



NEWSLETTER

OF THE

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER
PAHO/WHO STAFF MEMBERS

VOLUME III NUMBER 1

APRIL 1993

E D I T O R I A L

The Association is entering its third year as an official organization and is time to evaluate its activities. We believe the balance, in general, is positive. We know that in the future we can do even more, with the active participation of all its members.

The Association is providing a link among fellow members through the Newsletter by supplying information on the whereabouts of retirees and providing their mailing addresses so old friends or acquaintances can renew correspondence. It is also providing a link to the Pan American Health Organization through the distribution of PAHO TODAY, the internal Newsletter of PAHO.

Social functions were organized during the first year and are planned for again for this year. We provided information on the PAHO/WHO Staff health Insurance situation and the new

rules to compute contributions of retirees. A committee is working on the issue of long term health care. Results will be made available to all PAHO retirees as soon the committee is completes its work.

We have easy access to the Director of PAHO to voice the concerns of retirees to the Administration. One request that many retirees have made to the Association is in the area of voluntary work. There is so much talent and expertise among the retirees that the Organization could greatly benefit from these resources. The Director has recently approved a program to permit retirees to offer their work as volunteers.

We need to hear from you in other areas where you think the Association should work harder. Please let us know about your ideas and expectations. **WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION AND INPUT!**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The term of office of Directors Alfred Gerald and Jean Surgi expired at the end of December. The third general meeting, on 26 November 1992, elected Jean Surgi and Renate Plaut to fill the vacancies. The Board of Directors, on 26 January 1993, invited Alfred Gerald, Jaime Ayalde and Dana Dashiell to join the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is as follows:

President - Hans A. Bruch
First Vice President - Jean S. Surgi
Second Vice President - Maria M. Segarra-Hines
Treasurer - Federico G. Varela
Secretary - Dana Dashiell
Members at large - Jaime Ayalde
Alfred N. Gerald
Helena M. Irwin
Edith Quiñones

RETIREES WHO WANT TO VOLUNTEER THEIR WORK TO PAHO CAN NOW DO IT

We have received many letters from retirees who want to volunteer their work to PAHO. There is so much talent and expertise among retirees which PAHO/WHO can put to good use. There are mutual benefits for both: our expertise can be used by PAHO/WHO for a humanitarian cause without taxing its limited financial resources, and we have the satisfaction of contributing to the noble cause of improving the health of the people in this hemisphere.

Any retiree who wants to volunteer his or her work, please write to Dr. Diana Serrano LaVertue, Chief of Personnel, Pan American Health Organization, 525 23rd Street N.W., Washington DC 20037. Please indicate how many hours a week or a month you want to volunteer, in which area of work, and if you would accept work outside the U.S.A.

A HISTORY OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The Pan American Health Organization has published a book of 290 pages on the work and accomplishments of its 90 years in promoting health in the New World (Pro Salute Novi Mundi). It has been published in English and Spanish. It is not a detailed history of the Organization but a description of what the Organization has done in order to accomplish its mission. The main chapters are: **Through Concerted Action: PAHO Today in Action** - the case of cholera (14 pages); **Through the Years** (100 pages): In the Beginning (1902-1920), Burgeoning Bureau (1920-1946), Regional Call to Arms (1946-1958), The Right to Health (1958-1975), Toward Health for All (1975-1983), Health in Development (1983-1992); **Through Programs and Orientation** (172 pages). To request this book please write to Dr. Judith K. Navarro, Chief of Scientific and Technical Publications at PAHO Headquarters.

RETIREMENT EXPERIENCES

AFSM is planning to cooperate with the Department of Personnel in providing more information to future retirees on questions related to pensions, citizenship status, health insurance and other areas. We would like to have input from retirees on their experiences -- good and bad -- during the retirement process. Please send them to AFSM/ attn: Renate Plaut, PAHO, Room 320, 525 23rd Street, N.W., Washington DC 20037.

ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH by Joseph N. Lanoix

When I retired from WHO in November 1979, I was the last member of the original, four-man staff of the WHO HQS Division of Environmental Sanitation created by Dr. M. Candau in 1952. As such, I had the privilege of participating in the development of WHO's policies and programs in Environmental Sanitation and, from 1961, in Environmental Health. It is perhaps for this reason that, in 1985, I was asked by Dr. B.H. Dieterich, then Director of EHE, to join as a Consultant with late Prof. Abel Wolman in a review of the essential advice and recommendations received from WHO's expert advisory mechanisms since 1949 and their relations to environmental health issues and problems.

This was one of the most interesting and challenging, as well as rewarding, assignments of my 29 1/2 year career with the Organization. In all, 110 documents were studied, including 35 reports of Expert Committees and 47 resolutions of the World Health Assembly and of the Executive Board. The result, after proper review and editing by the

EHE Division, was printed by WHO in November 1988, in a 34-page paper (EHE/88.2, Nov. 1988) under the title "ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - WHO SAYS"

The distribution of this paper by HQS was limited, and, so far as I know, the paper is available only in the English language. For these reasons, I wonder how many public health officials, including sanitary engineers, in Latin America have seen and read it. The paper is addressed to everyone interested in the history and the evolution of Environmental Health policies and programs in the World. It is not a scientific or technical paper, and its aim is to stimulate discussion of the ways in which WHO has approached the **"persistent inadequate environmental conditions to which people in all countries are exposed."**

By calling attention to this paper, I invite my retired sanitary engineering colleagues and all other retired WHO/PAHO personnel in the Americas to give their views on WHO's past environmental health programs and, with some hindsight, to let the **NEWSLETTER** Editor have their comments on the paper.

Environmental Health programs in the Americas often have served for other parts of the world. This is especially true of rural and urban water supply programs and those concerned with the development of human resources for environmental health. Therefore, there are many sanitary engineers and public health physicians in this Hemisphere who have played prominent roles in this field in the past and who might wish to contribute, without fear of censorship, critical and enlightened comments on

WHO's past policies and programs cited in the above mentioned WHO paper.

EXCERPTS FROM A TRIP TO CHINA by Maria' Mercedes Segarra-Hines

Many generations have been intrigued by the wealth and divine right of its emperors. I myself have been attracted for years to the Chinese culture. Nevertheless, a trip to China was a large undertaking from our part of the world.

Recently, due to their openness to the outer world, many people are traveling to that wonderful country full of spectacular natural scenery, with a culture so different from our own, unique crafts and banquet food rarely duplicated anywhere.

Last year I got an invitation from the Health Services in Beijing to attend a four-day International Symposium on Hospital Management to be held at the Kunlun Hotel in Beijing. The Symposium was attended by about 300 participants from Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The main topics, among others, included : **Health Care Systems in Different Countries, Problems and Solutions; Health Care Management toward Year 2000; Quality Control in Hospitals; Essential Programs for Quality Assurance; Preliminary Exploration on the Quality Management of Medical Technology Departments in Hospitals; Hospital Management Through Electronic Medical Records;**

Practice and Consideration of Hospital Economic Management; Educational Programs for Hospital Managers; and Systems for Planning Hospital Facilities. The Director General of the International Hospital Federation discussed the topic of International Health Services. It seems that problems in health care are similar everywhere.

Several post symposium tours were organized by the health authorities in Beijing. Our tour took us and other people who were attending the symposium to three different cities and Hong Kong.

Before taking the trip outside Beijing, we visited the main tourist attractions in this city, one of which, of course, is the Great Wall. The walk on the Great Wall, although only one part, is a thrilling and breathtaking experience because of the steepness of the changes in level. Your lungs and legs are fully exercised. Once a military highway, the Great Wall, according to the Chinese people, is 10,000 miles long. It was built in short sections starting in the fifth century BC as a defensive boundary wall around the smaller states of Yen, Chao and Wei. The first Qin Emperor (221-206 BC), who unified China, extended the wall to the north as a protection from the Huns and other nomadic tribes.

Subsequently, the Ming dynasty repaired and extended the wall. Built by slave labor, it has been called the longest graveyard, since the builders were buried where they fell.

The Forbidden City, another tourist attraction, is a quintessential symbol of traditional China. Built in the

fifteenth century, it was the residence and seat of power of the emperors of the Ming and Qin dynasties. Treasures and precious works of art are on display.

The Summer Palace was the summer residence of the Emperors. It was built in 1153 AD and was reconstructed in 1888. It is a huge and ornate collection of temples, pagodas, palaces, pavilions and theaters.

The Temple of Heaven is a masterpiece of the fifteenth century. Each year the Emperor came to the temple to pray for good harvest and other heavenly blessings.

As the tour took us to other cities, we visited Xi'an (Sian) situated in northwest China, which is one of the historic cities after Beijing. It is very rich in ancient Chinese history, traditional culture and archeology. It is one of the 24 historical cities protected by the State Council. One of the most spectacular and important places to visit is the terracotta army entombed to guard the grave of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi. The 7500 life-size clay soldiers were buried 22 centuries ago. In 1974, they were discovered by local peasants digging a well. There are three vaults: Number 1, opened to the public in 1979, contains the soldiers; Number 2 contains 1400 cavalymen, archers, charioteers and infantry men; and Number 3 contains 64 officers. Besides the city tour, we had the opportunity to enjoy a beautiful theater ballet.

After Xi'an the tour took us to Guilin in South China. The most interesting attraction in Guilin was the three-hour boat ride through the Li River. This gave us a spectacular view of different sizes and types of mountains.

In the next city, Guangzhou, also in south China, we visited the Sun-Yat-sen Memorial Hall, a theater seating 4500 and built in 1931. The visit here was very short. From Guangzhou we traveled to Hong Kong by train.

In the south we found Chinese food similar to that we have here in the United States.

Hong Kong, previously a possession of China and now governed by the United Kingdom, is a very modern city. It will be returned to China in 1997. Mostly it is a commercial city where you can do very inexpensive shopping, mainly for electronic products.

I found the trip a thrilling experience. We had the opportunity to share experiences with the Chinese people working in health services, with whom we talked about our profession, about training of personnel, the problems encountered in the profession and possible solutions. The visit to hospitals and the School of Health Records and Information was very informative.

The length of the trip to and from China was the only drawback, since it was a 23-hour flight going to Beijing and about 17 hours coming home from Hong Kong. Hotels and services were very good.

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A pleasant surprise came after my trip to China. As you may know, our colleague Antonio Rios is teaching English at the Zheng Zhyou Institute of Technology. Before leaving for my trip, I wrote to him about and included the

itinerary with the hope we could meet. I received a letter from Antonio indicating that he did not received my letter on time but he had quite an unexpected surprise. One of his students was absent and he did the reason. When she returned she showed him a business card from a visitor from Virginia, U.S.A. I was the visitor and I handled her the card when she attended the same International Symposium on Hospital Management in Beijing. Antonio commented that he had a very emotional experience since, an encounter occurred between two strangers, both known to him and he was in the middle of it. **What a small word this is!**

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REFLECTIONS AFTER THE DEATH OF MY MOTHER. By Dinórah López-Molina

My Mother, Amalia Viadé de López-Molina, was finally called to rest five days after my sister, Halma, was mercifully called to Heaven after suffering a huge stroke that left her with an active mind confined in a completely incapable body. I say finally because my mother had lived, and I stress lived, for almost 114 years. During her long and fruitful life she saw myriad changes sweep over the world: great wars, colonial empires braking up and new nations formed, dictators rising and dying, transatlantic steamers and jet airplanes, radio and television, stupendous technological and medical advances, and a walk on the moon.

Closer to home, Puerto Rico, long neglected by its possessor because of its lack of riches, passed as war booty to the United States after the Spanish-

American War. When that beneficial umbrella was spread over the island, it brought many changes, such as needed sanitation, public schools, electricity, telephones, telegraph and cable; in time, a second language and even new word; and local traveling went from ox cart and horse-and-buggy to automobiles, transatlantic steamers and jet airplanes.

Because her mother had died when she was four years old and her engineer father was frequently away, mother was brought up by ignorant servants concerned mainly with feeding the children and not upsetting the household. In the then-existing local culture of "*women do not need to be educated*," she did not learn the three R's until her teens. Aware then of what she had been missing and its importance, she became a voracious reader and educated herself by putting aside some time every day to read the newspaper, history, etc., even after becoming a wife and mother, once she had taken care of her home duties. Her own experience influenced her attitude in bringing up not only her own but other children who grew up exposed to her sphere of influence (the children and grandchildren of two such who because of circumstantial limitations didn't go far in school are now professionals).

What my mother lacked in formal education was supervened by God-given wisdom. After experiencing the benefit and progressive influence of the U.S in Puerto Rico and its peoples (benefit extended to those who chose to remain Spanish subjects) my mother intuitively felt that some day English would become important coin-of the realm language in future world affairs. Better to prepare her four children for that day, with our father's consent she relocated

us for two years States' side so that we could learn the language more quickly in the proper environment, and then return us to Puerto Rico so that we would not lose our Spanish.

My mother's farsightedness and my profession opened PASB's doors for me, and during WWII, incidentally made me double useful when as a U.S. Army Medical Department Dietitian I was stationed in places where I also pinch hit as translator and interpreter.

Throughout her life she met adversity and reverses with courage, patience and trust in God. Reflecting on her radiating effect on home, family and environment, my mother may well have been an unusually far-sighted woman whose far-reaching passive influence is still going on.

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NEWS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

Some quotes from letters received:

Mary E. Bedwell, Harrisburg, Va. "It is good to have news of other staff members, and learn of your projects and purpose."

Frank A. Butrico, Tucson, Arizona. "Not much goes on Tucson which can be reported news. I manage to keep busy playing some golf (purely) and staying involved in community activities... I had hoped AFSM might provide a link with PAHO and WHO to encourage the use of retirees to further their programs... I am not advocating the use of 'cheap'

labor to displace permanent staff. There is much talent among retirees that may better service the Organization, professionally and financially, than some of the outside STCs."

PAHO AND WHO HAVE NOW A PROGRAM FOR RETIREES WHO WANT TO VOLUNTEER THEIR WORK. SEE ARTICLE ON THIS SUBJECT IN THIS NEWSLETTER.

John Donahue, Pittsburgh, CA. "Enjoy the Association Newsletter. After many years with PAHO and making friends in all 37 countries, the memories keep me young and active in California. Keep up the good work."

Ruth Horcher, Ocala, FL. "Besides tending my rose garden, I now have the luxury of using my precious time to immerse myself in the study of history and to learn additional languages."

Harold B. Hubbard, Minor Hill, TN. "Following my retirement from PAHO in 1984, I was a cattle rancher and practicing veterinarian near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, located on the state line with Wyoming at 8,000 ft. high in the Rockies. In 1990 I sold the ranch, closed the veterinary medical practice and became semiretired once again. Later I practiced in Cheyenne, WY, and from there came to Tennessee to live with my oldest daughter, Karen Wells, and help her with her business of property preservation and protection. Next year I shall return to my beloved West to live in the Rockies once more."

Vera Kalm, Stockbridge, MA. "I was particularly interested to learn about the study on...long term insurance for PAHO/WHO retirees. A cost-benefit analysis on what's available will be of great assistance to all of us who are considering buying such insurance. I believe Mrs. Jean Surgi of the Committee

is in touch with Mr. A. J. Friedgut, President of AFICS in New York, who has a great deal of information on the subject and is, I gather, involved in a related study..."

Someswara Rao Kandarpa, Irvingston, N.Y. "It is heartening to note that a Committee of the Association is already assigned the important problem of health care and related insurance. Supplementation of existing coverage should be top priority and I am glad the Committee is looking into it. Some custom-made arrangements with an insurance company may be necessary to fill the gap in our present coverage. I am glad to find the addresses and whereabouts of several of my erstwhile colleagues and close friends, with whom I had the pleasure of working together... I would sure love to reminisce the old times with them. The publication PAHO TODAY is yet another welcome development. This, along with the NEWSLETTER seem to put us -the nostalgic retirees- right in the center of PAHO's activities and happenings."

Rafael Miranda Franco, San Juan, PR. "Being retired leaves us plenty of time to enjoy our grandchildren and travel. This past year my wife and I have been in California, Maryland, Hawaii, Florida and are going again to Maryland to spend Christmas with a daughter and grandchildren. Last week we were in Havana, Cuba, attending the AIDIS Congress. This is the Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineers."

WHO IS DOING WHAT AND WHERE:

Maria Valderez, Washington D.C.

From January 25 to 29, 1993, our colleague, Maria Valderez, participated in a show at PAHO's Headquarters called: IMAGES, Artistic Expressions of Three Brazilian Women. She presented many beautiful and artistic oil paintings that were very highly praised. The other two artists were Cristina Cunico with photographs and Heloisa Tigre with etchings. The show was a very successful event. **Congratulations to the artists!**

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OBITUARIES

Halma Souffront, sister of our dear colleague **Dinórah López-Molina**, and their mother **Amalia V. de López-Molina**, residents of Washington D.C., died on 21 January and 26 January, respectively.

They were buried in the Old San Juan Cemetery in Puerto Rico. Our sincerest condolences to Dinórah and her family.

Jack Anderson died on 7 April 1993 in Arlington VA. Jack was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Association. Our sincere condolences to his family.