In 1983, when Judy Dahl-Hansen returned Down Under, to Perth, she intended to earn a diploma in painting. Part-way through her four-year programme, Western Australian artists opined that she should turn professional so impressed were they by her ability.

"Within months, the public were buying Judy Dahl-Hansen. For a school drop-out that's pretty good," said Rajindar Pal, chairman of the Association at the vernissage of her paintings in August. Described as a "colourist," and an abstract painter, she displayed 20 pieces, including a vivid oil titled "Red Centre: Australia," and a water colour, "Shark's Bay," both depicting scenes from her native "Oz."

For a fortnight during the summer-less summer of Geneva, 1996, where the sun was virtually nowhere to be seen, her oils, water colours and pastels brightened the main WHO lobby. It was proof positive that she is "anything but retired," and that during the 13 years she served WHO so faithfully, a commanding Australian talent waited in the wings.

When she was invited to exhibit almost two years ago, she attempted to persuade Australian airlines to waive freight charges — without success. But then Swiss friends, Reto and Isabel Schatz-Vischer in Perth, offered to pack her paintings with their shipment home to Basel. Former colleagues then brought them to Geneva, and with the help of serving staff installed the exhibit, thus showing that despite occasional indications to the contrary, they can work together. (A tip of the hat to formers, John Bland, Jery Kilkr, Marianne King; to servers, Hari Anenden, Jackie Sims, Ted Weissman; those who helped with accommodation.)

"Judy shows us that there is indeed life after WHO," declared Mary-Jane Watson, chairman of the Staff Committee in welcoming remarks. "I believe very firmly in WHO. I wish you success in everything you do for health," the artist told those at the exhibit in an emotionally-tinged response.

Said the Association’s chairman in ultimate tribute to her work: "Our colleague, just only 71, is now at the start of a second career as brilliant as the colours that flow from her brushes."  

—Peter Ozorio, Editor
On joining WHO in 1950 my wife and I decided that we would purchase an apartment and pay off the mortgage in the 10 plus years before retirement. While this meant we didn’t have cash for extravagant living, we still enjoyed a comfortable life style, and on retirement we had a home without financial burden.

We always thought that we would retire in Geneva, but after a year of trial we realized that working was not the same as retiring there. Why? We found ourselves forced to make great efforts to find our mother tongue environment. We finally decided to go back to our roots — to the benefits that the U.K. provided for us, the National Health Service, the social security system, English newspapers, T.V., radio and, not forgetting, our friends of long-standing. Our family having grown up and married we didn’t need to remain in Geneva to provide them with the facilities of skiing. At our age we ourselves had become bored with the sport.

When we returned to the U.K. we chose Exmouth for retirement but just what home would be appropriate? We took some time viewing many houses, meeting many senior citizens and asking them why they were moving. The reply was often along the lines “my wife finds the stairs difficult” or “we are at a distance from public transport and feel we want to be nearer in the event that we won’t be able to use our car” or “the house is now too small for our family when they visit with the grandchildren”.

The experience of others helped us considerably in our final decision. We decided on a bungalow-type house with a view of the sea, situated not on but near public transport and where we could walk without climbing a hill. We later extended it to provide for family visits.

So far, so good but how do you occupy your mind and maintain an interest in living on retirement?

Soon after my return, the realisation came home to me that I had been spoilt by having secretarial assistance all my working life. So I enrolled for adult education courses: first term, touch typing, and second, word processing. Thereafter, I took a course in cooking designed for “Retired Gentlemen!”. That ran for two terms. While no cordon bleu I can certainly help out in the kitchen and with entertaining. Better still, I can cope when my wife goes off, as emergencies demand, to care for grandchildren in Canada or Kenya.

I found full-time entertainment and occupation in tracking down the family tree of my wife and myself, using the resources and knowledge of aunts and cousins by the dozens. I was able to trace the trees back for several members of the family scattered round the U.K., Canada and elsewhere. The study kept me busy for 18 months and, as I produced the family tree on my P.W.C., I became quite efficient in the use of the machine. It is a retirement hobby I thoroughly recommend.

To finish with health. I suffered from a torn muscle and haemorrhage in my leg from playing squash and I was advised to alter my pattern of exercise. Accordingly, I stopped at age 66 and switched to swimming, walking, cycling. Every morning before breakfast, I spend 15 minutes engaged in stretching. No longer do I need strong muscles; rather muscles which are ready to be brought into action without tearing or aching. The message is: as you age don’t stop regularly exercising, but do it within the bounds of your physical ability.

Disease is a function of human behaviour, so too is health; Indira Gandhi once said when addressing the World Health Assembly: “Life is not just for living, but living in health.” Each one of us has the responsibility, as far as we are able, for living in health.

—Bill Barton, M.D.
(formerly SDT)
Exmouth, England
LONGEVITY

During the recent excitement in the media about the 120th birthday of Mme Jeanne Calmant in the south of France, it was not mentioned that Mr Shirechiyo Izumi from Japan had reached the age of 120 years and 237 days in 1986, "according to documents most experts think are authentic" (U.S. NIH Publication 93-2756); his immune system failed and he died after developing pneumonia. Had he not finally succumbed to this, otherwise easily treatable disease, would Mr Izumi still be alive? Do persons with an exceptionally long life-span have particular genetic features? There is no doubt that different animal species have different age expectancies; mice live shorter than tortoises, and horses shorter than elephants.

The fruitfly (drosophila) is the favourite species of geneticists; it is inexpensive, short lived, and reproduces fast. Normally, its life-span is about a month, but with selective breeding and mating, after 15 generations, stocks living twice as long were isolated. Biologists are now studying tens of longevity- and aging-related genes, to understand the reasons and mechanism of longevity. This is, naturally, basic research and has no immediate practical implication; but, perhaps, understanding of the biochemistry of senescence will help, in the not too distant future, to approach some practical problems in geriatrics.

It is, however, possible, even probable that simple "hygienic" measures can slow down the aging process. In humans, even after the age of 90, exercise has positive effects. "Training can improve walking speed, mobility, independence in daily activities, and reduce dependence on canes, walkers, and wheelchairs in some individuals." (NIH 93-2756).

According to some experiments, mice eating 30 to 60 per cent fewer calories live longer, and have less disease. I discussed this study with Albert, my traditional coffee-and-cake partner. Let the mice do so, he said. Longevity is not all; there are some other pleasures. And we had a piece of cake, as usual.

—Tom Strasser, M.D.
(formerly CVD)

The Art of Judy Dahl-Hansen (from p. 1)

"... her oils,
water colours
and pastels
brightened WHO."

Quarterly News of the Association of Former WHO Staff
A new moral blight is spreading throughout the world and its name is the "free" market economy or "liberal" economics. Its central belief is simply stated: if the market economy is allowed to function, free of governmental restrictions or social considerations, everyone will be better off. The trouble with this philosophical truism is that it isn’t true: it hasn’t worked in the past and it won’t work in the future, in spite of all the sanctimonious promises of the World Bank and most modern and universally esteemed economists. Those of us in the U.N. system, and all the others feeling the pain of the present trend must not forget, nor repeat, the mistakes of the past.

We must remember that it was not the market that took children out of the mines, ended slavery, offered free education to young people, saw to it that men and women who had lost limbs or contracted diseases at work, received some form of compensation. It was rather an appeal to a higher order of humanity and some form of organized compassion. And it took some fierce battles to make it happen. But compassion is in short supply these days. It seems the economies just can’t afford it. What the drive to make money results in has been shown by the hundreds of thousands of acres of great forest sold, cut down and shipped away in Maine and Michigan in the last century, just as the bulldozers of greed are devouring the last tropical forests, leaving desertification and poverty behind.

If this drive backwards in social behaviour continues, there will not be a pond, a lake, a river or sea left unpolluted by the end of this century...and there are not many of those left even now. And the industrial trawlers will suck out all the edible fish in the sea before they too join the list of rotting fishing boats like those that now belong to indigenous people. Worst of all there will not be a traditional way of life left undisturbed.

Until now few societies have even attempted to live without any high ethical or spiritual goals. The present attempt to reduce all men and women to consumers of perishable goods starves their souls. No poetry or ultimate reality can be found in the busy market place. People need food, water, shelter of course, but they need more than that if the human experience is to have any meaning.

—Nedad Willard
Geneva
(formerly INF, Geneva & New Delhi)
(Excerpted from UN Special, Nov. 1995)
Women with slight incontinence can be cured, she adds.

As for the genital tract, she says that menopause's "unpleasant symptoms can now be minimized by properly regulated hormone treatment." A yearly check-up with a gynaecologist is recommended until age 70; and after that, every two years. Among health hints for other systems of the body:

— Cardiovascular: Your pulse rate "after physical effort" should not exceed 180 beats per minute less your age. Thus, for a 65-year old, the limit would be 115 beats per minute (180 less 65).

— Respiratory: Almost all of us breathe badly, at a third or a quarter of our capacity; learn to do it properly, she counsels.

— Skeletal: Exercise -- walk, cycle (an exercise bike will do), swim -- to "minimize osteoporosis, fragility, arthritis, and rheumatism." Bear in mind, the aim is not to increase strength but endurance.

As for eyes: Check them at least every two years; clean glasses daily. Beware of long evenings at the telly. And ears: Protect them from loud noises (disco music, for instance), which can destroy cells in the inner ear. Have wax removed by a nurse.

And a general bit of advice: Organize retirement as though it were a new professional career.

(For a copy of the JMS's "A Healthy Retirement," drop a note to WHO's AFSM, Room E 118.)

HOW TO PUBLISH YOUR MEMOIRS

Following the review of my book "Une Blouse Blanche sous le Boubou...en Afrique et à l'OMS" (Quarterly News No. 24 Winter 95-96) by Dr Lucien Bernard and Ned Willard, I was contacted by several former colleagues, both English- and French-speaking. They said they had written their memoirs and had looked in vain for a publisher. I myself had the same misfortune. I sent mine to about 10 editors who invariably replied that unless one is well-known, memoirs were of interest only to a small group of people who were directly concerned and so had no commercial interest. Thus, they were unpublishable.

My book is a biographical novel of a fictitious African doctor based on the experiences of several colleagues as well as their imaginary adventures in Africa with WHO.

The book was eventually accepted for publication by Harmattan Editions (5 rue de l'École Polytechnique 75005 Paris), and an author's contract was signed under these terms: the title becomes a part of the publications of the printing house with the author's royalties to be paid after the sale of 1,000 copies, a figure which had little chance of being realized. To minimize risk, the editor asked that, before printing, 100 copies be bought, which represents, in effect, publication at the author's expense.

By describing my experience, I want to encourage my former colleagues to record their activities because I believe that they are part of the "institutional memory of WHO." Certainly, records can be found in the reports of the D-G and the RDs, but I think that administrative reports -- excellent though they be -- are cold, formal and aseptic.

Nothing can replace real-life events which take into account not only difficulties encountered in the field, rivalries and pettiness of human beings but also their good side. Their successes as well as their failures show how they served the ideals of WHO in which they believed.

All this is relevant, it seems to me, as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of "our" organisation.

—Daniel Flahault
(Former Ombudsman)
Thônex, Switzerland

NOW ON HIGHWAY "E"

Thanks to the initiative of serving staff chairman, Mary-Jane Watson, the AFMS which is a section of the Staff Association, has been placed on the information highway. It now can be reached by internet through this e-mail address: "ExStaff@who.ch" for attention of the individual concerned.

LIFESTYLES

ANYTHING BUT RETIRED

—"Nari" Narasimhan, formerly Treasurer of the ILO Staff Committee, has established Ananda (Joy in Hindi) Travels. Going into business, not to make money but to keep occupied after separation from service at age 60, he offers "incredibly economic fares," as several satisfied WHO customers can attest to. (Tel: 22 348.01.17 Fax: 22 348.01.17)

—Jan Stjernsward, M.D., Ph.D., has accepted a position at Lund University in his native Sweden, and as medical director of Global Cancer Concern, a new NGO in London.

For 16 years chief of the cancer unit, and twice Chairman of the Staff Committee, he left WHO "on account of the rules" at age 60 in June 1996. The cancer programme was taken over by the International...
Healthy Dying

There is the whole area of ethical and human rights with regard to illness and medical treatment at 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 Ageing, 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 ageing has for human rights.

—Irene Hoskins
U.N. Representative, American Assn. for Retired Persons, Geneva
(Excerpted from World Health Forum, vol. 16, 1995)

In Memoriam

Georges Esatoglu

With great sadness we learnt of the death of our former colleague Georges Esatoglu, which occurred on 22 July 1996 during the reception given by the Swiss authorities to mark the 50th anniversary of WHO's Constitution. With a personality that was both confident and charming, Georges had the unique ability to make the workplace more convivial simply through his presence, his dynamism and his readiness to help.

Born in Asia Minor and brought up at the meeting-point of several cultures and religions, Georges derived from them a wealth of understanding and a truly international spirit. As a member of the Staff Committee, he was involved in all the campaigns and conflicts that arose whenever the rights and freedoms of international civil servants were threatened. When certain dictatorships oppressed their people and several of our colleagues were imprisoned or went in fear, he assumed the chairmanship of the newly-formed Viviana Micucci Committee, whose very creation underlined the seriousness of the threat to staff, and prompted rescue operations on the part of authorities.

But Georges was above all the tireless Editor of Dialogue, the WHO staff magazine, which did not long survive his departure. A communicator rather than a man of letters, Georges created an eclectic magazine which had no equal in any other U.N. body. Always on the lookout for new talent and ideas, he knew how to extract from his colleagues, and their network of friends, the photos, drawings and texts he needed on a wide variety of subjects.

Georges was also a bon vivant, ever ready with the timely comforting word, and encouraging comment or...
a joke that would help colleagues to start their day on the right footing. Since his retirement ten years ago, the familiar daily round at WHO was never the same again. But he loved life so much and had his head so full of projects that he had no difficulty in adapting to his lifestyle. He was constantly involved in a thousand different projects, and set a perfect example of successful retirement. He turned up at WHO from time to time, always just as ready to tilt at some windmill or other, or to tell you the latest joke.

Looking at him, you would think he would live for ever. On that evening, he was enjoying the fun, in the sumptuous surroundings of the Parc des Eaux-Vives, happily surrounded by a throng of friends. Fate ensured that evening was his last rendez-vous, his last dialogue.

—J.M. Leclercq
(TRA)

Goodbye Georges

I witnessed, I think, the last moment of Georges Esatoglu's life. It was towards the end of the reception given for the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of WHO at the Parc des Eaux-Vives Restaurant. Suddenly we heard the thud of a body falling; I turned around and it was Georges, lying at the foot of the little water-basin on the terrace, unconscious, his face ashen.

We did everything we could, including assisted breathing and external cardiac massage. Then the Cardimobile and its team took over. After 30 minutes it became evident that our efforts were in vain. It was not easy to telephone Maria Esatoglu.

I made Georges' acquaintance shortly after my arrival at WHO. For many years we both participated in the Staff Committee so that we met regularly and our exchanges of views, often lively, were always marked by friendship and fellowship. Together we participated in many FICSA meetings in Paris, London or Washington. I remember once, just before taking the plane for Geneva, having lunch near Victoria station, with Georges and Ted Webster, and of the warm spirit felt by the three of us.

The now defunct journal Dialogue, always interesting, was animated by Georges as its Editor-in-chief. Of course that brought criticisms and controversies. The disputes between Georges and Robert Munteanu, director of personnel, are still in our memories. Georges defended the staff with passion, sometimes excessively. Without a doubt it was better to be a yes-man, he never was that.

Goodbye, Georges, it is hard to see our friends go.

—Samy Kossovsky
(formerly JMS)
Geneva

Paul Bierstein

Paul Bierstein passed away in California on Easter, 7 April which is also World Health Day. The first Sanitary Engineer employed by WHO in 1947, he was the leader of a malaria control team in India, then joined WPRO in Manila as Regional Adviser in Environmental Health, a post which he held until 1963. He then became Chief, Community Water Supply unit, the Division of Environmental Health at Geneva's headquarters, until his retirement in 1974.

As someone who worked closely with Paul for over twenty years, I remember him as dynamic and efficient, who made a large and strong contribution to the planning and the development of WHO's environmental health programmes, both in the Western Pacific Region and in Headquarters. He competently guided the water supply programme as several reports of WHO Expert Committees indicate. It was a privilege to have worked with him.

—J. N. Lanoix
(Sarasota, Florida)

Letters

(Unless stated to the contrary by correspondents, letter received are routinely considered, and edited, for publication to encourage an exchange of views among colleagues. —Editor)

Laidback Lifestyles

Re: Easy Living (Quarterly News, No. 23, Autumn)

We chose retirement in South Carolina after much travelling throughout the United States several years ago on a 45-day Amtrak pass. The main things we were looking for included:

Low cost of living: A 3 or 4 bedroom house in a good area costs about $130,000 - $200,000; apt. rents for $400 to 800 a month; lunch in a good restaurant, $5 to 7; groceries for two people $50 a week.

Viable community: Charleston's preservation is one of the best in the country; the Mt. Pleasant suburb only 10 to 15 min. from downtown Charleston; area population about the same as Geneva canton.

Distance: Not far from family: our two sons and
my wife's extended family are within a day's drive.

**Recreation:** Great public beach is 10-min drive away; Charleston's cultural facilities are way out of proportion to its size.

**Lifestyle:** I've only worn a tie once or twice in a year!

Even though South Carolina is a relatively small state, it is diverse. There are three distinctive areas: piedmont, midlands, and low country (where we are). It can be snowing in the piedmont, while our palmetto trees don't even flinch!

—Herbert Ohlman
Charleston, So. Carolina

**MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS**

**Re:** Quarterly News, Autumn No. 23

I was particularly interested in reading Joe Abcede's article ("Living Life Fully After WHO"), as this revived memories of the warm hospitality I received from him and his wife when I visited Manila in the early seventies.

Another item of interest was the letter from Dr J.W. Kwamina Duncan ("AFSM Directory"), which reminded me of an incident many years ago. Driving back to Djoué late one evening, I had a puncture just after crossing the bridge. It was pitch dark; no street lights; and rather too far for me to walk without a flashlight. Suddenly another car came into view and I was a bit apprehensive as it pulled up beside me. The driver was Dr Duncan and within minutes he had changed the tyre. To this day, I am grateful for his help.

Re the item on AAFI ("An Invitation to Join"): A local group was activated in December 1994, and covers the Alpes-Maritimes and the Var. Membership now ranges between 40 and 50, and luncheon meetings are held about once a quarter. We have met in Nice, Brignoles, Cannes, Monaco and in Cotignac. Although WHO is not very well represented, which is a pity, we have made new U.N. friends.

I wish to thank AFSM for all it does for us. The Quarterly News keeps us up-to-date not only of former colleagues but also of current events within WHO.

—Marion Penichot (née Pope)
(formerly Travel Officer, AFRO, 1965-77)
St Raphael, Var, France

**IN THE PRESS**

**"THE CURRENT INCUMBENT"**

The 49th World Health Assembly, meeting in May, adopted a resolution that a WHO director-general will henceforth be permitted a maximum of two consecutive 5-year terms of office.

This limit will not, however, apply to the "current incumbent," Hiroshi Nakajima, appointed in 1988. Endorsement of the resolution, virtually without overt opposition, was interpreted by many delegates as offering 68-year-old Nakajima an acceptable way out should he decide, following the widespread Western criticism of WHO's management, not to try for a third term. He is said to have indicated privately that the prospect of continuing in the post for a further five years after 1998 does not attract him as much as has been rumoured.

—Alan McGregor
(Excerpted from Lancet 1 June 1996)

**AT AGES 86 AND 74, OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALISTS**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded the first medals of the Atlanta Olympic games not to athletes but to two doctors for pioneering studies demonstrating how exercise reduces the risk of heart disease. As winners of the first prize in sport science, both Jeremy Morris (U.K.) and Ralph Paffenbarger (U.S.) received an Olympic medal, a certificate and shared $250,000. The prize, awarded for the first time this year, will be presented every two years at the Summer and Winter games.

Morris, 86, and Paffenbarger, 74, were recognized for research which inspired the fitness revolution and proved the relationship between physical activity and a reduction in the incidence of coronary heart disease.

Morris is Emeritus Professor of Public Health at the University of London. For more than 40 years, he has served as an expert advisor to WHO. Paffenbarger, a former marathon runner, is Professor Emeritus at Stanford University School of Medicine.

(Excerpted from despatch, Xinhao News Agency, 15 July 1996)

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The opinions in the News are those of the authors, not necessarily of AFSM.)