

# NEWSLETTER

OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STAFF MEMBERS



VOLUME XV NO. 2

AUGUST 2004



*At the spring luncheon: Raquel Aida with  
Dinorah López-Molina, who celebrated her 90th birthday on 13 June*

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## RETIREES' ACCESS TO THE PAHO INTRANET

All PAHO retirees who are connected to the Web and have an electronic mail address may now access the PAHO Intranet. This privilege has graciously been extended to us by the Administration. We express our appreciation to the Director, Dr. Mirta Roses, and to Dr. Richard Van West Charles, Area Manager, Information and Knowledge Management (IKM), whose interest and support has made this possible.

To access the PAHO Intranet you must first obtain a password from PAHO's system administrator. To obtain a password do the following:

1. In your Web browser (Intranet Explorer, Netscape, etc.) type the address:  
<http://intranet.paho.org/login/LogIDAdd.asp>.
2. An Intranet page will then be displayed.
3. In the proper boxes you must type your e-mail address and name. In the lowest text box type "I am a retired PAHO employee." Then click SUBMIT.
4. You will receive a message from PAHO's systems administrator in the next 24 hours at your e-mail address providing you with a password that will permit you to log into the PAHO Intranet.
5. To log in: type the following address:  
<http://intranet.paho.org>.
6. A log-in screen will then be displayed. Type your e-mail address and password in the appropriate boxes and click LOG-IN button.

We hope you enjoy your access to the PAHO Intranet!

## CARI BORRÁS HONORED

The Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members wishes to acknowledge colleagues whose efforts past and present have contributed to the fulfillment of the Organization's ideals, either inside or outside of PAHO. An outstanding example of these health professionals is Dr. Caridad Borrás, who was awarded the gold medal of the Spanish Society for Medical Physics while still on the staff of the Organization. The medal and accompanying certificate were bestowed in June 2003, soon after Cari's retirement, during the National Congress on Medical Physics in Vigo, Spain.



*Cari Borrás*

Cari was born in Barcelona, Spain. In 1964, she obtained a degree in physical sciences, equivalent to a Master's Degree, from the University of Barcelona. In 1974, that same university awarded her a Doctorate in Sciences (*cum laude*), following the defense of her dissertation on the research project, "Radiodosimetric Problems in the Application of Radioisotopes to Embryology," conducted at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia PA under a Fulbright scholarship. In 1971, she was certified in radiological physics by the American Board of Radiology (on which she has served as an examiner), and in 1991 she was certified in medical health physics by the American Board of Medical Physics.

From 1964 to 1966, Cari worked as a radiological physicist at the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau in Barcelona, Spain; from 1966 to 1973, at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia during her graduate studies; and from 1974 to 1988, at the West Coast Cancer Foundation in San Francisco. During that time in that city, she also served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of California, San Francisco, and Visiting Scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. Her activities in San Francisco included research in diagnostic radiology, especially in what was then the new field of computed tomography and its applications in radiation therapy.

She joined the Pan American Health Organization in 1988 as Regional Adviser on Radiological Health, and in 2000 was named

Coordinator of the Program on Essential Drugs and Technology. From 2003 to 2004, she worked at the Institute for Radiological Image Sciences in Frederick MD as Senior Scientist and Director of Special Programs. She is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the George Washington University in Washington DC and a consultant for PAHO/WHO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). She is a member of the International Organization for Medical Physics, has sat on numerous scientific committees of that organization, and since 2000 has chaired its Scientific Committee.

Cari has published one book (with Spanish and English versions), 33 articles, five reports, and 40 abstracts in scientific journals. She has contributed to 24 PAHO/WHO and eight IAEA publications, presented two scientific exhibits, and organized and/or served as a guest lecturer in more than 150 international courses, workshops, congresses, and seminars. As a PAHO/WHO staff member, she advised the health authorities of Latin American and Caribbean countries on matters ranging from diagnostic and therapeutic radiology services and radiological safety programs to the investigation of radiation accidents.

In 1997, she became a Fellow of the American College of Radiology and in 2004 a Fellow of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine.

Our congratulations to Cari and best wishes for her continued success.

## **INTERVIEW WITH LUIS ODRÍA**

*by Luzmaria Esparza*

**Luis, when did you join PAHO and when did you retire?**

I joined the Organization in 1960 as a driver for a conference held at the State Department. My contract was only for two weeks. Then, before the conference was over, they offered me the opportunity to cover for one of the messengers who was going on vacation; and then for another. And so I stayed on, always as temporary staff, until one of the messengers retired and I came on board as a messenger and regular staff member. I retired in July 1992 with the grade of professional.

## **Where are you from originally?**

I was born in Lima, Peru, and came to this country in 1959, unable to speak English and without a penny to my name, but with a real desire to work and make my way in this great country. I arrived in Washington DC, staying at the home of my uncle, Gen. Manuel A. Odría, who had been President of Peru for eight years (1948-1956) and was living temporarily in Washington, receiving therapy at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for a broken leg that he had suffered just days before his term ended in 1956. This was undoubtedly a great help to me during those initial months until I could stand on my own.

## **In what department did you work?**

Throughout my time at PAHO I worked in the Department of General Services.

## **What satisfactions did you have at PAHO?**

I had many—working and collaborating with so many interesting people, of whom I have very good memories. Many of these friends and colleagues, unfortunately, are no longer with us but are waiting for us in the Great Beyond to remember the best times that we had together here on earth, which we will never forget. I might add that after 32 years in the Organization, I can boast of holding the record for promotions—seven in all—in addition to receiving two meritorious increases. Greater satisfaction? Impossible! I have always considered myself very fortunate to have worked at PAHO and to have achieved all this, although I'm not entirely sure that I deserved it. I am and will continue to be eternally grateful to the Organization, which gave me so much.

## **After retirement, is there life after PAHO?**

Of course there is. As long as one has the talent, the will, and the health to continue to live life to the fullest, and I believe I possess those qualities.

## **Where are you living now? Do you like it?**

I have been living in Orlando FL since 1994. And yes, I like it very much. Orlando is a growing city that is moving forward—a very clean place that offers its residents many opportunities. Also, winter here lasts about three days. The rest of the year, it's hot.

**You say that you're working. Can you tell us where?**

First, in 1995 or 1996 I worked 11 months at the American Automobile Association, in security, and one of those months, I was named Employee of the Month. Since 1998, I have been working with a private company (Allied, Inc.) for Coca Cola.

**What satisfactions have you had in your new career?**

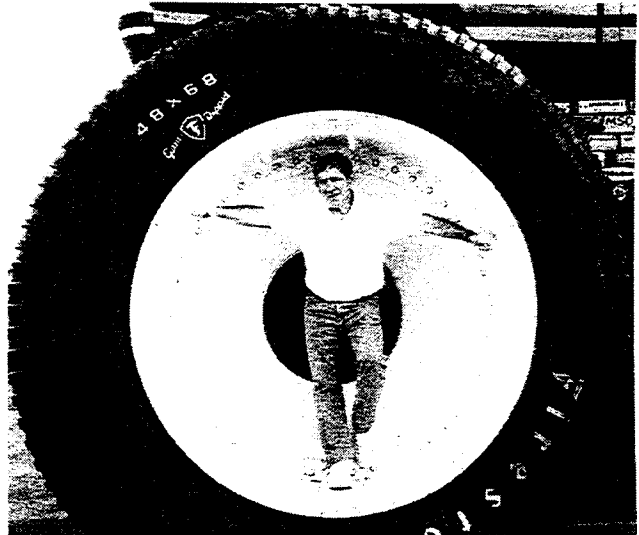
In February 2002, I was named Best Employee of the Month, and in December of that year, I had the most gratifying experience of being named Best Employee of the Year. As you can see, my second career is turning into as happy and rewarding an experience as my time with the Organization.

**You say you've published a book and that a second one is coming out soon. Why don't you tell us a little about them?**

Well, as you know, I was something of a bullfighter in my country, where I performed under the professional name of Luis Rodriguez. This gave me an in-depth knowledge of the art of bullfighting, and with my obsessive interest and a little audacity, I decided to write a book about it, entitled *El arte del toreo y los secretos de la lidia* [The Art and Secrets of Bullfighting]. It was published in Valencia (Spain) in February 2003.

The launch of this book was very moving. The ceremony was held at the Meliá Rey Don Jaime, a five-star hotel. Around 300 people attended, some of them celebrities from the bullfighting world. The person who made the presentation was Enrique Ponce, the number one bullfighter in the world for the past 12 years. It was all very nice, with reporters who cover bullfighting for TV and major newspapers and magazines present. The book describes the technical aspects of bullfighting, its history, and techniques. It also provides a rather extensive discussion of the bulls used in bullfighting, the different stages of the bullfight, the moves with the cape, terrains and the locations where the bull tends to return, bullfighting instruments, the public, and thoughts on bullfighting, in addition to a useful glossary of bullfighting terms. This book is selling quite well.

Another book of mine is coming out in November under the title *Cronología histórica del toreo -1526/2003* [A Chronology of Bullfighting - 1526/2003]. This one will also be published in Spain. This book recounts the most significant events in the history of bullfighting. It offers a day-by-day account, covering 365 days a year, with more than 5,000 historical facts spanning the period 1526 to 2003, with information such as dates of birth, dates of debut, alternates, confirmations of alternates, retirements, marriages, deaths, fatal goings, bullring openings, etc.



*The author, "alone, in the center of the wheel"*

**Do you have any other interests besides bullfighting? In your book I see illustrations signed by you. Let's talk about that.**

Well, yes, in addition to bullfighting, I enjoy fishing, horseback riding, and reading. As for the illustrations in my book, I did all 56 of them. Drawing and painting are other hobbies of mine.

**Well, congratulations, Luis, on your passion for life. Where can we find your books?**

You can find them on the Internet at [www.avancetaurino.com](http://www.avancetaurino.com). Key in the title, "El arte del toreo y los secretos de la lidia," and click on "Go". If you visit Spain, you can buy it at the Corte Inglés or La Casa del Libro in Valencia.

Warmest greetings to everyone in the AFSM.

Luis

## **OBESITY AND HEALTH**

*by Jan Barahona*

A few largely preventable risk factors account for most of the world's disease burden. This reflects a significant change in diet habits and physical activity levels worldwide as a result of industrialization, urbanization, economic development and increasing food market globalization. Recognizing this, the World Health Organization adopted a broad-ranging approach and developed, under a mandate from Member States, a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, which was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2004. The text of the final resolution (WHA57.17) and the Global Strategy annexed thereto can be found on the WHO home site ([www.who.org](http://www.who.org)).

The Pan American Health Organization recognized the extent of the obesity problem in a document entitled "Obesity, Diet, and Physical Activity" (SPP37/8, accessible on the PAHO home site - [www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org)), which it submitted to the Subcommittee on Planning and Programming at its 38th Meeting in March 2004.

### **The Magnitude of the Problem**

Currently more than 1 billion adults worldwide are overweight, and at least 300 million of them are clinically obese. Childhood obesity is already epidemic in some areas, and on the rise in others. An estimated 17.6 million children under 5 are estimated to be overweight, worldwide.

PAHO Deputy Director Dr. Joxel Garcia recently noted in an interview that the Latino community of the United States is one of the most affected by obesity. Nevertheless, obesity in the United States cuts across cultural ethnic lines. Moreover, obesity is a growing problem in other nations of the Western Hemisphere: "I have data showing that in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay more than 15% of their population is considered obese." In the United States that figure fluctuates between 20% and 25%. According a study by the US federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths caused by a poor diet and lack of physical activity jumped by 33% between 1990 and 2000. Obesity could soon replace tobacco as the No. 1 cause of preventable deaths in the US.

### **Effects of Obesity on Health**

Dr. Garcia pointed out that from 10% to 30% of all obesity cases seen in the United States are related to genetics. However, there are two key factors that have contributed to the growth in obesity: growing physical inactivity and changes in dietary and cultural habits. "If obesity were just a matter of how people look, it would not be an issue; then it would just be a matter of preference. But the problem with obesity is all the diseases for which it increases risks, including type-2 diabetes, hypertension and some cancers that are associated with obesity."

Obesity is known to put people at higher risk of serious health problems that include coronary heart disease, a lesser-known yet highly important obesity-related disorder known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and arthritis, gallbladder and kidney disease, and cancers of the breast, colon, uterus, esophagus and kidneys. The non-fatal, but debilitating health problems associated with obesity include respiratory difficulties, chronic musculoskeletal problems, skin problems, and infertility. To this must be added the social stigma, psychological distress and economic discrimination often suffered by the obese, and the costs are heavy in terms of both health and quality of life.

### **Body Mass Index**

Body mass index (BMI) is the measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and adult women. Until a few years ago, government agencies in the US generally agreed that concern about weight begins when a man's BMI hits 28 and a woman's 27, that is, 152 pounds for a 5'3" female. But in 1997, the World Health Organization adopted a new standard. BMIs between 25 and 29.9 were now "preobese." The next year an expert committee of the US National Institutes of Health came to the same conclusion and called the new category "overweight." "We felt it makes sense that if someone's BMI is between 25 and 30, they should not gain more weight," says Dr. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, head of obesity research at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City. "We don't feel those millions of people should be trying desperately to lose weight. At

a BMI of 30, the risk for both disease and early mortality is so great that people should begin to lose weight." The 25 cutoff was chosen, he said, because of evidence that the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol all seem to increase around that point.

Although most experts throughout the world are convinced by the overwhelming data that shows the detrimental health effects of being overweight, there are some who feel that too much is made of the lower end of the BMI scale, and that fitness is more important than fatness, that the real health problem is too little exercise, not too much weight. One of the most persistent doubters is Steven Blair of the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas. His

research reinforces the idea that fitness is more important than fatness. Following 25,000 Cooper patients for eight years, he found that it is better to be fit and fat than skinny and sedentary. "It may be true, but the fact is, overweight people are not fit," says Dr. Pi-Sunyer. "The average American is incredibly sedentary."

**Body Mass Math**

You can use the table below to calculate your BMI. Another option is to go to the web site of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute ([www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/)) and follow the instructions to enter your weight and height, either in pounds or kilograms, and calculate your body mass index.

**Body Mass Index Table**

To use the table, find the appropriate height in the left-hand column labeled Height. Move across to a given weight (in pounds). The number at the top of the column is the BMI at that height and weight. Pounds have been rounded off.

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287

## What to do for Prevention, Weight Maintenance, Management of Co-morbidities, and Weight Loss

US Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said, "Americans need to understand that overweight and obesity are literally killing us. To know that poor eating habits and inactivity are on the verge of surpassing tobacco use as the leading cause of preventable death in America should motivate all Americans to take action to protect their health," he added.

What you should do:

- eat more fruit and vegetables, as well as nuts and whole grains;
- engage in daily moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes;
- cut the intake of fatty, sugary foods in the diet;
- move from saturated animal-base fats to unsaturated vegetable-oil based fats.

### Staff Health Insurance Fund Provisions

PAHO/WHO's Staff Health Insurance Fund contains the following provision for obesity coverage: (Annex A, Part V. Preventive measures (reimbursed at 100%): V4: "Consultation with dietician of obesity cases (BMI greater than or equal to 30 only), on doctor's prescription."

### Sources

WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activities and Health, WHO 2003

PAHO Perspectives in Health Magazine, Volume 7, Number 3, 2002

NHLBI, Obesity Guidelines

Medical World Debates Risk of Being Pudgy.  
[www.Comcast.net/News/Health Wellness](http://www.Comcast.net/News/Health Wellness)

WHO Staff Health Insurance Rules

### PAN AMERICAN HEALTH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION (PAHEF)

Did you know that the role of the Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF), an independent organization, has changed to better serve the people of Latin America and the Caribbean? For example, the Foundation is

focusing on promoting philanthropy as a social value. Also we have added a communications unit to increase our visibility and to support the promotion of philanthropy.

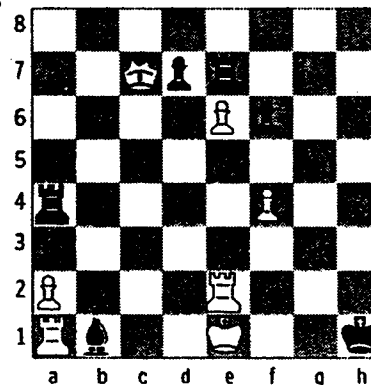
Earlier this year, *Glamour* magazine contacted the Foundation and wrote an article entitled "Yes, you can save women's lives" for its April 2004 issue that mentions PAHO's participation in cervical cancer screening and treatment. The article also refers readers to us if they want to help with cervical cancer prevention.

The Foundation's promotional brochure has received the Communicator Award of Excellence for the best non-profit brochure in 2004. We are proud that it received this distinction, and, more importantly, its ability to convey the Foundation's mission to our stakeholders and to tell the story of health initiatives supported by the Foundation and executed by PAHO.

We want to thank those of you who have donated to the Foundation. Your support has made a difference in the lives of the peoples of the Americas. Specifically, it has helped fund recent projects that focus on addressing health issues of an aging society, responding quickly to disasters in the Region, developing radiological services, improving blood safety in the Region, working to eliminate parasitic worms across the Americas, and prevention of cervical cancer. All these efforts work together to combat disease, lengthen life, improve health care services, foster health research, and enhance the capacities of health care workers in the Americas; in a nutshell, to achieve the shared PAHO/PAHEF vision of Health for All.

Telephone, 202-974-3416; fax, 202-974-3636; [info@pahef.org](mailto:info@pahef.org). [www.pahef.org](http://www.pahef.org).

### CHESS



White mates in three moves.

Solution to problem: (White: Ke1,Qc7,Ra1,Re2,  
P:a2,e6,f4; Black: Kh1,Ra4, Re7,Bb1,P:d7,f6);  
1.Qc2! Rxe6 2.Qh7+! Bxh7 3.0-0 mate; or  
1...Rxa2 2.Qe4+! Bxe4 3.0-0 mate; or 1...Kg1  
2.Qg6+! Bxg6 3.0-0 mate; 1...Bxc2 2.Kd2+  
Bd1 3.Rxd1 mate.

### IN MEMORIAM

John Chadburn	14 March 2004
Macrino Araujo	19 April 2004
Washington Miñán	1 May 2004
Ramiro Martínez Silva	2 May 2004
Jerry Stevens	3 May 2004
Tulio Fernandes Provoste	28 June 2004
Ozil Pereira Sampaio	30 June 2004
Mateo Budinich	26 July 2004

### REMEMBERING COLLEAGUES

#### John B. Chadburn

by *Marina Orellana*

John Chadburn was an exceptional man: cultured, talented, intelligent, with a privileged memory and mind, a good friend to his comrades and colleagues, as proven by the fact that on learning of his death, past and present translators at the IDB sent their condolences, for they held John in the highest esteem.

Born and educated in England, he arrived in the US capital with the first UK delegation to the United Nations. At the time, I knew him by name only. On retiring from diplomatic service, he moved to Geneva to pursue further studies, specializing in translation.

He then returned to Washington DC and joined PAHO, providing services for years to the international agencies in that city—the Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and others. With his magnificent mind, his knowledge of law (he was not an attorney), and his sense of equity and justice, he offered guidance to staff who consulted him about problems they were having at work.

Because of his celebrated qualities, vast knowledge of English, and good relations with colleagues in other agencies, I invited him to collaborate on the Spanish-English section of my glossary. He accepted but never wanted his name to appear on the cover. He used to

say that everyone referred to glossary as the “Orellana Dictionary” or “the Orellana.” Later, when he learned about the glossary’s success among students, international civil servants, and the public, he got excited about the project. After several reprintings of the 3rd Edition, we worked hard together to produce the 4th which, after some delay, was published by University Publishing in June 2003.

When asked in public or private why his name did not appear on the cover, he made up a response: People might stone him for producing the glossary, and he didn’t want to get hit in the head. However, it never happened, and we worked long and hard together until the work was done. These days, when time should be easing our sadness, the condolence cards continue to come from colleagues and friends, especially from the World Bank, who recall him fondly and with admiration.

#### Ramiro Martínez Silva

by *René González*

Ramiro Martínez Silva died of a stroke on 2 May 2004 in Washington DC. He is survived by his wife Magaly; their children Minje, Aline, Barbara, Consuelo, Ramiro, Eric, and Joseph; seven grandchildren; and their children’s spouses, Zeno, Gary, Mary, and Dori. He was formerly married to Barbel Anna Ulith, who died in 1978.

Ramiro’s professional career was distinguished by his academic and scientific achievements, his work as a teacher, and his dedication to improving the health services of Latin America. Born in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Ramiro obtained his medical degree from the University of that city in 1951 and later revalidated his credentials at the University of Hamburg (1957). He pursued graduate studies, specializing in pathological anatomy and microbiology at the University of Barcelona Medical School (1951-1954) and in tropical medicine at the Tropeninstitut of Hamburg (1955-1957). In 1963, he obtained a Master’s in Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Ramiro’s teaching career began at the Medical School of his Alma Mater, in Santiago, when after returning from Germany, he was named





*Ramiro Martínez-Silva*

Adjunct Professor of Microbiology and Chief of the Clinical Hospital Laboratory. He held these positions until 1958, when he was hired as a Professor of Virology by the University of Arequipa, Peru, having collaborated in setting up the education and research programs in the basic sciences departments and in planning the clinical departments.

In 1959 Ramiro joined the Pan American Health Organization. He began his work with the Organization in Colombia as a Visiting Professor of Microbiology at the National University of Colombia's School of Public Health, where he remained until he was named Regional Adviser on Laboratories at Organization Headquarters. Except for a three-year stint (1976-1978) on a project in Puerto Rico, he spent all of his time in Washington DC until his retirement in June 1987.

Ramiro made real contributions to regional progress in the fields of virology, parasitology, mycology, and laboratory administration, organizing several excellent training courses in the countries in these fields. A corollary to his work was the publication of the manual, "Procedures in Laboratory Administration," in 1977, used as a textbook in several countries. That same year, Ramiro took up and completed a project begun by a team, producing

the report, "Caribbean Health Laboratory Services," presented to the Ministries of Health of eight Caribbean countries and accepted by the authorities without any changes.

Another of his major undertakings was the proposal for a "Center for Training Staff in the Maintenance and Repair of Biomedical Equipment," which was presented to the Venezuelan authorities, the UNDP, and the education and health ministers of countries of the Andean Pact and Panama.

His scientific merits aside, Ramiro was a man of enormous culture. He loved and cultivated his mother tongue, often quoting the writer and poet Francisco de Quevedo. He was a classical music lover and no stranger to philosophy and politics. All this made of him a voracious reader, a scintillating conversationalist, and an agreeable and valued friend. His friends can attest to this, especially those of us who had so much fun with him in our daily carpool, famous for the conversations in which we jokingly commented on our everyday work. Ramiro was cornerstone of that group.

Ramiro may have left us physically, but he is still in the hearts of those of us who had the privilege of counting him among our friends.

*by Abraham Drobny*

It is with deep sadness that I pen these lines, having learned of the death of Ramiro Martínez-Silva. In 1959, when I was in charge of what in those days was Area IV of PAHO, I was visited by the former Dean of the University of Arequipa Medical School, who had recently resigned as a result of a dispute with University authorities. The microbiology professor, Ramiro Martínez Silva, had also resigned in solidarity with the Dean.

The Dean spoke to me about the young professor, who needed to continue to advance his career in his specialty. By chance, we had received a letter from the National University of Colombia's School of Public Health requesting an adviser in microbiology. I interviewed Ramiro repeatedly and was very impressed, not only with his knowledge of science, but with his personality and culture as well. I recommended his appointment as a consultant in Colombia. Thus began his career at PAHO.

I will not discuss Ramiro's career as a scientist inside and outside the Organization, since our mutual friend, René González, has done so very effectively. Our friendship began in those years and continued throughout life. Those of us who knew him closely are aware of his profound universal culture, his vibrant personality, and his love of beauty. He devoured books, not only scientific tomes, but everything that fueled his knowledge. He was a real humanist and a believer in the need for peace—peace that equalizes rich and poor, people of all colors, believers of all religions. He was also a good friend to his friends, and his memory will be with us always.

### **Washington Miñán**

*by José R. Teruel*



*Washington Miñán*

Washington Miñán, an International Building Services employee, died on 1 May 2004 after 37 years with PAHO as Office Maintenance Supervisor—coincidentally, on the day celebrated as Worker's Day in many parts of the world! During his 37 years with PAHO, Washington was honored several times at the Organization's Annual Awards Ceremony; once in 1998 for 25 years of service to the Organization, and again in June 2002, receiving the award for *Outstanding Support*

*Staff* for the joint efforts between his company and PAHO.

Gustavo Silva has authorized to us to share part of the text that he prepared on 9 April 1998 following the Awards Ceremony marking Washington's 25 years of service:

"The special recognition and, above all, the standing ovation that the packed auditorium gave Washington Miñán at yesterday's ceremony are testimony to the humanity and professionalism of Mr. Miñán, a highly valued and much appreciated figure at Headquarters, as one could see; and to the fact that the staff at Headquarters recognizes these virtues and from time to time acknowledges them publicly and spontaneously.

"If yesterday's applause doesn't lie, I'm far from the only one who feels this way. I am very happy for Washington; but I am also happy for us, the staff of the Organization—happy that we have recognized someone who gives his all to his work and does so without fanfare, expecting no greater reward than the knowledge of a job well done. I consider myself lucky to be able to count someone like him among my colleagues. Thus, to the award given by the Administration and to the applause that we surrounded him with yesterday, let me add simply: thanks, Washington.

"Yes, Mr. Miñán is a real professional, because he does his work with great care and dedication, because he thoroughly knows his job, and because he does it efficiently and good-naturedly. I have always noticed this in my interactions with him. I don't believe there are many of us in the Bureau whom one could say possess all of these qualities. Thus, I am convinced that the tribute we paid to him yesterday is more than deserved."

### **Angel Quirós**

*by Jan Barahona*

Angel Quirós passed away on 6 January 2004 at the age of 90. He was born on 4 March 1914 in Peru. He came to the United States in 1968 and found work with International Building Services. He was assigned to PAHO and there began a long and happy working relationship



*Angel Quirós*

with the Organization, where he continued to work with pride and dedication until his retirement in 1982.

Angelito will be remembered for his happy smile and readiness to serve the staff. He was an example to all, not only for his hard work, but also for his courtesy to others. He worried about the smokers at PAHO, and advised them to give it up, and he was always concerned about saving the utility costs of the PAHO building. He loved the Organization and its staff, and after his retirement he often dropped by to visit his many friends at PAHO. One of his proudest moments was the party given at PAHO for his 80th birthday, where a huge outpouring of staff, led by Dr. Abraham Horwitz, turned out to honor him.

### **Dr. Myron Ezra Wegman**

*by José R. Teruel*

Dr. Myron E. Wegman was born in Brooklyn, New York, on 23 July 1908. He completed his BA at City College of New York, his MD at Yale University School of Medicine, and his MPH at Johns Hopkins University. His career spanned seven decades and included periods as a full-time clinical pediatrician, as well as more than 50 years in public health, 14 years as Dean of the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and eight years at the Pan American Health Organization in Washington DC. He was president of the American Public Health Association in 1972 and also served as member and Chair of the Pan American Health and Education Foundation board for several years.

Dr. Wegman died on 14 April 2004. He is survived by his son, David Wegman; his daughter, Jane Dunatchik; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and his brother, Edwin Wegman. Dr. Wegman was preceded in death by his wife, Isabel, and daughters Judy Hirst and Betty Petersen.

Dr. Wegman began his career as a pediatric consultant in Maryland and later served in the New York City Health Department. His academic career included appointments at Yale University School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Schools of Hygiene and Medicine, Cornell University School of Medicine, Columbia University School of Public Health, and the School of Tropical Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico. He was also chair and professor of pediatrics of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine.

Dr. Wegman worked for PAHO during the eight-year period 1952 to 1960. Looking into old files at PAHO, I found several interesting letters and other correspondence between Myron and PAHO authorities. One letter, dated 14 December 1950, from Dr. Fred Soper, Director of PAHO at that time, made reference to conversations with Myron and offered him the position of Chief of the Education and Training Division at the Washington office. While trying to persuade Myron, he wrote: "I really believe this to be a key position with a unique opportunity to contribute to the development of medical and health programs in the Americas during the coming years."

It took Dr. Wegman a year to make the decision to join PAHO. During that year, however, he collaborated with PAHO and WHO on missions in his field of specialty. As examples, he went to Finland to study and to make recommendations regarding an epidemic of diarrhea in children in that country, and to Ecuador to analyze the facilities in the area of maternal and child health care. In accepting to work directly with PAHO, he wrote in one of his letters to Dr. Soper in early 1952: "The decision to leave here is far from easy. I have great satisfaction in my work, the stimulus of a constant flow of young men whom I can influence at the beginning of their careers, daily contact with the children as a leavening factor in my activities in public health, and a financial status equal or slightly better than that in Washington, considering higher living costs."



*Dr. Myron Wegman*

By means of a formal bulletin, Dr. Fred Soper announced on 11 March 1952 that Dr. Myron E. Wegman was designated Chief of the Division of Education, Training and Technical Service, starting 1 June 1952. (I found a reference that the annual salary was \$11,000). He did an excellent job in the following years, and by January 1957 was designated General Secretary of the Organization. That position, at the time, was equivalent to second in command, after the Director. Among other important activities, it is fair to say that he helped to develop the negotiations that led to the expansion of PAHO's facilities, resulting in the construction of the beautiful headquarters of the Organization in Washington DC. The site was donated by the US Government and the construction was funded with funds from the W. J. Kellogg Foundation.

On 15 July 1960, Dr. Wegman wrote a letter to the new Director, Dr. Abraham Horwitz, resigning his position with PAHO: "It is with profound regret that I submit herewith my resignation from the Bureau, effective 15 October 1960. The Board of Regents of the University of Michigan has invited me to be Dean of the School of Public Health, an opportunity which I feel I cannot reject. My experience with the Organization has been exceedingly fruitful and rewarding for me. So much has been crowded into eight years that it is difficult for me to realize how much I have learned, how much I have gained. I have had a chance to know and work with a great many fine people, in an exciting and satisfying task...I am

deeply grateful. I am sure you know that you may always come to me to do everything I possibly can to further the work of the Organization and to aid you to achieve the goals you have set."

As Dean of the School of Public Health and also after his retirement, he continued to be interested in international and global health issues and helped the Organization on several missions in different countries. He also served as member and chairperson of the board of the Pan American Health and Education Foundation, raising funds for public health programs in the Americas.

In December 1972, he was invited by Dr. Ramón Villarreal, Chief of the Department of Human Resources Development of PAHO, to participate in a mission in Costa Rica. There, he would be in charge of a feasibility study for the creation of a School of Public Health that would train health personnel for the entire Central American region. That mission was accomplished in early 1973 and it has a special significance for me. I joined PAHO in early 1973 and that was my first mission as a PAHO technical officer. It was an honor to travel and to work with Myron Wegman. This experience gave me the opportunity to witness and to admire how he used his extensive experience, his diplomacy in dealing with authorities of a foreign country, his commitment to work, his concern for precision and correct details, and his love for new gadgets that he used perfectly in his work. From that time on, we were good friends.

A few years before his death, Dr. Wegman moved to an assisted living house, although he was always independent and taking care of his personal activities, including driving his beloved car! When I tried to encourage him to move to the assisted living home at Glacier Hills in Ann Arbor, a place that he had chosen before and also that had been recommended by his family, he complained that, "There were too many old persons living there!" But he adjusted and made very good new friends there. He was the expert in the house on helping to fix computer problems for the other residents.

Myron left many friends in many countries who will miss him very much. I am one of them.

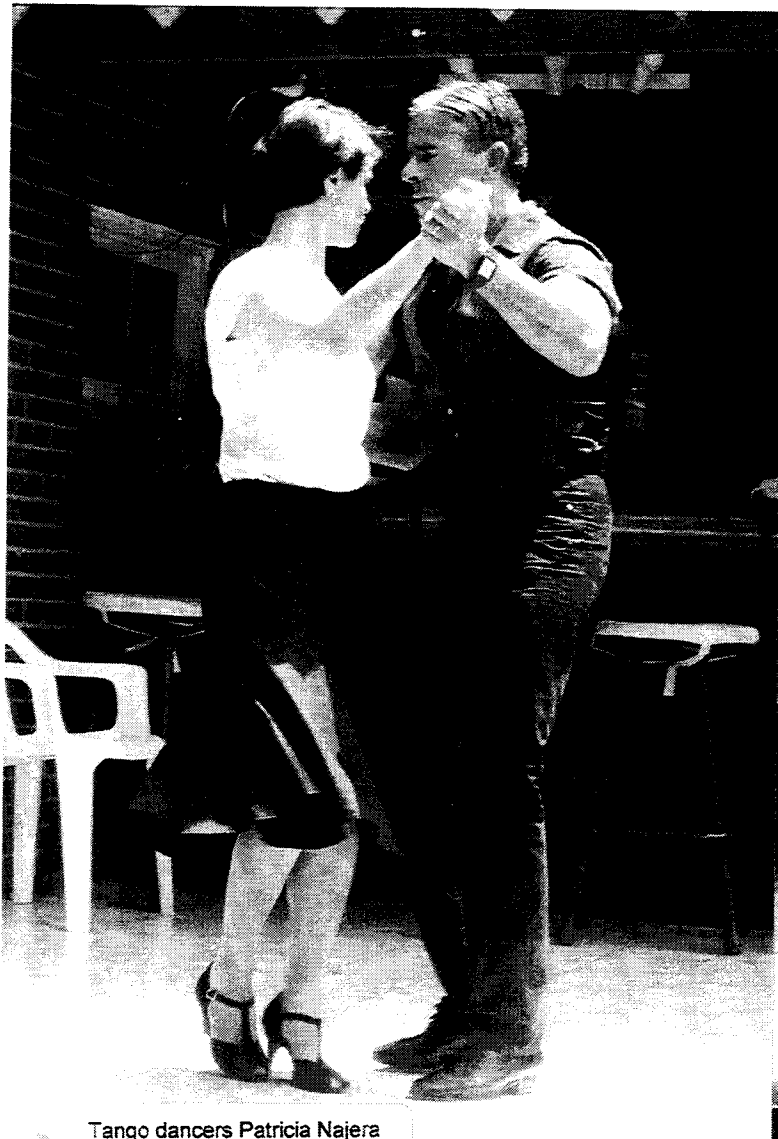
# PICTURES TAKEN AT THE JUNE LUNCHEON



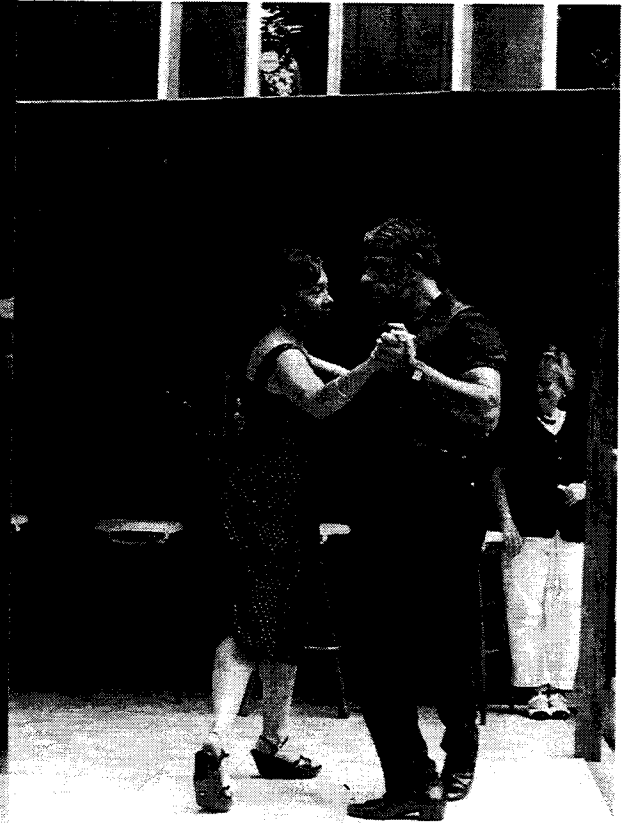
Gloria Liebrand,  
Dinorah Lopez-Molina



Patricia Peterson,  
Diana Cheng,  
Jenny Eybers



Tango dancers Patricia Najera and Jose Parisi



Melida Rivero, Jose Parisi

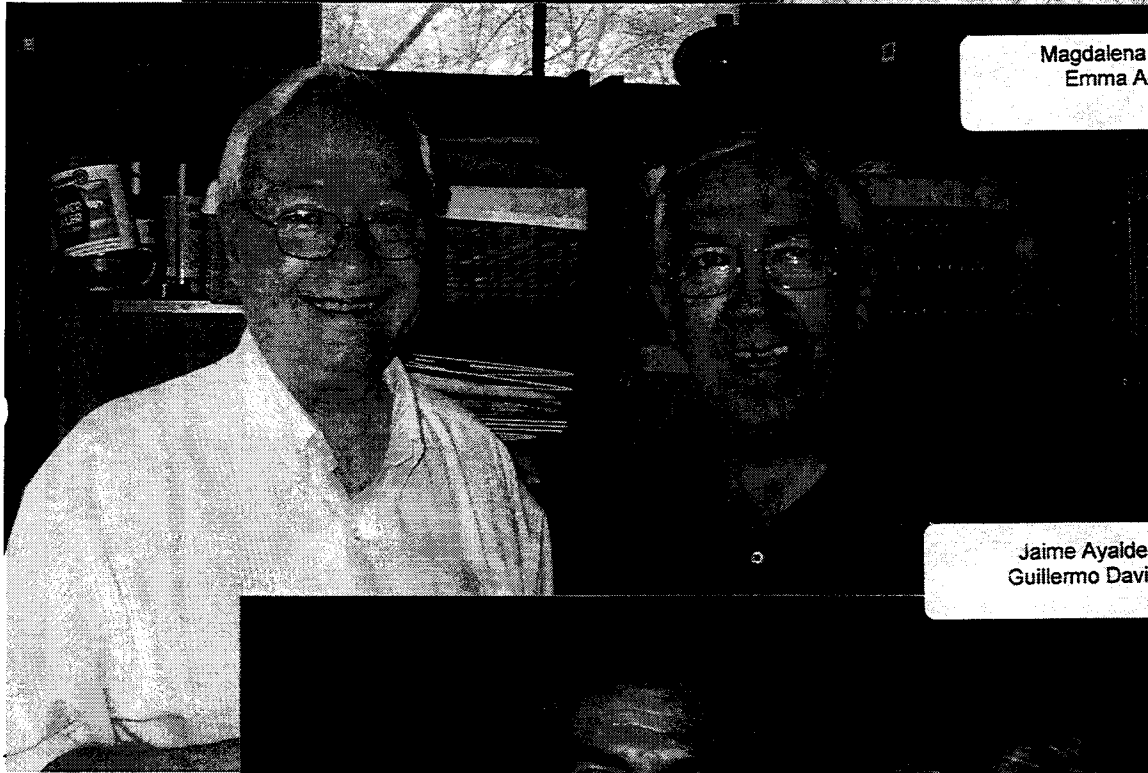


Augusto Vallenas, Jose Maria Salazar Bucheli, Jenny Eybers





Magdalena Collins,  
Emma Aguilar



Jaime Ayalde,  
Guillermo Davila



Roberto Rivero,  
Nancy Berinstein



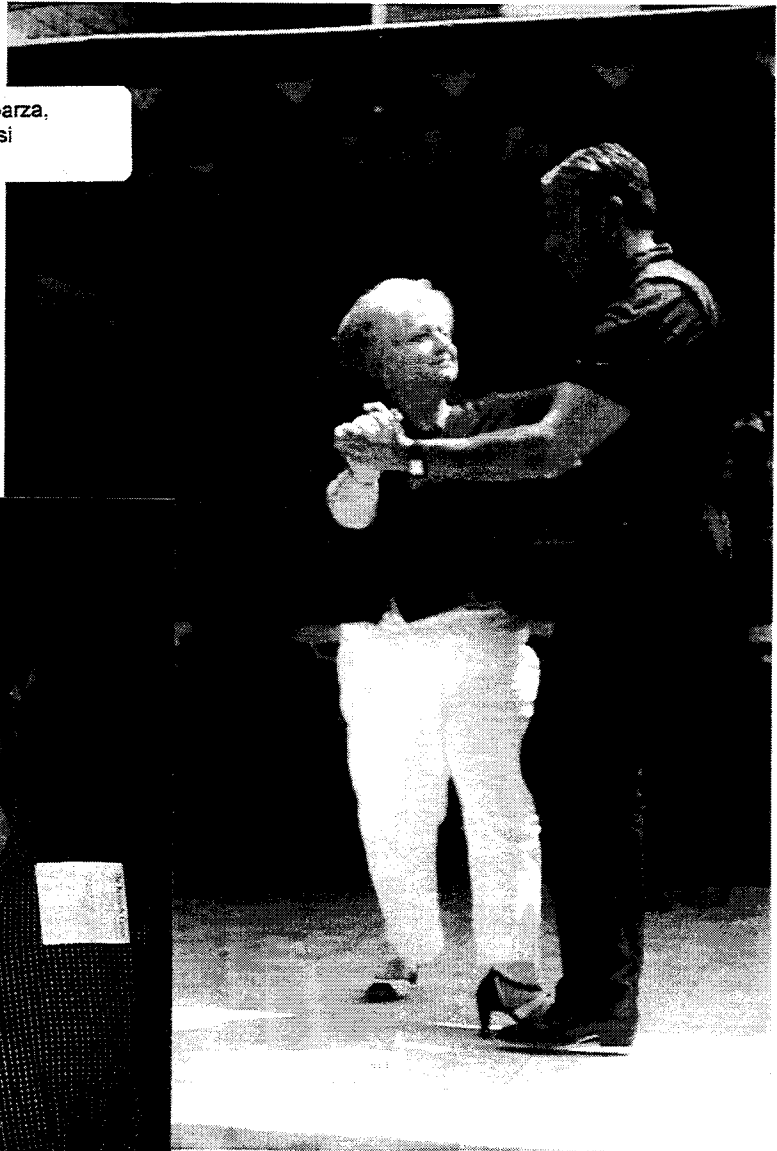
Jaime Ayalde, Guillermo Davila,  
Nucky Walder, Producer/  
Director, Teatro de la Luna



Luzmaria Esparza, Hortensia  
Sagino, Nucky Walder



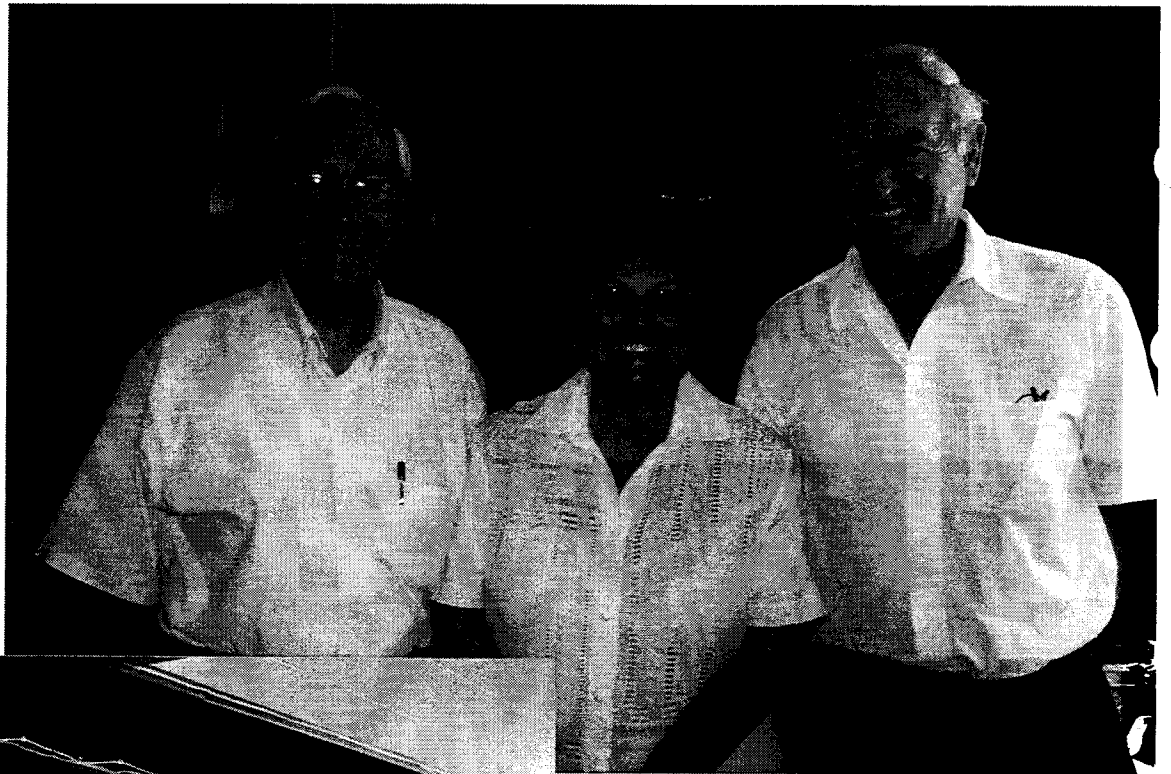
Luzmaria Esparza,  
Jose Parisi



Deanna Ner Mardirossian,  
Augusto Vailenas



Jose Parisi, Gloria Liebrand,  
Luzmaria Esparza, Patricia  
Najera, Melida Rivero



Jaime Ayalde, Irene Pino, Jose  
Teruel



Jan Barahona,  
Luzmaria Esparza, Hortensia  
Sagino



Dinorah Lopez-Molina, Rita  
Shelton

## THE BACK PAGE

AFSM would like to know about the needs of its members. We might not be able to solve all your problems, but we have many experts and resources that could be utilized. We might either help in some way or refer you to the right source.

We would also like to have your input to the Newsletter, either in the form of articles for publication or in comments on the content: What kinds of articles do you like? Are there some that should be eliminated? Are we missing something that should be included?

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