



# NEWSLETTER

OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER  
PAHO/WHO STAFF MEMBERS

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VOLUME II NUMBER 2

OCTOBER 1992

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## E D I T O R I A L

*Since the last issue of the Newsletter your Association has been looking into the matter of insurance for long term health care. While for those who have just recently retired this concern may seem premature, it is never too early to plan for that proverbial "rainy day." It may or may not ever befall you. Yet even persons only close to retirement might benefit from at least giving some thought to that eventuality - if they wish to enjoy the coming "golden years." To be golden, they should be as carefree as possible.*

*For those of us who are already in the midst of those golden years there looms a specter because health care costs have escalated, and even our own PAHO/WHO health insurance coverage has been somewhat curtailed.*

*So..... extended or long term health care is a topic of current interest. In view of this, the committee headed by Maria Mercedes Segarra-Hines called a meeting on 14 August 1992 that was well attended by our retirees. A presentation was given by one of the several insurance companies that have entered this new field. It was quite interesting, but "one swallow does not a summer make."*

*Therefore, another member of the above committee, Jean Surgi, agreed to further investigate the matter, ascertain what other international agencies are doing, and obtain a clearer picture of what options are available. It will be a complex and lengthy study. We are grateful to Mrs. Surgi for her part in it.*

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### LONG TERM HEALTH CARE

Maria Mercedes Segarra-Hines' committee, has been making a study of long-term health care insurance for PAHO retirees. It is intended to cover possible medical expenses not included under the insurance carried through PAHO. An analysis is underway to determine just what is covered by PAHO insurance (and for those eligible, by Medicare) as well as what is not covered. Then the Committee will discuss with several insurance companies what they might offer to supplement existing coverage; it will ask them to provide cost information, will compare the costs provided by different companies, and will then recommend a policy to retirees. Retirees will be able to determine individually whether or not they wish to buy long term health care insurance and, if so, at what level. The information will also be provided to current PAHO employees, who may wish to join such a plan before their retirement.

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### MATURE DRIVING

Can You Answer These Questions?

- \* How does the aging process affect your driving ability?
- \* When are you expected to yield the right-of-way (the number one problem area for drivers age 55 and over)?
- \* Where are the danger spots in a parking lot?

- \* At what temperature is an icy road most slippery?
- \* What are the safety rules for making a left turn (the second most common violation of older drivers)?

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) sponsors a unique program for older drivers called "55 Alive." It consists of eight hours of classroom instruction that refine existing skills and develop safe, defensive driving techniques. The program is conducted throughout the country in two half-day sessions and teaches preventive measures to use when driving to prevent accidents and save lives. The course is taught by volunteer instructors, and materials are provided by AARP for a nominal fee. This is an opportunity to review procedures for handling adverse driving conditions and to learn about the effects of aging and medications on driving. There is more to it than just the rules of the road, although they are covered as well.

In addition to the individual and community benefits that come from this course because of the increased safety-consciousness of those who take it, there is an added bonus: Your insurance company may give you a discount (ranging from 5% to 15%) on your annual premium. Many states, including Virginia and the District of Columbia, require that a discount be given; in Maryland, some insurance companies (Geico, The Hartford and others) also give a discount. You

must take the course every three years to maintain a discount.

If you are interested in taking this course, call AARP at 202-434-2277 to be put in touch with a coordinator in your geographical area.

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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1992 General Meeting of the Association will be held **23 November at 9:30 a.m. at PAHO headquarters, Room C.** After the meeting join the Board of Directors for lunch. Please let us know in advance if you can come to the lunch so we can make the proper reservations. You can call Jean Surgi at (301) 762-7490 or Hans Bruch at (301) 530-5450.

\* \* \* \*

### NEWS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

Some quotes of letters from the field.

From:  
**Rafael Miranda Franco** (in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico)

"Although retired for over 11 years I still have fond memories of my tour of duty with PAHO and would like to keep in touch with news about the Organization, its people and other retired staff."

**Enid G. Harden** (in New York, NY)

"...I am very interested in receiving more information on long-term-care insurance and hope that PAHO will support a policy in which I can participate. I work part time as a Public Health Nurse for the New

York City Department of Health, Bureau of School Children and Adolescent Health Program."

**Donald Myers** (in Melbourne, FL)

"I was very pleased ...and surprised on receiving the May issue of the Newsletter of the Association and two issues of PAHO TODAY and hope that both newsletters continue to be sent to me regularly. ... perhaps a column could be included in each of the AFSM Newsletters which would list names and home addresses of individuals terminating their service from PAHO, and another listing the current deceased members. It is believed that this type of addition to the newsletter would be of great interest to the readers as an aid in maintaining contacts within the PAHO family, and in conveying personal condolences to the member's family."

**Joseph N. Lanoix** (in Naples ME)

"I have read the newsletter with great pleasure and I should like to congratulate you and your colleagues for this great initiative. Although I have not served with PAHO, I have been in frequent contact with PAHO staff members during my 29 1/2 years with WHO. Since my retirement in Nov. 1979, I have lost these contacts and I would be curious to learn about PAHO's present organization and about the staff list in the EHE sector. Perhaps you will include an article on this subject in one of the Newsletter's future issues. ... Another subject of interest for us retirees is to know what PAHO's former staff members think of the levels and periodical adjustments of our pensions. ... Some retirees, or staff members about to retire, might be interested in investigating, and perhaps choosing, the Sarasota FL. area for retirement. Although it is a small

town, relatively speaking (pop. 55,000 approx.) Sarasota does have a Center for Performing Arts, an Opera House, a Theater and several Dinner Theaters. In addition, from October through April the Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning holds almost daily lectures on a variety of subjects, always including a series on International Affairs. There is also a branch of U. N. Association which organizes lectures..."

**Arthur J. Manger (in California)**

"...In response to your request for contributions, I should like to acquaint AFSM with a unique travel opportunity. First a bit of background. Prior to joining WHO, I served as a Naval Officer during the Korean War. Recently a consortium of Korean organizations decided to express their gratitude to military personnel who helped preserve Korea's freedom by offering the opportunity to participate in a Korea Revisit Program. In essence, the military veterans are provided an all-expense-paid week in Seoul - lodging in a five-star hotel, three meals daily (including two formal banquets), and daily tours (including one to Panmunjom). The veterans' only obligation is to pay round-trip group airfare.

In consultation with the representatives of the consortium, I cited the fact that the war was a United Nations effort and suggested that they might consider extending the program to UN Agency retirees. I am pleased to say that they eventually agreed to this suggestion. Should any of our colleagues wish to take advantage of this opportunity, they can write or phone me for further information ... at: 1600 Michael Lane; Pacific Palisades, CA 90272 Tel (310) 459-5109."

**MARY ELIZABETH BEDWELL (in Virginia)**

"...Thank you for the issue of Vol. II No. 1 of the (Newsletter) of May 1992, the first I have received. I read it with much interest and will be glad to join the Association and receive succeeding issues of the Newsletter as published.

I worked in the Library from August 1949 to September 1966 and thoroughly enjoyed my work and association with other staff members...."

**SONJA BOLER ROIZEN (In California)**

"...This is just a note to say how nice it was to read what other PAHO-WHO staff members are doing with their lives!

I worked at WHO from 1967 to 1976, got married and moved to Virginia and started working for PAHO in 1977 and left in 1984. As you see, WHO - PAHO was a large part of my life! My husband and I started a small Computer Software Company, which eventually grew, and sort of forced us to move to the Silicon Valley, which was the place to be at the time. It has been a good move for us, but for me it was sad to leave PAHO and friends! At the time I worked... in (Health) Statistics... Like Iva Latortue in Haiti with whom I had the pleasure to work in fellowships, I feel that the Newsletter is a wonderful idea..."

\* \* \* \*

## OBITUARIES

Since our last Newsletter, we learned of the death of the following colleagues:

\* Miss Mercia Martin-Walsh in Worthing, in the South of England. Some of you may remember that she was, at one time, secretary to Dr. Soper.

\* Dr. Eugene Lowe on 16 April 1992 in Vienna, Virginia.

Our sincerest condolences to their families.

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## LETTER TO OUR COLLEAGUES

We received many letters from retirees inquiring about the Association, membership and dues. We will try to answer these questions in general.

A group of colleagues interested in forming an association of retirees got together in January 1990. In November of that year, The Association was officially established with bylaws, a program of activities, and a board of directors.

The Association's main objectives are to provide the membership with a link to PAHO/WHO and its fellow members; to voice the concern of its members on issues affecting all of us to the Administration of PAHO/WHO and UN; to provide information to its members on important issues concerning retirees; as well as to promote fraternal, humanitarian, educational, cultural and social activities.

The present Board of Directors is : Hans A. Bruch, President; Alfred N. Gerald, Vice-president, Jean S. Surgi, Vice-president; Federico G. Varela, Treasurer; Helena M. Irwin, Secretary; Edith Quiñones and Maria Mercedes Segarra-Hines, Members at Large.

We welcome all retirees and former PAHO/WHO staff members in the Association and feel certain that their contribution would be very valuable, such as telling us what you would expect from the Association to serve the needs of retirees. We also need contributions to the Newsletter, i.e. information on your activities, or on any subject related to retirees, such as resources available in your area, or seminars, classes, health clubs, trips, etc. Such news would be very important to maintain a network of former colleagues through the Association, just as PAHO TODAY provides retirees with a link to the Organization.

The annual dues are \$10.00. Checks payable to AFSM should be sent to :  
Association of Former PAHO/WHO STAFF MEMBERS  
c/o Pan American Health Organization  
Room 320  
525 23rd. Street N.W.  
Washington D. C. 20037

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See next page for an interesting travel account.



## A TRIP TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Bill and Jean Surgi spent almost five weeks during April and May in Australia and New Zealand on a three part trip: the first two weeks they participated in a Battle of the Coral Sea Commemorative Tour sponsored by the U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation, visiting Sydney, Canberra and Townsville; the next week they visited Jan Barahona's mother and sister in Swan Hill and Melbourne; and the last two weeks they toured the south and north islands of New Zealand by train and bus.

Because we participated in so many interesting events, and saw so many unforgettable sights, we will describe the Coral Sea Tour in this Newsletter and will save the Melbourne and New Zealand segments for a later date.

Bill Surgi is a veteran of the Battle of the Coral Sea, the World War II engagement that prevented Japan from reaching its goal of invading Australia, and he is Founder and President of the Coral Sea Association in this country. He was one of many veterans who returned to Australia for the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Tour, which included the following highlights:

- A visit to the Australia National Maritime Museum (Sydney), to which Bill had sent two of his WWII Navy uniforms to be considered for display in a Coral Sea exhibit. One was included, and Bill was photographed with it "backstage" before the exhibit opened and again when it was in its display case. Bill presented a plaque from the Battle of the Coral

Sea Association to the Museum.

- A full day sightseeing tour of Sydney and its beautiful suburbs, including spectacular views of the harbor from every angle, a visit to Watson's Bay (the Navy base HMAS Watson, its Chapel on the Cliffs and famous Bondi Beach), lunch at the Waterfront Restaurant, and Manley and the northern suburbs.

- The first official Coral Sea event was a charter boat tour in the harbor (beginning at the Opera House, where we were closely scrutinized by security personnel, including snipers on the Opera House roof) to view the arrival of the combined Australian and American fleets into the harbor. Two couples in our group, the official representatives of the Navy Memorial, were invited aboard naval vessels for the occasion. We had a fantastic view of the ships, including the carrier USS Independence and the communications ship USS Blue Ridge (flagship of the Seventh Fleet), as they entered the harbor, and encountered canoes of a peace group protesting the event. We also saw a replica of an early Australian sailing ship.

- A magnificent parade through the center of Sydney, followed by the Lord Mayor's reception at the Town Hall where we met the Governor of New South Wales, American Ambassador Mel Sembler, and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, who represented President Bush.

- A reception aboard the USS Independence, where we met (among others) the Commanding Officer of the Independence and the Commander of the Seventh Fleet.
- A sumptuous feast at the famous Doyle's Seafood Restaurant, hosted by the owner, Peter Doyle, who is also a Director of the Maritime Museum. Peter came to our hotel in his Jaguar to chauffeur us on a tour through the city and around the harbor to the restaurant. On the way he told us of the transport of one of his ancestors from Ireland to Australia for some petty crime and showed us the magnificent old mansion where this ancestor had served his time and earned his freedom. He started a family fishing business, which was continued by later generations and which evolved into a seafood restaurant. This failed during the depression; the family went back to fishing and later reopened the restaurant, which is now so well known that Peter Doyle's has become a familiar face in Visa ads (Don't bring American Express, because we don't take American Express!). (Peter says that in his family the saying is, "Crime does pay!")
- A beautiful drive to Australia's capital, Canberra, enjoying colorful fall foliage along the way. (Canberra was designed by an American architect, and the trees which change color were also imported from this and other countries; they are not native to Australia.)
- A reception at New Parliament House hosted by Australia's Prime Minister, Paul J. Keating, where we talked with Mr. Keating, with Secretary Cheney and with Undersecretary of Defense Peter Williams, DOD's spokesman during Operation Desert Storm, and where the veterans had their picture taken with Mr. Cheney.
- A Coral Sea Commemorative Service at the Australian-American Memorial, in which two Australian and six American Coral Sea veterans (including Bill) played a role. They were seated in front of a group of Australian and American sailors, and during the ceremony each veteran was escorted by a sailor up to the Memorial, where the veteran threw a flower into a reflecting pool, which symbolized the Coral Sea. In an amazing coincidence, Bill was escorted by a young sailor from the Blue Ridge by the name of Matt Dillon. Matt asked Bill if he was also at Midway, and then asked what ship rescued him after the Yorktown was abandoned. Bill said that he was at Midway and that he was picked up by the USS Benham. Matt said that his grandfather was on the Benham that very day! Matt had been randomly selected for escort duty and randomly assigned to Bill, the only veteran in the group who was rescued by the Benham.
- A reception at the Old Parliament House, addressed by the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony J. Principi (since

promoted to Secretary).

- A visit to the Australian War Memorial, where we saw a new Coral Sea exhibit featuring the USS Yorktown and where Bill presented a plaque to the National President of the Returned and Services League in Australia (Bill belongs to the Washington DC chapter). We were also present for the official opening of the Coral Sea exhibit, with Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander as the guest of honor.

- Our next adventure requires a few background notes. When Bill was still in the Navy, serving with the Reserve unit at Andrews Air Force Base in this area, he was assigned as the flight attendant on a VIP plane. During the course of his assignment, Admiral G.J. Willis, then Chief of Naval Operations for Australia, and Mrs. Willis came to the US to launch a new ship being built in Seattle. The Willises toured the US on Bill's plane, and they became very well acquainted during the course of the week. When we reached Sydney, Bill called Admiral Willis in Canberra, and he invited us to his home for cocktails when we reached Canberra. We had a delightful visit with the Willises, after which the admiral chauffeured us to the American Embassy in his own car. The rest of the group arrived by bus, which was unable to pass the antiterrorist pillars and get up the hill to the Embassy door. Its passengers struggled up on foot, while we were quickly saluted past the guard and deposited on the

doorstep!

- A reception hosted by the American Ambassador and attended by Secretary of Education Alexander at the Embassy. This was the first one built in Canberra, and since there was no particular style of architecture to follow, it was designed in the American Colonial style. This started a tradition for other embassies, most of which have been built in styles appropriate to their respective countries. The Semblers have brought many items of American art to the Embassy, and graciously showed us their lovely home.

- The plan for the day was to have included a visit to the Australian War Memorial on our way to the airport to catch a plane to Brisbane and then to Townsville. However, the airplane refuelers tied up the entire country with a one-day strike, which caused a change in our plans: we left Canberra earlier than planned and had a "forced rest" of eight hours in Brisbane. Bill and Jean contacted a friend (formerly with the World Bank) and she drove us around Brisbane to see some of the sights, including the Southern Cross, the first plane to fly from the United States to Australia.

- A trip to Magnetic Island, off Townsville, where we toured various beaches and viewing points; visited the koala park, where we saw kangaroos, exotic birds and, of course, koalas (which we were even permitted to hold!); and had lunch at magnificent



resort.

- A sightseeing tour of Townsville, during which we saw the Blue Ridge, flagship of the Seventh Fleet and command ship of Desert Storm, enter the harbor, In the plaza where Coral Sea events were centered, many veterans (including Bill) had their hands outlined on a commemorative wall, which they signed with their names and Coral Sea Battle affiliation. Bill and Jean met up with their longtime Aussie mates, Alf and June Gilbert, who had led an Australian contingent to the Coral Sea Association reunion in Norfolk on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the battle in May 1972.
  - Bill, along with other Coral Sea veterans, was photographed on the beach with the Coral Sea in the background; this picture appeared in newspapers both in Australia and the United States. Bill was featured in other newspaper articles in Australia and was interviewed several times for TV and radio.
  - The "Red, White and Blue" Ball at Queen's Gardens, a magnificent event with fireworks, great bands, the Silent Drill Team, good food, drinks and dancing under star-filled skies.
  - The veterans in our group participated in the Coral Sea Parade along with Australian veterans and active duty Australian and American forces, followed by the dedication of the National Coral Sea Memorial at Anzac Park
- and a reception on the Blue Ridge.
  - The veterans and widows of veterans, along with Prime Minister and Mrs. Keating, attended the Coral Sea wreathlaying on the Blue Ridge. The ship sailed into the Coral Sea, where a moving service was held. Several officials and representatives of veterans tossed ceremonial wreaths into the water; a member of our tour group represented American Veterans of the Battle of the Coral Sea. Some of the wives (including Jean) who were not invited to this ceremony discovered that it was being broadcast live on a local TV station, so they saw the whole thing, with a much better view than those who attended!
  - Bill and Jean met with several cousins of some of their Aussie friends now living in the DC area. These people lived in Townsville during the war and had vivid memories of their fear of imminent Japanese invasion. One of the women hugged Bill so tightly he thought he could not breathe, and told him that she would never forget the Americans, who prevented that invasion. Another sent a beautiful bouquet to the Surgis' room, welcoming them to Townsville.
  - The final official Coral Sea event was a meeting with Anne Bunnell, Deputy Mayor of Townsville, who presented certificates to the veterans in attendance. Bill in turn presented a plaque from the Coral Sea Association to the city of Townsville.

Once again, we urge you to send us your comments, suggestions and/or constructive criticisms. This is the only way the Association can grow and cater to your wishes. You dont have to sign it.

**Dear Editor:**

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**Mail to**      **AFSM (Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members)**  
**Pan American Health Organization**  
**Personnel Office. Room 320**  
**525 23rd Street, N.W. Washington D.C. 20037**