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)

Group of the Romantic Germany Cruise
Behind, the Bishop–Princes' Palace in Würzburg
Photos of the cruise (see article on page 15)

The group in the dining room; Pierre Carteret, our photographer

Gütenberg in Mayence

“Biological Dynamic” by Audreu Alfaro, from Valence, Spain

The group in Mayence

Mainhattan in Francfort

Waiting for the bus, before going on excursion.

Signs in Schmiedgasse

The fountain in Herrngasse; behind, the Franciscans’ church

Die Tauber, seen from the ramparts

Photos by Pierre Carteret
(See others in the French version)
EDITORIAL

This year, two days are dedicated to the elderly. 4 April was World Health Day which focused on growing older in good health (see page 4) and the second will be the International Day of Older Persons, which will take place on 31 October. We participate in both of these days.

In addition, the elections for our Executive Committee will take place in October. The call for candidatures has been sent out and we hope that many of you will be candidates for this election (see below).

Other elections will take place almost at the same time: the first elections of representatives of the retirees who remain part of the WHO Staff Health Insurance, on the health insurance committees – the Global Oversight Committee and the Global Standing Committee.

Here too, we hope that you will get fully involved as it concerns your health insurance (see page 4 for the article from the Executive Committee).

DC

AFSM Executive Committee Elections (24 October 2012)

- **If you live in or around Geneva:**
  
  We shall be pleased to receive your candidature by 31 July

- **Wherever you live:**
  
  You can vote for your preferred candidates between 24 August and 23 October

  If you have not yet received a candidature declaration form, please ask us for one or look on our web site – [www.who.int/formerstaff/en/](http://www.who.int/formerstaff/en/)

DON’T FORGET, PARTICIPATE !!!

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**Important contacts:** see page 11

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Association of Former WHO Staff
Elections to the SHI Committees.

The Administration informed us that candidatures can now be submitted. In this regard, our president has received the following communication:

"Dear Dr Menu,

... Any former staff wishing to put themselves forward for candidacy must sign a “Declaration of Candidacy” document. This document contains the following sentence:

" I may not under any circumstance use the property, the facilities, the services or the funds of WHO, either directly or through third parties or associations, for the purpose of campaigning for election to the Global Oversight Committee or the Global Standing Committee"

With this in mind, I would ask you – and, through you, the members of your associations – to ensure that any property, facilities, services or funds of WHO provided to your association by WHO for the use of former staff not be used to advance any individual’s election campaign.

We thank you for alerting the members of your association accordingly.

With best regards, Nicholas R Jeffrey, Comptroller"

You already are aware of this recommendation included in the call for applications.

We urge the members of AFSM affiliated to the WHO health insurance to vote, not abstain. The issue is important.

The Committee

World Health Day 2012

Good health adds life to years

As readers are aware, this was the theme of World Health Day 2012, celebrated on 4 April. In the days leading up to the event, the front page of the WHO headquarters intranet, and of the European Office intranet, featured our own Honorary AFSM President, Roger Fontana – see an excerpt from the article below, together with news from the Eastern Mediterranean Office and the Pan American Health Organization.

On the day itself, the entrance hall at WHO headquarters was full of life from early in the morning with stalls set up by the AFSM, AFICS (the Association of Former International Civil Servants), Cité Seniors Geneva¹, and GINA (the Geneva International Network on Ageing). Our stalls were alongside others set up by young WHO Interns to demonstrate the problems that the elderly can face with vision, hearing and touch. We were pleased that some AFSM members living locally were able to come and join in the festivities.

At 10 a.m. the roundtable in the Executive Board room started with a video clip, followed by opening remarks by the Director-General who first led us all into a rousing chorus of “Happy Birthday WHO”. The discussion in the EB room was moderated by Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General for Family, Women and Children’s Health. The speakers were:

- Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF)
- Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing
- Tom Wright, Chief Executive Officer of HelpAge International
- Richard Blewitt, Chief Executive Officer of AGE UK
- Marc Wortmann, Executive Director of Alzheimer’s Disease International

1. Run by the Ville de Genève, their offices at 62 rue de Lausanne/28 rue Amat, are open on Tuesdays to Fridays from 09.00 – 17.00 and Sundays from 11.00 – 17.00. They organize many activities, including computer training courses. The brochure on their activities can be accessed on www.seniors-geneve.ch. The AFSM has some copies of the brochure and we will be pleased to send you one if you are interested.

Association of Former WHO Staff
John Dalli, European Union Commissioner responsible for health and consumer policy, gave a video message.
Astrid Stuckelberger, President of GINA, read a message from the Mayor of Geneva.
Ursula Barter, Vice-President of the Nongovernmental Committee on Ageing at the United Nations in Geneva.
John Beard, Director, WHO Ageing and Life Course programme.
Mirtha Nordet, the retired 69 year old ophthalmologist featured dancing on the World Health Day poster with one of her grandsons.

In her closing remarks, Margaret Chan emphasized the importance of older people mentoring the young and referred to the main points in WHO’s call for action:
- Promoting good health and healthy behaviours at all ages to prevent or delay the development of chronic disease.
- Minimizing the consequences of chronic disease through early detection and quality care (primary, long-term and palliative care).
- Creating physical and social environments that foster the health and participation of older people.
- Reinventing ageing – changing social attitudes to encourage the participation of older people.

The roundtable discussion was followed by a Tai chi demonstration in the main lobby. Many of us present participated, including the Director-General. Refreshments followed – tea and coffee and a large strawberry meringue cake for WHO's 64th birthday. Many happy and healthy returns WHO!

We were delighted to learn after the event, that the staffing of the WHO Ageing and Life Course programme will be strengthened, and also WHO will be taking more advantage of the social media, such as twitter, to promote its activities. Perhaps after reading a twitter message on the health of the elderly, a young person may be motivated to help an elderly person in some way, and we should not forget that the youth of today are the professionals of tomorrow!

Celebrations in the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office
The event, showcasing the importance of staying active, healthy and involved throughout life, was inaugurated by the Regional Director, Dr Ala Din Alwan, together with H.E. Dr Fouad El-Nawawi, Minister of Health of Egypt. During the event, Dr Alwan presented prizes to members of the media who had shown the best portrayal of ageing and health for World Health Day.

Former EMRO staff member, Mrs Hanaa Ghoneim, was featured on the EMRO intranet. She remains as active as ever, representing retirees in the WHO Staff Health Insurance Committee and volunteering with a local charity group. She and other retirees were among the invitees at the EMRO World Health Day celebrations.

Pan American Health Organization (WHO Regional Office for the Americas)
The celebration was an all-day affair composed of a technical symposium on healthy ageing and thought-provoking speeches directed at “How ageing must be included in the public health agenda”. The proceedings were honoured by the presence of such dignitaries as Ms Kathleen Sebelius, US Secretary of Health, and Dr Linda Fried, Dean and Professor at Columbia University’s School of Public Health. The AFSM Washington Board of Directors was seated in the front of the General Assembly Room. AFSM Washington was asked to invite all former staff to participate both in the symposium, the luncheon and the afternoon agenda which was filled with music, games, healthy exercises, healthy cooking classes, and more. The Director, Dr Mirta Roses, requested the PAHO Representatives in each country to invite former staff both to observe and participate in the Washington proceedings through the web conferencing tool Elluminate. In addition,
World Health Day 2012

Dr Roses requested that former staff be included in all other such activities planned for the remainder of the year.

Intranet feature used by Headquarters and the European Regional Office

As referred to above, Roger Fontana, was interviewed and his story was shown on both the HQ and EURO intranet sites. Roger, together with the AFSM President Jean-Paul Menu and Vice-President Sue Block Tyrell, was very active in collaborating with the World Health Day organization team.

At 87 years young, Roger remains as active as ever and jokes about his diminishing eyesight and hearing. Getting old starts in the brain, Roger affirms: if you choose to be miserable about entering the “third age”, don’t blame this on the number of years but on your own attitude. Roger finds his voluntary work truly enriching - he is broadly involved in the networks of Geneva-based pensioners. If you have a severe health handicap, this is a problem, admits Roger, especially during retirement when your income is lower. But that is where the networks come in, with members supporting each other in dealing with health concerns and understanding the local social services entitlements. Ageing is often used and misused in the political context, Roger says, but in reality it is a very private, intimately human question. We need to realize though, that the body only follows, what leads is the mental framework. One can actually flourish in old age, and contribute to society both meaningfully and tangibly. Retirement is an opening, says Roger. Our savoir vivre keeps growing at every stage of our lives. It is a blessing to live long and have the chance to accomplish so many new things.

*Sue Block Tyrell, with input kindly provided by Hanaa Ghoneim and Nancy Berinstein*

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Healthy ageing: you can do it!

The ten commandments of primary prevention

A message from the WHO medical service

- Thou shalt see five people every week
- Thou shalt not get fat
- Thou shalt take exercise and stay supple
- Thou shalt visit thy dentist
- Thou shalt get immunized
- Thou shalt limit risks to your heart and blood vessels
- Thou shalt avoid self-medication
- Thou shalt sunbathe in moderation
- Thou shalt keep your mind active
- And thou shalt reach old age in good health!

Association of Former WHO Staff
Highlights from the 65th World Health Assembly, 21-26 May 2012

The two invited speakers were HRH Princess Lalla Salma of Morocco who spoke on cancer prevention and treatment as an equity issue, and Mr Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, a former WHO staff member, who called for a multi-sectoral approach to health.

Two key issues were the reappointment of Dr Margaret Chan as Director-General of WHO for a second five-year term of office and WHO reform. In her acceptance speech, Dr Chan pledged her continued commitment to improve the health of the most vulnerable and stressed that universal coverage is the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. On WHO reform, delegates reiterated the need for comprehensive reform, for WHO to become more effective in its normative and technical assistance role and to improve accountability and transparency; expressed broad acceptance of the five proposed categories: communicable diseases, noncommunicable diseases, health through the life-course, health systems, and preparedness, surveillance and response; and requested increased focus on the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Resolutions were adopted and decisions made on many important issues, including:

- Early marriages and young pregnancies
- Humanitarian emergencies
- International Health Regulations
- Mass gatherings
- Millennium Development Goals
- Noncommunicable diseases
- Pandemic influenza preparedness
- Intensification of the global polio eradication initiative
- Research and development
- Schistosomiasis
- Social determinants of health
- Substandard/spurious/falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit medical products.

Progress reports were presented on six areas: strengthening of health systems; disease eradication, prevention and control; reproductive health; food safety initiatives; climate change and health; and partnerships and multilingualism.

Delegates endorsed the Global Vaccine Action Plan which aims to prevent millions of deaths by 2020 through more equitable access to vaccines for people in all communities: the last week of April is designated as World Immunization Week.

Other highlights

- In February, a new Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health was appointed at Headquarters: Oleg Chestnov, former Deputy Director for International Relations at the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation; other ADsG are: Bruce Aylward, Polio, Emergencies and Country Collaboration; Flavia Bustreo, Family, Women’s and Children’s Health; Carissa Etienne, Health Systems and Services; Keiji Fukuda, Health Security and Environment; Mohamed Abdi Jama, General Management; Marie-Paule Kieny, Innovation, Information, Evidence and Research; Hiroki Nakatani, HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases.

- In March, WHO launched an updated global policy to accelerate coordinated public health interventions for TB and HIV.

- In April, WHO issued a new report on Dementia: a public health priority with recommendations on improving early diagnosis, raising public awareness about the disease and reducing stigma, and providing better care and more support to caregivers.

- On the occasion of World Malaria Day in April, a new initiative was launched by the Global Malaria Programme – T3: Test, Treat and Track, which urges malaria-endemic countries and donors to move towards universal access to diagnostic testing and antimalarial treatment, and to build stronger malaria surveillance systems.

Sue Block Tyrrell

Further information and documentation can be found on the WHO web site – www.who.int
Health Insurance

Organigram: put a face on each name

Distribution of work as at 01/04/2012

Jean Noël Gerfaud AB, Z
WPRO

Laure König J K L R + AFRO

Dominique Vignane-Duhard D E F I P
plus claims of K L  SEARO

Cécile Ruggieri C G H

Julie Perez MN plus claims of K L

Vincent Huguet S T U V X Y+ EMRO OCP

Corinne Pharamond-Bonnenfant
Will help
Victoria, Julie or Dominique

Patricia Pascal
Will help
Victoria, Julie or Dominique

Victoria Medina de Staples O Q W
Direct Paiement: (A _ M)
Direct Payment Regions: EMRO - SEARO - EURO

Catherine Villard
Direct Payment: (N _ Z)
Direct Payment Regions: AFRO – WPRO

Association of Former WHO Staff
Health: Elderly are more likely to die from malaria than younger tourists

Of all those who have visited a malaria-infected country, tourists over the age of 65 have the greatest risk to die from the disease, reveals a study published on the website of the British Medical Journal.

Authors are from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Oxford. They reviewed the data of 25,000 patients treated in the UK for imported (i.e. acquired outside the country) *falciparum* malaria between 1987 and 2006.

In 9 out of 10 cases, malaria infections affect people of African heritage travelling to meet friends or family but their risks of dying from the disease are relatively low. This may be due to early exposure to malaria, or to greater awareness of the symptoms and a tendency to seek medical help earlier.

For tourists, the risk of dying from malaria increases steadily with age. In the population under study, 4.6% of cases were fatal in people aged over 65. The death rate was particularly high when returning from the Gambia compared with other West African countries.

Low drug prophylaxis rates, low awareness of the dangers of malaria and delay in seeking care may well be factors for death from malaria in tourists. In addition, doctors may not think systematically of the possibility of malaria in older tourists. There is also a higher lethality rate in December which may be due to travellers and doctors mistaking symptoms for common winter viruses, or getting less rapid diagnosis over the holiday period.

The authors conclude that people of African heritage who are visiting friends and family are far more likely to get malaria due to low prophylaxis uptake, but tourists travelling from Europe, especially on winter sun holidays in Africa, are far more likely to die from the disease once acquired, a risk that further increases in older tourists.

They stress the importance of interventions from doctors who should make holidaymakers aware that malaria is common, fatal and needs early diagnosis. Doctors must emphasize the need for taking malaria prophylaxis and encourage prompt presentation in case of fever when returning home.

While this study was restricted to the UK, it should be of interest to our readers from other countries who are considering a holiday trip in malaria-infected countries.

Text adapted from http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/pressoffice/press_releases/2012/.
For those interested in the full text of the study please refer to: Anna M Checkley et al, *Risk factors for mortality from imported falciparum malaria in the United Kingdom over 20 years: an observational study.* http://www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.e2116

1. *Lethality rate* is the proportion of deaths in patients affected by a specific disease.

*Dr Jean-Paul Menu*
Now Colour blind people see red!

In no. 83 of the Quarterly News I tried to draw attention to a visual handicap which affects about 400 million people across the world. You may perhaps remember the Daltonians, those strange colour blind creatures who make you laugh when they pick green cherries.

The staff member responsible for the Prevention of Blindness programme in WHO prepared in March 2011 a letter to the editor explaining the position of WHO regarding this handicap and submitted it for the nihil obstat of his Director. The latter, like all WHO directors, was a normally busy civil servant who, in addition, was preparing his candidature for the election of Regional Director. I am sure that he was pink with pleasure, and with my congratulations, when he celebrated that happy event last February. Unfortunately for the Daltonians, no WHO staff member seems to be now available to give the green light to that letter describing for our readers what WHO is doing in regard to this handicap.¹ In the meantime, I must confess that I turned white with mild anger, veering to purple, when last April I read a short text in black and white for the use of delegates who frequent the Executive Board Room in WHO headquarters. It concerns the instructions for the use of microphones. (I invite Daltonian readers to hold tight to avoid falling from their chairs and thus turning black and blue). I quote verbatim the colourful original text:

1) press the red button on the board, a green light will start blinking.
2) the green light will be replaced by a red light
3) the microphone has been activated you may speak
4) press the red button to deactivate the microphone at the end of your speech.

After reading these instructions several times, I ended up pressing all the colour buttons like a brown chimpanzee. Sometimes it worked!

I suggested to the Conference chief officer the following instructions: “Press the red button on the right of the board, a green light will start flashing on the left of the board.”

But a much simpler solution was found. Now just pressing one button activates the microphone. Welcome to all delegates of the Governing Bodies, Daltonians included.

J-J Guilbert

¹. For example, one role for WHO (which has made no reference anywhere to colour vision) could be to collaborate in the definition of “international criteria for a study on how to limit the variety of forms, variations of colour, position and intensity of signals used in vehicles.

FOR SORTING YOUR GREEN WASTE...
BEST NOT TO BE COLOURBLIND!

Latest news!
Among car drivers obliged to use an ethylotest, 8% will not be able to see the green colour indicating they are not authorised to drive.
Who to contact on your Executive Committee?

Many of you contact the AFSM Executive Committee for informal advice and assistance with issues such as staff health insurance claims and pension matters. We welcome your calls (+41 22 791 3103 or 3192), emails (aoms@who.int), letters and visits to our office – Association of Former WHO Staff Members, Office 4141, World Health Organization, avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

However, if you have specific questions, you may wish to send an email direct to our focal points who are knowledgeable on such matters:

Pensions:
Ann Van Hulle – vanhulle.ann@gmail.com, or Bunty Muller – buntymuller@yahoo.fr

Staff Health Insurance (SHI):
David Cohen – dacohen@sunrise.ch, or Ann Van Hulle – vanhulle.ann@gmail.com

Help with completing SHI claim forms:
Sue Block Tyrrell – tyrrellsb@gmail.com, or Anne Yamada – anne.yamada@gmail.com

Membership and change of address etc:
Anne Yamada – anne.yamada@gmail.com

Articles and/or obituaries for the Quarterly News:
David Cohen – dacohen@sunrise.ch

Old age rest homes:
Roger Fontana – please call the AFSM office
Or contact Ms Nicole Yersin (AFICS Social Welfare Officer) – Ms Yersin is on duty on Fridays but may be contacted by email at afics-social@unog.ch or messages can be left on her voicemail – +41 22 917 35 19, bearing in mind that messages will be left pending until the following Friday: any retiree from any organization has access to her services

Other questions:
Jean-Paul Menu (President) – jpmenu2@orange.fr, or Sue Block Tyrrell (Vice-President) - tyrrellsb@gmail.com, or Dev Ray (Vice-President) – devray@gmail.com, or Roberto Masironi (Administrator) – rmasironi@gmail.com

The Executive Committee members will do their best to provide you with assistance. However, for definite solutions to your problems, the Committee members will refer you to the appropriate officials in WHO dealing with such issues as Pensions and Staff Health Insurance.

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: insurance@who.int
Pensions: +41(0)22 928 88 00;
Email: jspfgva@unog.ch for Geneva
Or unjspf@un.org for New York
AFSM office manned on Tuesday and Wednesday From 9:30 to 12:00
Otherwise, please leave a message: someone will call back.

Coffee mornings in Nyon – change of venue

From June onwards these coffee mornings for all retired international staff will take place from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the café “Les Saveurs d’El Medina” which is situated about 300 metres from Nyon train station and is 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.

Dates for the rest of 2012 are:
Tuesdays – July 17 and October 16
Wednesdays – August 15 and November 21
Thursdays – September 20 and December 20
World No Tobacco Day 31 May 2012: Tobacco industry interference

In 1987 the World Health Assembly promoted the idea of a global no-tobacco day to draw worldwide attention to the tobacco epidemic and its lethal effects. The World No Tobacco Day was launched on the 40th anniversary year of the founding of WHO in 1988, when the Director-General, at the time, Dr Halfdan Mahler, in the hall staircase took a hammer and broke an ashtray to signify the end of smoking in WHO. The picture’s quality is not the best, but it was not easy to retrieve it from the WHO archives after 24 years. I had the pleasure of organizing the Day when I was responsible for the WHO Tobacco or Health programme.

Ever since the Day has been celebrated yearly in almost all Member States on 31st May. Activities cover different themes every year to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate for effective policies to reduce consumption. Activities both in WHO and in countries usually include public information, television coverage and speeches by ministers of health, action in schools, posters in streets etc.

This year the theme was: Tobacco industry interference.

The tobacco industry is becoming increasingly aggressive in opposing anti-tobacco action. It goes as far as bringing governments to court. This includes Australia, Norway and Uruguay. The move could discourage other countries to act against tobacco. Years ago it infiltrated the University of Geneva Medical School. The author of the infiltration was discovered, condemned in court and removed from the medical school. The Day is still going on after 24 years. Obviously there is a need for it.

R. Masironi

How tobacco industry acts:

1. Manoeuvring to hijack the political and legislative process
2. Exaggerating the economic importance of the industry
3. Manipulating public opinion to gain the appearance of respectability
4. Fabricating support through front groups
5. Discrediting proven science
6. Intimidating governments with litigation or the threat of litigation
BAFUNCS: The 35th Annual General Assembly and Reunion
Oxfordshire, 11-13 May 2012

Warned by friends about the British weather, I set off for this reunion armed with all my winter clothes, but lo and behold the temperatures rose and the rains stopped and there is nothing prettier than the English countryside when the sun shines and the yellow rape seed flowers are all around. We were about 80 altogether this year and WHO with 15 ex staff members was, as always, well represented.

An excellent afternoon tea on Friday drifted into the Friday evening informal dinner. I was deprived of a seat on the (now almost traditional) WHO table on this first night as I was promoted to sit with the high an mighty at the top table. A great honour of course, but I missed out on all the WHO gossip from the past! The programme the next morning gave us the Rt Hon. Lord Hannay, former British Ambassador to the United Nations and past chairman of the United Nations Association-UK, who provided us with an admirable insight in the UN’s Role in Global Security and how this has changed in the last 20 years of the post war period. The UN Security Council needed guidelines to regulate its military operations and in 2004 The Secretary General at the 59th session of the General assembly presented the report (Doc. A/59/565) of the high level panel on threats, challenges and change which endeavoured to regulate the UN’s uses of force. Lord Hannay was a member of this panel.

After coffee break BAFUNCS tended to some housekeeping issues, such as accounts and budgets and a discussion of its benevolent fund, which has some problems in dispensing its funds sensibly under the present regulations since no requests for aid that match those are coming in.

The Saturday afternoon was devoted to excursions. There was a choice of three: The Ashmolean museum in Oxford, A walking tour of Oxford City or a visit to Claydon House (National Trust). I hear all three were delightful, but I can only vouch for the Ashmolean museum which is exquisite. There is no other word for it. Angela Postiglione was our guide and she whizzed us in three little groups past the most famous treasures exhibited and the rest of the time we wandered round on our own. The evening brought the official dinner which was preceded by some Neapolitan songs sung by Ms Rosella Bondi, who was accompanied by Cyril Groom, the many talented Oxford Region Secretary/Treasurer. Seating arrangements for this dinner are subject to rules and regulations and I found myself next to a colleague from UNDP with whom I had a delightful conversation partly in Bahasa Indonesia about that part of the world where we had both worked.

Rosemary McCreery, formerly of UNICEF and the UN Commission of Human Rights and former Assistant Secretary-General (human resources) spoke on “Promises, principles and politics – some personal reflections on the UN and Human Rights”. The picture she painted for us was one of an eternal struggle, but one that the UN can never afford to give up. There are an enormous amount of declarations and treaties and agreements outlining human rights and the rights of children, but no sooner has one been concluded or there are forces at work to try and circumvent the issues regulated. It is also clear that the UN is always in the bad books and can’t do a thing right. For the governments of the concerned countries (Ms McCreery quoted Cambodge from personal experience) the UN meddles too much and for the NGOs also working in the field the UN does never enough.

After coffee break the London representatives recommended next year’s annual reunion which will be held from 10-12 May in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in the London docklands. The president, Edward Mortimer, closed the meeting thanking the WMO participants for having fixed the weather.

During the meeting I picked up a lovely magazine type publication called Traveller’s Tales, prepared by the BAFUNCS Surrey Region and edited by Bernadette Rivett, an AFM member (see below). The stories (13 of which are written by former WHO staff) are of an anecdotal nature and the kind of issues will be familiar to a lot of us. They are now collecting stories for a second volume.
BAFUNCS: The 35th Annual General Assembly and Reunion

The next BAFUNCS Overseas Region lunch for the Geneva area will be held in July. Anyone who wants to try out BAFUNCS and join the lunch, please contact me.

Coby Sikkens

1. BAFUNCS participants were invited to take part in an Oral History Project on UN Experts on Conflicts and Humanitarian Interventions in the Sub-Saharan Region, 1945-2001. Teresa Tomás Rangil, a postdoctoral fellow at the History Faculty of the University of Oxford, is conducting this research which combines the study of institutional archives with oral history interviews of UN experts. Readers interested in participating in the study should contact Teresa on tomasrangil@gmail.com. “Anyone interested in obtaining a copy (price £3 - English only) should contact: Ann Chaplin – email: achaplin@waitrose.com”

New members

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

Annual members:
Elizabeth BOUBERT, Claude ALLEN; Moll CHRISTENSEN; Carlos OPPENHEIMER

Life members:
R. IYENGAR, Jacques MIEGE, Ayoade ODUOLA, Elisabeth WALCH

Conversion from annual member to life member
Gisèle BERTHET, Beniamino GRANDIN, C. GREGORY, Simone HERBULOT-SIMONOY, Jens JORGENSEN NORDENKULL, Irène KEISER-MOON, H. D. LIEBERMANN, Suzanne RENAND, Anthony THOMAS, Wolfgang TREBELJÄHR, Oswald WIELANDER

Association of Former WHO Staff
River Cruise (Rhine-main-Danube) in Germany: Strasbourg to Passau

We left Geneva by bus and arrived at the embarkation site in Strasbourg. When 23 of us were installed in our cabins, the MS Monet left at 19.00 hr on the Rhine. We found four tables had been set aside in the dining room for us – with a French chef the food was excellent and service perfect. The members of the group changed their tables often in order to make better acquaintance with all others in the group.

After a night of sailing, we arrived at Mayence, the town of Gutenberg, and the boat anchored in front of the palace of the crown prince – a harmonious contrast between a half-timbered sandstone construction and modern architecture. In the square animated by a packed and colourful market, we visited the Cathedral St Martin and the market fountain (1526). A little distance away, in front of the Opera and the statue of Gutenberg, a double line in brass indicates the 54th parallel (latitude) and a little higher in the town, we could admire the stained glass windows of Chagall in the St Etienne church.

The next stop was Frankfurt – economic capital of Europe – where, from a bus, we observed the contrast between the old quarters and the new city. In the old quarters, we could admire the Cathedral St Barthélemy in sandstone, the main square – Römerberg – with the St Nicholas church, the Ostzelle – a collection of half-timbered XIV century houses, the town hall with the four emperors’ statues, and the protestant St Paul’s church where the national assembly convened in 1848/49 as a symbol of individual liberty and democracy for Germany.

The two stops of Sunday brought us the two small mediaeval towns of Mitenberg and Wertheim – to leisurely visit the palace, the old houses, the monuments, the fountains, the wrought iron signs, the statues and decorations on the walls – to the satisfaction of all our amateur photographers. At Wurzburg, we descended from the boat at the foot of the fort Marienberg. A bus then took us to the vast courtyard of the baroque residence of the bishop-princes - inspired by Schönbrunn and the Versaille – constructed in the XVIII century under the direction of the architect Balthazar Neuman and the interior decorated by the painter G B Tiepolo and the sculptors A Bossi and J P Wagner. We then went to the cathedral St Kilian, a roman sanctuary ((XI/XII c.) and followed Dom Strasse to the Town Hall with the Eckard tower and the red house until the bridge Altemainbrucke (1133) which was reconstructed in 1473 and decorated with statues from 1730.

The next stop was Rothenburg ober der Tauber, certainly one of the best conserved, restored and maintained mediaeval cities we visited. The old town is completely encircled by the bastions with towers, We spent a whole morning walking around the old streets with half-timbered houses and admiring the signs and the statutaries beside the ramparts which overlook the Tauber. We visited the principal monuments – church of St Jean, the St George fountain the Town Hall and houses of the nobles.

The visit to Nuremberg next day started with the palace and followed the guide on the ramparts, the square of Tiergärtnertor to visit the house of Albrecht Dürer, the St Sebald church, the Town Hall, the house of the artisans with frescoes on its façade, to arrive at the Market Square with the Bell fountain, to touch the golden lamb which brings good luck and visit the church of Notre Dame and cross a bridge in Pegnitz to visit St Laurent church. Our last stop was Regensburg (Ratisbonne) to make a deviation of 10 km to visit Walhalla, neo-doric temple in marble on the banks of the Danube built between 1830 and 1842 by the architect Leo von Ketzé for raising a monument to the great men of German civilization by the king Louis 1 of Bavaria. We subsequently visited Ratisbonne with its old bridge (Steinern Brücke 1135/1146), the old town hall, the Haidplatz the triangular place with houses from different ages, the gothic cathedral St Pierre, the ancient chapel and its rococo décor, the roman gate and the walls. We spent some more time in this UNESCO named world historic site.

The last night of sailing brought us back to Passau and we took a bus to Munich to fly to Geneva with an understanding that we will meet in Dijon on October for a burgundy week-end.
The race of the planets is on. Throughout this season, Mars and Saturn are jockeying for position in the evening twilight. Actually, it is Mars that does all the running as it moves rapidly eastwards from day to day in its orbit, overtaking more distant Saturn in mid-August. On 14 August, the two planets and the bright star Spica will present an extraordinary sight as they form a straight line. From the northern hemisphere this line will be vertical to the horizon, low down in the west just after sunset. But from the southern hemisphere it will be horizontal and much higher up. The contrast of colours will be striking, with yellowish Saturn, reddish Mars and bluish Spica. This is also a great time of year for stargazing along the Milky Way. The centre of our home galaxy lies in the constellation of Sagittarius, and there are some notable star clouds in that direction if your skies are dark enough that you can see the Milky Way well. While Sagittarius is low down in the south from Europe, where it forms a teapot shape, it is virtually overhead from the southern hemisphere at this time of year and the teapot gets a bit lost. Also look for neighbouring Scorpius, with reddish Antares and a fainter star on either side of it. A curved line of stars marks the scorpion’s tail, sticking up above the southern horizon as seen from Europe. For more details go to http://www.popastro.com/youngstargazers/skyguide/.

Information to survivors on the death of former Who Staff Members

We have prepared this information leaflet which may be helpful at this sad time, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you require assistance:

Association of Former WHO Staff (AFSM), WHO, Office 4141, CH-1211 Geneva
tel.: +41 (0) 22 791 3103/3192, email: aoms@who.int

Pension matters: The following documents are required by the Pension Fund to obtain a surviving spouse’s pension:

- Original death certificate
- Surviving spouse’s birth certificate
- Marriage certificate (and, if applicable, judgement of divorce)
- Copy of passport or official identity card showing the surviving spouse’s signature
- PENS.E/2 Instructions for payment benefits
- PENS.E/10 Declaration of Country of Residence (if applicable)

Useful Pension Fund booklets are available in the AFSM Office.

The contacting address of the Geneva Office of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund is:

By mail: UNJSPF, c/o Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
In person: DuPont de Nemours Building, chemin du Pavillon 2, 1218 Grand Saconnex, Switzerland (bus stop “Susette”) (Monday through Friday: 8.30 am – 5.30 pm)
Phone: +41 (0) 22 928 88 00 /88 34 /88 13 Fax +41 (0) 22 928 90 99
Website: www.unjspf.org Email: unjspf.gva@unjspf.org

Health Insurance matters: With regard to health insurance, the WHO Staff Health Insurance at WHO Headquarters should be informed and provided with a copy of the death certificate. It is very important that the surviving spouse, and any other dependants already insured under the SHI rules at the time of death of the staff member and who wish to continue their participation, apply within 90 days of being informed by the Staff Health Insurance Officer that insurance protection can be continued (Form WHO 90.3 Application for continued participation in the Staff Health Insurance). Failure to apply or renunciation of insurance protection excludes the dependants and other eligible family members from participation at a later date.

Staff Health Insurance Telephone +41 (0) 22 791 18 18 Email. insurance@who.int
Personal visits and enquiries from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm, WHO/HQ room 2140 on 2nd floor

Association of Former WHO Staff
In memoriam

Veronica Izant passed away on 25 January 2012 in her 89th year.

Liliane Lartigue passed away on 6 July 2012. She was 78.

Gerda Lembke The very sad news has reached friends and former colleagues from WHO that Gerda Lembke passed away in Copenhagen on 20 April, a few days after being taken to hospital. I have known Gerda ever since I started in WHO, in 1962, where she had worked in several units, among others in Personnel, the Conference Unit, she was also the staff representative. We have shared many happy times together, in WHO as colleagues, and outside as friends, and no doubt many of us will remember the famous “choucroute” dinners. Gerda will be greatly missed by all who knew her and remembered for her charismatic personality and great sense of humour. There was never a dull moment when she was around. She was an exceptionally good and trustworthy friend. She enjoyed travelling and visited among other places, the Galapagos, went on safari and even to Nice and San Francisco where we met. I am so happy that she managed to have a winter holiday with her son Ralph and to have seen her about a month ago when she came to dinner, she looked well and that is how I want to remember her.

Odette Popkin

Alexander (Sandy) Macara, a Champion of Public Health

Born on 4th May 1932 in Scotland, Sir Alexander Macara, MB FRCP FFPHM FRCGP FFCM, died on 21st June 2012 in Bristol. Although he had not been a permanent staff of WHO, his role has been crucial to global health. Very early in life he found his call for medicine and public health in order to care for underserved populations. Teaching in the department of Social Medicine, University of Bristol, he devoted his entire life to the improvement of health conditions of populations in Great Britain and the world. He held innumerable functions, academic, regional, national and international. He was above all a formidable example of “Health Politician”. His influence was decisive within the General Medical Council and the Council of the British Medical Association of which he was elected chairman. One of his lifetime achievements was to succeed in banishing smoking in public places. He would call the tobacco industry “monstrous and cynical”. Facing strong and unfounded opposition, his last victory was to require that school children be immunized against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) prior to schooling. He received many honorary doctorates and awards for services to medicine and public health and was knighted by the Queen in 1998. His contributions to the WHO goals for Health for All were no less impressive, especially in the European Region. Sandy played a major role in the creation and development of the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER). He excelled in being a gentle but determined leader at those times where most were hesitant and then withdrawing when a new leadership was ready. The undersigned drew regularly on those qualities and on his inspiration to introduce concepts and vision of Health for All in the schools and departments of public health. Modest to the extreme, combining wisdom and restrained warmth, Sandy’s kindness was proverbial and so were his oratorical talents. We offer our deep condolences to his wife Sylvia and his children.

Jean-Paul Menu and Jacques A. Bury

1. See in particular http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-18580265
http://www.heraldscotland.com/comment/obituaries/dr-sir-alexander-macara.17993611
Next trip: Cruise in the Canary Islands

Tenerife, Lanzarote, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Arrecife, Las Palmas, Puerto de la Esta

5 January - SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE (Island of Tenerife): We board our ship at 17.00h at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Welcome, cocktail and presentation of the crew. Dinner and animated evening.

5 January - SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE: While the south coast is highly urbanized, the north coast, with its black sand beaches at the foot of cliffs, recalls the volcanic origins of the island. Between these two areas stands the highest mountain in all of Spain, Teide peak, crowned with eternal snow, at 3718 m altitude. Half day guided tour of Puerto de la Cruz - main places of El Charco (18th century), Concejal Place, the location of the church (17th century), the streets of Las Lonjias and Iriarte, the Fort of San Felipe (XVII century), the Hermitage of San Telmo, the Church of San Francisco and Taoro Park. We will also visit the Botanical Garden. Also a half day guided tour to Teide National Park. Located in the centre of the island of Tenerife, it is a perfect example of the vegetation at an altitude averaging over 2000 m, and is one of the most spectacular examples of global volcanism in the Canary Islands. Back on board for lunch and cruise to Lanzarote. Afternoon of browsing. Dinner and evening entertainment on board.

7 January - ARRECIFE (Island of Lanzarote): Arrival early morning in Arrecife. This island, entirely classified as a biosphere reserve is known for its volcanic landscapes that have cities and fertile valleys buried in large lava flows. Morning: half day tour: visit the north of the island. Departure by bus to the north of the island through the towns of Teguise, once the capital of the island, Los Valles "The valley of 1000 palms", and Maguez, where the volcano of Corona is located. Back on board for lunch. The afternoon half day excursion: Departure by coach to the Timanfaya National Park, characterized by an impressive sea of lava of 52 km. You can visit the park on a camel and you will go down to a place called "El Islote de Hilario". There you will regain the port of Arrecife. Back on board for dinner and cruise to Gran Canaria. Night navigation.

8 January - LAS PALMAS (Island of Gran Canaria): Arrival early morning in Great Canaria. Excursion: Angostura Valley and Crater Bandama. The tour begins in the harbour of the Old Town "Vegueta"; visit the home of Christopher Columbus (1493), pass the cathedral of Las Palmas before starting our journey to the mountains through Tafira, and arriving in the valley of Agostura. After refreshments in the caves of Artiles, visit of the crater Bandama of about 2000 m deep. Finally, visit of the Botanic Gardens "Canary Gardens". Return to the boat for lunch. The half day afternoon excursion: the Basilica of Torer and Gardens Arucas. We cross the city of Las Palmas and stop for one hour at the beautiful gardens of the Duchess (just outside the city of Arucas), before continuing to the centre of the city of Arucas to view the cathedral of black stone. We continue our drive through the mountains to the small village of Tenerife where we visit the colonial church. There will be some free time before returning on board for dinner. Cruise to El Hierro. Night navigation.

9 January - PUERTO ESTACA (El Hierro Island) - SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA (La Palma): Arriving early morning in El Hierro. The island of El Hierro, declared "Nature Reserve of the Biosphere", is located at the southern end of the western Canary Islands. Half day guided tour of Hierro. We will go to the capital Valverde which is at an altitude of 700 m. We pass by the Mirador de la Penas, where there are exceptional views of the valley El Golfo and Frontera. We make a stop to visit a pineapple and banana packaging station, and then a cellar where the wine is bottled. Opportunity to taste this wine and cheese from the island. Back on board for lunch and cruise to the island of La Palma. Afternoon navigation, arriving in the evening at La Palma. Dinner on board followed by a lively evening. Overnight stopover.

10 January - SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA San Sebastian (La Gomera): The island of La Palma, in the extreme northwest of the Canaries archipelago, is well renowned for its lush forests and its extraordinary natural beauty. Half day guided excursion "Volcano and Wine". Departure by bus, with the first stop to visit the Church of Our Lady of Snow, continuing on to the Mirador de la Concepcion, with its spectacular views of the city and the coast. Continuation via Brena Alta Mazo and Fuencaliente where we will visit the Ceramics Museum "El Molino". On arriving at the San Antonio volcano, we will take a short walk to the edge of the volcano. The next stop is the Bodega Carballo where it will be possible to do some shopping and taste the wine, before continuing on to Paso Alto, Brena Baja and back to the boat in Santa Cruz de La Palma for lunch and cruise to La Gomera. Afternoon of browsing. We will reach the island of La Gomera in the evening. Dinner aboard and evening with the crew. Overnight stop-over. Night navigation.

11 January - SAN SEBASTIAN (La Gomera), SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE: La Gomera offers a wide variety of landscapes. Guided half day tour of La Gomera to discover the typical villages of Hermigua, known for its forest of "El Cedro", and Agulo, which is situated in a rocky amphitheater facing the sea. Visit continues to the Garajonay National Park, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Finally, you will see the famous palm grove that produces honey. Back on board for lunch and cruise to Santa Cruz de Tenerife where we will arrive in the evening. Gala dinner followed by dancing. Overnight stopover.


Price: cruise from Santa Cruz of Tenerife, excursions included, approx. price per person - based on double cabin: lower deck: € 1,250; main deck: + € 175; boat deck: + € 240; upper deck: + € 295; single cabin supplement: € 550. Airline prices from Geneva either directly or from Paris: prices not yet known.

The exact price will be determined by the number of people interested.

Association of Former WHO Staff