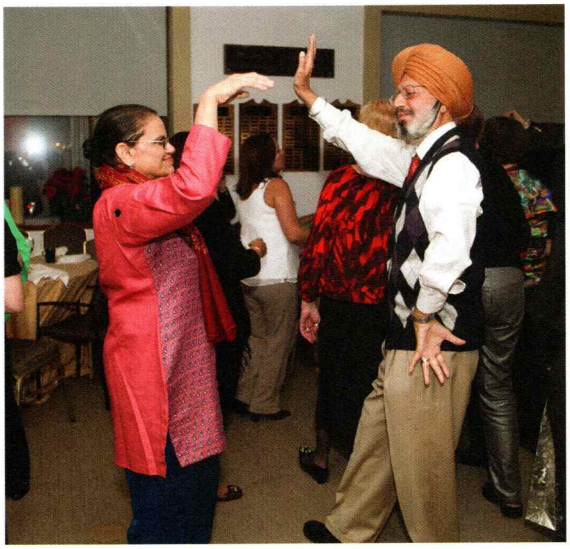
The Voice of the Foreign Service





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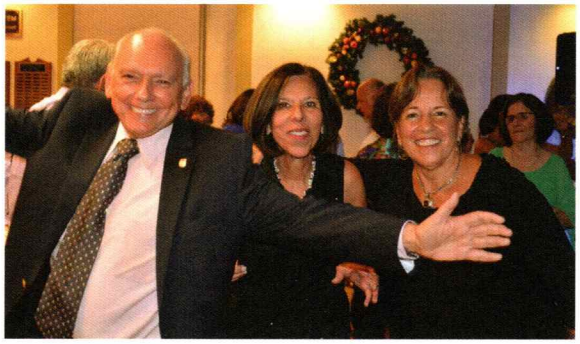


You may access our Web site at: http://www.afsmpaho.com to view additional photos of the 25th reunion not found in this Newsletter.

Letter from AFSM Geneva on Occasion of Our Reunion & Anniversary Celebration

by Jean-Paul Menu,
outgoing President, on behalf of the Executive Committee, AFSM (Geneva)

Dear Nancy,

It gives me great pleasure to convey warmest wishes from the Executive Committee of the AFSM in Geneva to you, to the Members of the AFSM PAHO/WHO Board and to all members of your Association.

I personally regret very much not being able to be with you for this General Meeting, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of your Association. I have very fond memories of my attendance at your Reunion in Panama City in 2012.

We share a common history. Both our Associations were born at about the same time around 1990. Looking at our records, I noted that on the occasion of our creation we had received the congratulations from Ms. Helena Irwin, on your board at that time!

But we share much more than history. Our aims are very similar, i.e., to serve our members by all possible means and this common objective calls for close cooperation between us. In recent years, our collaboration has significantly increased in several areas and particularly with regard to our common Health Insurance, SHI.

We wish you an enjoyable and productive Reunion and we hope to see you again soon, either in Geneva or in Washington.

Happy Anniversary and buena continuacion!

Reminder

No Future Printed Newsletters

This will be the last printed copy you will receive of the PAHO AFSM Newsletter. In the future it will be sent to your electronic address. Accordingly, please be sure that your correct email address is recorded in our system. Check the membership directory, and if there is any error or if your email address is not there, please send the correct information to: Hortensia Saginor at hortensiasagi@gmail.com or ISaginor@aol.com.

All Newsletters are also accessible via the AFSM website at: http://www.afsmpaho.com, where you can view and download all newsletters from the latest to those dating back to 2005. If it is impossible for you to have access to an electronic version of the Newsletter, then please contact Hortensia and advise her of your correct mailing address to receive a black and white printed version. Thank you for your understanding and support.

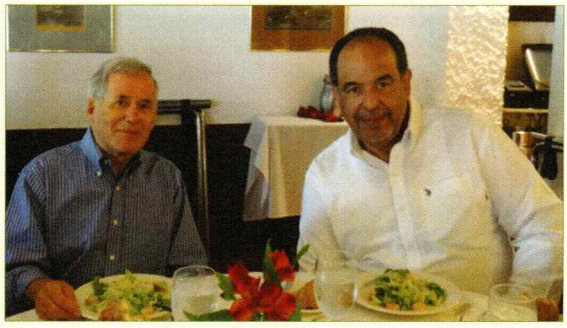
Summer Luncheon in Washington

by John Silvi

AFSM held its annual summer luncheon at Normandie Farm Restaurant in Potomac MD on 5 August 2014. Approximately 50 retired staff and their guests enjoyed a choice of three different menu items and the restaurant's famous popovers. Normandie Farm provided a great atmosphere for retired staff to see colleagues, mingle, and be brought up to date with one another and reminisce about their days in PAHO.

Members of the AFSM Board updated attendees on current issues of interest, especially pension matters and health insurance; the Board has been working hard in those areas. During the luncheon, a Board member sat at each table and solicited members for input on what issues were important to them and on what things the Board could do. Members were also reminded that the annual AFSM meeting would be held in Washington, DC this December.

Lastly, two door prizes were awarded. Hortensia Saginor was recognized and applauded for her hard work in organizing and handling all the arrangements that made this a very enjoyable luncheon for all.



Annual Workshop of International Associations of Retirees and Former Staff

by Marilyn Rice

On 20 October 2014, AFSM PAHO/WHO hosted the 6th annual workshop of international associations of retirees and former staff (ARAIO). Nancy Berinstein, President of AFSM, welcomed the attendees, and then each participating association made a presentation followed by questions, answers, and discussion. Each presentation focused on some or all of the following topics: a brief history of the association; how members are recruited or included; changes in the parent organization and how this might have affected association members; changes in pension, taxes, health insurance, and finances; communication with members in country and intra-country; knowledge-sharing activities; use of social media tools; and other outstanding issues. The session was expertly moderated by Lesley Shneier of the 1881 Society (the World Bank's association).

There were some interesting and different issues that emerged. PAHO's association is fortunate to have a representative on the WHO health insurance committee and collaborates with the global AFSM based in Geneva. At the same time, given the economic issues that PAHO itself is facing, support previously given to AFSM for free help with mailing and use of PAHO facilities has been suspended, and fees are now being charged at such a rate that other options must be explored.

Membership in the IMF's association is automatically triggered by a retiree's receipt of pension, and no fees are charged; most of the members are either in the WDC area or the US.

The OAS association members are concerned with the shift of the pension to an individual savings plan wherein the member and the OAS make contributions to an individual account for which the member makes the investments. This means that the pension income is not guaranteed nor is it stable.

The IDB association has 30% of its members outside the US, with 12 chapters supported by country offices. Retirees are still considered by these offices to be family, and support is provided for a web site, video conferencing, emails, and permanent staff, as well as financial support. The association holds international and regional press briefings for its members and offers tickets to cultural events at a discounted rate.

The Asian Development Bank's association is based in Manila and has 16 chapters. It gets a subsidy from the parent organization as well as the full time support of one or two staff members and payment for postage and mailings.

The World Bank's association members are still very technically associated with the parent organization, which provides ample opportunities for professional networking and staying professionally connected. Retirees have become champions in issues such as mentoring, development of a knowledge platform with state-of-the-art speakers, peer reviews for the Bank's products and services, and providing lessons learned and learning opportunities. Many connections are virtual through social networks and email, and the web is used to solicit and answer questions.

In almost all the associations, officers are elected with widespread use of electronic voting to ensure maximum participation of members. Most associations have a newsletter and communicate virtually with their members (web sites, Facebook, Linkedin). All associations raised the concern of downsizing of fixed-term and more permanent staff in the parent organization, thereby affecting the numbers of people interested in joining an association of former staff. This is of particular concern to those associations that depend upon member fees for support, but it also raises questions about the roles, relevance, and viability of the associations for former staff.

In the afternoon members joined one of three discussion groups: Chapters, Relevance, and Knowledge and Communication. The group on CHAPTERS made the following contributions: To overcome the passivity of members, more tasks should be created in which they might actively participate. In addition to geographic chapters, the World Bank has created thematic groups that enable people to make technical contributions. Most chapters have mainly social functions. Where there is open communication (chat room, Linkedin) people have the opportunity to pose questions, make comments, or provide answers, but the underlying issue is who will monitor this. Associations handle the issue of spousal membership differently, some including them from the start and others only after the former staff member dies.

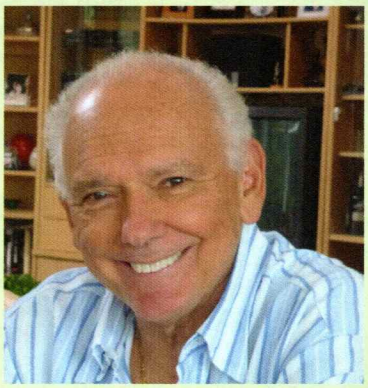
The group on RELEVANCE was challenged with how to keep the associations relevant in the changing circumstances of all the international organizations. There are really two cohorts: the retirees (concerned with pension, health insurance, social engagement, professional connections, and networking) and the former staff who leave before retirement (wellness programs like hiking and yoga, professional connections and networking). It will be important to have strong advocates on the associations' boards of both groups, as well as people with leadership skills and networking abilities. To attract new members it will be important to be proactive (make a good pitch at retirement seminars and showcase benefits; work with HR departments to encourage them to share information about the associations when staff are getting ready to retire or leave). Use of social media (Linkedin, Twitter, Facebook) is vital to stay relevant and connected to the whole community, with the caution that monitoring should prevent individuals from hijacking the space. Other ideas included having liaison with the staff association of the parent organization and offering discounts to cultural events.

The group on KNOWLEDGE and COMMUNICATION generated a number of ideas about how former staff can provide technical and country-specific support to the parent organization. Ideas included generating a data base of who can do what (IDB), using a "skill finder" tool to identify which organization has what skills, matching members' skills with parent organization needs, providing pro bono services within the community, helping to oversee corporate social responsibility activities, helping the parent organization reduce workloads by identifying potential candidates for jobs and providing peer review for some policy papers. On the communications side virtual communication was stressed through web sites, newsletters, Facebook, Linkedin, a virtual room for members to participate in meetings from a distance, and striving to keep email address lists up-to-date. Connections to the parent organization might be maintained through annual meetings, social events, and seminars (on health issues, taxes, estate planning), to which other associations might be invited.

The meeting next year will be sponsored by the IDB, most probably in September or October. ■

RODRIGO A. BARAHONA

I would like to thank AFSM for providing me this opportunity to share some aspects of my retired life with my fellow associates (many of whom I have the privilege to call friends) in response to the newsletter title "Where are they now?". Based on the articles already published in this section on our newsletter, I interpret this to mean not only the place where we live, but also what we do.



In the months approaching my retirement, I attended orientation meetings provided by the Organization, in which different options were provided on how to deal with this job transition, from having full-time institutional duties to being retired and having all one's time freely available. This was discussed under the wise principle that one does not go from doing a lot to doing nothing, but rather to do something different, which means taking on new challenges, learning new skills or dusting off others that we already had but were not being used in our work in the Organization. All of this should be complemented with taking greater care of our health, and dedicating more time to sports and physical activity.

Support was provided by giving us several books to read in which different lifestyle options were suggested and highly valued for this new lifestyle that was knocking on our door and which we would soon encounter when we left. Of all the options, the one that most caught my attention was that of engaging in activities completely different from what we did at work. Probably because from a young age I always had the vocation of undertaking entrepreneurial activities while simultaneously carrying out my professional and teaching obligations, this was the direction I intended to take. I would take all the time needed to play tennis at least three times a week and do gymnastics, thereby occupying a good part of the morning, and the rest of the time would be devoted to productive projects, mainly involving real-estate.

But the plan did not last long. We returned to Costa Rica in February 2000 and two months later Dr. Astrid Fischel, First Vice President, requested my assistance in coordinating the environmental health component of an ambitious social program called "Triangle of Solidarity" that was aimed at reducing poverty. Due to the social importance of this initiative as well as my personal esteem for Dr. Fischel, I got involved in this for the rest of that year, every afternoon attending meetings at the Presidential Palace. It was almost like I was back in PAHO, because the subject of environmental health was part of my various activities in the Organization, dating from my first Short Term Consultancy contract for a mission in Peru and subsequent consultancies in other countries, and several years later as a PAHO officer in National Institute of Municipal Sanitation and Development (INSFOPAL) in Colombia and later as part of the Technical Assistance Service for Sanitation Companies (SATECIA) Project in Brazil.

It is noteworthy that my duties at the Presidential Palace involved many activities with international organizations such as the WHO Centre in Kobe, Japan, the IDB, the WB, UNDP, and PAHO. I want to emphasize that I always had the valuable support of the PAHO Representation in Costa Rica and the Office of International Affairs.

In 2001 and 2002 I was able to devote more time to other activities, available time that allowed me to accept invitations to participate in PAHO consultancies and technical meetings in Ecuador, Paraguay, Brazil and Bolivia, as well as some consulting activities with the Costa Rican Ministry of Health and teaching activities with the Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP).

In December of 2002, Dr. Mirta Roses, newly elected as Director of PAHO, invited me to be one of the coordinators of the PAHO Twenty-First

Century initiative. Until about four years ago, this and subsequent commitments derived mainly from its implementation process in several areas of the Organization, had me returning to nearly full-time involvement with PAHO.

I then again felt myself to be at the crossroads facing retirement. Now I divide my time between administration of the businesses I have started, exercising with the help of a coach (to avoid mistakes that might harm me), enjoying my family by extensively using virtual communication technology (Ipad) because we have a daughter and two grandchildren in Colombia, and a son and a six-month-old granddaughter in Boston. The rest of the family is in Costa Rica. Several months ago I also decided to allocate three hours a day to reading and so far I have achieved this during the week. On weekends it is more difficult due to the football games and sometimes the beach.

In addition to the pleasures of family life, we have the advantage of enjoying a large group of married friends. Some Costa Ricans, including PAHO retirees, and other UN foreign retirees who stayed to live in "the happiest country of the world" or those working with international companies in Costa Rica. We meet often with some of them to organize trips, and with the accompaniment of an excellent Ecuadorian guitarist we sing in parties and during trips, our voices clarified and sweetened with the magic of a good wine. PURA VIDA!

In closing this brief story of my life after retirement, I reflect back on the many decades I served the Organization that also enriched me through the opportunities it gave me to grow as a professional and as a person. This, coupled with the fact that different institutional circumstances led to my services being required in both the technical and the administrative areas, at headquarters and in the "field", gave me the privilege of knowing many people who today form the ranks of the retirees. You, colleagues, in your time were the Organization, as the current staff is today. And to have known each other, interacted and supported each other, both professionally and personally, this is the best trophy that this long adventure has given us. ■

Staff Health Insurance and Pension Updates

by Carol Collado with Germán Perdomo

First and foremost, we hope that all of you are settling into the New Year healthily.

Health Insurance

You will have noticed that as of December 2014 there was a 4% increase in premiums applied to the pension as agreed in the 2011 decisions. This occurs for retired staff in December since our insurance premium is paid in advance, whereas the staff does not see the increase until January. This is an annual increase that will be applied each year for the foreseeable future in order to cover the actuarial deficit foreseen until 2051. (Remember, there were 15 years from 1996 to 2012 without a single increase!) According to the actuarial report for 2013, we are on track, and your committees are constantly monitoring with the SHI Secretariat to make sure that all tendencies and trends are taken into account to enable us to continue to enjoy our good benefits.

As we mentioned in our last Newsletter, the SHI system of governance placed into effect in 2012 is now functioning in full. The General Oversight Committee (GOC, the policy-making body) met in November and considered recommendations from the General Standing Committee (GSC). A number of recommendations were accepted and passed on to the Director General for approval. As of this writing we have not yet heard the results of this, but will keep you posted as soon as we know. The important thing for all to remember is that there will most probably be new Rules changes, some having to do with maintaining the balance in our self-funded system, others that will clarify procedures or reduce processing times, and still others that will mean some changes in the benefits schedule.

IT CANNOT BE STRESSED TOO MUCH THAT WHEN YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT THE NEW RULES ARE OUT, YOU SHOULD TAKE THE TIME TO READ THEM AND KNOW WELL YOUR BENEFITS AND RIGHTS. Remember, it is our insurance and we need to be active in maintaining its worth. There will be format changes, and the benefits will be contained in an annex, which will help in locating specific information, but it is important that you read through the entire Rules at least once.

Although they will be sent out, there are often difficulties with timeliness and proper arrival. We want you to know that there are additional means of finding the information. Once posted in English and Spanish on the website available to retirees, http://extranet.who.int/shi (signin SHIretiree; password SHIretiree), we will be notifying you through our PAHO/WHO AFSM general bulletin email, and there will be a link on the Facebook page and on the website. As we are moving to electronic communication, it is important that we all develop the minimum skills so that we can be informed.

The retiree representatives continue to advocate for your priorities: improving communication with retirees; assuring equitable access to information; reduction of delays in claims processing; consistency in application of Rules globally; and improving the recognition of the WHO/PAHO insurance card in the countries. Achievements include a website created for retirees to access information in a timely manner, https://extranet.who.int/ (signin SHIretiree, password SHIretiree), and the development of a direct email to your representatives,

On another concern for retirees and the health of the SHI, we have been able to place a study on Long-Term Care in the SHI budget for 2015. PAHO/WHO AFSM will be working with other international organizations to present a seminar on LTC and its alternatives presently estimated for late spring 2015. We will keep you informed as to how you can participate.

The retiree representatives and alternates are elected globally by retirees, presently for a two-year period that will terminate during 2015. You will be hearing more about this from the Secretariat in Geneva in 2015. It is important for you to participate in these elections and to ensure a regional presence in the SHI retiree representation.

AFSM continues to be active in representing you in the Regional Surveillance Committee, protecting you and your benefits while assuring the future of SHI and maintaining the proper use of the insurance, monitoring Rules compliance, and participating in proposals for amendments.

Reminders:

- Be on the lookout for the new Rules and become familiar with them; share that information with your providers and others who may need to act on your behalf.
- Carefullly review the documentation given to you by the service providers, and when in doubt, consult PAHO, the web, or your representatives.

Attention: you do not want to be denied a benefit because you didn't comply with the instructions such as:

- Submit the complete documentation of claims on time.
- Report hospitalizations to the Health Insurance Office immediately.
- Obtain prior approval for many services such as major surgery exceeding $50,000, major non-surgical care exceeding $30,000, durable equipment, therapies, and nursing care, to name a few.

Pension

At our 25th Anniversary Reunion we were fortunate to have with us the CEO Sergio Aruizú, and Deputy CEO, Paul Dooley, of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). Their presentations were quite interesting, and you will be able to access them through our website. In summary, however, they assured us that the Fund is in a very good operational and financial situation and with an optimistic expectation that this scenario will continue. We were assured that with the expected returns of 3.5%, the principal of the fund would not need to be used for benefits for the next 50 years.

The Fund is a global one and therefore subject to the intricacies of providing services to participants in 190 countries, with multiple currencies and local and national bank rules, etc. The Fund also has a complex governance system, with several layers designed to protect its viability and participants. In addition, they are involved in the design and installation of a new IT system to better respond to the multiple inquiries (over 40,000 in the last year) and the intricacies of the 1.5 million payments made annually, as well as to the investments, risk management and management of environmental concerns, and for developing creative solutions so that the beneficiaries can enjoy their pensions in a timely and accurate manner.

We also heard about the importance of returning the Certificate of Entitlement on time, as the documentation (originals) are needed for changes to the banking information and beneficiaries, among others. Rights and documentation needed to obtain spousal benefits and other information is available on their website, www.unjspf.org.

Reminders:

- Register on the website and check your information.
- Prepare documentation needed for your survivors. In this respect, the booklet prepared by AFSM's Jaime Ayalde: Staff Benefits: Health Insurance, Pension and other Benefits of a Surviving Spouse (2nd Edition 2013), is an invaluable aid with the forms available as well as instructions to follow. ■

Reminder about Pension Letters

The payment of pension benefits is linked to the receipt by the Fund's New York office of a statement of survival known as the Certificate of Entitlement (CE). Beneficiaries should have received their CEs in late October 2014, and they should have been sent back, duly completed, by the end of the year.

You must allow up to two months after mailing your CE for the online system to be updated, so February and March were the key months for you to have made sure that the certificate arrived at its destination. The reason is that in April the wheels of fortune are turned one more notch, and if the certificate has not arrived the stop-payment order is given, a shocking fact that may come to your attention when you receive your bank deposit statement early in May.

Here are the steps you need to follow to access the Fund's website and view your account:

- Go to www.unjspf.org.
- Click Welcome (for English).
- Click Beneficiary.
- On the left side you can see the CE Tracking System.
- On the rest of the screen there are interesting articles, such as the Annual Letter of the CEO and a new quarterly report on investments, presented in English, French and Spanish. These are for general information, open to any reader.
- Click on CE Tracking System in the left-hand column and log into the Secure Documents page.
- If you are a new user, click Beneficiaries to register and follow the instructions provided.
- If you are an established user, enter your Retirement Number and Password (or PIN). ■

Questions and Answers

From time to time when we receive questions from our members that would be of interest to the whole membership, we will publish them in the Newsletter with the appropriate answers. Accordingly, please feel free to send to Marilyn Rice, ricemarilyn2011@gmail.com, any questions you might have in the future.

Question: Will the PAHO/WHO pension payment be reduced if one should start taking Social Security benefits?

Answer: No, the amount of pension you receive from PAHO will in no way be affected. If, when you came to PAHO, you signed a waiver to release you from paying into Social Security, then it means you did not contribute during your PAHO service, and accordingly you will not receive any Social Security payment for that time period. If you did not sign the waiver and you did contribute to Social Security, then you are entitled to receive Social Security benefits. In either case, your pension will not be affected.

Welcome to New AFSM Members July to December 2014

From the Washington, DC Area

Mary Buff
Nancy Fabara
Sharon Frahler
Miguel A. Segovia
Olga Van Looveren
Eleana Cornejo de Villanueva
Frank Zelaya

From Other Parts of the USA

Robert Neal Meriwether
Chun-Hwa Chen Liu (Associate Member)
Bernardet Miranda (Associate Member)

From Other Countries

Richard VanWest-Charles – Canada
Carlos E. Samayoa Castillo – Guatemala

Immunizations for Older Adults

by Enrique Vega

Older adults now age more protected against vaccine-preventable diseases due to immunizations administered at earlier ages. In most cases, adults maintain immunity in old age and do not need to get immunization booster doses. Yet, because the immune system weakens as people age, older adults are at increased risk for certain vaccine-preventable diseases, such as acute respiratory infections, including pneumonia and influenza. According to the United States National Council on Aging, nine out of ten flu-related deaths occur in people 65 and older.

Immunizations in older adults have proved to be very effective, as they have shown a substantial reduction in the incidence of diseases and deaths. Individuals should consult with their health care providers about their immunization history so they can get new immunizations or booster doses, if needed. The most common recommendations for immunizations in older adults are:

Seasonal Influenza (Flu) vaccination

- One dose is recommended once a year in all older adults throughout the influenza season (approximately starting in October and continuing through May in the USA).
- Adults over 65 years old can receive either the standard dose or the high dose. Consult with your health care professional to choose which one is the best option for you. There is a live nasal flu vaccine, which is indicated only for people ages 5-49, and it is contraindicated in the geriatric population.
- Flu vaccine is mainly recommended for residents of assisted living, rehabilitation, and long-term care facilities.

Pneumococcal vaccination

- Pneumovax® is currently recommended for one use in all adults after the age of 65, with a revaccination after five years if certain anatomical or chronic diseases are present.
- This vaccine is mainly recommended in residents of assisted living, rehabilitation, and long-term care facilities, and in older adults who smoke cigarettes.

Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) vaccination

- It is recommended in adults as a booster shot every ten years, or after an exposure to tetanus under some circumstances (mild wound) or five years if the wound is severe.
- If the individual is in contact with a child less than 12 months, then tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) vaccination is recommended over Td.

Shingles (Herpes Zoster) vaccination

- It is recommended that all adults 60 years old or older get one dose of the shingles vaccine. Discuss shingles vaccination with your health care provider based on your health status. There is no maximum age for getting the shingles vaccine.

Depending on the individual's immunization record, it may be required to get vaccinations for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal disease, varicella, measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), due to certain health problems, occupations or risks posed by lifestyles. Moreover, it is advisable for older adults who travel to tropical countries to get relevant vaccines such as the yellow fever vaccine. ■

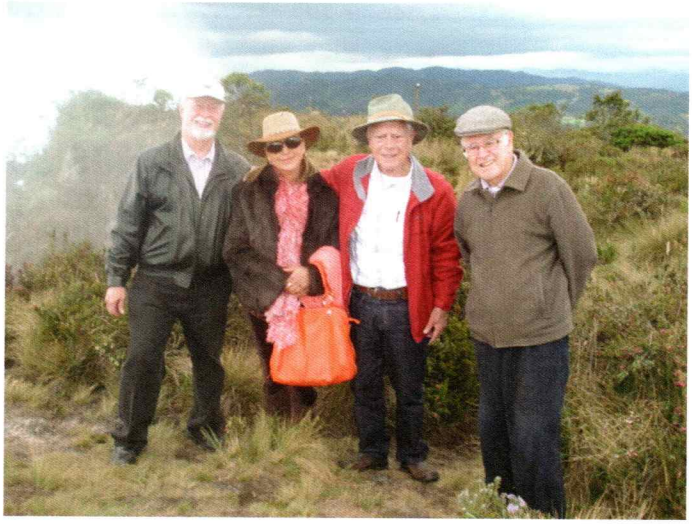
—Resource about immunizations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
http://www.vaccines.gov/who_and_when/seniors/

AFSM Colombia Chapter – 9th Reunion

by Raúl Londoño, President

The 9th reunion was celebrated with great success in terms of participation, fellowship and the importance of the issues discussed. We wish to thank AFSM, the FCU and PWR-COL for the great contributions we received and which ultimately helped us to achieve our desired objectives.

On the first day we had a full agenda, which can be summarized as follows: Presentation and analysis of the technical cooperation provided by PAHO to the Government of Colombia, keeping us up-to-date and helping us to find new ways of collaboration between retirees and PWR. We were updated on developments in insurance and the FCU. We honored the memory of our deceased members. We were apprised of the social and solidarity progress achieved by Women Volunteers and their support to seniors in the street. Through interesting special papers presented by the participants, we learned of important and varied contributions we could make to society and the contribution we could make from the health perspective to the peace process in Colombia's post-conflict. We analyzed the work and the financial reports during 2013-2014; approving the 2014-2015 Action Plan and Budget. Colombia Chapter managers were appointed for 2014-2015, and attendance at this year's meeting of the AFSM in Washington, DC in December was approved. The city of Cali was chosen to host the 10th meeting. In the evening during the cocktail hour, we discussed the topics of the day and shared an enjoyable time together.



The second day we left early by bus to go to the municipality of Subachoque to visit the beautiful church of San Miguel Archangel. We heard a splendid concert performed by the Subachoque Symphonic Band which is comprised of 47 children between the ages of 7 and 12. Then we left Subachoque for a test of extreme tourism where we ascended to a height of 3,500 meters to Tablazo, the place where Colombian aviation security teams work and where the mountain falls 400 meters vertically, creating a balcony, from where one can see the snow of Ruiz, Tolima and other places. Even though the fog prevented us from seeing them, we were able to appreciate the beautiful scenery.

Finally, we went to the Tibar farm, located in a beautiful ecological setting, where we enjoyed and shared a great afternoon with a delicious lunch. The atmosphere of friendship we felt during the two-day meeting helped to project the chapter into the future and thus to strengthen it. ■

Article of Mutual Interest with AFSM Geneva: FAFICS Council Meeting

Rome, 7- 9 July 2014

by Jean-Paul Menu

Founded in 1975, FAFICS is the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants. It brings together Associations of retirees from the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies of the UN. There are currently 57 Associations that are members of FAFICS located in all regions of the world with a total membership of some 18,000 retirees. FAFICS provides a framework for promoting and defending the interests of former civil servants, most notably in pension and health insurance issues. It meets every year in early summer, immediately before the annual meeting of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and at the same location. To find out more about FAFICS visit www.fafics.org.

I attended the 43rd annual session of the Council meeting of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants, as part of the AAFI-AFICS (Genève) delegation. The meeting was hosted by the FFOA (Former FAO and Other UN Staff Members Association) at the FAO Headquarters. Out of 57 Associations of retired UN staff, 33 attended or were represented.

As usual, the main part was devoted to pension issues. Sergio Aruizú, the Chief Executive Officer of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (the Fund), assured the participants that the Fund was in a very good operational and financial situation but needed to modernize to adapt to the changing environment. The actuarial situation has significantly improved, essentially due to the increased age of retirement (from 62 to 65).but it still shows an actuarial deficit of 0.72%. The FAFICS Council decided on the recommendations that its representatives would have to defend during the session of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (the Board) that would immediately follow the Council. The first one was to defend the two-track system which, while not specifically targeted, was mentioned as being costly to the Fund. Among other priorities considered by FAFICS there were: eliminating the reduction in the first pension adjustment due after retirement, improving the pension adjustment system, absorbing bank charges, revising the small pensions, and reviewing procedures for appeals by retirees to the Board. It was made clear, however, that no improvements in benefits to retirees could be considered by the Board for the time being.

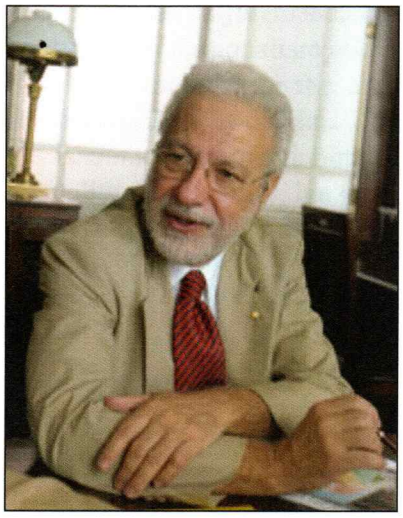
The second major item on the agenda of the Council dealt with health insurance schemes for UN retirees. Contrary to the single joint Pension Fund for all retirees, most UN agencies, including of course WHO, have their own. Consequently, the role of FAFICS is mostly limited to comparative studies of the various schemes and the collection and sharing of information on changes in the provisions. The meeting was reminded that the UN General Assembly had asked for a survey of health care plans for active and retired staff within the UN system and to explore options to increase efficiency and contain costs. This matter is being followed up by FAFICS.

Among other subjects, the Council considered how to manage communications between member associations, how to better use the UNJSPF Emergency Fund, and whether it should support the creation of a UN Ageing Agency. With regards to this last item, the Council considered it was premature.

The presidency of FAFICS has passed from our friend and AFSM colleague Roger Eggleston to Ms. Linda Saputelli, President of AFICS-New York.

Having the possibility to attend the FAFICS Council meetings allows the AFSM to be kept immediately informed of the main concerns of the community of UN retirees all over the world and to participate in the dialogue with the Pension Fund staff. I was happy to meet again with several presidents of Associations of former UN staff who are also friends and members of our AFSM. ■

Remembering Our Colleagues



Ciro Carlos Araujo de Quadros

1940-2014

Excerpts taken by Marilyn Rice from obituaries in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Lancet, *and* the Telegraph

Dr. Ciro de Quadros, a Brazilian epidemiologist who navigated war zones and reimagined outmoded public health practices to lead an immunization campaign that eradicated polio in Latin America and the Caribbean, died of pancreatic cancer on 28 May 2014 at the age of 74.

Ciro Carlos Araujo de Quadros was born into a middle-class family in Rio Pardo, Brazil, on 30 January 1940. After medical school, he graduated from the National School of Public Health in Rio de Janeiro and served his first tour of duty as head of a government clinic in a remote Amazon area, where he helped to arrest smallpox. Whenever he found smallpox patients, Dr. de Quadros acted quickly to vaccinate anyone who might come in contact with them. The method, known as "surveillance and containment," became the standard in epidemiology. "It is difficult to grasp the magnitude of Ciro's achievement," said Dr. Donald A. Henderson, who led the World Health Organization's global smallpox eradication initiative in the 1960s and '70s, and who was dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health from 1977 to 1990.

Dr. Henderson, who recruited the young Dr. de Quadros to help organize smallpox eradication in Ethiopia from 1970 to 1977, said he was not only a great epidemiolgist but also a fearless and inspirational leader. He managed to win the confidence of the people by hiring local nurses and health workers and quickly brought the disease under control in Ethiopia. In 1971 he inaugurated the regular publication of a surveillance report which documented smallpox incidence. Distributed to health personnel and local officials, it helped to sustain morale and encouraged a sense of "ownership" which saw officials competing to bring down rates of the disease in their areas.

Dr. Henderson recalled Dr. de Quadros's persistence in the midst of Ethiopia's civil war as a half-dozen of his teams were kidnapped and one of his United Nations helicopters was commandeered with its pilot aboard. He helped negotiate the return of the health teams and the pilot, all of whom resumed their work in the field. The pilot had taken the opportunity provided by his enforced idleness to vaccinate his captors. The last case of smallpox in Ethiopia was reported on 9 August 1976, after which de Quadros moved to Somalia, where the last case was found and contained in 1977, making it the first infectious disease to be eradicated from the globe. The campaign in Ethiopia became the gold standard for eradication programs.

Dr. de Quadros worked for PAHO from 1977 to 2002, where he was widely credited with carrying out one of the boldest - and seemingly least likely - projects in modern epidemiological history through PAHO's Expanded Program on Immunizations. "At that time vaccine coverage rates were only 5% to 20%," says Donald Henderson. "What Ciro did was amazing." He persuaded countries to join what became a hemisphere-wide effort. "Within five or six years all except Haiti had well over 80% coverage." De Quadros also created a fund for buying vaccines on behalf of PAHO members, one of the largest ever bulk-purchasing schemes in the public sector. Countries were able to buy vaccines in quantities that would otherwise have been unaffordable. Beginning in 1985, he dispatched teams of health workers in 15 countries to the most remote, underdeveloped, and war-torn areas of the region to reach Latin America's most vulnerable people: unimmunized children under age 5.

The incidence of polio had declined significantly in Latin America since the development in the early 1960s of the inexpensive Sabin vaccine, which is administered orally and costs a fraction per dose of the injected Salk vaccine. But Dr. de Quadros and his colleagues knew that epidemics would always be possible until the disease was tracked down and populations immunized against it. Dr. de Quadros focused his efforts primarily on polio, but he also equipped his teams with vaccines against measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, and tuberculosis.

In remote regions, his health workers organized local volunteers, drummed up publicity, enlisted the cooperation of the local health clinic's few employees, and sometimes timed their mass immunizations to coincide with local religious festivals. They negotiated 24-hour cease-fires between rebel and government forces in El Salvador and Guatemala - so-called tranquility days - so health workers could administer immunizations. In Peru, where they failed to win the cooperation of the Shining Path guerrillas, the teams worked around those areas controlled by the rebels, keeping the country's polio hot spots isolated and clearly defined for health workers, who would revisit them after the battle lines had shifted.

Dr. de Quadros made record-keeping a hallmark of his program. Teams kept track of all families in their assigned areas and sent vaccinators to locate any child who missed an immunization appointment. Dr. de Quadros adopted many innovative methods to vaccinate children and bring the disease under control. He obtained investments from UNICEF, Rotary International, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other organizations and established an international fund to help poorer countries buy vaccines at a discount. He taught governmental health and finance ministers about the social benefits of preventive medicine. He organized "national immunization days," in which the vaccination of millions of children was seen as a holiday, with music and sports to encourage people to show up. The last reported case of polio in Latin America was recorded in Pichinaki, Peru, in 1991. An independent health survey commissioned by PAHO officially declared the disease eradicated in the region in 1994.

In recent years, Dr. de Quadros led the Sabin Vaccine Institute's efforts to eradicate polio globally, as smallpox had been eradicated in the 1960s and '70s and as polio was in Latin America two decades later. He also taught at Johns Hopkins's schools of medicine and public health.

He is survived by his wife, Susana; two daughters, Julia and Cristina; and two stepsons, Marcelo and Alvaro Boggio. ■

Dr. Alvaro Uribe Acevedo

1926-2014

*by Italo Barragán Arenas**

On 1 June 2014 in Bogotá, without a fraternal farewell, our friend, colleague and fellow Alvaro Uribe Acevedo, with whom for decades we shared friendship and work together at the Pan American Health Organization, passed on.

Alvaro was born in Bogota, Colombia, in 1926, and he spent his childhood and adolescence in Bucaramanga with his parents and classmates at the Santander Institute where he graduated in 1946 as Bachelor "E Pluribus Unum". He received his medical degree from the National University of Colombia, specializing in Public Health and Malariology, after which he joined the Colombia Ministry of Health's efforts to eradicate malaria.

His academic and professional credentials led him in 1966 to link with PAHO, where he held important positions such as Medical Officer in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; Project Manager in Guatemala and Brazil; Head of malaria research in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and finally as Regional Malaria Advisor for the Americas, based in Washington, DC. In the field of health, Alvaro

oversaw numerous investigations regarding the transmission of malaria vector control and insecticide application.

During his 20 years of service with PAHO and until his retirement in 1986, he distinguished himself by his dedication to service, professionalism and a great sense of responsibility that earned him the admiration and affection of all who worked beside him. Highlighting his human qualities I cannot avoid mentioning his strong and delightful personality, his chivalry, his great emotional, ethical, moral and social values and his great respect for friendship.

After he finished his work and retired from PAHO, he moved his residence to the city of Bogotá to enjoy everything he loved in life: literature, classical music and opera, which were an intrinsic part of his experience. Since he was a dedicated music lover, he customarily went to concerts and recitals. With his wife Virginia he went to many concerts and baroque chamber music performances of the Bogota symphony orchestra. He was a great fan of the work of Richard Wagner, and he attended performances with great delight at the Metropolitan in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington and temples of Wagnerian music in concerts halls of Europe.

He was a tireless reader, and it was a real pleasure to discuss with him every book read, every national event or simple everyday things past or present. He reconstructed them with incredible accuracy, confidence and grace. His literary bent left us with valuable publications, articles, notes and commentaries relating to his retirement, his love of opera, his admiration for Shakespeare and graceful chronicles of his passage through the halls of his university, all of which have been published in the journal "Excelsior" of the "Santanderiana Foundation", of Santander College.

Alvaro leaves us with the best of memories, and though his body is gone, his energy is still with us, because people never die when they live in the hearts of those left behind. ■

* *This is a contribution of the AFSM Colombia Chapter, of which Alvaro was an active participant. Close to the end of his life he managed to participate in some of their meetings. Alvaro's wife has also been an active participant in a group of "Wives of Former PAHO Staff", in Bogotá, helping those in need of their assistance.*

In Memoriam

DEATHS IN 2014 AND 2015
NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED

Manuelita Zephirin	9 May 2014
Marijke Velzeboer	14 July 2014
Olga Cosio	27 July 2014
Santiago Broll	28 July 2014
Jorge Arias	12 September 2014
Clear Forrester	15 September 2014
Mercedes Alonso	25 September 2014
Guillermo Orosco	25 September 2014
Mario Feltszer	26 September 2014
Isabel Pfeifer	27 September 2014
Roberto Prado	27 September 2014
Erik Jensen	28 September 2014
Magdalena Collins	2 October 2014
Carlos Oliva	14 October 2014
Oziel de Oliveira	21 October 2014
Luiz de Souza Borges	25 October 2014
Heriberto Ramos Orozco	22 December 2014
Dora Alberti de Vera Ocampo	30 December 2014
Berta Chiari	2 January 2015
Jose Carlos Campagnaro	3 January 2015

CONDOLENCES TO AFSM MEMBERS

To Irene Pino for her husband Albino,
who died 31 January 2014

To Elizabeth Glass Westlake for her husband James,
who died 12 May 2014

To Hortensia R. Saginor for her husband Irving,
who died 25 October 2014

To William Muldoon for his wife Marian,
who died 12 November 2014

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 2015 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 the Newsletter and other important information can be electronically mailed to you. Any changes or additions to your address should be sent to Hortensia Saginor(AFSM) by routine mail toPAHO Headquarters inWashington DC or, preferably, by email to isaginor@aol.com or hortensiasagi@gmail.com

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

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Coordinator – Cristina Torres
Members – Germán Perdomo, Hernán Rosenberg

Publications Committee
Coordinator – Nancy Berinstein
Editor-In-Chief – Marilyn Rice
Members – Jaime Ayalde, Enrique Fefer, Jean Surgi, Cristina Torres

External Relations Committee
Coordinator – Hernán Rosenberg
Members – Nancy Berinstein, Carol Collado, Enrique Fefer

Outreach Committee
Coordinator – Germán Perdomo
Members –
Brazil: César Vieira
Chile: Alfredo Ballevona
Guatemala: Samuel Arévalo
USA: Amalia Castro, Carol Collado, Hernán Rosenberg, Mercedes Vargas

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Coordinator – Carol Collado
Members – Jaime Ayalde, Nancy Berinstein, Jerry Hanson, Jean Surgi

Membership Office – Hortensia R. Saginor

Auditor – Fredy Burgos