Informed opinion and active co-operation on the part of the public are of the utmost importance in the improvement of the health of the people (WHO, Basic Documents, 47th Edition, 2009)

(London in the snow)

The Executive Committee wishes you a happy and healthy New Year
Photos of the General Assembly

A view of the Assembly

The report is certainly very interesting!

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Photos of the reception

Listening to Dr Acuna, representing the DG

Around a table

The photos are from Samy Kossovsky and Sue Block Tyrrell

Other photos in the French version
EDITORIAL
October was a busy month for the Executive Committee.

Following the International Day of the Elderly, details of which were given in QNT 93, our General Assembly took place on 8 October at WHO headquarters, Geneva. About 80 participants attended. You will find the report on pages 4–12.

Next came the influenza vaccination sessions on 15 and 22 October which were, as usual, much appreciated. 260 people were vaccinated – a higher number than in the past. We hope that the Regions will be able to follow our example.

On 5 December, our annual reception brought together more members than usual.

Elections for the next Executive Committee will take place in October 2014. We are calling on you now to think about submitting your candidature. New blood is needed on the Committee and we are hoping that some “young” retirees will be interested. Please think seriously about it and, if you do not wish to submit your own candidature, think about your friends who might be interested.

The 19th Solidarity Fair took place on Wednesday 11 December: you will find an article on our participation on page 23.

Our links with our sister associations in the Regions are getting stronger and we hope to strengthen our collaboration even further.

We wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014.

DC

Important contacts
AFSM: see on page 1
Health Insurance (SHI): +41(0)22 791 18 18; in case of absence, please leave a message: someone will call back,
Or email to: shihq@who.int
Pensions: +41(0)22 928 88 00;
Email: unjspf.gva@unispf.org for Geneva
Or +1 212 963 6931 and unjspf@un.org for New York
AFSM office covered on Tuesday and Wednesday
From 9:30 to 12:00
Otherwise, please leave a message: someone will call back.
It was early morning on Friday, 8th November 2013, barely three weeks after a killer earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 struck the Visayas, when typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) first landed in Guiuan in Eastern Samar. After Samar, it landed in the succeeding islands four more times hitting last Palawan (a tourist destination).

The Philippines is an archipelago comprising about 7,107 islands mostly located in the central Philippines. In Samar it destroyed the weather station-our first line of defence. The weather bureau failed to differentiate the similarity between storm surge and tsunami.

In the aftermath, you will see extensive destructions, an immense catastrophe and hardly anything left on the ground but countless dead bodies littering all over, injured people walking on the streets looking like zombies - hungry and desperate. There were no communications or electricity after the typhoon struck on Friday and after a week still many dead bodies on the decomposition state yet to be buried littered the streets. Schools, churches, business establishments, government offices and evacuation centres, hospitals were badly damaged. Hospitals in neighbouring provinces are overcrowded with injured people and already running low on medical supplies. People were so desperate that they were scavenging for whatever food they cold find in the garbage. They have looted supermarkets and government food stock centres and they only stopped because there is no more to loot.

The government was not in control. The government predicted only 2,000 to 2500 casualties but as of 16 November the casualties are already close to 4000. Nobody will ever know the exact number of fatalities but the media estimates of around 10,000 seems real because there were plenty of people who were buried, soaked and carried away to the sea by storm surges and, also we do not have an official registry of residents in a given local government unit. There was a Philippine Star story of a man who had to walk 50 km to get money from a remittance outlet only to find out it was closed for the day. He then hobbled back home on the same 50 km route. Needing money badly to buy food for his starving family, he decided to walk another 50 km to get to the next remittance outlet. Tired from too much walking and blistered feet, he decided to get the shoes of a dead man he saw on the road. After all, he believed the dead man would understand his plight. But luck was not at his side. He was the 80th customer and was told that only 50 customers could be accommodated for the day, therefore he would have to return early the next day.

Yes, the destruction is shocking and unimaginable. It was an unprecedented disaster for the Philippines and more than a million people have been displaced by the typhoon. The bottom line is that the Philippines is the second most vulnerable country and disaster prone to calamities in the world and among the worst-hit victims of Climate Change at the expense of some of the worst polluters in the planet. Let us all reduce our carbon footprint to save the planet.

Regarding our fellow retirees we do not seem to have received any bad news, as most live in Metro Manila. Mehmet Salih and family live in Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao a bit far from the disaster area, but frequently visited also by typhoons but not like Yolanda (Haiyan) with a wind speed of 320 km/hour.

Romy Murillo, President AFSM (Manila)

Note from the Editor: Although our Association did not start its own fund raising, retirees and active WHO staff were given many opportunities to donate money.
Report of the General Assembly on 8 October

Opening

The Assembly was opened by Jean-Paul Menu, AFSM President, who welcomed the participants1 (especially those from outside the Geneva area - Elisabeth Stussi from Strasbourg and Roger Aertgeerts from Antwerp) and invited guests present from WHO, the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) Geneva, and Charles Hager, one of the AFSM auditors.

On behalf of the Director-General, Daniel López Acuña, Director of Country Cooperation and UN Collaboration, welcomed the participants back to WHO. He stressed the importance of the AFSM which is an asset to the life of WHO and enables its members to retain their links with the Organization. He thanked the representatives of former staff for their work on the new SHI governance committees and on the WHO Pension Committee to protect the interests of former staff. Dr López Acuña referred to the ongoing discussions to improve the process of selection of WHO country representatives and to the possibility of calling upon retired former country representatives to take part in assessment panels. Retirees represent an important source of knowledge and experience. He mentioned the active collaboration in PAHO/AMRO between the administration and the Association of Former Staff, not only at their assemblies, but also in consultations of a technical and policy nature. Finally, Dr López Acuña wished the participants a very successful meeting. Jean-Paul thanked Dr López Acuña for his welcome on behalf of the Director-General and his concrete proposal for collaboration.

Election of Chairperson and Polling Officers

On the proposal of Jery Kilker, seconded by Françoise Héry-Persin and Ferdinand Littaua, William Gunn was unanimously elected as Chair.

In accordance with the AFSM Statutes, Polling Officers were elected for 2013-2014: three were re-elected – Janet Clevenstine, Sandra Edgar and Andréé Prodham, and a new one was elected – Helena Mbele-Mbong. The Assembly thanked the Polling Officers for their help.

Adoption of agenda

Roger Aertgeerts proposed two points for discussion under item 8 of the agenda on pensions: firstly, the problem of obtaining information required by national tax authorities, e.g. the actuarial (capital) value of the acquired pension rights; and secondly, the inequity in net pension based solely on the prior negotiations between WHO, third parties hosting WHO staff and the relevant host countries, particularly in EU member states. With the acceptance of this proposal, the Assembly adopted the agenda.

President’s report2

The key elements of the report were presented by Jean-Paul Menu, President, and by members of the Executive Committee – Sue Block Tyrrell, David Cohen, Roger Fontana, Roberto Masironi, Dev Ray and Anne Yamada. Jean-Paul highlighted some key issues since the last Assembly. What had worked: very well - the international activities and the links with sister associations in the Regions; well – the continuing services provided by the Executive Committee; less well – the need to replace older members of the Committee by younger ones. He referred to several matters: the process to elect the representatives of former staff on the new SHI governance committees; the stable membership of the AFSM and the welcome increase in life membership; the

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1. About 80 people
2. A copy has been distributed to all members and is available on the AFSM web site
responsibilities of the Executive Committee members; and expressed his gratitude to WHO for its continuing support to the AFSM, including the production and distribution of documentation and communications.

Discussion focused on the following points:

• The need for a link to the AFSM website on the WHO intranet to enable those about to retire to find information on the Association: unfortunately it is not possible for AFSM members to access the WHO intranet (point raised by Coby Sikkens).

• A proposal to set up a system whereby AFSM members can find information on seminars being held at headquarters which are of interest and open to former staff (proposal made by Lindsay Martinez).

• A proposal to provide support and advice to those with WHO staff rights who are about to retire on a UN pension from organizations such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and UNITAID (proposal made by Valery Chernyavskiy who is ready to help).

• A proposal for the AFSM, with its WHO roots, to support the ILO association of former staff in its efforts to secure free influenza vaccinations for former ILO staff, similar to the arrangements made by WHO and the UN for its former staff (proposal made by Odette Foudral, President of AFICS Geneva).

• The need to find a person to take over the organization of trips for AFSM members (point raised by David Cohen, editor of the Quarterly News and in charge of the trips, who would like to hand over this function but is prepared to help his successor).

The report of the President was welcomed and approved.

Proposed amendment to the AFSM Statutes

Yves Beigbeder explained the rationale for the amendment in case 12 or fewer candidatures are received for the 12 seats on the Executive Committee at the time of the biennial elections. The General Assembly unanimously agreed to amend the Statutes and to add at the end of Article 5 the following text “If the list of candidates only contains twelve names or fewer, the Executive Committee shall declare these candidates elected without proceeding to a vote.”

Two suggestions were made:

• In an effort to secure more candidates, to insert wording into the call for candidatures that members may wish to propose colleagues; however, the agreement of that colleague would need to be sought and s/he would need to complete the declaration of candidature (proposal made by Coby Sikkens).

• In cases where there are 12 or fewer candidatures and therefore no voting takes place, to put in place a system to review the candidatures received before proceeding to a declaration of the election of the candidates (proposal made by Lindsay Martinez).

Financial report and Auditors’ report for the financial period 2011-2012

Anne Yamada, Treasurer, introduced the financial report (see pages 12-13). The amounts shown in the UBS accounts at end 2012 have decreased in view of

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1. Proposed amendments distributed to all members in September 2013. The Statutes and the amendment can be found on the AFSM website.
the fact that more assets are transferred to the accounts at the Mutuelle in the UN which provides a better interest rate income but expenditures are being kept to the minimum.

Charles Hager, one of the AFSM auditors\(^1\), read out the Auditors’ report on the accounts for 2011-2012. They had found that the accounts were in order and the assets, liabilities, income and expenditure were correct and justified. The Assembly duly approved the financial report for 2011-2012 and accepted the Auditors’ report.

Election of auditors for 2013-2014

In accordance with the AFSM Statutes, the Assembly re-elected two auditors for 2013-2014 – Charles Hager and Richard Saynor and thanked them for their continuing services.

Questions on pensions

The Assembly welcomed Elisabeth Chauveau-Bais, Chief, Participation and Entitlements Section and Allamane Bacar Said, Chief, Finance, Client Services and Records Management from the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) office in Geneva, and Beatriz Sperandio de Llull, Administrative Officer, Pensions/Secretary of the WHO Pension Committee at WHO/HQ.

Participants were informed of the stable and healthy situation of the Fund’s assets. The actuarial valuation as at 31 December 2011 showed a deficit of 1.87% but there is no need for concern if the deficit is within 2%.

The UN General Assembly has increased the age of retirement to 65 years for those who enter service after 1 January 2014 and this will decrease the deficit considerably.

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) has recommended that current staff be allowed to also serve until 65 years of age without prejudice to their current entitlements, but the agencies’ administrations are not in favour. The Fund is very careful with its investments. Contributions received are sufficient to meet the liabilities and so the investment income is not touched.

Discussion focused on the following points:

- **The voluntary extension of the retirement age to 65 years for serving staff** (raised by Marjory Dam): No decision has yet been taken on the ICSC recommendation by the General Assembly. The actuarial deficit will decrease if new staff serve until age 65 but the situation will be neutral if current staff also serve until age 65 years.

- **The process for determining cost of living increases** (raised by Leila Mehra): The figures used to determine cost of living increases are taken from the Consumer Price Index, provided by governments, which are published by the UN Statistics Division and can be found on their web site. Increases are awarded if the figures increase by 2% or more and in Switzerland the 2% increase has not yet been reached.

- **The issue of taxation of pensions** (raised by Ferdinand Littau and earlier by Roger Aertgeerts - notably the need for information required by tax authorities, i.e.. one country requires details of the actuarial or capital value of acquired pension rights on the date of retirement – if this information is not provided, a retiree can be taxed at 38% instead of 8%; and (ii) the unfair inequity

\(^1\) Richard Saynor, the second AFSM Auditor was unable to attend the Assembly
in net pensions based solely on the prior negotiations between WHO, third parties hosting WHO staff and the relevant host countries, particularly in EU member states): It is not the UNJSPF policy to give advice on taxation – the Fund makes monthly payments in 50 currencies in about 190 countries and does not have the resources to obtain and provide regularly updated accurate information on taxation policies in all these countries; each country has its own policy which is subject to change. The Fund cannot negotiate with national governments. The UN pensions are considered as a gross amount and are therefore taxable. The pension benefit is based on pensionable remuneration which is a little higher than the salary to take into account that when the staff member retires s/he will be subject to tax. Salaries of serving staff are considered net income. If required by the tax authorities, the UNJSPF can provide information on the amount contributed by the former employer, the retiree him/herself and the interest. The UNJSPF hopes that the associations of retired UN system staff can help provide information on taxation issues.

On the first issue, the UNJSPF representatives offered to provide, subject to the agreement of their senior management, information on the value of a withdrawal settlement just prior to retirement. On the second issue, the inequity in taxation in different countries has been raised at meetings of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS). The taxation is of course based on the laws of the country of residence of the retiree and not on the country in which the staff member worked. It is inappropriate to just focus efforts to change taxation in countries where large numbers of UN retirees are resident. Even when there have been past negotiations on tax arrangements, e.g. previously no taxation of the lump sum in France, policies can change. Opening up such discussions may prove beneficial to some but could be detrimental to others. The associations of former staff do not have the right to negotiate with governments, only the UN agencies themselves are able to do that. Other pension inequities exist, for example the amounts received by those who die soon after retirement and by those who live a long time and hence a capital equivalence of future pensions does not make sense since the benefits will vary depending on the longevity of the retirees as the UNJSPF is a defined benefit scheme and not a defined contribution scheme.

Dev Ray informed the participants that the Executive Committee is endeavouring to obtain information on taxation in countries and to identify members who are prepared to provide information to others on taxation in their country of residence – the October edition of the Quarterly News will contain an article on this matter.

- The rationale for the taxation in Switzerland of UN pensions as “2ème pilier”, which involves a higher tax rate than “1er pilier”: (Klaus Netter, a member of the AFICS Committee, may be able to provide advice to the AFSM on this matter.

- Quarterly pension statements (raised by Lindsay Martinez – these often arrive from New York late and in unstuck envelopes but the information is personal and confidential): Such statements (about 20 000 per quarter) are printed and inserted into envelopes by machine and then transmitted to the UN post office. From time to time the machine needs water replenishment to stick the envelopes and sometimes the lack of water is not noticed immediately by the operator, so it happens that a few envelopes remain unstuck. These statements are now available on the Fund web site. A new paperless, online system will be put in place next year.
On behalf of the Assembly participants, the Chair thanked Elisabeth Chauveau-Bais Aliamane Bacar Said, and Beatriz Sperandio de Llull, for their attendance, their responses to the questions raised and for their help to AFSM members during the year.

Questions on Staff Health Insurance (SHI)
Claude Hennetier Rossier, Coordinator, Insurance and Pension Services, presented the new SHI governance structure, with its two new committees – the Global Oversight Committee (GOC) and the Global Standing Committee.

The new governance will be beneficial to the SHI and the management of the SHI Fund. The GOC replaces the Joint Meeting which was held every 3 years. The GOC will meet twice a year and has just held its first meeting on 24-25 September. The Global Standing Committee, which includes representatives from the Regions, replaces the Headquarters Surveillance Committee, and will hold monthly meetings. The first meeting is due to take place on 23 October. Meetings are held using Webex technology which is a combination of Skype and videoconferencing. The Regional Surveillance Committees continue to meet. Former staff are represented on both committees.

The elected representatives are:
Global Oversight Committee – Ann Van Hulle-Colbert – Member and Clas Sandström – Alternate Member
Global Standing Committee – Jean-Paul Menu and Marjory Dam – Members and Françoise Héry-Persin and Carol Collado – Alternate Members

SHI will send out to all former staff who are SHI participants the new SHI rules and in formation on the exact composition of the new committees.

Mrs Hennetier Rossier referred to the French reform of the health insurance for the “frontaliers” (those who live in France but work in Switzerland). The position of the family members is not clear and clarification is being sought urgently by all the UN organizations in Geneva before a French decree is issued on this matter. The information obtained will be shared with SHI participants, through the AFSM or otherwise.

Ann Van Hulle-Colbert reported on the first meeting of the GOC. Matters discussed include the role of the committee, its functioning, financial issues including a review of the Annual Report for 2012 which also contained a separate financial report prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards, and WHO’s investment strategy for the SHI Fund. Investments for SHI are overseen by the WHO Treasurer with the advice of the WHO investment committee. An external adviser explained the investment strategy and made recommendations to the GOC. The GOC functions as an advisory committee to the Director-General: any proposed changes in rules are submitted to the Director-General. The second day of the GOC meeting was devoted to benefits. In the new SHI rules, the benefits will be presented in a separate appendix and will be easier to understand and consult.

The representatives of former staff on the new committees welcome information from former staff members affiliated to SHI on the problems they encounter. The representatives can then raise such problems in the appropriate committee. Recent examples include the problem of lack of recognition of SHI guarantees in hospitals, notably in the United Kingdom; complementary insurance and the way SHI deals with
claims of persons who have additional insurance for the non-reimbursed portion of expenses (normally 20% up to the catastrophic limit); and the rules on accommodation in hospitals. The representatives want to be able to reach out to all retired SHI participants; this is not possible through email or internet at the moment as SHI does not have a complete list of retirees' email addresses. Access to information on SHI may become available on a new sharepoint site and the secretariat is working on this. In the meantime, information on SHI is of course provided in the Quarterly News to AFSM members and to those SHI participants who contact us for information/assistance. The next GOC meeting will be held in April 2014. Mrs Hennetier Rossier referred to one of the proposals made by the GOC. If agreed by the Director-General, a system will be set up to provide former staff with information similar to that provided to active staff. She requested all former staff to provide SHI with their email addresses, as by the end of the year, reimbursement information will be sent by email and not by post. Referring to another issue raised by Ann Van Hulle-Colbert regarding complementary insurance, Mrs Hennetier Rossier indicated that, subject to agreement by the Director-General, it was proposed to pay catastrophic expenses systematically, irrespective of whether the SHI participant has complementary insurance or not. It should be noted that the rationale for this change is that participants wish to cover the non-reimbursed portion of expenses but not beyond as otherwise they risk paying higher premiums for complementary insurance.

Questions focused on the following points:

- **The higher charges levied by some health care providers for services to SHI participants** (raised by Coby Sikkens, David Cohen and Leila Mehra): There is no protection against these higher rates – some providers apply the TARMED rates and others do not. SHI participants are encouraged to check their bills, including concerning the time spent with the provider, and query them when necessary with the provider - SHI will provide support to do so. In such cases, if a participant has paid a higher tariff without realizing it, SHI can make an exception for the bills which have already been paid but cannot continue to do so in the future. The participant would be asked to change their provider or to ensure that future bills are reasonable. There are agreements in place with certain hospitals and clinics and there is an established list of prices. For services in the Geneva Cantonal Hospital, the point value can be higher for those living outside the Canton as the Geneva authorities support the public health infrastructure for their own tax payers. SHI, which is internal to WHO cannot be assimilated to a private Swiss insurance and cannot be a member of Santé Suisse and therefore cannot be included in their overarching agreements. However, SHI can continue to negotiate with providers and this is what it is currently doing jointly with the CERN, ILO and UNOG insurances. The new sharepoint will help to provide information on such matters. It was suggested however that, in the meantime, it would be helpful if SHI would send out a letter to inform participants of SHI’s policy and to indicate the definition of excessive charges. Mrs Hennetier Rossier referred to the particularity of SHI which is global for all staff and its lack of capacity to negotiate tariff agreements worldwide, compared to CERN which is Geneva-based only and UNOG which has different schemes for national and international participants.

- **Services reimbursed at 100% - under preventive measures, a gynaecological check-up and mammography after age 40 are reimbursed at 100% every two years. What reimbursement is made if a patient needs to have an annual check-up and mammography?**: 80% is reimbursed in the intervening years as treatment will be considered as a normal benefit and not as a preventive measure.

- **Provision of information on the cost of certain procedures and negotiations as a UN group to ensure providers do not levy higher charges** (raised by Dev Ray and Derrick Deane): It would not be ethical to publish prices and provide details of agreements with clinics etc. In the future, it may be possible to provide a list of providers who apply TARMED rates. Four agencies – CERN, ILO, UN and WHO negotiate together as collectively they represent a substantial number of participants. CERN will reimburse 90% of the cost of services but can only make direct payment to hospitals where an agreement has been.
negotiated. The ILO UN and WHO prefer participants to have a choice of services. SHI cannot just negotiate with providers in the Geneva area; many participants reside elsewhere in the world.

- **Health insurance with the French Social Security and use of SHI as complementary insurance** (raised by Elisabeth Stussi – can SHI join the “Noémie connection” whereby once the French Social Security has paid its coverage, it will send the bill directly to the complementary insurance provider to reimburse the balance, thus avoiding the extra work for the retiree to contact also the complementary insurance provider): Such an agreement with the French Social Security would only cover bills for services in France and SHI reimburses bills from some 190 countries. At first glance, SHI may not have the capacity to do this. However, on the GOC there is an external French health insurance expert who may be able to explore this matter but not in the immediate future.

Marjory Dam expressed her thanks to Claude Hennetier Rossier and her team for the extra work accomplished in setting up the new SHI governance structure and arranging the global elections of the representatives of SHI affiliated former staff on the new committees.

On behalf of the Assembly participants, the Chair thanked Claude Hennetier Rossier for her attendance, her responses to the questions raised and for the help of SHI staff to AFSM members during the year.

**Closure**

Jean-Paul expressed his gratitude to William Gunn for his chairmanship of the Assembly, and thanked the interpreters (David Neal and Christian Stenersen) and the operator (Claude Costa) for their excellent services. He reminded the participants of the dates of two upcoming events at WHO/HQ: the influenza vaccination sessions on Tuesday 15 and Tuesday 22 October, and the annual reception on Thursday 5 December.

*The text is from Sue Block Tyrrell
And the photos from Samy Kossovsky*

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**WHO Health Insurance matters (SHI)**

All insured retirees should have received their insurance card for 2014. Two information notes were enclosed in the same envelope. The first one, signed by the Head, Staff Health Insurance asks you to provide your email address (if you have one) so that SHI could email you your reimbursement advices. We welcome this initiative and encourage you to take advantage of it. Please note that the email address of SHI has changed. It is now shihq@who.int instead of insurance@who.int.

The second note is an innovation: this is the first time your elected representatives are offered the possibility of communicating with all WHO retirees who are members of SHI. From now on, all of you can write to your representatives by regular mail or by email at the address shi.retreps@gmail.com. Naturally the members of the Association can continue to write to us care of the Association (aoms@who.int)

Lastly, the Administration will mail to you soon the new version of the SHI Rules.

We take this opportunity to urge you to read the Rules carefully before incurring health care expenses in order to avoid disputed or rejected bills on the grounds that the rules have not been respected.

Your representatives will continue to keep you informed of any new developments.

*Ann Van Hulle-Colbert and Jean-Paul Menu*
### Income and expenditure accounts 2011-2012 vs 2009-2012

and Budget for 2013-2014

(in CHF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Income</strong></th>
<th><strong>Budget</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Item</strong></td>
<td><strong>2009-2010</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership fees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life members (new and conversion from annual to life member) *</td>
<td>17 962,10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total membership fees</strong></td>
<td><strong>25 121,45</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
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<td>Interest on saving accounts Mutuelle UN</td>
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<td><strong>Contributions</strong></td>
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<td>Contributions for annual receptions</td>
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<td>received from WHO</td>
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<td>received from participants</td>
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<td>Donations received from members</td>
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<td><strong>Other income</strong></td>
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<td>Received by closing memory and website accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>34 686,10</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
<th><strong>Budget</strong></th>
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<td>Bank charges</td>
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<td>Annual receptions</td>
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<td>General Assembly</td>
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<td>Elections</td>
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<td>Flowers (funerals/hospitals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
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<td>Donation to Médecins sans Frontières/Donation to Solidarity Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations to Dixon family</td>
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<td>Allocation for future services</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Excess income over expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34 686,10</strong></td>
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### Accounts 2011-2012 vs 2009-2010

**Balance Sheet as at 31.12.2012**

in CHF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>31/12/2010</th>
<th>31/12/2012</th>
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<td>Current account Mutuelle UN</td>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<td><strong>Total current assets</strong></td>
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**Funds Balance**

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<td>Excess of income over expenditure</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue from life members*</td>
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<td>12 621,15</td>
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<td>207 555,37</td>
<td>225 777,21</td>
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</table>

Cumulated allocation for future services: 29 086,41

* Contrary to previous biennia, we have only recorded as income 1/12 (1'496.84) of life membership contributions received during 2009/10. The remaining 11/12 (16'465.26) do not appear as “income” but are recorded in the “Balance sheet” as “Funds earmarked for life members”. In the past the total life membership contributions were recorded under income and included under capital funds.
Sleep, a vital function of the brain

Sleep enables the brain to clear out the waste toxins accumulated during waking hours as a result of neuronal activity.

This is what Dr Maiken Niedergaard, researcher at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Rochester in New York and collaborators have written in a study published in the American magazine *Science*; they believe their findings could advance understanding of the biological functions of sleep and open up avenues to treatment against neurological diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

The brain, unlike the rest of the organism does not get rid of waste via the lymphatic system; it remains a fortress protected by a complex system of gateways that control the entry and exit of molecules.

A unique “glymphatic” system is very active during sleep: it enables the clearing out of toxic waste responsible for Alzheimer’s and other neurological diseases. In addition, the intercellular space increases by 60% during sleep, enabling the toxins to be evacuated more efficiently.

Almost all animal species sleep in one way or another, from flies to whales, note the researchers. Sleep can be fatal when predators are near at hand, therefore, sleep must respond to a vital function which is essential to evolution.

The authors were able to observe this brain cleaning system for the first time thanks to new imaging technology used on mice, whose brain is similar to that of humans. This mechanism, integrated into the brain’s blood network, pumps cerebrospinal fluid through tissues and returns it purified, the toxins being transported by the blood to the liver where they are eliminated.

This purification of the brain is essential because the accumulation of waste, such as toxic proteins, can provoke Alzheimer’s disease. According to the researchers, nearly all neurodegenerative disorders are linked to an accumulation of cellular waste products.

David Cohen

1. Maiken Niedergaard et al, in Science, 18 October 2013: Sleep Drives Metabolite Clearance from the Adult Brain
An active retiree

From the Atlantic to the Black Sea: 3800 km by bicycle across Europe: July to October 2013

What got into me to skim through a book describing a trip from St Nazaire to Constanta in Romania by bicycle! The photos were splendid, the description full of enthusiasm and most importantly, according to the author, freedom to cycle 3800 km through 10 countries along the Loire, the Rhine and the Danube.

For two years, the idea stayed with me. It was important for me to prove to myself that I could do it even though I was just a Sunday cyclist and I had no equipment for such a task or any experience of camping. In 2013, at age 65, I was ready to undertake this project alone. Nothing is impossible if the dream is strong enough. Internet was there to help me. The research for 6 months was important. I tried everything: creating a blog describing the project, renting out my house during the summer, informing my acquaintances and family as well as potential sponsors, selling the plants in my garden and getting rid of my unnecessary possessions, borrowing, and working alone to give me added energy. My family and friends helped me to buy a touring cycle and an appropriate trailer. I started training and many sponsors came to my assistance.

My initial fears gradually yielded to growing confidence. The first 2000 km to Budapest were on well-surfaced roads and prepared me for the second part of the trip - more adventurous and full of unforeseen obstacles which are reported on by the few travellers in order to discourage you. The first week was a real challenge to overcome the aches and pains, fatigue, and sinking motivation. But when you think you cannot go on, you find you can – it takes just the sight of the beautiful countryside, a smile, a welcoming camping site, a telephone message, a cold beer, a hot shower, and life perks up again - you can get going again the next day and become impatient to explore new horizons. Each day on the rest of the trip brought its share of adventures, misadventures and encounters. The most memorable reward of my trip was the feeling of freedom and creativity, which I had not experienced in my previous “normal” daily life.

You cannot return from such a trip and continue life in your slippers at home. I ponder over the lessons learnt and think what to do for the future. The only thing I know is that my life will never be the same again.

Chantal Huot de Saint-Albin, (Life member)
sirenedudanube.blogspot.fr

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1 En roue libre de l’Atlantique à la Mer Noire, Michel Bonduelle, Editions Ouest-France
2 Fahrradmanufaktur TX 400
News from WHO

Highlights of events over the past few months

• The Philippines catastrophe was declared a Grade 3 Emergency under WHO’s Emergency Response Framework – the first-ever acute-onset level 3 emergency since the adoption of the UN’s “Transformative Agenda” in 2011. WHO has mobilized its fastest and largest ever response, providing emergency kits and supplies, and working with the Philippines’ Department of Health and partners to carry out a major measles and polio vaccination campaign.

• The theme of this year’s World Mental Health Day on 10 October, was “Mental health and older adults” which is becoming an ever increasing public health priority. Over 20% of adults aged 60 and above suffer from a mental or neurological disorder.

• On 11 October, WHO and Health Care without Harm launched a new initiative to get mercury removed from all medical measuring devices by 2020. The initiative, Mercury-Free Healthcare by 2020 coincides with the signing in Japan of the Minamata Convention on Mercury which is now open for signature by Member States and others.

• For the fourth consecutive year, WHO was invited by the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia to observe and provide any required technical assistance during the Hajj. The recent outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) prompted health authorities to strengthen surveillance and health education for incoming pilgrims.

• From 18-21 November, the Seventh Global Meeting of Heads of WHO Country Offices (HWOs) took place at headquarters with the Director-General and Regional Directors. The overarching objective of this biennial meeting is to make WHO’s work more responsive and relevant to country needs. High on the agenda this year was WHO Reform at the country level.

• On 25 November, the Director-General was dressed in orange to support the online campaign for this year’s Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Staff were invited to also wear orange and participate in the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence” to raise awareness of the scale of violence faced by women and girls around the world and mobilize action to prevent it.

• On 25-26 November, the second Financial Dialogue Meeting took place at headquarters, with 265 representatives from 90 Member States and 12 non-state partners coming together to review WHO’s funding outlook for 2014-2015 and to find solutions to address funding challenges. For the first time, funding projections have been made prior to the start of a biennium. More than 80% of the Programme Budget for 2014-2015 is available or projected.

• A global communications strategy is under development for launch in the Spring of 2014, together with an implementation plan. A new video on WHO can been seen on YouTube – www.youtube.com/user/who.

• WHO’s campaign on World AIDS Day, 1 December, focused on improving access to prevention, treatment and care services for adolescents either living with or at risk of HIV infection. Adolescents in particular are falling through the cracks of HIV services that target either younger children or adults.

• On 3 December, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, WHO launched the first-ever global report on international perspectives on spinal cord injury.

• From 10-12 December, the WHO Centre for Health Development in Kobe organized the first WHO Global Forum on Innovation for Ageing Populations. Topics for discussion include: care at home; medical technologies targeted to prevent functional and cognitive decline; and ageing-in-place innovations for community-based care and home-based care systems.

Further information can be found on the WHO web site – www.who.int

Sue Block Tyrrell
Readers’ Corner

Congrats with QNT 93! It's interesting, witty and informative, including my happy article about living in ADD. I read it with much pleasure/printed a copy. Yes, I still like hard copies! Congrats again! Cheers from ADD.

Tanja Ellen Sleeuwenhoek

Fortunately I am still extremely fit. I play golf, sail and regularly attend a gym. However, a few years ago I needed an 8-hour operation that left me run down for some weeks. It brought me to thinking what would be my situation should something happen later, when I would be less able to assess my options or recover so easily.

I also become conscious of older relatives and friends who are facing all sorts of health issues that badly affect their quality of life. As we age, facing an undignified, and unpleasant, future becomes likely to be the norm! Moreover, the likelihood is that such a future will continue for many years! What then can we do now to minimize difficulties later on?

What do we foresee our requirements as being as we become less able?

How will we cope? Particularly should our partner no longer be around. How will he or she cope when we are no longer around?

There is nothing new in any of these observations. However, can, or even should, WHO form part of the process? If so, who in WHO?

We can address many issues now. We can determine how we would like to be treated. For example: Care givers at home; move to a retirement home; give instructions for or against life support possibilities. These are just some of the decisions we can take. How do we record these decisions and how can we ensure they are carried out?

There is an organization in the USA entitled “Aging with Dignity” (www.agingwithdignity.org) and they publish a draft living will that they refer to as “Five Wishes”. It is probably more comprehensive than would be needed by most of us but the first two wishes, are most relevant:

1. Who to make decisions when one cannot oneself, and
2. The kind of medical treatment wanted or not wanted.

We could develop some suitable variation for WHO personnel that would be most useful both for staff members and the SHI administration when taking crucial decisions in the latter part of our lives. I suggest SHI as being the custodian of such information because, although an administrative, not a medical, service:

1. It is likely to be SHI we first consult if faced with issues we need advice on.
2. SHI has the full history of past cases from diagnosis to outcome.
3. There is a distinct possibility that should we prefer not to have expensive interventions at the end of our lives that savings could be made that could be spent on more desirable alternatives that could emerge from such a process.

The process could start on separation at retirement. Not obligatory but a draft of instructions that could be given to ones lawyer and to WHO SHI administration to guide them when the need arises. WHO SHI obviously cannot take decisions as to where and how we live but they can understand our wishes with regard to actions that they are requested to support when the need arises.

What are the views of others on this?

David Wheeler

Dear Dr. Menu,

I wish to thank you for providing me with a copy of your report presented in the General Assembly, 8 October 2013, covering the activities of the Association of Former WHO Staff Members between November 2011-October 2013. I read your report word by word, and wish to express to you and to all members of the AFSM Executive Committee the excellent activities of the association which kept the links active among the WHO retirees all over the world and successfully promoted the image of our Organization.

Kindly convey my congratulations to all the members of the Executive Committee for their remarkable activities, wishing them continuous success and good health.

Dr. Khaled Mneimne

Dr Mneimne, as he does every year, sent a donation of USD 200 for AFSM.

Many thanks, Dr Mneimne
Readers’ Corner

Some 20 years ago, or more, WHO undertook one of its periodic economy drives. This particular case targeted waste paper and particularly the unnecessarily high number of reports received regularly from projects in the field and regions. By doing so there would also be a saving in printing, transport and handling costs. Many of these reports, “information copies” returned to Records Management / Registry at such speed that lack of interest was clearly visible and all knew that a copy was available on file and in the Library. These copies were promptly consigned to the wastepaper basket as were, I am sure, many in the units. A new distribution list (number of reports required and by whom) was duly prepared, circulated and included in the appropriate section of the Manual.

Months passed without any visible change so I mentioned to an administrator that perhaps a reminder would not be amiss. He looked uncomfortable and while agreeing that my remark was pertinent was reluctant to push the issue not wanting to ruffle any feathers. Project staff he remarked considered these reports as their window to headquarters and could be offended by further action. So it looked like another non starter.

My date of departure on early retirement was rapidly approaching so my Irish sense of humour urged me to have a last fling. With the assistance of colleagues I gathered bundles of “information copies” for a month or two prior to my departure and had them delivered to the office of the administrator with the following poem on the evening of the day I bade a fond Farewell to WHO after 30 years service.

Waste not  -  Want not
(an ode to economy)

Although your name’s not Thomas
Like that saintly man of old
Seeing is believing … at least
That’s what I’ve been told.

Now, this is just a sample
Of what daily we receive
I hope I have convinced you
And that now you do believe

The Manual (yes, there is one)
Tells us clearly what to do

(Signed) With every good wish

M. Kehrli-Smyth  REM / REG

2014 dates for coffees and lunches in the Geneva area

We are pleased to inform you of the dates of these informal social gatherings for retired UN system staff. We do hope you can join us:

**Geneva:** First Wednesday of each month, “International Carrefour” coffee afternoons from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Cité Seniors, 62 rue de Lausanne – 28 rue Amat. For other activities at Cité Seniors please consult their web site – www.seniors-geneve.ch

**Nyon:** Coffee mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the café “Les Saveurs d’El Medina”, situated about 300 metres from the Nyon train station and accessed by following the rue de la Gare towards the lake and, at the small market square, going down on the right to no. 11 rue de la Combe. There is a shop called “Anouk” on the corner. The dates for the first half of 2014 are:

- Tuesdays: 21 January, 15 April and 15 July
- Wednesdays: 19 February and 21 May
- Thursdays: 20 March and 19 June

**Ferney-Voltaire:** Lunches on the last Monday of each month at Chez Toni (Café Voltaire), 10 Grand’rue at 12 noon. The restaurant is inside the café, opposite the bar, on the left.

Sue Block Tyrrell
In memoriam

Dr Juan José Fernández Maruto 96, passed away in Madrid on 24 September. My father was always fighting against the anopheles as a malarialogist during the National Campaign in Spain until its eradication and then, in the Malaria Control Department in WHO, firstly as Team leader in Algiers during nine years, then in Togo, and later until his retirement, in Reunion Isles. Juanjo Vamos de Vaza, his son

John Winchester Fraser (1923 – 2013)

John came from a Scottish family living in London. His studies of Classics at Oxford were interrupted by WW2; he served in the Falklands. Arriving in Geneva he taught at the International School before joining WHO in the early 50s. His first wife, Lucette – who also worked briefly in WHO – must have introduced him to Geneva society. When they split up he led a bachelor’s life from a flat in the Old Town. He loved children but had to wait until, in his 50s, he was overjoyed when he and Petra added Emma to Annick and her brother from Petra’s first marriage.

John, with his extraordinary gifts and high standards as a linguist, could appear a cool, even arrogant perfectionist at work (see the last paragraph) – friends including me wondered why he did not aim higher, perhaps as a writer with his phenomenal knowledge which went much further than his Greek and Latin (for which he attended a reading group at the University of Geneva) or the Shakespeare Group under the famous scholar Aamir Ali. He read Science and Nature, and was always “au fait” with world politics. He had a very musical singing voice. As for his memory, he learned the “Ode to a Nightingale” in his 80s and recited it to me by the Lake “because he hadn’t learnt it before – strange! – and it had about 80 verses.”

Like his predecessor as Head of English TRA, Cyril Dumbleton, John made it his business to know all about medicine and sometimes confounded the experts, as well as being able to explain technical matters including the intricacies of staff rules and regulations. He was a frequent and welcome articulate speaker at staff gatherings.

He had no patience with genderism (gender issues were to be mopped up with tissues). Though no one was more of a true international spirit, he was no empty idealist. A dark poster on his wall proclaimed the “Año internacional de Nada”. He was an atheist, but it was not advisable to misquote the Bible (or anything else) in his hearing; he was well versed in religious and other philosophies too.

But John, I realise, was that rare thing: an ambitious and fully committed family man, which one saw in his home (there were those Scandinavian “Gloegg” parties at Christmas!). He worked long after retirement to finance his young daughter’s studies, and when he did write – outside work and staff magazine articles – it was beautifully crafted and humorous rhyming or other texts for family occasions. He was a modest perfectionist therefore, and tough on himself (the only time I saw John in tears was when he felt he had hurt someone irremediably). Immobilised with oxygen tanks after pulmonary embolism and pneumonia, his last years were particularly hard for him: he could not understand why I and others wanted to see him. A day or two before he died I found him “bored” because he had nothing to read. When I went to get something he said “Only biography or history”!

John had to give up his attendance at the « Old WHOers » Friday midday lunches almost two years ago, and is much missed.

Richard Harrison
In memoriam

Fred Beer was born in Cardiff, a fact of which he was very proud throughout his entire life. He was an only child and in his teens he developed what was to become a lifelong passion for cycling. With his Gran’s cold rice pudding in his back pocket, a woolly red bobble cap knitted by his Mum on his head, he would cycle with his friends for several miles to take part in a race. As his father had died of tuberculosis, he decided to study microbiology and went to the Hammersmith Royal Free Hospital. He applied to the World Health Organization which was the start of a career of over thirty years. He worked in many countries, in Kenya and Nigeria, and then spent many years in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India, with shorter assignments in the Maldives, before tourism, and Mongolia. He worked in WHO’s Tuberculosis Programme and later in the Smallpox Eradication Programme. After many years abroad, he felt he was no longer European and requested a move and was posted to WHO’s Headquarters in Geneva where he worked in the Supplies unit and later in the new HIV/AIDS Programme, until he retired.

While in Africa, Fred had met and married an Italian lady, Adriana, and became a well-loved and lifelong member of her family, with whom he kept in touch throughout his life. Adriana’s health deteriorated and Fred spent some years caring for her, until her death in Geneva.

Many years ago, Fred had visited WHO’s Regional Office in Brazzaville, where he first met June. In the 1980s, he met June again, now working in Geneva. A lasting friendship flourished between June and Fred, and, eventually, in December 1994, they married in Geneva. Thus started a wonderful, happy life for them both.

After coming back to the United Kingdom in 1997 Fred and June had joined the British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants, known as BAFUNCS, and Fred played an active part in the Executive Committee as National Welfare Coordinator, Overseas Representative, and a trustee of the Benevolent Fund.

Fred was, as so many of his friends have said, larger than life, had a wonderful sense of humour and a dry wit, always able to make people laugh, loved life and people, was generous, kind and caring, a true gentleman. He endeared himself to all who met him. We were privileged to have known him.

(abstracted from the Eulogy written by June Hargreaves – Beer)

Coby Sikkens

I am sorry it is not possible for me to thank, individually, the overwhelming number of Fred’s friends and ex-colleagues who sent me such kind and heart-warming messages following his death on 1 November. I hope you will accept my thanking you this way – I was very touched and greatly appreciated your kindness.

June Hargreaves-Beer

Harry Whitfield

It is with sadness and a deep feeling of loss that I inform you of the passing away of our friend and former colleague Harry Whitfield. Harry joined WHO in October 1963 at the age of 38, arriving directly from his native Ireland. He worked as a Management/Technical Officer in Data Processing, subsequently called Information Systems Support. Harry will be remembered by all who knew him as a serious worker, attentive to detail, but with a jovial personality and a quick smile. He retired to Ireland in 1984 when his son John, his pride and joy, was only 4 years old. He spent several years in Dublin before returning to his place of origin in Castleblaney, Co. Monaghan, where he died on 17 June 2013 and was laid to rest in the family burial ground at St Mary’s Church.

His son John has qualified as a lawyer having studied both in Dublin and the USA. His wedding will take place mid-December but sadly Harry will not be there to see it.

We extend our very sincere sympathy to John and surviving members of the Whitfield family.

Mary Kehrli-Smyth
In memoriam

Kurt Weithaler, 93, passed away on 30 November 2013
Prior to joining WHO in 1970 he worked at the University Clinic of Innsbruck as an Doctor for Internal Medicine. One of his achievements was the introduction of liver laparoscopy and courses in Social Medicine.
In the 60's he left for Ethiopia taking up the position of Head Doctor of the Imperial Body Guard Hospital which he build up nearly from scratch.
From 1970 to 1977 he was appointed WHO Senior Advisor of the Smallpox Eradication Programme in Addis Ababa. After successfully having eradicated smallpox in Ethiopia he was as of 1977 until 1979 WHO Epidemiologist with the Expanded Programme of Immunization in the Yemen Arab Republic, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Afghanistan.
After having retired from WHO he joined the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [UNDOF] as Force Medical Officer for 4 years.
After that he helped build up the post graduate course for community health for doctors of developing countries at the Institute for Social Medicine of the University of Innsbruck.

Regina Weithaler, Un staff member, New York (his daughter)

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Vicki Hammer passed away on 20 October. Suzanne Cherney has kindly shared with us what she wrote about Vicki’s early years at WHO.
The Working Group on Questions Concerning Women – familiarly but misleadingly referred to as the Women’s Group (misleading because around 10% of members were men) – was started at WHO headquarters in Geneva in 1974-1975. Vicki was one of the founding members, and while I was President (1975-76) and trying to get through a difficult pregnancy, she and I effectively co-chaired the group. She later took on the role of President with her classic enthusiasm and energy.
Apart from the changes we brought about to ensure greater administrative equality between male and female WHO staff members, the group (later re-named Fifty-Fifty) helped the Organization itself move forward. Vicki was particularly instrumental in our reports publicly shaming WHO for its practice of having meetings of exclusively male experts on primordial female subjects, e.g. IUDs and breastfeeding. She also was one of the prime movers in getting WHO to shine the spotlight on female genital mutilation. The Family Health department was due to submit a report on women’s health to WHO’s governing body. When we found out that the draft report made no mention whatsoever of FGM, we – Fifty-Fifty – wrote quite a few pages on the subject and successfully negotiated with the WHO officers in charge to include them in the official report. This was the first-ever official mention of FGM by WHO, and it would not have happened without Vicki.
Through her intelligence, charm and dogged perseverance, Vicki made things happen.
She has been taken from us way too soon.

Suzanne Cherney

Patricia Pedersen passed away on 15 December 2013
In memoriam

Patricia Hearn passed away on 26 October in UK, aged 88
Before joining WHO in SUP/HQ (now PROC) in 1961 Pat had worked for the Bank of England as well as working in Canada and travelling considerably, particularly in Asia, as a stewardess on a cruise line. She enjoyed life in Geneva, where she was very active, playing tennis regularly, mountain hiking, and skiing as soon as the season began, but she took early retirement in 1981 to care for her aged parents. She will be remembered as a warm, kind person by those who worked with her. One ex-colleague remembers how much she helped newcomers by guiding them in the work of SUP. Pat was a loyal friend, entirely selfless always ready to help others and refusing anything in return. She will be very much missed by everyone who knew her.

Mavis Fèvre

Other deaths

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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New members

We have pleasure in welcoming to the large AFSM family the following members and we congratulate them on their decision.

Life Members
Geneviève TIBAX

Conversion to Life Membership:
Luz NACU

Annual Members:
Marie-Claude VON RULACH, Michael NATHAN, Bruce DICK, Terri MEALIFF
Solidarity Fair at WHO Headquarters

The 19th Fair was held on 11 December to help replenish the Solidarity Fund, set up in 1995 to help staff members who lose their jobs at WHO and find themselves in financial difficulty. Since that time, thousands of francs have been distributed either as grants or interest-free loans to our colleagues and to other charitable causes.

This year, Peru was highlighted, with support especially to the Children of Peru Foundation which is dedicated to building a better future for poor children in Peru. In addition to the now traditional AFSM tombola, organized by Maria Dweggah and Sue Block Tyrrell, there were many stalls selling food and handicrafts (especially from Peru), second-hand books and the usual bake sale. Artists entertained us from Africa, Peru and Indonesia. This year’s tombola prize contained a wonderful collection of items from the USA, hand carried by Maria. The proceeds of CHF 425 will be donated to the Solidarity Fund. The lucky winner of the prize was Marie Gaspard who works in the Department of Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies.

We are pleased to participate in this event to demonstrate our solidarity with the staff and the Fund. It also provides us with the opportunity to promote our Association. A few people asked for information or took documentation, and we were delighted that some local AFSM members were able to participate in the Fair. Until next year – perhaps a special 20th year event ….

Maria Dweggah and Sue Block Tyrrell

Astronomy: Skies for January–March

The constellations at this time of year are probably the most recognisable of all. Looking south (or north if you are in the southern hemisphere) there is Orion, with its three stars in a line, called Orion’s Belt, pointing south-east to Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. Flanking Orion’s Belt to south and north are the bright stars Rigel and Betelgeuse. Follow the line from bluish Rigel to orange Betelgeuse and you come to an object that outshines even Sirius, which is Jupiter.

This is a great time to use binoculars. You cannot quite make out the disc of Jupiter with binoculars, but compare it with Sirius and you will see a great difference. Sirius, being a star and therefore very distant, is a point of light. Our turbulent atmosphere wreaks havoc with this point of light, causing it to twinkle, sometimes quite beautifully. Even with the naked eye it can occasionally appear to send out beams of light like a sparkler, and it has even been reported as a UFO sending out death rays!

Jupiter, on the other hand, rarely twinkles. Its disc may be only 41 seconds of arc across, but this is large enough to prevent its light from being distorted by the atmosphere. This year it is as far north as it can get during its 12-year orbit around the sky, so from the northern hemisphere it is particularly high in the sky and easy to observe. With binoculars you should spot up to four of its large moons on either side of it.

You can get more sky news from the Society for Popular Astronomy website: http://www.popastro.com/youngstargazers/skyguide/.

Article kindly provided by the British Society for Popular Astronomy
Call for Action!

This message is particularly addressed to our members and all other former WHO staff living in the countries of the African Region.

The objective of the Association is to form a fraternal network united by our past and irrespective of the great diversity of our former responsibilities at all levels of WHO. We have a special duty towards our distant friends even if we cannot provide them with the same service as those who live in the Geneva area. How to reach out to all of them? Whatever the distance that separates us, we must continue to search for the most effective ways of providing the services expected by members, especially when it comes to defending their interests.

We were therefore delighted to receive the following message from our colleague, Tanja Sleeuwenhoek.

Dear All, I recently retired from WHO, now living in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia1. Until June 2013, I was based in GVA. To my surprise, there’s no AFRO section of the ASFM. Many reasons have been cited. The continent is too large; there’s no real interest; mail is slow, etc. Nevertheless, I think ASFM is a good way to stay in touch with WHO/public health issues at large and with each other, providing a sense of community. It’s also a great way to catch up on issues important to all of us, like SHI coverage and Pensions issues for instance.

Rest assured, I am not thinking of establishing a formal AFRO section of AFSM and no financial contribution would be required. Rather, am thinking of possibly creating a loose network using email addresses of former WHO staff who have retired in Africa, to stay in touch/share information. In case you think so too, please let me know. My email is tanjasleeuwenhoek@gmail.com. In case you know of other people who may be interested, please spread the word/let them know of this fledgling initiative.
I hope it will work! At least, am happy to give it a try. Please contact me any time in case of questions.

Tanja Ellen Sleeuwenhoek

Our Executive Committee is thrilled to hear of this proposed initiative. It is very comforting to know that WHO retirees are more and more conscious of being one family. As in the case of the creation of AFSM (Manila), also reported in Quarterly News 93, we will offer all possible support. You can also address your views and proposals to our office in Geneva.

JP Menu

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Note from the Editor: Tanja is already known to our readers from her article published in Quarterly 93 (“Retirement in Addis Ababa”)

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A new distinction for Dr Halfdan Mahler

On the occasion of his 90th birthday (see Quarterly News 91), the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, awarded a special medal to Dr Mahler, its Founding Regent and Director-General Emeritus of WHO.
On the lighter side

Haiku Puzzle for the Princess of White Stuff

Sharp and Soft, flakes
All the same, No two the same.
Falls in clouds
To rise in drifts Cold, hivernal,
Stark, ephemeral, After night
A new start
Like the stars – A world apart
All white (Snow)

Richard Harrison

Bird Puzzle Poem

Eye stripes black and yellow look like slits
Under the pillbox hat of powder blue, it’s
Not the penduline or exotic azure; it splits
Seeds in a flash, and thanks to such wits
Milk-bottle tops surrender to sharp peckish fits.
No, not the great, the coal, the long-tailed one, but fits
Into a similar ball of moss it knits –
Not the willow, marsh or crested – flits
Tree-top to windowsill: near us it often sits;
Combative and flirty – which is it of all tits?

Richard Harrison

I promise you! As soon as you walk on two feet, it’s finished!
You go to school or you work all day. Why do you think I stay on four legs?

Stop the bullshit!

But I swear to you! Big like that, the mouse!

It’s a wonderful day, I would like you to play outside

no kidding?

It’s a wonderful day, I would like you to play outside

I promise you! As soon as you walk on two feet, it’s finished!
You go to school or you work all day. Why do you think I stay on four legs?

Stop the bullshit!

But I swear to you! Big like that, the mouse!

It’s a wonderful day, I would like you to play outside

no kidding?
Secret of longevity: a full and effective medicine chest

In retirement, you have to look after yourself!!!
Since my retirement, I have spent several months working on the construction of my medicine chest!

Over to you to judge !!!

Prescriptions !

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Prescribed drug</th>
<th>Daily dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allergies</td>
<td>Medoc</td>
<td>2 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anemia</td>
<td>Porto</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Dry Champagne</td>
<td>2 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronchitis</td>
<td>Burgundy or Bordeaux</td>
<td>3 tasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( + sugar and cinnamon )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>White Anjou</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronary arteries</td>
<td>Dry Champagne, New Beaujolais</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea</td>
<td>Champagne</td>
<td>1 bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Dry Burgundy</td>
<td>2 glasses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Pouilly Fuissée</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Alsace</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Saint-Emilion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menopause</td>
<td>Médoc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Champagne</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatism</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 glasses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trip 2014

From Amsterdam to Basel on board MS LAFAYETTE
Cruise of 9 days from 24 April to 2 May 2014

24 April: Board at 18h00. Installation in cabins. Presentation of the crew followed by a welcome cocktail. Dinner on board.

25 April: AMSTERDAM
Buffet breakfast. Morning tour of Amsterdam "Venice of the North", which has some of the finest 17th and 18th centuries architecture. This city is unique with its mixture of old and modern. Lunch on board. Afternoon excursion to Haarlem, where its historic 17th century centre is intact. Back on board for dinner, dancing. Departure, cruising at night towards Xanten.

26 April: XANTEN – AIX LA CHAPELLE (AACHEN) - DUSSELDORF
Breakfast. Morning spent cruising alongside Nijmegen and Arnhem, the Dutch entrance doors to the Rhine and then across the border at Emmerich. Lunch on board. Arrival early afternoon at Xanten. Afternoon tour to Aachen to see the old town, with its narrow streets and historic squares marked by 2,000 years of history. Visit to the Treasury, the largest north of the Alps where there are pieces of religious art of Byzantine, Carolingian and Staufen, including the "Cross of Lorraine" and "Reliquary Bust of Charlemagne" (no guide for the visit to the treasury, just a leaflet). A little free time before returning to the boat to go to Düsseldorf. Dinner and evening entertainment on board.

27 April: DUSSELDORF - COLOGNE - KOENIGSWINTER - KOBLENZ
Depart early for Cologne. Walking tour. This commercial and industrial district has been the cultural crossroads of Europe since the Middle Ages. One can admire the huge Cologne Cathedral which took more than five centuries to construct. Surrounded by the cathedral, in a circle, are 12 Romanesque churches representing the 12 apostles. Visit to the old city, passing in front of the famous House of Cologne. Some free time and then transfer by coach to Koenigswinter where the ship awaits us for lunch. Continue up the Rhine arriving at Koblenz in the early evening. Dinner and an optional stroll to the "Deutsches Eck".

28 April: KOBLENZ – MAINZ – WORMS
Breakfast. Early morning departure towards Mainz. Continue up the most beautiful and romantic part of the Rhine, with its castles, legends and mythical Lorelei rock. Lunch on board. Arrival at Mainz In the afternoon. Guided tour of Mainz and the Gutenberg Museum (closed Mondays). Capital of Rhineland-Palatinate, Mainz was founded more than 2000 years ago by the Romans. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the best architects and sculptors shaped the skyline of the city, with its palaces and churches, beautiful historic homes remarkably restored. Visit the Gutenberg Museum, the World Museum of Printing, which has two copies of the Gutenberg Bible, the oldest printed book in the world. Return to the ship at Worms. Dinner and dancing on board. Night sailing to Strasbourg.

29 April: STRASBOURG – BREISACH
Breakfast. Early morning arrival in Strasbourg. Guided tour of this European capital, visiting several areas of the city notably the "Imperial German District" near the Place de la République and the European quarter, passing in front of the European Palace, the Palace of Human Rights and the European Parliament. Continuation of the tour on foot, visiting the cathedral, the well-known Kammerzell house, then La Petite France district, area designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage of Humanity. Lunch on board. Afternoon cruising towards the beautiful wine region of Breisach. Dinner on board followed by an evening of entertainment. Night sailing to Breisach.

30 April: BREISACH - TITISEE - BLACK FOREST - BREISACH - BASEL
Breakfast, excursion to the Black Forest and Titisee. Visit the eco-museum of Gutach in the heart of the Black Forest, where different aspects of lifestyle are highlighted by this museum - its architecture, its traditions, its culture, craft as well as the economic activities of the region. Lunch.
From Amsterdam to Basel on board MS LAFAYETTE

Proceed In the afternoon to Titisee, a romantic setting by a lake of the same name, situated in the middle of a pine forest, where you can stroll and relax. The undeniable charm of the site and its ease of access are a must in the Black Forest, and a boat trip on the lake will enable you to discover this magical place. Return by coach to Breisach late afternoon. Dinner on board and entertainment. Night sailing to Basel.

1 May: BASEL – SCHAFFHAUSEN – LAKE CONSTANCE – ISLAND OF MAINAU – BASEL
Breakfast. Full day excursion to the Rhine Falls, Island of Mainau and Lake Constance including entrance, lunch at Mainau and bus transport. Visit the spectacular Rhine Falls, one of the Swiss natural beauties. Discover the Laufen castle, where you can get a closer look at the Rhine Falls, thanks to a platform that dominates the area giving stunning views of the roaring waters. Continuation to Lake Constance. Lunch on the island of Mainau, a really exceptional floral and plant paradise, which has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Germany. Return by coach to Basel to join our boat. Gala dinner on board followed by dancing. Overnight stopover.

2 May: BASEL
Buffet breakfast on board. Landing at 9am.

Amsterdam-Basel: principal deck 1259€
Superior deck +132€
Excursions (package) 385€ offered (loyal customers)
Single +339€

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Booking

I am interested: Number of people: 1 / 2
E-mail address:
Mail address
Deck: principal / superior ²:
Date:
Signature:

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1 Enrolment by email to dacohen@sunrise.ch or mail see address on page 1) no telephone please.
2 Deck category not guaranteed