



NEWSLETTER

OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PAHO/WHO STAFF MEMBERS

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WINTER 1997

ANNUAL MEETING

The Eighth Annual Meeting of the Association of Former PAHO/WHO Staff Members was held in Room B at PAHO Headquarters on 17 November 1997, with President Jaime Ayalde presiding and with 26 members in attendance. Guests included Dr. David Brandling-Bennett, Deputy Director; Mike Custy, Personnel; Guadalupe Bowling and Kay Foster-Tallon, Staff Health Insurance; Luz María Esparza, President, Staff Association; Leo Lamarche, Chairman, Washington Local Organization; Abbas Ordoobadi, President, AFICS; and Joan Luke Hills, Deputy Director, United Nations Information Center.

The President introduced Dr. Brandling-Bennett, who welcomed the group on behalf of the Director. He noted that PAHO will finish up the biennium in good financial shape, due to conservative management of finances and an unexpectedly high level of payment by the countries.

The budget for the next biennium was approved by the Directing Council at the same level as for that of the current biennium. This

effectively represents a decrease, since there is no provision for mandatory and inflationary cost increases; but many countries wanted a no-growth budget and the United States sought a decrease. The Director successfully negotiated the no-growth position, thus avoiding an actual dollar reduction.

The future beyond the next biennium is uncertain, since there is constant pressure in the US Congress to decrease the amount paid to international organizations. Measures are being taken to inform legislative and executive leaders about PAHO/WHO, including the hiring of a consultant to advise on how to inform governmental staff about PAHO and its programs.

PAHO is still involved in the follow-up to the 1994 Summit of the Americas in Miami, particularly in the areas of health sector reform and health and the environment. This has provided increased recognition by various ambassadors to the OAS and by delegations participating in the follow-up. For the coming Summit in April 1998 in Chile, the Director has proposed a topic on health technology uniting the Americas, which elevates the agenda to the highest political levels and thus is of value to the Organization.

PAHO needs to make itself better known in order to attract outside support for its activities, on the order of what UNICEF has been able to do over the years. Health is an area which can attract gifts from individuals

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Hans Bruch, Editor

Frank Gauldfeldt

Renate Plaut

Jean Surgi

Jaime Ayalde, *ex officio*

and corporations. The Director would like members of AFSM to use their influence to shore up support for PAHO by making contacts to encourage donations to its programs.

Agenda and Minutes: The agenda for this meeting and the minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting, 9 November 1996, were unanimously approved as presented.

Reports: The President, Jaime Ayalde, presented his annual report of activities and accomplishments of the Association for 1997. He reviewed the modus operandi of AFSM as well as its overall financial strategy and noted specific achievements in the following areas: pension benefits - helping the Administration in its efforts to ensure that retirees continue receiving their benefits by signing each year the certificate of entitlement, and assisting one retiree to have benefits restored when, due to illness, the certificate was not returned on time; interinstitutional coordination - meeting with other retiree associations and with groups within PAHO, such as the Staff Association, the Washington Local Organization, and the PAHO Family Association; cooperation with the Administration - assisting in planning and carrying out preretirement seminars, and in health insurance matters, particularly in procedural adjustments in the processing of PharmaCare benefits; expansion of membership; finances; and maintenance of a multipurpose data bank on membership, dues paid, addresses, and other information needed to carry on the work of the Association. In closing, the President reiterated appreciation to the Director and Deputy Director for continued support of AFSM.

The Treasurer, Renate Plaut, presented her report covering the period 31 March 1996 (when she took office) through 31 December 1996. The opening balance was \$7,712.51; income was \$3,805.10; expenditures were \$1,380.20; and the ending balance was \$10,137.41. She noted that the books for 1996 had been audited and approved. She also reported, on a preliminary basis, that as of 30 September 1997 the assets of the Association amounted to \$14,296.45. At the next annual meeting an

amendment to the bylaws will be presented, to change the fiscal year of AFSM to cover the period 1 October-30 September, so that a final Treasurer's Report can be presented to the membership at the annual meeting in November.

AFSM has 240 members in good standing—those who have paid dues at least as recently as 1996. It was noted that the increases in assets in 1996 and 1997 are partially due to the introduction of 10-year and lifetime memberships; a number of people paid for these long-term periods and will not be paying annual dues again (lifetime) or in the next few years (10-year members).

Election of Board Members: Terms of three members of the Board of Directors (Juana Palma, Renate Plaut, and Jean Surgi) were expiring at the end of December 1997. All three accepted nomination for another three-year term on the Board, and they were elected unanimously. In addition, Carlos Garcia was unanimously elected to fill the remaining two years of the term of Jim Milam, who had recently submitted his resignation as a member of the Board.

The United Nations Today: Ms. Joan Luke Hills, Deputy Director of the United Nations Information Center in Washington DC, was introduced by the President. She described the organization and purpose of the Center and noted that major functions are to provide information about the UN to the government and other groups and to report to the UN on what is going on in the US Congress.

She said that she was supposed to talk on *The United Nations Today*, but that in view of recent happenings in Congress, i.e., the failure of the House of Representatives to vote to appropriate some of the UN arrears, she had decided to touch on some of the feelings that had led to this vote, and also to review some of the reforms the Director-General was planning for the UN, which are tied in with the vote. It is possible that there will be a supplemental appropriation in 1998.

Although 70% of the work of the UN is humanitarian in nature and only 30% is related to peace and security, it is the latter which seems to receive all the headlines. The UN has in fact been an instrument of US foreign policy, as can be seen in Korea, where the UN flag is flying on the 38th Parallel. UN help was also needed in the Gulf War and is again needed today in that area, so it is ironic that, just as the US is asking for help, it is unwilling to pay its arrears.

Many of the failures in the peace and security area have been due to the fact that the Security Council has put more on the UN than it could handle and has not always provided the equipment and strategies needed for success. The Director-General argued against going into Bosnia, but was overruled. Where 30,000 heavily armored troops were needed, 7,600 lightly armored troops were provided. The UN, a peace organization, has had to be an ally of NATO, which is a war organization.

Problems such as those in Bosnia and Somalia have produced a great deal of disagreement, and caused many members of Congress to turn against the UN. Arrears funding, particularly for peacekeeping, was withheld as far back as the Reagan years, and this resulted in an effort to scale back the organization and also to reduce assessed contributions. Congress voted to reduce the US percentage for peacekeeping from 31% to 25%; however, the UN member states were not consulted, so the US is still being billed at the 31% rate. This has caused the amount of arrears to increase to its present level of slightly more than \$1.4 billion.

The package presented to the House of Representatives provided for payment of a little more than \$900 million, which would not have fully paid the arrears. It also provided for a reduction in the regular US payment to the UN from 25% to 22% and then to 20% (in 2001) and required the organization and all the specialized agencies to undertake reform, including staff reduction. The current situation is a paradox, because Congress says unless the UN introduces reforms the US is not going to

pay, and the member states are saying that unless the UN pays they will not support its reforms. Hopefully, a supplemental bill will be introduced in January and cooler heads will prevail. (Another provision of the failed package was \$3.5 billion in funding for the IMF so it could help with the bailout of the Asian economy, which is essential to maintain a healthy US economy.)

Reform in the UN was actually started in the 1980s under former Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and has continued under the present Secretary General, Kofi Annan. These have included, among other things: reductions in staff (for a total of some 1,000 when completed); consolidation of certain program areas and elimination of others; holding cabinet meetings of department heads and including staff outside of New York through teleconferencing; having all UN agencies in the field report to one resident representative and housing them in one area—the UN House; and shortening sessions of the General Assembly. He has also proposed the establishment of a revolving fund of \$1 billion as a cushion against a situation such as the present one, but this is controversial and is opposed by the United States government.

Unless the US acts to pay what it owes to the UN, the situation could get increasingly bad by the first of the year. The UN has been borrowing from peacekeeping funds to support other programs, so countries have not been repaid for the assistance they have provided. Peacekeeping funds are now nearly depleted, so the UN cannot count on that source of funding for the operating costs of the UN itself and programs will have to be cut. Let us hope the arrears package will be approved by Congress.

At the end of the formal talk, several attendees made suggestions and asked questions, including:

- Individuals and groups (such as the United Nations Association and the American Foreign Service Association) should lobby

Congress and encourage others to do the same.

- Will the UN be able to borrow from the Joint Staff Pension Fund and thereby endanger our pensions? This appears to be unlikely.
- Will the Ted Turner donation help the current situation? This is earmarked for programs only, and the lawyers are still deciding how it will be paid.
- Is there regular communication with the media about UN achievements? The Information Center provides such communication, but the media prefers to emphasize failures, since the public seems to be in the market for negative information.

(Note: A full transcription of Ms. Hills' talk is being distributed with this newsletter.)

Adjournment and Luncheon: The meeting adjourned at 11:45 and most of those attending enjoyed a lunch provided by AFSM.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 1948-1998

1998 will be a crucial year for human rights. Throughout the year the international community will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first ever proclamation of the rights and freedoms of every human being. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which fostered vigorous development of the international promotion and protection of these rights. The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of this solemn act is the ideal opportunity to give new impetus to human rights, drawing inspiration from the achievements of the past 50 years and reflecting the vision of the next century. . . .

1998 is also of great importance as the time of the Five-Year Implementation Review of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action which has been linked to the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration by the World Conference on Human Rights. . . .

LUNCHEON FOLLOWING ANNUAL MEETING



(Left to right) Luz María Esparza, Carlos Sera, Flora Early, Margarita Tio-Quintana, Hortensia Saginor, Hans Bruch, Renate Plaut, Juana Palma, Jean Surgi, Jaime Ayalde, and Berta Chiari.

"1998 Human Rights Year" will begin on 10 December 1997 and culminate on 10 December 1998, the date on which, 50 years previously, the Universal Declaration was adopted. Activities throughout the year should:

- serve as an important vehicle for advancing the role of all human rights along with peace, democracy and development as the guiding principles for harmonious international relations and strong community life in all nations in the next century;
- enhance the implementation of human rights and prevention of their violations, as well as promote good practices;
- focus on reaching people everywhere, in particular at the grass roots level; and
- strengthen the partnership for human rights within and outside the United Nations system.

The preparatory process for "1998" should serve as a catalyst for a global movement giving evidence that human rights reflect not only hopes and aspirations but also essential interests and legitimate demands of all people on all continents, and should permeate all human activities.

From "AFICS Quarterly Bulletin," October 1997

UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION FUND INVESTMENTS

The market value of the assets of the Fund was \$16,846 million on 31 March 1997; by 24 June 1997, three months later, it was \$18.7 billion. The total investment return for the period 1 April 1996 to 31 March 1997 was 8.9 per cent; after adjustment by the US consumer price index, this represents an inflation-adjusted or 'real' rate of return of 5.9 per cent.

Over the 37-year period for which data are available, the cumulative annualized total rate of return was 8.8 per cent, representing an annual 'real' rate of return of 3.6 per cent after adjustment by the US consumer price index.

From "AFICS Quarterly Bulletin," October 1997

1999 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS

In 1999, for the first time, older persons around the world will be honored. Preparations are now underway to celebrate in 1999 the International Year of Older Persons. Services provided for older persons will be placed more in the forefront of public policy as the next century begins. People around the world are living longer and, in general, are in much better health than 50 years ago. This provides a challenge for members of the United Nations to provide improved social services for an older population. Celebration in 1999 of the International Year of Older Persons should provide a focal point for governments to rally around for the benefit of all senior citizens, and to provide support at all governmental levels for the special programs that will improve the quality of life for older persons in their remaining years and take advantage of the valuable resources, skills and expertise older persons possess.

AFICS (NY) [and AFSM] members, in their local communities and taking advantage of their unique skills gained in their careers in the United Nations system, could explore the possibilities of joining in the preparations and celebration of the 1999 International Year of Older Persons.

From "AFICS Quarterly Bulletin," October 1997

ON SLEEP, STRESS, SEX, SELF . . .

What distinguishes this little book on aging, titled simply "Healthy Aging," from others on the same subject is its author. A. P. Dewan is a former international civil servant who served for 14 years with the World Food Program as an adviser in community development, as well as for the United Nations in the field for three years. Today, in his mid-70s and with four publications to his name, he is chairman of India's Nature Cure and Health Center in New Delhi.

"Stress management, nutrition and exercise are the basis of longevity and optimum health" and the key to graceful aging, he says in a foreword

to his 150-page work which, while rooted in his native India, draws upon all cultures for inspiration and authentication. Indeed, it is a delight for the variety of sources he quotes—religious, literary, political, and scientific.

To name just few: Gita, Lord Krishna, as well as Jesus, Lord God; Plato and Euripides; Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare and Winston Churchill; Victor Hugo and Maxim Gorky; Masters and Johnson, the American Medical Association, and the US Surgeon-General.

Echoing Hippocrates, in whose time, we are told, old age began at 56, and who warned against sedentary life, the author's advice to readers is this: "You should not retire, but only change activities at a particular age—even if you don't get paid" for your labors. It is advice that those serving colleagues who are against voluntarism may not be pleased with. alas!

The author himself does not seek "private gain" for his book, which "I present to my elderly brethren," he says. Any profit will go to centers that serve the elderly. Some excerpts:

On sleep: "Before sleep, put your feet in hot water for some time. This will induce sleep early, and it may be deep sleep."

On stress: "To minimize stress, take flight rather than fight. Find a momentary retreat."

On sex: "Why . . . discontinue such a desirable experience? Many older couples have found that sex is better in the mornings, when they are refreshed."

On self: "Keep your expectations very low, and your emotional health will never be disturbed."

And on garlic: "It normalizes blood pressure, reducing it in the case of hypertensive persons and increasing it in case of persons with low blood pressure."

From "Quarterly News of the Association of Former WHO Staff," Winter, No. 28, 1996-1997

HEALTHY DYING

There is whole area of ethical and human rights with regard to illness and medical treatment the end of life. There is no international consensus on guidelines or standards in this area, and in many countries there seems to be little national consensus either.

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons, adopted in 1991, state that "older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives."

The declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons of the International Federation on Aging, on which these principles are based, goes one step further by declaring that "older persons have the right . . . to die with dignity by accepting or rejecting treatments designed solely to prolong life."

The idea has been introduced that the ultimate aim of health promotion is "healthy dying," meaning that older persons should remain independent as long as possible and have control over their lives. This concept deserves further consideration. At the same time, more serious attention needs to be given to the whole range of implications healthy aging has for human rights.

Irene Hoskins, UN Representative, American Association for Retired Persons, Geneva.

From "Quarterly News of the Association of Former WHO Staff," Summer, No. 26, 1996.

An index to articles published in the AFSM Newsletter since its beginning in September 1990 is included with this mailing. Copies of past articles will be sent to any member who requests them.

PERSONAL CORNER

Sumedha M. Khanna
(PO Box 722, Gualala CA 95445)

I was saddened to read about Bill Childress' "crossing over" to the other side. Bill was a great friend and teacher for me. He taught me about the budgeting process in PAHO and most importantly how to use that process to your advantage. I have many fond memories about our work in PAHO. I particularly recall his sharp memory, his wit and great sense of humor. Even more importantly, I have several of Bill's early art works, including two of his paintings on drift wood. They have decorated our home wherever we have been. Now they are even more precious than ever. Bill showed through his personal example how to "create" an extraordinarily rich life "after PAHO." We can all learn a great deal from his example. So many of us do not prepare for this part of our life.

Please note my change of address. We have moved to this part of Northern California. We live in a beautiful natural coastal community—The Sea Ranch—one of the two utopias in the USA. It is about 40 miles south of Mendocino and 110 miles north of San Francisco. We have a beautiful view of the Pacific Coast and acres of natural environment with redwoods, cypress, and all kinds of wildlife (no mountain lions). It is a community which draws writers, artists, and thinkers.

Over the past three years I have been pursuing the study of alternative and complementary healing arts and systems. I am starting a community-oriented service in this area, which will be called "Healing Well Associates." This will be primarily a resource center for the healing arts practitioners in this community and for women in midlife. More about this later when we get started, as of 1 January 1998.

My husband, Steve Serdahely (some of you may remember him from PAHO) and I send our best wishes for the holiday season. It is a great feeling to be connected with our many friends in PAHO. We cherish many loving and warm memories of our work in PAHO.

Marina Orellana (Santiago, Chile)

Eva R. Saxl writes: "Enclosed please find news of Marina Orellana's recent Award which is a lovely recognition of her continuing interest in her many years' work after her UN retirement.

"On September 30, Translator's Day the Catholic University of Chile (Instituto de Letras) awarded Marina Orellana, formerly of UN Headquarters and UNESCO reviser, and Chief of Language Services, WHO Regional Office for the Americas, the 1996 translation prize in recognition of her excellent contributions to the translating profession. She is the author of three books: *Glosario Internacional para el Traductor: La Traducción del Inglés al Castellano; Guía para al Traductor*, and *Buenas y Malas Palabras: Notas de redacción para el buen hablar y escribir*.

From "AFICS Quarterly Bulletin," January 1997

LIST OF DECEASED RETIRED STAFF MEMBERS, 1997

d'Ipolito, Guiglielmo	02 Jan
Bernal Lopez, Carlos	05 Jan
Zapatel, Juan Antonio	27 Jan
Carney, John Francis	22 Jan
Sollmann, Elfriede	28 Jan
Angulo, Humberto	08 Mar
Sadique, Said M.	09 Mar
Alibi de la Fuente, Hernán	17 Apr
Childress, William H.	19 Apr
Velasquez, Arturo	03 May
Macher, César	23 May
Ayrolla, Jacy	25 May
Lima, Orcilio Jose de	04 Jun
Salvo, Pedro Juan	24 Jun
Lopez Ore, Carlos	20 Jul
Vieira, Marcos	09 Aug
Rivera, Vilma I.	25 Sep
dos Santos, Carlos Alberto	11 Oct
Mora, Enrique	13 Oct
Sguaitamati, Mariana	23 Oct
Xavier, Narciso Rodriguez	15 Nov
Londoño, Alvaro	02 Dec
Motta, Celio Paulo	06 Dec

From APL, revised 9 Dec 1997

OLD FOLKS ARE WORTH A FORTUNE

Old folks are worth a fortune, with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet, and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a lot more social with the passing of the years; some might even call me a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charley Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis show up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life!

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him I do—all the time. No matter where I am—in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen or down in the basement—I ask myself, "Now, what am I here after?"

From "AFICS Quarterly Bulletin," October 1997

THE TEX-MEX VERSION OF "THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS"

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the casa,

Not a creature was stirring—Caramba! ¿Que pasa?

Los niños were tucked away in their camas, Some in long underwear, some in pijamas, While hanging the stockings with mucho cuidado

In hopes that old Santa would feel obligado To bring all children, both buenos and malos A nice batch of dulces and other regalos. Outside in the yard there arose such a grito That I jumped to my feet like a frightened cabrito.

I ran to the window and look out afuera, And who in the world do you think that it era? Saint Nick in a sleigh and a big red sombrero Came dashing along like a crazy bombero, And pulling his sleigh instead of venados Were eight little burros approaching volados. I watched as they came and this quaint little hombre

Was shouting and whistling and calling by nombre:

"¡Ay Pancho, ay Pepe, ay Cuco, ay Beto, Ay Chato, ay Chopo, Macuco, y Nieto!"

Then standing erect with his hand on his pecho He flew to the top of our very own techo. With his round little belly like a bowl of jalea He struggled to squeeze down our old chiminea.

Then huffing and puffing at last in our sala, With soot smeared all over his red suit de gala, He filled all the stockings with lovely regalos— For none of the niños had been very malos. Then chuckling aloud, seeming very contento, He turned like a flash and was gone like the viento.

And I heard him exclaim, and this is verdad, "Merry Christmas to all, and Feliz Navidad!"